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Latinised Arabic and connections to bilingual ability

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Abstract

As software support for non-Latin scripts is becoming more readily available, the continuing use of Latinised forms in online discourse highlights an interesting phenomenon. This paper focuses on Latinised Arabic (LA) as one manifestation of this trend. While there appears to be significant variation in the conventions used to Latinise Arabic in association with regional vernaculars, there is evidence that LA is now being used for more than just online communication.

Thus far, researchers have dealt with LA as a form of script-switching. In this paper, LA is examined as a form of code-switching to investigate links to bilingual ability. A statistical comparison between emails from two emailing groups indicates a link between the use of English and LA. A close examination of code-switching sites reveals a number of associated trends, while email content suggests a number of factors that influence language and script choice.

Introduction

The last few decades have seen a rapid diffusion of technology in many communities across the globe. Computers became commonplace and quickly evolved, mobile phones soon followed, but it was perhaps the Internet that marked the technological revolution of the age. For quite some time, English, with its Latin (or Roman) character set, was the patron language of these innovations (Crystal, 2006). A person with no knowledge of these characters stood little chance of gaining technological literacy. Even as software support for non-Latin scripts became more accessible, technology has hardly lost its association with the English language – or more precisely, with Latin script.

As the languages of the world came under pressure to meet the urgent demands presented by rapid, English-dominated technological advancements, an apparent trend began to develop: the Latinisation of the characters of many non-Latin script languages (Danet & Herring, 2007). This paper steers attention towards this latter phenomenon with a focus on Latinised Arabic.

Latinised Arabic: An overview

What is it?

Latinised Arabic is a written form of Arabic that uses Latin or Roman characters as an alternative orthographic form of Arabic language, which normally employs Arabic script. Being a relatively new phenomenon that has featured in very little research to date, researchers have still to agree on a common term for it. So far, the process of Latinising Arabic has also been referred to as ‘Romanization’ (Beesley, 1998), ‘ASCII-ization’¹ (Palfreyman and Al Khalil, 2003), as a form of ‘transcription’ and even as ‘transliteration’ (Language Analytics, 2007), although this last designation is criticised as being ‘inaccurate’ by Beesley (1998). More recently, Latinised Arabic has been given names such as ‘Arabizi’ (Yaghan, 2008), ‘Frankoarab’ and ‘Arabish’ (e-magazeen: see section 3).

Yaghan (2008) notes that proposals for the Latinisation of Arabic date back to 1880, with the first comprehensive scheme for Latinised Arabic proposed in 1940. In both instances, Egypt was at the centre-stage of these proposals, and the Egyptian vernacular was the subject of what became a highly politicised debate (Khayat, 2004). Faced with severe opposition from conservatives, such calls were soon abandoned. On the other hand, Palfreyman and Al Khalil (2003) point out that established conventions of Latinising Arabic have existed for some time, and coin the term “Common Latinised Arabic (CLA)” to refer to the ‘standard’ form influenced by these conventions. The purpose of these has been to make Arabic more accessible to non-speakers of Arabic.

¹ In reference to ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange)

One of the most common and authoritative of these conventions is the *ALA-LC* Romanisation scheme developed by the Library of Congress (Barry, 1997: 10-19).

However, the form of Latinised Arabic discussed here (henceforth referred to as LA) is very different from its predecessors. The largely voluntary use of this volatile form is a clear indication that it is very unlikely to be backed by a political agenda of any sort. Unlike older standards, LA was not developed with a specialized purpose in mind. It is not aimed at making Arabic accessible to foreign speakers, but is rather used for communication between speakers of Arabic. The widespread use of LA, and the unusual manner in which some characteristic Arabic sounds are denoted, e.g. turning CLA names such as 'Khaled' and 'Ghada' into '7'aled' and '3'ada', set LA apart from the more traditional Latinisation conventions known to date.

There is little agreement on exactly when this contemporary form of LA came into existence, although its rise has been inextricably linked to that of the Internet. This may account for what appears to have been a steady growth of this phenomenon over the past 15 years or so. Indeed, it is suggested that LA first emerged as a reaction to the domination of Latin script in the world of technology, as is the case with a number of other non-Latin script languages such as Greek and Japanese (Bianchi, 2006). Even as support for non-Latin scripts became more readily available, LA has still remained widely popular. This is possibly because Arabic users were accustomed to typing on an English (QWERTY) Keyboard (Language Analytics LLC., 2007) which, for Arabic-speakers living abroad, may sometimes be the only typing option (see section 2.4). The association of LA with a younger generation of technology users also makes it something of an icon for a new teen identity that actively contributes to its viability (cf. Palfreyman and Al Khalil, 2003).

Initially, LA was bound to technology-mediated communication (e.g. through text messages on mobile phones, web chat, emails, etc), but there is increasing evidence that its use has spread to other domains which are not restricted by Latin script. Today, LA continues to be seen in text messages and in internet blogs, discussion forums and chat (Palfreyman and Al Khalil, 2003), while simultaneously spreading to offline mediums, including cartoons (Palfreyman and Al Khalil, 2003), handwritten notes and writings on walls (Yaghan, 2008), and even some printed magazines.

One graphological feature of LA, which is similar to a parallel trend in Latinised Greek cited by Androutsopoulos (2006), is the use of numbers and digraphs (consisting of a number and a diacritic apostrophe) which resemble Arabic letters to represent sounds that are not present in the English language. Palfreyman and Al Khalil (2003) list these as shown in Table 1.

Sound (IPA)	Arabic character	ASCII Representation	
		In Palfreyman & Al Khalil (2003)	In Present Study
/ʔ/	ء	2	2
/ħ/	ح	7	7
/x/	خ	'7 / 5	7' / kh
/ʕ/	ع	3	3
/ɣ/	غ	'3	3' / gh
/t'/	ط	6	t
/ð'/	ظ	'6	z / th
/s'/	ص	9	s
/d'/	ض	'9	d

Table 1 Difference in graphological features of LA based on a sample of Gulf Arabic vs. a sample of Egyptian Arabic

Arabic Diglossia and Latinised Arabic

We cannot hope to acquire an understanding of the context of LA without some insight into the language situation in the greater part of the Arabic-speaking world. Arabic is the official language of 25 countries. Broadly speaking, there are two main classes of Arabic: Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), a descendant of Classical Arabic (which lives on in the Qur'an today), and regional Arabic vernaculars or Colloquial Arabic. A diglossic relationship exists between the two, where MSA is considered the pan-Arab written "high" variety of education and religion, while colloquial Arabic is the spoken, "low" variety which varies from one region to another (Ferguson, 1959; Holes, 1995).

This presents a complexity when dealing with LA, as the Latinised form of Arabic is often the spoken form, which essentially reflects the regional variety that the user/speaker is accustomed to (Bianchi, 2006). This means that LA is not based on one standard variety of Arabic. Differences in regional varieties extend to differences in the graphological depiction of "characters" in LA. The consonant representations from Palfreyman and Al Khalil (2003) in Table 1 are representative of one possible variety of LA, namely Gulf Arabic. However, if the same sounds were to be represented in LA according to a different spoken variety of Arabic then the results may be significantly different. The same table illustrates the LA representations found in the samples analysed in this paper, which are all based on Egyptian vernacular. For the sake of simplification, no distinction is made between colloquial Arabic and standard Arabic in the remainder of this paper.

The Arabic language has four pairs of plain/emphatic consonants as displayed in Table 2. In the Latinised representations based on Gulf Arabic cited by Palfreyman

and Al Khalil, the emphatic sounds had their own representations. However, in the sample of Egyptian Arabic studied, these Latinised emphatic consonants were completely absent. Instead, these sounds shared the same representations of their non-emphatic (plain) counterparts. A possible explanation for this may be that emphatic sounds are more characteristic of spoken Gulf Arabic than they are of Egyptian speech, where emphatic consonants are sometimes replaced by other sounds (for a detailed discussion of the phonological features Arabic dialects, see Holes, 1995).

	Dental				Inter-dental			
	Plain		Emphatic		Plain		Emphatic	
Fricative	/s/	س	/s'/	ص	/ð/	ذ	/ð'/	ظ
Plosive	/t/	ت	/t'/	ط				
	/d/	د	/d'/	ض				

Table 2 Plain and emphatic pairs in the Arabic Language

Another variation was seen in the position of the apostrophe in a Latinised digraph, which sometimes appeared to the right of the number rather than to its left. Moreover, the Arabic sounds (خ) and (غ) are sometimes represented as <kh> and <gh> respectively. This suggests the influence of CLA on how users represent Arabic online (cf. Palfreyman and Al Khalil, 2003).

More than just transcription

Although technology has come a long way in accommodating non-Latin scripts, the domination of Latin script can still be seen even today. One area where this is particularly apparent is in the Domain Name System (DNS), where the ASCII code still has the upper hand (Huston, 2008). It is of little surprise then that Latinised Arabic domain names such as *yallakora* (Go Football), *masrawy* (into Egypt), *otlob* (order) and *yallabina* (let's go) exist, even when the website content is entirely in Arabic script (or sometimes entirely in English). More interesting for this study are domain names such as *fann3arabi* (Arabic art), *6arab* (music) and *a7la* (better) with the distinctive numerical markers of contemporary LA.

The fact that some of the domain names above are used for websites where the content is entirely in English raises an important question: If the website was clearly designed to address speakers of English, then why is the domain name in Arabic? Clearly, LA here has a purpose which extends beyond transcribing Arabic words due to technological limitations. A website like www.otlob.com for example represents an online ordering service based in Egypt. The website content is entirely in English, possibly to appeal to a wider audience of multinational companies as well as non-Arabic speakers living in Egypt. However, the domain name is in (Latinised) Arabic, which hints at the location of the service. The domain name is obviously designed to catch the eye of someone familiar with Arabic. Another example is www.6arab.com,

where the domain name suggests to the Arabic internet user that this is a website for Arabic music, setting it apart from other music websites on the internet. This would seem to imply that LA serves a function that extends beyond facilitating access to technology for Arabic users.

LA in emailing groups: A case study

Following the overview of LA in the previous section, the discussion now proceeds from description to analysis. This section describes a statistical analysis carried out on emails from two emailing groups in order to discover any links between bilingual ability and the frequency of use of LA. An attempt is also made to detect any code-switching trends by examining code-switching sites in the two groups, and explore the influences governing code/script choice. Therefore, the questions addressed in this section are:

- How frequently is LA used? (Section 2.2)
- When is LA used? (Section 2.3)
- What influences code/script choice? (Section 2.4)

The terms *code* and *script* are central to the discussion in this section. *Code* is used here in a broad sense to mean a language as well as any language varieties (standard or colloquial) and style variations (formal or informal) within that language (Romaine, 1994: 121). *Script* is used to refer to a writing system consisting of characters which represent elements expressible in language (Huston, 2008). Throughout this section, reference will be made to two codes (Arabic and English) and two scripts (Arabic script and Latin script). It is worth noting that the main concern in this section is not LA as a kind of script-switch (cf. Bianchi, 2006) between Latin script and Arabic script, but rather as a kind of code-switch between Arabic (whether in Latin or Arabic script) and English. Based on the emails studied, the possible combinations of these codes and scripts (henceforth referred to as *format*) are listed below:

- Arabic in Arabic script only
- Arabic in Latin script only
- Mixture of Arabic in Arabic script and English
- Mixture of Arabic in Arabic script, Arabic in Latin script and English
- Mixture of Arabic in Latin script and English

All references to names and places in the examples cited have been omitted to ensure the confidentiality of the participants, but any typing errors or emoticons have been preserved. Interestingly, proper names were always in CLA, demonstrating its clear influence in this aspect.

Description of the two mailing groups

The two groups referred to in this paper are designated Group A and Group B. Both groups consist mainly of Egyptian university students. Both groups include male and female members, and all the members are native speakers of Arabic. The two groups are 'listed' as English according to the formal description on their websites, however, the email content varies considerably as will be shown. All the emails reviewed from these groups were exchanged between 2003 and 2004.

Group A consists of 50+ members aged 18 to 25. It is associated with a simulation of the Arab League organized and run by university students. The mailing group is designed to plan and discuss upcoming meetings and events. This study included 168 emails from this group, representing all the emails exchanged between 2003 and 2004 after forwarded messages and automated notifications have been excluded. Although the group is listed as English, the activity it is associated with does not require the members to be bilingual. Some of the members are comfortably bilingual in English and Arabic but the majority of members are only *incipient bilinguals* (Diebold, 1964); they can understand English and can probably produce a few words in it, but cannot communicate in English as comfortably as they could in Arabic.

Group B consists of 20+ members aged 16 to 21. It is associated with a club within an English teen magazine. The mailing group is designed to coordinate and discuss article-writing and to plan meetings and events. This study included 85 emails from this group, representing all the emails exchanged between 2003 and 2004 after all forwarded messages and automated notifications have been excluded. The magazine this groups is associated with requires its members to be fluent in English. Members are required to produce quality written material in English, and so are only allowed to join the magazine on the basis of their competence in English. Being also native speakers of Arabic, all the members of Group B are comfortably bilingual in Arabic and English. It might be argued that the members of Group B do not necessarily have native-like control of English, and accordingly do not satisfy the requirements for Bloomfield's (1933: 56) definition of bilingualism. However, in contrast to Group A, all of the members of Group B are at least bilingual according to Haugen's (1953: 7) definition; they are able to produce complete, coherent statements in English. The following section investigates whether this difference in bilingual capacity between the two groups links to the choices of language varieties.

How frequently is LA used? A statistical analysis

The language varieties used in Groups A and B were recorded and statistically analysed to note trends. Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of emails in each format in the two groups.

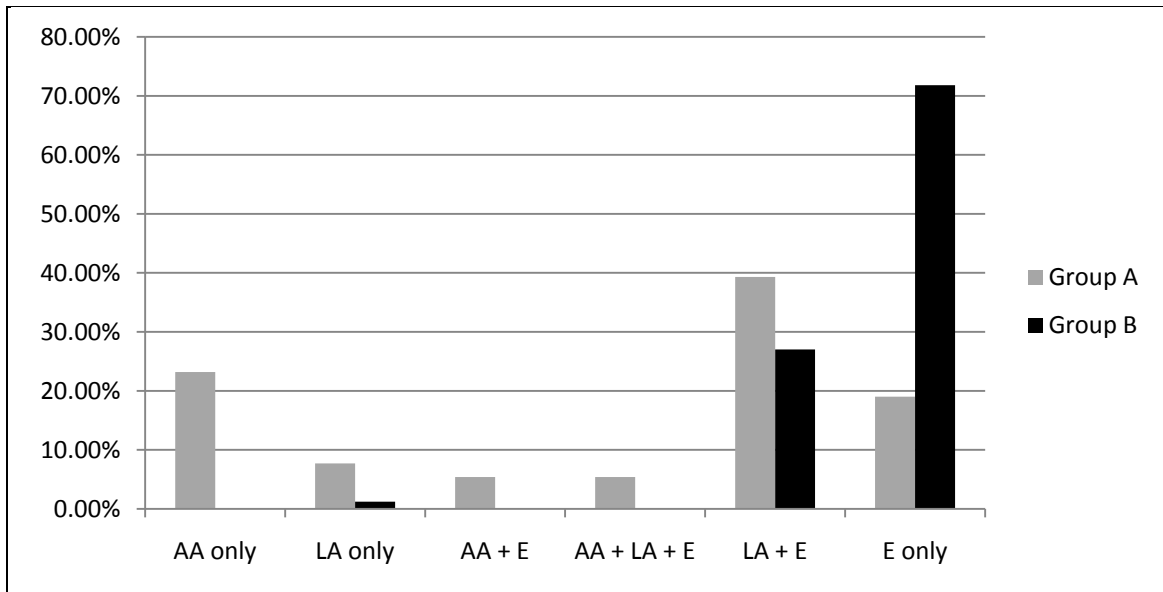


Figure 1 Percentage of emails displaying each format in Groups A and B

As Figure 1 illustrates, the email formats in Group A vary between Arabic in Arabic script (AA), Latinised Arabic (LA) and English (E), and on occasion a hybrid combination of two or more of these forms. Out of 168 emails written by 21 distinct authors, the majority of emails (81%) include Arabic (whether in LA or AA), while 69% include some amount of English. Exactly half of the emails (50%) are written in a combination of English and Arabic (whether LA or AA), while a little more than half the emails (52.4%) display instances of LA. In most cases where LA is one of the language choices used, it amounts to at least 60% of the written text.

Table 3 is a further breakdown of the language choices by member. The names of 16 distinct authors have been coded into alphabets (*a-p*) after excluding contributors of less than 3 emails due to non-significance. Mapping out the results in this manner highlights a number of interesting points. Apparently, there is a great tendency to mix and alternate between formats, with only one member (*n*) using a single format throughout. In fact, two members alone, (*c*) and (*d*), account for half the total number of emails in the LA+E category. Except for (*n*), those who use AA are just as likely to alternate between formats. However, those who use AA alone never use LA alone. In addition, except for (*g*) and (*n*), all the members use some form of LA at least once and except for (*n*), all of the members use some E at least once. In sum, the more a person uses E, the more likely they are to use LA.

Email Format	Number of emails per distinct author																Total
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	
AA	9			1	8		9	2						8			39
LA		6	4						1						2		13
AA+E					1	3	1					2	2				9
AA+LA+E	1							1				6				1	9
LA+E			19	15	3	8			1	2	5		8		1	2	66
E	1	1	3	3	4	2	8	1	2	2	1		3				32
Total	11	7	26	19	16	13	18	4	4	4	6	8	13	8	3	3	163

Table 3 Breakdown of the email formats in Group A by member

In Group B, most of the emails exchanged are entirely in English (71.8%). However, a significant number of emails contain occasional instances of LA (27%). None of the emails contain any Arabic script. 11 of the 17 distinct authors (64.7%) alternate between using English and a combination of LA and English in their emails, while the remaining 6 (35.3%) use English only. It is worth noting that even where LA occurs it does not amount to more than 5% of the written text in most emails. The only exception is an email comprised of one sentence which is a formulaic greeting on a religious occasion written entirely in LA. This one-line email and its translation are shown in Excerpt (1) below.

- (1) kol sna w anto tybeen mould nbwi mubark
'Season's greetings. Wishing you blessings on the Prophet's birthday.'

When is LA used? An examination of code-switching sites

Code-switching can be defined as a shift within the same speech exchange from one language (code) to another, where a language is identified as a distinct grammatical system or subsystem (Gumperz, 1982: 59). Singh (1985: 34) also refers to *code-mixing* to indicate a language switch that occurs within the same sentence. According to Singh, code-switching refers only to cases where the language switch marks a distinctly different unit of speech. In this paper, the term code-switching is used in a sense that is inclusive of the notion of code-mixing.

Code-switching in Group A

Extensive code-switching between Arabic and English occurs in many of the emails in Group A. In many cases, the writers alternate between code and switch choices so frequently that it is impossible to assign a base (matrix) language (cf. Sankoff *et al.*, 1990) which could be treated as the main language of the email. Although much of the code-switching in this group does not appear to be governed by any clear rules, some instances fall under recognisable code-switching categories.

a) Borrowing

At one end of the continuum, all code-switching can be perceived as a form of borrowing from another language, where the borrowed items can range from single words to whole clauses, sentences and or even chunks of discourse (Gumperz *et al.*, 1975; Romaine, 1994). Some researchers make a distinction between borrowing and code-switching, although this is not always possible (Romaine, 1994). As a general rule, if the morphological and syntactic features clearly belong to one language, then any word that is not native to that language must be borrowed. However, if the foreign word is accompanied by foreign morphology and syntax, then it is a case of code-switching (Sankoff *et al.*, 1990). The following are examples of how single English borrowed words are used in LA text. Arabic words are written in italics while English words appear in normal type.

- (2) e3melo search bel3araby
'perform a search in Arabic'
- (3) 3ANDY ANNOUNCEMENT BE7'SOS EL DIRECTOR BETA3NA
'I have an announcement about our director'
- (4) ha7awal ab3at el assignments fi a2rab forsa
'I will try to send you the assignments as soon as possible'
- (5) KOL SHEWAYA EL TEAM BEYE7LAW
'The team keeps getting better and better'
- (6) el group kol showaya bey2arab min ba3do
'The group keeps coming closer'

Examples (3)-(6) display a special kind of borrowing known as *nonce-borrowing* (Poplack *et al.*, 1988; Sankoff *et al.*, 1990; Poplack, 2001). According to Poplack, nonce borrowing "tends to involve lone lexical items, generally major-class content words, and to assume the morphological, syntactic, and often, phonological identity of the recipient language" (Poplack, 2001). The words 'director', 'assignments', 'team' and 'group' are all preceded by the Arabic definite article *el* (ال), which is an Arabic suffix that appears as part of the word in Arabic script. This suggests that the borrowed English words have been partially syntactically integrated into the Arabic text, qualifying them as nonce-loans. Example (11) (below) is particularly noteworthy, where only the loan words are written in Latin script while the rest of the sentence is in Arabic script. Interestingly, the words in the examples above recur regularly in the emails of various members. Over time, nonce-loans occurring frequently in the recipient language can gain the status of established loanwords (Romaine, 1994) such as the English words in examples (7)-(11) below. It is worth noting how the authors of examples (7)-(10) appear to associate technological terms such as 'emails', 'e-group', 'site' and 'pc' with English.

- (7) fain el e mails
'where are the emails'
- (8) bgad mabsoota mel e-group
'I'm truly happy with the e-group'

- (9) e7na ben7awel ne7oto 3al site
 'We are trying to upload it to the [web]site'
- (10) mafesh pc 3aleh windows Arabic
 'There is no pc with Windows Arabic on it'
- (11) prejudice ال stereotyping و وصف الاضطهاد الثقافى و ال
 الذى يعانون منه
 'It would be futile to go into the cultural oppression, stereotyping and
 prejudice that they suffer from'

Arabic equivalents for these words do exist, but are generally regarded as highly formal. The English terms 'prejudice' and 'stereotyping' in example (11) are perhaps the most obvious loanwords, where no widely-used immediate equivalent exists in Arabic. This example is also interesting because it involves a script-switch at the code-switching sites. This singles this instance out as a true case of code-switching according to Angermeyer (2005) who suggests that lexical borrowing occurs if a foreign word is written in the host script, but if the word retains its native script then single-item code-switching has occurred. This is particularly important because it also suggests that, in writing, "speakers have a choice between treating a given lexical item as borrowed or switched," and that "even after a word has been borrowed, it is still available for codeswitching" (Angermeyer, 2005: 525).

b) Culture-bound expressions

The influence of the native culture is perceived in how authors switch to Arabic when they use expressions that are specific to the local culture (cf. Warschauer *et al.*, 2002). This suggests that the authors feel more at home expressing their native culture in their native language. It may also be said that the authors resort to Arabic here in order to reduce social distance.

- (12) sorry for not writing for so long bas mozakret ramadan rabenna
 mawareeko
 'Sorry for not writing for so long, but [I have been overwhelmed with]
 studying [and fasting] in Ramadan, may God never put you through
 this'
- (13) we used to say you are the only secretariat who talks to us. ezzaher
 e7na 7asadna nafsena
 'We used to say you are the only secretariat who talks to us. It seems
 that we have given ourselves the evil eye'

c) Personalisation vs. objectivisation

Code-switching can be used to indicate degree of personal involvement, to distinguish fact from opinion or to lend authority to speech (Gumperz, 1982: 80). Wardhaugh (1998: 103), refers to this as an "affective dimension" to metaphorical code-switching where "you change the code as you redefine the situation – formal to informal, official to personal, serious to humorous, and politeness to solidarity" as in the following

examples. The switch to English in example (14) appears to be intended to demonstrate authority. Similarly, in example (15), the addressee is specified in English, but the message itself is in LA, establishing its informal, joking tone. The author then restores formality (and authority) by switching back to English in the next sentence.

- (14) ma3ad el session el gaya 6th of september. Assignment due then. NO EXCUSES!
'Our next session is on the 6th of September. Assignment due then. NO EXCUSES!'
- (15) to our football team: hangeeb loko ta2m mo7tarafeen min bara 3ashan el match el gay lazem neksaboh!
to people who missed last session: call me or there will be problems!
'To our football team: we will get you a team of [football] professionals from abroad because we must win the next match!
To people who missed last session: call me or there will be problems!'

d) Reiteration

Gumperz (1982) identifies repetition as one possible form that code-switching might take. Saying something in one code and then repeating it in another can provide clarification or emphasis, such as in example 16 below. It can also have a comic or sarcastic purpose such as in example (17). This effect would not be achieved by simply repeating the same phrase in the same code.

- (16) I found no one. YES MAL2ETSH WALA WA7ED RA7
'I found no one. Yes I found that no-one went.'
- (17) We, as your people, رر عايا سيادتك...
'We, as your people, your people [subjects]...'

e) Tag-switching

Tag-switching (Poplack, 1980) involves inserting a 'tag' in one language into a phrase that is entirely in another language. Gumperz (1982: 77) refers to these as 'sentence fillers'. Tags or sentence fillers are words or phrases that are bound by minimal syntactic constraints and therefore can usually be inserted with ease at a number of possible points in a sentence. The following are examples of such tags. It is to be noted that the LA tags *ya3ny* and *ba2a* in examples (20) and (21) are loosely translated here since their meaning varies widely according to how they are used and where they are inserted in a sentence; they have minimal referential value in monolingual speech.

- (18) Keep it up ya shabab
'Keep it up, guys'
- (19) please everyone try to be there begad
'Please everyone try to be there really'
- (20) I won't miss the chance to see u for a louzy midterm *ya3ny!*
'I mean, I won't miss the chance to see u for a lousy midterm!'
- (21) ba2a [*name*] in the middle for all of us

- (27) I wanted to know if there would be any more volunteers for both topics... (ya3ni 3aib 3alaina wa lamo2a7'aza lamma neb2a 20 members we mosh 3arfeen ne2assem el sho3'!)
- 'I wanted to know if there would be any more volunteers for both topics... (I mean, it's shameful that we are 20 members and still can't divide the work [between us]!)
- (28) those who are absent for 3 consecutive meetings without a reasonable excuse are AUTOMATICALLY dismissed from the club. (men 3'air za3al ya gama3a, but seriously, this is getting WAY out of hand!)
- 'Those who are absent for 3 consecutive meetings without a reasonable excuse are AUTOMATICALLY dismissed from the club. (no hard feelings guys, but seriously, this is getting WAY out of hand!)
- (29) As for outings, I personally recommend them whenever we're all disposed for such plans – since outings encourage social interaction between members away from the 'official' air about meetings... (wa lawenni shakka enno 7ad feekom yekoon far2a ma3ah mawdoo3 el official air da 7'ales :-P)...
- 'As for outings, I personally recommend them whenever we're all disposed for such plans – since outings encourage social interaction between members away from the 'official' air about meetings... (although I doubt that this 'official air' issue makes the slightest difference to any of you :-P)...
- (30) I hope that you're all fine, doing well in your studies and beginning to prepare for the upcoming mid-year finals (kal 3ada, zayyi kedda tab3an :-P)
- 'I hope that you're all fine, doing well in your studies and beginning to prepare for the upcoming mid-year finals (as usual, like me of course :-P)

c) Qualifying a message

Another form of code-switching which appears in the discourse of Group B is introducing a message in one language and then switching to another language to provide clarification or elaboration (Gumperz, 1982). In the following examples, the authors initially introduce the topic in English, but they switch to Arabic to qualify their message. It is interesting that such elaborations are consistently provided in Arabic, although the members are comfortably bilingual in English and Arabic. This suggests that the native code is regarded as the simpler, more personal or perhaps more easily understood code.

- (31) There's this special display of a children's animated movie in [*name*] theatre (elli 3and el Opera)
- 'There's this special display of a children's animated movie in [*name*] theatre (the one by the Opera house)'
- (32) Monday is fine ya [*name*].. go for it.. bass 3andy moshkela.. I finish college at 2:30
- 'Monday is fine [*name*].. go for it.. but I have a problem.. I finish college at 2:30'

- (33) I couldnt attend the last meeting we msh fahma 7aga
'I couldn't attend the last meeting and I don't understand anything'

d) Specifying an addressee

This is another function of code-switching identified by Gumperz (1982). Here, the switching is used to designate a specific recipient of the message. This can be particularly useful in emailing groups like the ones studied here where the message goes out to the whole group indiscriminately.

- (34) I really want to know what you think about these two ideas (eih ra2yek
ya [name])
'I really want to know what you think about these two ideas (what do
you think, [name]?)'
- (35) I hope you're all fine, and enjoying your summer vacations (I assume
that you're all done with studies and exams) - tab3an ya [name] I know
that you're an exception
'I hope you're all fine, and enjoying your summer vacations (I assume
that you're all done with studies and exams) – of course, [name], I know
that you're an exception'

e) Tag-switching

Like Group A, Arabic tags are frequently seen in Group B. Some of the tags cited below are common to both groups. Again, it is to be noted that some of the tags do not have a fixed referential meaning.

- (36) how is everybody ya gama3a
'How is everybody [you] guys'
- (37) miss u all awy
'Miss u all very much'
- (38) i forget names all the time fe3lan
'I forget names all the time, really'
- (39) shofty we will have to send [name] (the smallest cat) away
'See? We will have to send [name] (the smallest cat) away'
- (40) ma3lesh i know it's a bit too late
'Sorry, I know it's a bit too late'

f) Flagged code-switching

This is a marked form of code-switching which is not subject to syntactic restrictions (Poplack and Sankoff, 1988). A means of 'flagging' such as a pause, hesitation, repetition or a commentary is used to draw attention to the switch. Example (41) is an illustration of how hesitation signals such a switch. Parentheses and quotation marks may also be said to function as flags, in which case much of the switches in this group could be considered flagged switches (e.g. 25-31).

- (41) I wasn't actually yelling, I was ... baharrag.
'I wasn't actually yelling, I was ... kidding around.'

What influences code/script choice? Motives and attitudes of members

It is not entirely possible to account for authors' choice of one code or script over another, but a number of clues are present. For instance, English appears to invoke authority in both groups. In Group B, English is favoured because it represents the language of the activity that the group is associated with. The fact that all the members are bilingual, and crucially are known to be so by their interlocutors, makes English an almost automatic choice, accounting for the minimal use of Arabic in Group B. On the other hand, members of Group A are not expected to be bilingual. Hence, the level of fluency of the addressees' plays an important role in determining the language used, as can be inferred from excerpt (42).

تساءلت [name] عننا فى ال email. أنا هنا ولكن لاتتخيلى معاناتى فى الكتابة العربى على الكمبيوتر.
(42)

It was easier for me to write in English, but since not all of us are fluent in English, I wrote it that way.

رجاء : أنا أجد صعوبة كبيرة فى قراءة رسائلكم لأننى لا أفهم العربى المكتوب بالانجليزى و العكس.
Plz write the emails in either Arabic or English, not this strange language. Or you can send me a key to help me read them.

'[name] asked about me in her email. I am here but you can't imagine what a hard time I have typing Arabic on the computer.

It was easier for me to write in English, but since not all of us are fluent in English, I wrote it that way [Arabic in Arabic script].

Please: I find great difficulty in reading your messages because I don't understand the Arabic written in English and vice versa.

Please write the emails in either Arabic or English, not this strange language. Or you can send me a key to help me read them.'

Excerpt (42) which appears at the end of an email which was otherwise written entirely in Arabic script at once highlights a number of factors which govern code and script choice in Group B. Firstly, the bilingual ability of other members: Some members are reluctant to write entirely in English because they know that not all of the members are fluent in English. Secondly, is the ease of typing English script vs. the difficulty of typing Arabic script: The fact that most members find it easier to type in Latin script encourages them to write in English or Latinised Arabic. Next, the unintelligibility of Latinised Arabic: There is a relative degree of difficulty associated with reading LA (probably due to the use of numerals and the abundant possibilities in which one word can be represented). This is further illustrated in excerpt (43) which features in another email by the same author. The fact that this member expressly mentions her dislike for LA must have influenced others to curb its use. This is interesting in light of the already substantial amount of LA used in Group A, as it suggests that LA might have been even more prevalent.

- (43) Sorry for writing in English, but it is the easiest way. I hate writing the newly invented language of i don't know what to call it! I don't know how to write it and i can't even read it sometimes. I'm verrrrrrrry slow in writing Arabic on the computer, and i have a class right now.

Another factor which seems to influence members' choice of script is lack of technical support for Arabic software, especially for Arabic users abroad (cf. Warschauer *et al.*, 2002), as suggested by excerpt (44).

- (44) momken bas le al mas2ol 3an el assinments we el 7agat
de(director) ... yeb3t email ye2ol eih el assinment tane..:))) ..
we talab tane ya rat balash be el 3arbe. 3alshn ana mosh fe misr we
mafesh
pc 3aleh windows arabic ...
'Would the person in charge of assignments and these things (the
director) send an email explaining what the assignment *is again?* :)))
Another request, preferably not in Arabic, because I'm not in Egypt
and there is no pc with Windows Arabic on it.'

It is to be noted that the evidence discussed here marks the attitude and motives of members at a given point in time (between 2003 and 2004) and may not necessarily be representative of the present situation. Technology has since become more accommodating of non-Latin scripts so the problem put forth in excerpt (44) may no longer be a hindrance. In addition, LA has spread more widely in recent years and fewer people are finding it difficult to comprehend. To verify this, the author of excerpts (42) and (43) was contacted to investigate her current attitude towards LA. Her response was that she "learnt" LA shortly after these emails were written, and that she is now a proficient user this variety. This suggests that an 'in-group' / 'out-group' construct with self-selecting membership is at work here (cf. Palfreyman & Al Khalil, 2003). The in-group are those who know/use LA, and the out-group are those who do not. The growing popularity of LA made the author mentioned here feel pressured to learn this variety for fear of being left out or left behind. In her case, learning LA was at once a response and a contribution to the spread of this variety.

Summary of findings

Evidence from both groups emphasizes the eminence of English in online discourse, even where all the participants are native speakers of Arabic and therefore no perceivable need for English exists. This suggests a generally favourable attitude towards English.

In Group A, bilingual members take full advantage of their bilingual ability, flexibly alternating between formats and using code-switching as "a mode of bilingual performance which allows the bilingual to display his or her full communicative competence" (Romaine, 1994: 173).

In Group B, English appears to be the dominant base language and most switches to Arabic are preceded by a punctuation flag. This suggests that the more fluent the participants are in English, the more frequently it is used. However, the cultural significance of Arabic is still apparent with a clearly informal connotation (which is perhaps emphasized by the use of the Latinised form), as opposed to the formal use of English. This assigning of contrasting tones allows the author to change hats by alternating between the two languages. Thus, code-switching here serves a stylistic function, as highlighted by Romaine (1994: 143):

Mixing and switching for fluent bilinguals is ... in principle no different from style shifting for the monolingual. The bilingual just has a wider choice – at least when he or she is speaking with bilingual speakers.

Indeed, the perceived bilingual ability of other users appears to be central to the choice of one code or the other. This is perhaps the key to understanding why fluent bilinguals choose to minimize the use of English when in doubt about the bilingual ability of their addressees (Group A), whereas English seems to be the automatic code of choice when no doubt exists (Group B). In other words, the choice of code and script is governed by the ability of the addressee to understand the chosen code or script.

In addition, the evidence studied indicates that lack of software support for Arabic script and the comparative ease and speed of typing in Latin script influence users to write in English or in Latinised Arabic.

Limitations

The difference between the size of the email corpora in Groups A and B undermines the comparability of the results to some extent. It was not possible to produce evidence of statistical significance because the sample size was too small after classifying emails into individual format categories. The total in one of these categories (LA+E) in Group A was greatly skewed by the contributions of only two authors. As original contributions by the authors, the lengths of the emails in the two groups varied to a great extent, and in effect so did the proportion of the varieties studied. It was beyond the scope of the present study to take this into account, but it may be worth investigating in the future how these varieties measure as a proportion of the individual word count of each email.

It must be noted that the evidence studied in this paper is only representative of the groups studied. If anything, this evidence illustrates great individual variation in choices, motives and attitudes. Some clear differences between the orthographical tendencies in the examples cited here and those found in Palfreyman and Al Khalil (2003) indicate that such conventions vary by region, and emphasise that the examples here are not representative of the online discourse of the wider community of Arabic users. In addition, the emails studied here are a 'snapshot' reflecting a situation at a particular point in time (2003-2004) and cannot be considered representative of present-day online discourse. Finally, it is important to note that the purpose of this

study was not to generate generalisable results, but to provide insight into a very specific, yet interesting, situation.

This paper shows that the dichotomy in the sort of online communication studied is not between Arabic in Arabic script and Arabic in Latin script (LA), since these hardly feature together. The real dichotomy lies between English and LA, which are very closely linked, as the analysis in Section 2.2 suggests. It is the bilingual ability of the addresser and the perceived bilingual ability of the addressee which apparently determine just how much English vs. LA is used. In the future, it would be interesting to investigate the role that English plays in online communication between native speakers of Arabic.

The very fact that it is possible to analyse online communication using criteria of conversational code-switching highlights how much these emerging genres resemble spontaneous spoken speech. Indeed, it is Arabic vernaculars that are more commonly found in online communication – the so-called ‘less-than-standard’ spoken varieties of Arabic. However, Standard Arabic is not completely absent from online communication. While this was not the focus of this study, the evidence studied here indicates a tendency to write the standard form in Arabic script, while colloquial Arabic is almost always Latinised. In this sense, it could be claimed that Latinisation ‘empowers’ Arabic vernaculars, marking this as an area worthy of further research. Some further questions this research raises concern which the online genres standard Arabic is more likely to feature in. Also, whether the use of Arabic script more associated with Standard Arabic and Latin script with vernacular Arabic and with the spread of LA outside of computer-mediated communication, what effect, if any, is this having on the perceived power, scope of use and attitudes towards Arabic vernaculars within Arabic-speaking communities?

Recent developments

With software support for Arabic script more readily available today than it was in 2003-2004, more recent developments which have potentially increased the applications of LA are offering a whole new perspective on its growing use. In September 2007, *Orascom Telecom*, an international telecommunications company, launched *Onkosh*² (‘unearth’ in Arabic), a search engine allowing users to look for Arabic content on the Internet using LA. Although users also have the option to type in English or Arabic in Arabic script, the company showcases the transliteration feature in particular, saying that, “for the first time ever on the Web, users are able to search for Arabic words by typing in English characters, through the patented ‘Bel3araby’ [in Arabic] transliteration feature” (Orascom Telecom, 2007). As the user types in Latin characters, a drop-down list of possibilities in Arabic script appears (Figure 2). If the user does not manually select one of the possibilities, the first option is automatically chosen in a manner similar to how predictive texting works on mobile phones.

² The search engine can be found at: <http://www.onkosh.com/>



Figure 2 Onkosh in use

Shortly afterwards, in early 2008, another online solution which is expected to “revolutionize the Arabic web” was launched by *Language Analytics* (Sergie, 2007). Like Onkosh, the web-based application, *Yamli*³ (‘dictate’ in Arabic), enables Arabic users to type in LA and converts what they type into Arabic script. The application features the LA phrase *2oktob 3arabi* (write in Arabic) in its logo. Yamli is different from Onkosh in that it appears to employ a slightly improved technology to produce more accurate results and a more exhaustive list of possibilities. It also gives users more time to type in the full words before converting what they type into Arabic script. Unlike Onkosh, Yamli can be used as an independent conversion application and not just as a search engine.

Simultaneously, in January of the same year, *LinguArabica* released a software package, *Eiktub*, which enables users to type Arabic script using a QWERTY keyboard and to save what they typed. In addition to an online pad, there is also a free downloadable version of the software available from the website⁴. In a PR release, the founders of Eiktub say that “anyone who is used to the English keyboard can now type beautiful Arabic fast, without having to switch keyboards”. Beautiful Arabic here refers to Arabic with diacritics (*tashkeel* in Arabic), a feature of Arabic script which, though largely ornamental to the native speaker, is indispensable in certain genres, such as poetry and Quranic verses. From a linguistic perspective, what is striking about Eiktub is that it offers an entire transcription scheme: the Bikdash Arabic Transliteration Rules or BATR©, named after its proprietor, Dr. M. Bikdash.

Another interesting development in the online career of LA occurred in February 2008, with the piloting – and subsequent official launch in April 2008 – of *e-magazeen*, an online magazine targeted mainly at teenagers which makes extensive use of LA. On the magazine’s Facebook group⁵, its developers make the unprecedented and bold claim that it is “the first Egyptian online magazine written in frankoarab style to make it easy for all of you to read”. To date, it has been claimed that LA is easier to *type* than Arabic in Arabic script, but never before has it been claimed that it is easier to

³ The application can be found online at www.yamli.com

⁴ The software can be found at www.eiktub.com

⁵ <http://www.facebook.com/inbox/?ref=mb#/group.php?gid=8195399453> (accessed 25/10/08)

read. A more recent entry on the magazine's website⁶ describes e-magazeen as "the first Egyptian ONLINE magazine written in all commonly used languages English, Arabic and Arabish". This description is perhaps more revealing as it highlights the fact that the magazine is not comprised entirely of LA (FrankoArab or Arabish), it is rather a blend of English and Arabic (both in Arabic and Latin scripts) which could only mean that it is aimed at a bilingual readership. Nevertheless, this daring step at once highlights how much currency LA has gained among Egyptian teenagers, and raises the question of whether LA is truly easier to read than Arabic in Arabic script.

Conclusion

Wider support for Arabic script online does not appear to curb the increasing popularity of Latinised Arabic, with growing evidence of its diffusion to non-computer-mediated communication. For the time being, the use of LA remains highly unregulated with clear regional variation. This paper suggests that there is a link between bilingual ability and the frequency with which users use English and LA in their emails. Bilinguals appear to possess the widest set of communicative options in online discourse, with LA serving as one stylistic possibility.⁷

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⁶ www.e-magazeen.com

⁷ The informed consent of all the individuals whose emails have been used in this study was obtained in March 2008. The examples and excerpts quoted from emails were shown to the authors before their consent was acquired.

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A domain matrix view of the uses and development of BE *going to* + infinitive

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Abstract

This paper examines the development of 'BE *going to* + infinitive' and its present day English (PDE) uses, drawing on data for illustration from the BNC and the EEBO collection. The construction is a paradigm example of a verb of motion taking on a future meaning, a common development in many languages (Bybee et al 1994, Croft 2000, Heine and Kuteva 2002). This paper briefly traces the history of the construction, from a domain matrix perspective, from its lexical and 'purposive', but the main focus of the paper is on the meaning that allows speakers to also use BE *going to* to refer to a future event that has a present cause (Leech 2004: 58) or evidence (Disney 2009, forthcoming); the so-called 'predictive' use. This paper looks at how the changes in BE *going to* can be examined from a domain matrix approach.

The domain matrix

This paper¹ examines the development of 'BE *going to* + infinitive' and its PDE uses, drawing on the BNC (e.g. 1-3 below) and Helsinki corpora as well as data taken from literary sources including Chaucer, Shakespeare and Dickens. The construction is a classic example of a grammaticalized verb of motion taking on a future meaning, a common and well documented cross-linguistic development (Heine and Kuteva 2002, Bybee et al 1994, Croft 2000). The paper briefly traces the history of the construction, from OE to the 19thC, from lexical 'going to' (1) to a marker of a future intention (2).

- (1) 'Yet still you smile like a bride going to meet her bridegroom!' she murmured
- (2) 'You should be pleased. We're going to celebrate your getting well.'

The main focus of the paper is on the construction in PDE where a development over the last 150 years or so has arisen that allows speakers to also use it to refer to a future event that has a present cause or evidence (Leech 2004: 58); the so-called 'predictive' use (3).

- (3) I know from past experience, that creating that mailing list is going to take approximately sixteen hours of my time.

The precise difference between the uses is not clear cut and I describe here a semantic continuum with a fuzzy boundary. In a Cognitive Grammar approach to linguistics, the multiplicity of meanings found in uses of a given form (construction) in a certain usage event can be thought of as co-existing 'domains' (Langacker 1987, 1991, 2008). A domain indicates "any kind of conception or realm of experience" (Langacker 2008: 44) and can be basic, or cognitively irreducible like colour and pitch, space and time, or can be non-basic like RED, ON THE TOP and LATER. Domains may be both core and implied and, crucially, are variably prominent in given speech events and their relative prominence in a usage event is the construction's 'domain matrix'. The idea is similar to the notion of 'layers' of meaning found elsewhere (e.g. Hopper & Traugott 2003: 124-126). For example, the English construction [modal + *have* + past participle], as a whole signals 'past inferential'. This is partly the result of the combination of domains contributed by the smaller elements. The variation in meaning in (4)-(6) can be attributed to the contribution of the domain matrix of the modal verbs and their respective 'certainty' values, from most (4) to least (6), but 'knowledge gained by inference' is coded in each:

- (4) He *must* have been here.
- (5) He *might* have been here.
- (6) He *could* have been here.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show in graphical terms (based on Langacker 2008: 48) how in a given usage event, e.g. (4), different meanings coexist with variable levels of

¹ My thanks go to my PhD supervisors Anna Siewierska and Willem Hollman at Lancaster University for their help with an earlier version of this paper. My thanks also to Geoffrey Leech for his advice and constructive criticism.

prominence. The small circles are the entity in focus, e.g. in (4) the situation, *he BE here*. The dotted lines joining them show that it is the same entity throughout the representation. The ellipses represent the different domains, such as the fact it is an inference (1), certainty (2), reliability of the information (3), the time reference (-*n*) etc.² The thickness of each shows its relative prominence in a given usage event. The domains are numbered for convenience, but it is not a claim that these are exclusively represented, this is necessarily a sketch. Each domain adds a 'layer' of meaning of varying prominence, and all domains are potentially available for each construction. Crucially, a specific domain may not become prominent until a certain usage event activates it (either by the speaker as an intended meaning, or by the hearer).

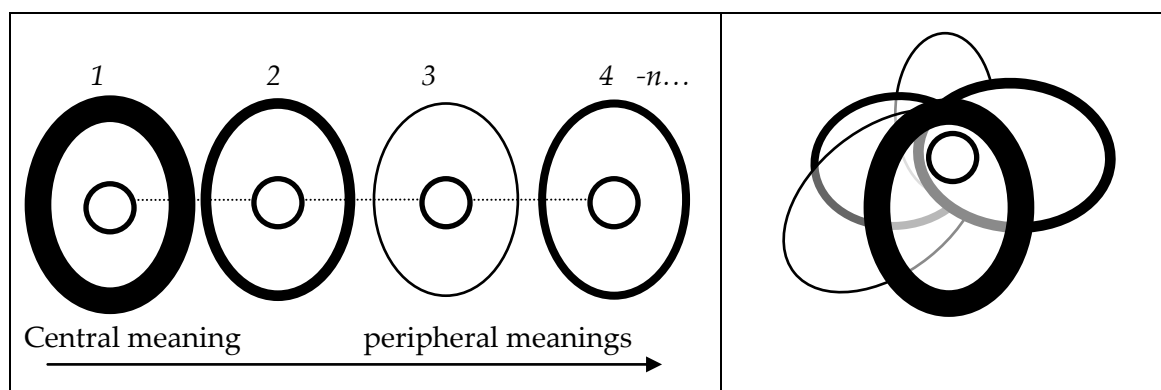


Figure 2.1 The domains in a domain matrix. Figure 2.2 The domain matrix conflated.

Language change and the domain matrix

From studies on language change has come the theory of 'grammaticalisation', described by (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 1) as:

[...] that part of the study of language change that is concerned with such questions as how lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions or how grammatical items develop new grammatical functions.

This approach has turned into 'Grammaticalisation Theory' (GT) and consists of a fairly well defined set of commonalities found to occur over time to constructions (see Hopper & Traugott 2003: ch.2; Fischer 2005, Brinton & Traugott 2005, Heine & Kuteva 2002 and 2007). It is central to grammaticalisation theory that 'change' is inevitable, but that 'a change' is not. It presupposes that variation is ubiquitous in language (Croft 2008: 3). Of the central claims made within GT, the unidirectionality principle, i.e. that change happens in certain 'directions' only, e.g. deontic to epistemic modality, and that they do not reverse, is perhaps the most controversial. Unidirectionality also claims

² Of course, this is just a very rough guide and it is not a claim made here that the actual thickness of the lines represents in any one-to-one fashion actual prominence, nor that the domains as described in-text relate specifically, or in any specified order, to the diagram. It is merely an illustrative tool.

that change is always away from concrete meanings and towards more abstract ones, and holds that there is a movement over time for form/meaning pairings to be realized first as words, then as particles, through to clitics and finally to bound morphemes (or rather, finally to zero morphemes), but not in the other direction. In order to account for some features of apparent reversal, the notions of 'lexicalisation' and de-grammaticalisation are invoked, i.e. that grammatical morphemes can become free lexical morphemes. There are conflicting views on grammaticalisation as a theory of language change. Indeed, some deny there is a 'process' at all, considering the converging data an emergent coincidence (e.g. Newmayer 2001: 225).

If the grammaticalisation argument is accepted, then as a general conclusion, the propagation of patterns of variants can be thought of as being driven by socio-pragmatic forces such as that described as 'the co-operation principle' (Grice 1975); people are social animals and successful and informative communication of thoughts is key to this. In fact, some argue that each case of change was motivated or goal-oriented (Heine 1997: 31), perhaps by a need for increased expressivity. However, this idea of motivated change in language is something which, increasingly, others deny (e.g. Croft 2000). In this view, variation is ubiquitous and change happens because change is an inevitable by-product of variability.

In the domain matrix view, language change can be seen as the conventionalisation of a modified matrix. What emerges is a 'new' prominence configuration between the active domains. This is precisely because during actual language use, the relative prominence of each domain changes according to its context.³ Over time, previously infrequently used combinations of domains may come to be used more often or implied domains previously not activated can increase in prominence. Further, some core domains may be stripped out, leading to more abstract or metaphorical uses. This would, on the surface, lead to what we describe as 'meaning change', although it is sometimes difficult to claim 'a change' in meaning has happened when in fact each layer is immanent. The point is that it simply might not be prominent until a certain usage event activates it.

A further important consideration is that, as Hopper and Traugott say (2003: 71), grammaticalisation implies that change is as much driven by the hearer as the speaker, i.e. that a 'meaning' is not always meant, but an utterance will be understood to mean *something*. It follows that "if new renditions or new combinations should happen to recur, they themselves are subject to entrenchment and conventionalisation, becoming conventional units available for exploitation." (Langacker 2008: 459). Language 'change' in a larger sense of a conventionalised form/meaning pairing is then

³ This works at different linguistic levels. For example, use of marked positions and stress can be used to adjust the relative prominence of a certain domain and perhaps a morphological variant will become associated with a certain wider meaning. I am thinking here of expressions like *See you laters* sometimes heard in the North of England. It is perhaps an extension of the plural *yous* often heard in environments in the North in low social distance interactions, but one occasionally hears non-northerners use *yous* to a single person. To an outsider the non-standard -s may be a form associated with reduced social distance rather than strictly coding 'plurality' as it is for native users. It therefore seems to me that users of the *see you laters* expression (anecdotally these are very often work colleagues, e.g. bus drivers) are using this form to show reduced social distance.

the result of myriads of tiny changes for every single utterance for every single construction. Clearly, where high frequency is involved as well, then there is more opportunity for this to occur.

A usage event, then, involves an utterance, the environment and at least a speaker and hearer, the ‘conceptualisers’. A given domain matrix combination may be either implied by the speaker, or inferred by a hearer, who is trying to make sense of an utterance they have heard. Clearly, form/meaning pairings can be novel and intended by the speaker, or a mismatch may occur between what was meant and what was inferred. Given that people already have a certain flexibility in what they consider to be acceptable usage, some instances may be less central, but still acceptable. This is the difference between Langacker’s ‘full’ and ‘partial’ sanction (1987: 68) and the resulting ‘stretching’ of the scope of meaning expressible by a given form along with successive meaning mismatches between the speaker and hearer increase the likelihood of change occurring. In terms of the process of meaning change, through repeated use, a domain combination (a ‘meaning’) for a construction becomes entrenched in the individual and conventionalised in the speech community, becoming part of the standard set of expressions in the language. This is why frequency is the crucial factor in this approach. The construction may be rather fully spelled out, e.g. BE *going to* + infinitive, or relatively schematic e.g. the future reference in BE *V+ing*, which is also an instantiation of the higher level, more schematic, construction BE+ complement and so forth. The process results in the backgrounding of the older, more prototypical meanings. The domain approach adds a way of describing in some detail an actual path of change, but is of course a rather crude representation. It does, however, significantly add to an approach that merely claims that ‘this meaning’ is foregrounded and ‘that meaning’ is backgrounded.

The BE *going to* + infinitive (hereafter BE *going to*)⁴ construction is often considered to have ‘grammaticalised’, based on three main considerations. First, it has a more semantically bleached ‘new’ use, second is the fact that in its spoken form the *going to* construction is often phonetically reduced to [ˈgʌnə], and is often spelt *gonna* to reflect this. Finally, it can be said to have been ‘reanalysed’, in terms of internal constituency boundaries from [[*going*] [*to X*]] to [[*going to*] [*X*]]. I have noted elsewhere (Disney 2009, forthcoming) the view that because its PDE use in e.g. (3) codes an allusion to ‘evidence’, then it can be considered to have an ‘evidential’ function. This paper looks at how the changes in BE *going to* can be explained from a domain matrix approach, but first I outline approaches to the field of evidentiality.

The domains of evidentiality and epistemic modality

The field of evidentiality is rather confusing because approaches are so varied, the terminology and boundaries are not consistent and some of the justifications for

⁴ Although not an unproblematic issue, I consider both finite and non-finite examples as well as uses without BE as being essentially the same construction, i.e. that *going to* is the form to which these meanings are associated.

studies are based on some misleading assumptions about the nature of evidentiality and its relationship with (other) modalities. In a study dealing with aspects of evidentiality the field needs to be explicitly delimited and the relationship between evidentiality and epistemic modality needs to be described. There are three main strategies that studies on evidentiality use to deal with its relationship with neighbouring fields: inclusion, as mentioned above, disjunction and overlap (Dendale and Tasmowski 2001: 342). The 'disjunction' approaches mostly divide the field according to grammatical criteria (e.g. Aikhenvald 2004), while non-typology studies tend to follow an inclusion model.

In brief, epistemic modality is concerned with the speaker's *attitude* towards the information in the proposition and evidentiality is concerned only with the *mode* of knowing. These issues are mostly overlooked in work on English and the distinction is conveniently ignored by many (see Chung and Timberlake 1985: 244-6) and one is most often included within the other. In fact, an inclusion model often seems to be considered self-evident by many authors, especially those writing on English, a complaint echoed by Aikhenvald (2004). Dendale and Tasmowski observe that "[m]ost often, the 'included' notion is evidentiality, because marking the source of information can be imagined as an indirect means of marking an epistemic attitude towards the information" (2001: 342). Kärkkäinen (2003) also notes that approaches vary, concluding that "[t]he choice of one as superordinate over the other is then almost a matter of terminological convenience". The result is, regrettably, terminological inconvenience.

Since Chafe and Nichols (1986), authors in the field have justified broader and broader approaches, mostly based on Chafe's comment that he is "using the term 'evidentiality' in its broadest sense" (1986: 262). He admits this is not actually necessarily concerned with evidence at all, but that evidence is "one of [the] considerations, but not the only one." He goes on to say his approach covers any linguistic expression of attitudes toward knowledge (1986: 263) and even includes expressions such as 'oddly enough' (ibid.: 265). Chafe (1986) and Biber and Finnegan (1989) among others include epistemic modality within 'evidentiality'. Mithun (1986) also comes fairly close to a universal inclusion scope and describes four general areas she considers as being covered by the term 'evidentiality' (p. 89-90). In contrast, Biber et al. (1999: 855) and Kärkkäinen (2003: 19) subsume evidentiality under 'epistemic stance' as do most 'discourse' based studies, e.g. Barton (1993), Mushin (2001), Clift (2006). An inclusion approach is also found in work on other languages, for example, Friedman's (1986: 169) work on Bulgarian, in which he says evidentiality "involves the speaker's ATTITUDE towards the information, source being an implication derived from that attitude". However, in line perhaps with the approach taken here, he concedes that the term evidentiality in his study is "a convenient label (...) not to be taken as literally descriptive." (p.169)

There are three main considerations in arguing against such 'inclusion' models. The clearest evidence comes from typology where researchers claim that evidentiality is a separate domain at the conceptual level (Anderson 1986, van der Auwera and Plungian 1998, Plungian 2001, Noel and van der Auwera 2009, Boye and Harder 2009, Boye 2009). I concur with by Boye (2009), who argues convincingly for a clear

separation of these domains on typological grounds, but dismisses the relevance of ‘grammatical categories’ for ascertaining this. He treats evidentiality as a conceptual functional domain in line with studies that show how evidentiality is a separate region of (universal) conceptual space. This space is itself, however, ascertained by cross-linguistic analysis of morphological marking for evidentiality (Anderson 1986, Plungian 2001), but the field is not restricted nor defined thus. The analysis is in line with Palmer, who divides his “propositional modality” into “epistemic” and “evidential” sub-domains (2001, but cf. Palmer 1986). The argument I follow here is that because evidentiality is only identifiable at the conceptual-functional level, then only this level can be considered a valid delimiter for the field, and as such all evidential expressions are expressing an ‘evidential function’, and could be considered ‘evidentials’, regardless of their surface form. This position also conflicts with an ‘overlap’ model, such as that presented by van der Auwera and Plungian (1998). In fact, because the overlap they describe results from evidential and modal values being semantically “identical at the interface” compatibility remains debatable.

Secondly, unlike stance comments, evidentials do not affect the truth or certainty of the proposition and can be questioned or negated in their own right, also without affecting these values.⁵ For example the evidence can be questioned in (4-6) but the beliefs cannot. Consider the difference between (7a) and (7b):

- (7) a. What evidence do you have that this is true?
 b. *What belief do you have that this is true?

Aikhenvald claims that in fact “an evidential can have a truth function of its own. It can be negated and questioned, without negating and questioning the predicate itself (2004: 4)”. Boye (2009) supports this view and his excellent discussion is not repeated here.

Finally, while evidential and epistemic meta-comments may superficially seem to have the same function, authors in the inclusion school often describe ‘evidentiality’ in terms of the speaker’s ‘commitment to the truth’ of the proposition or to the speaker’s ‘evaluation’ of the proposition (e.g. Chafe 1986, Palmer 1986, Mithun 1986, Kärkkäinen 2003). This misses the fact that evidentiality is concerned with the specification of the source. The inclusion analysis works well for adverbials with clausal scope such as ‘apparently’ in (10), which marks both hearsay and uncertainty:

- (8) *Apparently*, he is very nice.

However, unlike *apparently* in (10), despite this formal similarity, an evidential expression or extension of an expression has no effect on the actual meaning of the target proposition, unlike appraisal comments, i.e. it does not affect the truth value or the relative certainty of the proposition.

- (9) It might rain. (no evidence, just an evaluation)
 (10) It might *be going to* rain. (only with evidence e.g. clouds on the horizon)

⁵ See Boye (2009a, 2009b) and Disney (forthcoming) for discussion and more examples.

Support for this view is provided by Nuyts (2001: 386), who says that where a 'commitment' is being expressed, it is actually to the epistemic value of the whole utterance *including* the evidential expressions, and not to the content of the proposition alone. That is, in (10) the 'possibility' signalled by *might* has scope over *be going to rain* and not just *rain*, as is the case in (9).

It is the multiplicity of meanings signalled by a meta-comment that seems to be the cause of the problem for people who insist on an 'inclusion' model, and it is this that the domain matrix approach is useful for. A good example of this sort of multiplicity of meaning, one of which has a salient evidential function is the case of Romance conditionals, e.g. (11) below (from Squartini 2001: 306) and (12) (from Dendale and Tasmowski 2001: 345). Squartini (*ibid.*: 205) says of his example that "the form traditionally called Conditional, among other more prominent and frequent uses, can also occur in contexts expressing report, hearsay or unconfirmed information". Aikhenvald considers these "evidential extensions" (2004: 148).

(11) *Secondo le ultime informazioni il president avrebbe lasciato Roma ieri.*

COND PstPrt

'According to the latest information the president left Rome yesterday'

(12) *Il y aurait de nombreuses victimes*

COND

'There are, it is said/it seems, many victims'

Dendale and Tasmowski's commentary on (12) claims that

... the conditional simultaneously evokes: (1) attribution of the information to a third party (= evidentiality), (2) uncertainty of the information (= modality) and (3) non-commitment of the speaker regarding the information (2001: 345)

It is hard to establish which of these three meanings, if any, is primary. It is difficult to establish the primary meaning because it is context that allows us to gauge this in particular usage events and examples such as this have none; as noted above, the relative salience, or prominence, of each function varies according to context or genre. The categorisation problems stem from attempts to analyse interacting functions into discrete ones, something that is not always possible, and one simply cannot tease apart evidential meaning from other meanings with any degree of reliability. This is where the domain matrix approach can add to the understanding of the interaction between constructions that invoke concepts like evidentiality and epistemic modality.

This does leave the question of how to decide if a construction has an evidential function open. This can be most easily and reliably ascertained by hypothetically posing the question 'How do you know?' to the speaker of a proposition. If the answer codes the source in some way, clearly it must be considered 'evidential'. This is why a sentence like (13) is not an evidential and why (14 a-b) are:

(13) He will fail. Q: *How do you know?* A: *I don't know, it's just an opinion.*

(14) a. I see he failed Q: *How do you know?* A: *I have his grade in front of me*

b. He is going to fail. Q: How do you know? A: *I can perceive a situation and scanning forward in time I predict this result.*)

The above argument claims that evidentiality and epistemic modality, or ‘stance’, are separate conceptual ‘domains’. It should be noted that an evidential comment is still mediated subjectively by the speaker and the appraisal comment can always be assumed to have a source, i.e. the speaker, so a comment can never be exclusively one or the other. Rather than consider this to be a problem, the approach taken here embraces this sort of interaction between domains. This view of meanings as being co-existing domains converges with the idea that evidential comments are ubiquitous, but simply may not be salient in every instance. Where a source is not overtly specified, a source may by convention be assumed to be a default, i.e. the speaker, and therefore backgrounded. It also may be that ‘certainty’ is assumed (and therefore default) unless modified, but further consideration of this is beyond the scope of this paper.

Figure 2.3 below gives a rough view of how the evidential and stance domains interact in this way, i.e. that a given meta-comment on a proposition may be a mix of evidential comment and appraisal comment, and that one or both may be prominent. This representation is of course a rather crude one, but the approach itself significantly improves on one that merely claims that e.g. there is some ‘primary’ meaning and that other meanings are ‘back-grounded’, although it amounts to the same thing. In this representation, the small circle, the focal entity, is the proposition *It has been raining* in the usage event given under the respective diagram. The domains shown relate to the meta-comment in bold.⁶

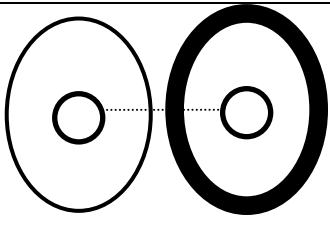
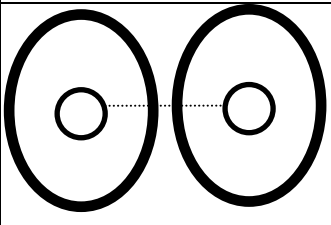
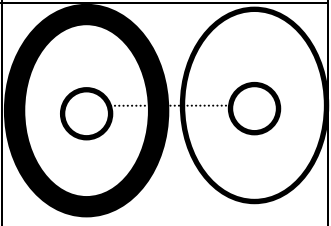
<i>Usage event utterance</i>	A I am sure it has been raining	B Apparently it has been raining	C It must have been raining
<i>Domain</i>	<i>Source Evaluation</i>	<i>Source Evaluation</i>	<i>Source Evaluation</i>
<i>Figure showing relative prominence of domains</i>			
<i>Description of above</i>	<i>Higher prominence of evaluation Source is default (the speaker)</i>	<i>Equal prominence: Evaluation coded with source (hearsay)</i>	<i>Lower prominence of evaluation Source as ‘inference’ more prominent</i>

Figure 2 Variable domain prominence

⁶ Obviously this is simplified and domains relating to time, space and umbrellas are omitted. This diagram is just presented in order to show how domains have varying prominence in usage events.

Clearly, at this interpersonal level, the actual motivation for invoking the source of one's knowledge, at least in languages where the system is optional, is variable and is context, perhaps even genre, dependant. Infantidou (2006) gives a coherent and useful account of evidentiality as a pragmatic function from a relevance theoretical perspective. There is a general social requirement for speakers to disseminate only reliable information, or at least information that can be taken as, relatively, reliable.⁷ This is motivated by adherence to Gricean principles of co-operation and relevance. As such, the motivation for evidential function can be seen a kind of social obligation. Givón (1982: 24) says on the motivation for using an evidential expression that "Propositions that are asserted with relative confidence, are open to challenge by the hearer and thus require – or admit – evidentiary justification" i.e. evidentiality can be seen as a defence strategy. Also, Nuyts (2001: 386) makes the claim that "if one does not have any kind of evidence pertaining to a state of affairs, one cannot evaluate its probability." i.e. it is part of an (inter-subjective) evaluation strategy.⁸ This clearly does not, however, justify including evidentiality under 'stance' systems.

BE *going to* and the domain matrix

In terms of the domain matrix for BE *going to*, one of the core meanings will be the motion use of lexical GO, as shown in figure 3. The domains are numbered for convenience, but it is not a claim that these are exclusively represented, this is necessarily a sketch. The numbers relate to (1) Motion towards, (2) Intended motion towards, (3) Motion to do, (4) Intended motion to do, (5) Non-motion intention, and (6) non-intention future. The most salient will be domain (1), but going somewhere does imply a continuation into the future, i.e. (2) and probably also salient will be the intention to do something on arrival, but this is unspecified in the construction in this usage event. Obviously, the core domain(s) in the construction can be added to, showing more detail as required. For instance, it consists here at least of the semantics of lexical 'go', the semantics of the present progressive and notions of volition.

⁷ The debate on evidentiality and its relationship to reliability is long and is not covered here due to lack of space. I accept that evidentiality does not linguistically code reliability values and that these are language specific inferences. Further debate can be found in Aikhenvald (2004).

⁸ Note that these motivations are driven by the needs of the hearer, and not by the speaker. Evidence of this can be seen in the highly ritualised formats required of academic writing and the credibility hierarchy of different sources of evidence in criminal law proceedings, where e.g. observation is ranked higher than conjecture. In a way, medicine also implicitly assumes graded evidential strategies in consultations and diagnosis, in that the doctor's sight and hearing is considered more reliable than the patient's own report, which is in turn more reliable than a report by e.g. an anxious parent whose child is unwell. These are left for further study elsewhere, however.

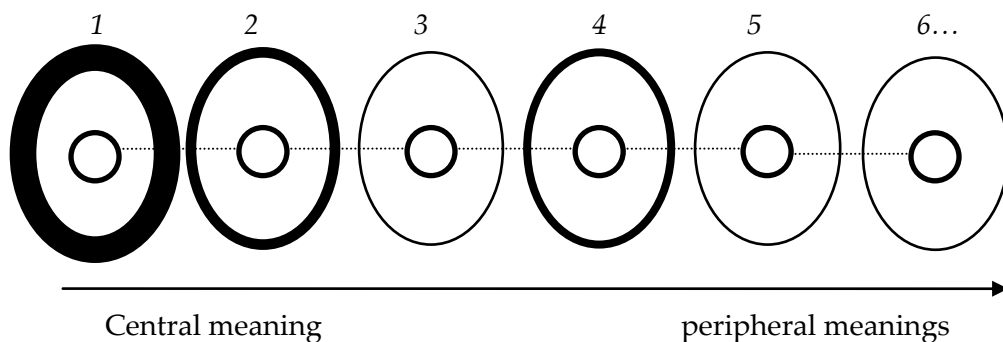


Figure 3 A domain matrix for a locative BE going to use

Figure 4 could be the representation for a purposive use, such as (15). Domain (1) is still highly prominent, and so is (2) for the same reason as above. Here, however, domain (3) is also very prominent.

(15) I am *going to* visit her. (*said as the speaker is leaving*)

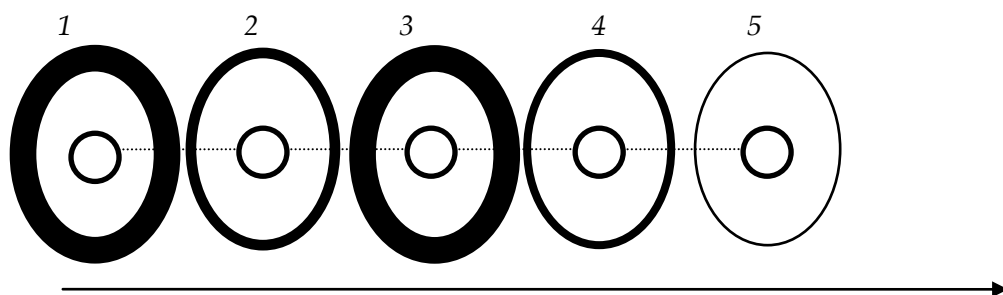


Figure 4 A domain matrix for a present purposive BE going to use

In that case, domain (1) is the most prominent as the sentence is expressing a ‘current motion towards a goal’. However, other implied domains are also activated to an extent, but are much less prominent, e.g. an intention to go, or at least to continue going, is implied (2), and there is always an implication that once the destination has been arrived at that there is something to do there (4). In contrast, figure (2) shows the matrix for the purposive *They are going to meet him tomorrow* where there are only ‘intentions to go and to do’. Here, (2) is less prominent than it would be if, for instance, a specific destination were overtly stated in the context, whereas in this case only ‘not here’ is implied by the purposive use:

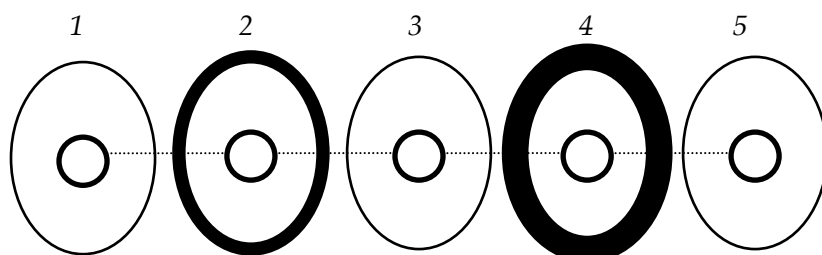


Figure 5: A domain matrix for a future purposive BE going to use

The grammaticalisation process results in a domain matrix shown as figure 3 where only the intention domain has any prominence at all and the motion aspect of the matrix has, as Langacker (1998: 81) says, been stripped away, e.g. as in *I'm going to be here at 6pm*:

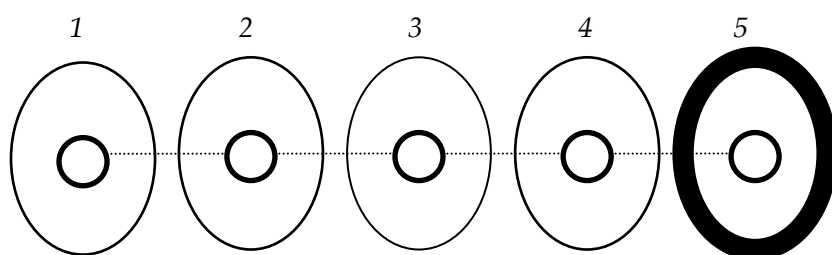


Figure 6: A domain matrix for a future intention BE *going to* use

This construction developed a non-intention use after this and in order to explain how this could happen it needs to be shown what else is immanent in the core domain matrix that can be left over once notions of ‘motion’ and then ‘intention’ have gone. For theory internal reasons, this is necessarily going to be even less concrete. It can be said that at a more abstract level, a given volitional entity ‘merely’ exists and as such this level is immanent, and therefore available as a meaning domain, when any reference is made to any entity, even humans.

The BE *going to* construction contributes only part of the meaning of the larger construction of which it is a part, i.e. here it is BE *going to* + infinitive. However, as noted above, it arguably does not actually have ‘a meaning’, but takes its full potential range of meaning (its complete domain matrix) into each usage event. Its discernable ‘meaning’ is only set when it is actually used in that context at that time and in that larger construction of which it is a part.

By way of illustration, the contribution of BE *going to* is slightly different in each example below and the reading clearly depends on the elements it combines with. Here, ‘kill’, a prototypical agentive verb, has an objective, observable effect (death). Taken out of any wider context, the likelihood of a highly prominent ‘intention’ domain fades from (16) to (18) according to subject type: (16) gets a firm agentive reading, and (18) is extremely low in agentivity. Context would determine for (17) the actual reading it gets, i.e. whether the speaker knows this is the agent’s intention, or whether the speaker has some evidence for the claim.

- (16) I am going to kill you.
- (17) He is going kill you.
- (18) This is going to kill you.

This fluidity in meaning is particularly clear in the case of 3rd person subjects, because with 3rd person reference there is always a certain amount of guesswork involved. Where such guesswork involves the future, it amounts to a ‘prediction’ and it follows that there is an immanent ‘prediction’ meaning underlying all future reference at least for 3rd person reference, including BE *going to* + infinitive. It is clearly more abstract

than an 'intention' and it is restricted to non-volitional contexts. In an actual usage event, something like (17) would be ambiguous, thus causing the 'blurring' predicted by Bybee et al (1994: 300). After the more concrete motion and intention meanings are gone, this meaning remains, and while the ambiguity would be especially frequent around 3rd person subjects the 'prediction' domain would also be available for others.

Further to this, while the relative prominence of 'intention' still fades according to subject type, in (19-21) the predictive domain of BE *going to* is more highly prominent throughout, because this time the complement verb concerns a subjective, unobservable effect (astonishment), and the verb gets a less agentive reading. There is therefore a certain amount of guesswork about the result of the action in all the cases:

- (19) I am going to astonish you.⁹
- (20) He is going to astonish you.
- (21) This is going to astonish you.

By the time there is very low prominence of the intention reading, e.g. in (16) and (19), any meaning that can be assigned to BE *going to* itself is based on the more abstract domains and in fact, it appears to simply be aligned with the meanings of its complements, i.e. *this* is not an agent so *astonish* is not agentive and BE *going to* gets a non-intentional reading. As final extra support for this view, consider (22-23). The complement contributes most to the agentivity domain, i.e. the construction with BE *killed* is more likely to get an intention reading than the one with BE *astonished* as it is itself more prototypically agentive.

- (22) You are going to be killed.
- (23) You are going to be astonished.

However, the paraphrases with *will* in (22-23) show that BE *going to* does in fact contribute something to the agentive reading as these seem to have even less intentional, at least in isolation from a wider context. Even out of any real context the difference between (22) and (24) seems whether the killing is perceived as planned or accidental, i.e. ± 'volition', and in (23) and (25) whether the speaker has evidence, i.e. ± evidential.

- (24) You will be killed.
- (25) You will be astonished.

A similar situation can be observed for (26)-(28):

- (26) I will astonish you.
- (27) He will astonish you.
- (28) This will astonish you.

⁹ This example is taken from *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens

An analysis based on the course grained distinction in Leech (2004) is not incompatible with this and might claim that the future 'result from present intentions' use has generalised to express a 'result from present causes'. In fact, however, there are examples where this distinction proves inadequate and that there is a more abstract 'prediction based on evidence'. Consider (29) below if said, for example, in March.

(29) It is going to be a hot summer.

This is clearly not a 'result from present causes' of any kind, long range weather forecasts notwithstanding. It has no present 'cause' only present 'indications' on which the proposition is asserted, i.e. it based on evidence situated in the 'immediacy' area of evidential conceptual space.

The domain matrix view, where the relative prominence of domains changes and where a 'new' prominence configuration may become conventionalised as a 'new' meaning is clearly useful for describing the sorts of polysemous constructions as BE *going to* + infinitive. As noted, it is the interplay of all components in a given context that gives the reading of the construction as a whole. The following section uses interrogatives to make distinctions at the domain level even more salient. In (30), the subject has a choice of plan: to be a boxer or to be something else, thus highlighting the 'future intentions' use, whereas asking (32) of an expectant parent highlights the 'future indications' use. This contrasts with (31) where 'he' has no choice but to be 'male'.

(30) Is he going to be a boxer?

(31) *Is he going to be a boy?

(32) Is it going to be a boy?

In (33-36), there is clearly an intention reading because a boy can choose to be ± *good*.

(33) Are you going to be a good boy?

(34) I am going to be a good boy.

(35) Is he going to be a good boy?

(36) Is he going to be good?

In contrast, in (37) the subject entity cannot be considered to be + volitional and therefore the intention domain is not activated and all that is left is 'prediction'.

(37) Is it going to be good?

In (34-36) the prediction domain inherent in all third person reference is more prominent, but because being 'good' is seen as something under the control of the subject entity, the intention domain is readily salient. Langacker (1998) makes a similar point about the subject and control. However, this is lost with a non-animate subject in (37). Further, compare (36) with (38) where the subject has no control over the future state of *happiness* and there is therefore no 'intention' reading available:

(38) Is he going to be happy?

Similarly, in (39) there is no intention reading, but this is for a slightly different reason. While in (35) one can intend to be *good* but not to be a *boy*, in (39) one can intend to be a *boxer*, but cannot intend to be *good*, only hope to be so. But the schematic construction is, on the face of it, identical.

- (39) a. Is he going to be a good boxer?
b. Is he going to be good?

In (39) being a boxer is presupposed as a planned event, thus 'using up' the intention domain, and *good* can then be interpreted as requesting a judgment of some sort. This is based on personal knowledge or rather it is based on the evidence according to current indications.

The question now is whether the historical development of this use supports the argument made above about immediacy and current indications being immanent in BE *going to*. Elsewhere (Disney 2009) I claim that a use synonymous with 'about to' developed almost immediately from the 'intention' use after it in turn developed from the purposive. This synonymy is described by Poole (1646: 26) who, being a language user at that time, was in a good position to make such an observation e.g. (40).

- (40) [...] she fell suddenly sick and died. As she was *going to* breath her last, she saw me grieve as much as if I had been her own.

Initially, the more abstract non-movement/non-intentional BE *going to* use allowed non-volitional uses only in the very limited environment of 'immediacy'. The problem is that the available data do not have any examples earlier than this because we only have written data which are very unlikely to include 'immediate' events. Clearly, constructions that are restricted to an 'immediate' time frame are not going to appear in such data. Therefore a certain amount of guesswork is inevitable. Further, the initial frequency of the non-volitional use would most likely be lower in the sort of everyday conversation where these changes occur, and in fact *about to* itself is almost exclusively intentional in a corpus of Shakespeare's complete works. An examination of uses in the EEBO¹⁰ corpus at the turn of the 17th to 18th Century reveals that of 300 examples only 26 are purposive, only 11 are non-intentional and only two of these are non-immediate (e.g. 41). That compares to BNC rates that are almost evenly divided, according to Berglund (2000) and my own figures, which allowed much less unresolved ambiguity.

- (41) That is, she was *going to* die unmarried, and without being dispos'd of according to the Privilege of her Condition. (c.1700 EEBO a33918)

That an immediacy use developed earlier than a distal future is understandable given that the core domain of BE *going to* is rooted in a current activity.

¹⁰ Early English Books Online

BE *going to* vs. *will*

There are of course many ways in which English users can refer to the future, including present simple aspect, subjunctives etc. There is a particularly interesting distinction between BE *going to* and *will*, that this section briefly notes. Detailed discussion on this can be found elsewhere, e.g. Leech (2004), Quirk et al (1985) Haegeman (1989), and space prohibits much discussion here. I do, however, wish to note some issues that have arisen in the literature and which can be understood better from a domain matrix perspective. That is, instead of attempting to attribute 'a meaning' to 'a construction' here, what these constructions are used to express can be thought of as intersecting continua consisting of variable domain prominences. The balance between the axes results in discernable, if very subtle, differences in their usage patterns and in fact the predictive uses described above of BE *going to* + infinitive exhibit overlap with predictive uses of *will*, and there is also some overlap with 'intention' uses too. The overlap is quite difficult to pinpoint, and usually amounts to the speakers' desire to highlight one particular facet over another. This is in line with the domain matrix view where, according to Langacker (2008: 49) domains "can be suppressed or overridden". In brief, BE *going to* has an intention use for plans made in the past whereas *will* has an intention use for plans made in real time, or in a time frame one can label as 'immediate' (42)-(43).¹¹ Similar to early 'predictive' uses of BE *going to*, this use of *will* is extremely hard to find in historical data because of its association with 'immediacy' (see Disney forthcoming).

(42) I am going to do it tomorrow. (i.e. *pre-planned*)

(43) I will do it tomorrow. (i.e. *decided as one is speaking*)

However, plans made in the past can be thought of as relatively certain, especially in an environment where scheduling is important, e.g. television newsrooms, where (44) may be heard. For them, 'certainty' is worth highlighting in this context so that need has overridden the expression of an 'intention'.

(44) We will bring you live coverage of that event as it happens. (BBC24 news 14/09/09 c. 13.20)

In contrast, *will* has a prediction use for future events that rely on knowledge gained previously (45), perhaps 'general knowledge', whereas BE *going to* has a prediction use for events based on knowledge gained in real time (46), or from an 'immediate' observable situation.

(45) He will crash.

(46) He's going to crash.

¹¹ Of course, domain prominence can be shifted by intonation and stress, so that if *will* in (45) carries the nuclear tone, the meaning then includes the notion of a previously decided plan.

Again there is an overlap between them when arguably either is equally possible and the choice is determined by other factors. This can also be used to explain weather forecasters' patterns when making predictions. Often, BE *going to* is the first future reference used,¹² and fairly often the final one. Mostly however, they use *will*.¹³ Clearly, they have evidence for the predictions they are making, such as meteorological data and previously observed patterns, but there are three points that make *will* more appropriate to this genre. Firstly, here again *will* highlights 'certainty', which is more important to the viewer than the notion of evidence. Secondly, and perhaps related to the first point, the tendency for BE *going to* to be used at the start and, less often, at the end, can be seen as an evidential 'frame' for the whole forecast. Using a such a frame may reduce the need for further evidential reference. In fact, this sort of single instance framing has been observed in Wintu narratives (Schlichter 1986: 49) which otherwise has an obligatory evidential system. Indeed, she reports (ibid.: 47) that one morpheme is used "for predicting future events which are somehow felt as being imminent", just like English BE *going to* described above. It remains to be seen if, in the absence of BE *going to* being used as the evidential frame, whether some other deictic evidential device, such as *As we can see*, is consistently used.¹⁴ The range of basic uses, where the other aspects, like certainty, are not highlighted by the speaker is shown as operating on two axes in table 1.¹⁵

	immediate	past
More volition	I will do it tomorrow (<i>plan decided at the current moment of speaking</i>)	I am going to do it tomorrow. (<i>plan based on previous decision</i>)
Less volition	He's going to crash. (<i>prediction based on knowledge of current situation</i>)	He'll crash! (<i>prediction based on previous knowledge</i>)

Table 1 The continua distinguishing BE *going to* and *will*

In general, the uses of *will* and BE *going to* overlap to a certain extent and there are examples where both are possible, but this is to be expected, as BE *going to* in general seems to be "taking over" even more functions of *will*.

¹² This is regrettably based on anecdotal evidence and awaits a full study. However, a cursory look through the ICE-GB corpus does reveal an interesting pattern.

¹³ Or rather they use very few verbs at all, but that is also left for another study.

¹⁴ The third point is rather more conjecture than fact. Weather bulletins tend to be spoken rather quickly and have a limited time slot. Obviously, *is going to X* is longer and harder to say than *will X*, at least in its long form, and may be the more prescribed pronunciation for informative broadcasts, with an avoidance of *gonna*. Where *gonna* is not discouraged, the proposal here would suggest that it would occur with a high frequency.

¹⁵ This is discussed in more detail in Disney (forthcoming)

It is, of course, not as simple as table 1 suggests, but this does seem to represent the distinctions at a maximally general point. However, these contrasting constructions do also have related uses that at first glance appear to contradict the claims made in table 1. In (47), there is a situation where there is current evidence for the proposition, i.e. the door bell rings, yet BE *going to* would seem to be unacceptable.

(47) That will be the postman. (*on hearing the door bell ring*)

One explanation may be that this is because the prediction of who exactly is at the door is not based on knowledge gained in the current situation, but on knowledge the speaker already possesses, perhaps the delivery is regular or the postman has a distinctive way of ringing the bell.

In (48), on the other hand, the fact about hitting one's thumb with a hammer and knowledge of the pain that causes may count as 'previously held knowledge', but BE *going to* is used and *will* would be unusual here.

(48) That is going to hurt. (*on seeing someone hit their thumb with a hammer*)

To explain this, one may say that the fact that the event is non-volitional and occurring immediately in front of the speaker triggers the use of the construction typically associated with this type of situation, i.e. the evidential domain expressed by BE *going to* is triggered. The fact of the previously held knowledge is necessarily less prominent and *will* is not used. Compare the situation in (49), where BE *going to* would be unacceptable. Here, the event is yet to occur, and therefore not 'immediate', so 'previous knowledge' is more important to foreground as the evidence for the claim in the proposition.

(49) That will hurt. (*on seeing someone about to deliberately hit their hand with a hammer*)

In fact, the fact of the evidence is backgrounded in favour of the 'certainty' part of the meaning of *will*. It is precisely this area that there is overlap between BE *going to* and *will* for future reference and precisely why there is so much confusion and debate about the distinction between evidentiality and epistemic modality, let alone between *will* and BE *going to*.

Conclusion

I have shown how with BE *going to*, the relative agentivity of the complement verbs and the subject type all contribute variable domain matrices to form the domain matrix of particular instances of constructions that use BE *going to* + infinitive. The discussion shows how domain prominence can be ambiguous, e.g. in (4-7), and that there is ambiguity between actions and states (7-10). I have also demonstrated how stative BE can appear in constructions with BE *going to* with agentive / intentional readings (15a)

as well as non-intention ones (17a). Finally, I show a difference based on whether an actor can be thought of as having control over a state e.g. the differences shown between (15b) and (17b). Bearing in mind that the non-intention and prediction domains are already inherent in BE *going to*, I would claim that the ambiguity such examples as these represent allowed the intention reading to be stripped away, leaving the inherent 'result of a cause' or 'prediction' domain as the most prominent. These then became conventionalised over time to become the PDE 'prediction use'. This conventionalisation process is well understood and in actual usage events it only needs successive, regular, slight mismatches between the domain prominence of what is said and what is inferred to allow another stage of conventionalised meaning to begin to develop. With BE *going to*, as with all grammaticalised constructions, this stage is based on more abstract domains with increased subjectivity. The 'new meaning' will therefore also be more abstract and have increased subjectivity. In actual usage events, where there is pressure to be as clear as possible, it would be unsurprising to find that speakers would find ways to reduce the ambiguity and mark for the 'new' meaning in some way. Such strategies would of course be more necessary in the early stages, before the use of that domain were more fully conventionalised through frequent employment.

In terms of the development of the predictive sense of BE *going to*, I show elsewhere (Disney 2009, forthcoming) and in line with the research mentioned above (e.g. Langacker 1998) that after the ambiguous purposive stage, the non-movement intention meaning implicit in this conventionalised the 'intention' meaning. Overtime, the 'immediacy' meaning was also stripped away, allowing the construction to be used, as with the intentions, for more distal events. As the possibility to refer to the less immediate future grows, then the frequency will rise, encouraging perhaps further changes. Also, that the non-intentional use has been slower to expand in use than its sister is also understandable, given that the core domain is strongly agentive. There is no reason, however, that 'It is going down the hill' could not have existed in reference to e.g. a rock rolling, and hence a non-volitional motion is, of course, immanent in the core construction. I show elsewhere (Disney 2009, forthcoming) how and when this seems to have occurred. The final point raised above relates to how BE *going to* contrasts with *will* with respect to future reference. A model was given that showed how the distinction may operate on dual dimensions, allowing for overlap in the system. Overlap is non-problematic, because for BE *going to* to have taken over any uses from *will* actually requires it and in fact, overlap is essential to language change.

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The acquisition of English agreement/tense morphology and copula *be* by L1-Chinese-speaking learners

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Abstract

This paper investigates how L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English acquire three English morphemes – the third person singular *-s*, the regular past tense *-ed*, and the copula *be*. Chinese, unlike English, has no subject-verb agreement and tense marking at all. Nevertheless, the Chinese verb *shi* 'be' functions similarly to the English copula *be*. Hypotheses were made in accordance with Prévost & White (2000) Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH), predicting that participants would (i) sometimes produce non-finite forms to replace finite forms in verbal inflections (i.e., the third person singular *-s* and the regular past tense *-ed*), and (ii) perform better in copula *be* than in verbal inflections. The predictions were confirmed by the collected production data, suggesting that the omission of verbal inflections is due to problems with the realization of surface morphology, and the forms of copula *be* are acquired before the inflectional morphology on *in situ* thematic verbs.

Introduction

The issue of first language (L1) transfer to the second language (L2) has been broadly investigated in second language research. Chan (2004) indicates that language transfer – the influence from learners' L1 or prior linguistic knowledge – can be positive or negative based on the outcome of their L2 learning.

Many studies have shown that L2 learners tend to display optionality on inflectional morphology when this property is obligatory in the L2, but absent in the L1 (Dulay & Burt, 1974). Vainikka & Young-Scholten (1996: 13) state that 'optionality is the effect of competing grammars within the same individual: the grammar of an earlier stage competes with the grammar of a later stage, and signs of both stages can be observed in the data.' Many researchers have paid great efforts to examine whether this optional use of tense and agreement morphology is because of an impairment of the functional categories in the individual's L2 grammars, or whether, in fact, the features exist in their L2 grammars and the optional use of inflectional morphology is because of other reasons (Haznedar & Schwartz, 1997; Prévost & White, 2000). A number of researchers contend that the optional use of inflectional morphology by L2 learners is not due to a lack of functional categories related to tense and agreement in their L2 grammars, but instead claim that the phenomenon is due to the fact that L2 learners have difficulties in the realization of inflectional morphology in the L2 (Lardiere, 1998a, 1998b; Prévost & White, 2000).

The present study investigates the acquisition of three English morphemes – the third person singular *-s*, the regular past tense *-ed*, and the copula *be* – by L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English. It is known that Chinese has no tense and agreement marking at all (Li, 1990; Lardiere, 1998a, 1998b, 2003), whereas English does. This means that in Chinese no morphological variation of a verb is required under either different tense or different agreement contexts. Consider the examples below.

- (1) a. 3rd person singular *-s*
 John kan dianshi
 John watch TV
 'John watches TV.'
- b. Regular past tense *-ed*
 John kan dianshi
 John watch TV
 'John watched TV.'

As seen in (1), no morphological inflection of the verb *kan* 'watch' is needed with respect to the subject-verb agreement. Also, no morphological inflection of the verb *kan* 'watch' is required when tense is different. By contrast, its equivalence in English requires morphological inflections on the verb *watch* with respect to different tense and subject-verb agreement. Therefore, if L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English show optionality in the acquisition of the third person singular *-s* and the regular past tense *-ed*, they may sometimes exhibit tense and agreement marking and sometimes ignore them in their L2 production.

For copula *be*, the Chinese verb *shi* 'be' functions in a similar way to the copula *be* in English (Chan, 2004; Lee & Huang, 2004), as shown in (2) below.

- (2) ta shi wode hao pengyou
he is my good friend
'He is my good friend.'

In terms of what we have seen above, the research questions of the present study addressed are as follows:

- (i) How will the L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English perform the morphological inflections – the third person singular *-s* and the regular past tense *-ed* – when they are obligatory in English? Will they show difficulty in the realization of inflectional morphology with respect to the two morphemes?
- (ii) How will the L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English perform copula *be* in English? Will they transfer their L1 knowledge of the verb *shi* into the acquisition of the English copula *be*?

Previous research

Agreement

Lardiere (1998b) proposes that learners of a specific language (in L1 as well as L2 acquisition) have to acquire subject-verb agreement, for determining whether the agreement feature in that language is strong or weak. Three different hypotheses have been proposed with respect to this issue.

The first hypothesis assumes that the [\pm strong] feature determining verb-raising is associated with the morphological paradigm of verbs (Eubank, 1993/4; Eubank et al, 1997). Advocators of this view argue that learners have not acquired the L2 verbal agreement paradigm simply because they do not know whether the agreement feature of this language is strong or weak, i.e., they have an unspecified value for feature strength. Thus, learners are expected to display verb-raising optionally until they have acquired the strength feature of the language, enabling them to set the value of the agreement feature to [+] or [-]. In this sense, if L2 learners of English have not acquired the [-strong] setting of the agreement paradigm in English, i.e., affix *-s* is only available on 3rd person singular present-tense verbs, they will allow sentences with both raised and un-raised verbs even though raising is allowed in neither the L1 nor the L2. Only when L2 learners have acquired the third person singular *-s* affixation, the [-strong] agreement feature would prohibit the raising of thematic verbs.

The second hypothesis predicts that knowledge of the correlation between the strength feature and the morphological agreement paradigm is impaired in L2 learners (Beck, 1997). That is, even if the verbal morphology is finally acquired, optionality of

verb-raising is permanent in L2 learners' interlanguage grammar.

The third hypothesis proposes that knowledge of syntactic verb-raising is constrained by UG, but the development of verbal agreement affixation is independent (Gavruseva & Lardiere, 1996; Haznedar & Schwartz, 1997; Lardiere, 1998a, 1998b). In some cases (as in L1 acquisition), learning of the morphological paradigm related to subject-verb agreement may take longer to acquire. Schwartz & Sprouse (1996) and Lardiere & Schwartz (1997) indicate that knowledge of feature values and functional categories can be transferred from learners' L1. They also assert that L2 learners' knowledge of functional categories and features exceeds their production of verbal morphology. For example, Lardiere (1998b) interviewed an adult native speaker of Chinese, Patty, who had lived in the US for 18 years and whose L2 English grammar had reached its final state. The data came from three audio recordings of Patty who spent nearly nine years between the first and the third recordings in a total English immersion environment. Recall that Chinese has no subject-verb agreement marking at all. The results of Patty showed that the percentage of correct use in the agreement marking of the third person singular *-s* on thematic verbs was less than 5 %. Nevertheless, Patty showed a variety of syntactic phenomena on the surrounding verbs, such as 100 % of correct use of nominative case assignment and acknowledgement of a lack of verb-raising in English. This suggests that Patty had knowledge of functional categories (at an abstract level), but had problems in morphological mapping.

Tense

Hawkins (2000) proposes that the feature [\pm past] is not an intrinsic feature of Tense, since some languages have it and some do not, but the feature can be parameterised. Li (1990) indicates that Chinese, unlike English, has no [\pm past] feature in its morphology. Therefore, one may ask what it takes for L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English to acquire past tense in English. Hawkins (2000) explains that the acquisition can be obtained via parameter-(re)setting. Hawkins (2000) also asserts that if there is no [\pm past] feature in the L1, and the parameter value has not been reset in the L2, we should not expect to find verbal inflection for past tense in the L2. It suggests that a high rate of omission of past tense marking is expected for those learners whose L1 lacks the [\pm past] feature and the parameter has not been reset in the L2 acquisition.

In considering some of the factors that have been proposed to account for variability in past tense marking, Lardiere (2003) looked at what goes into the second language acquisition of past tense marking in English. To address a perspective of the feature [\pm past], Lardiere (2003) used the data from Patty (see Lardiere 1998a) to examine her inquiry. The results of Patty showed that there was a significant correlation between finiteness and pronominal case-marking. It means that Patty had native-like knowledge in finite and non-finite distinction in English; however, Patty had non-native-like morphological correlations of finiteness, especially lexical or thematic verbal affixation, in her L2 grammar. The overall percentage of past tense marking in Patty's three recordings was low, less than 35 % of correct use in the obligatory contexts. In spite of this, the result still suggests that Patty had knowledge of

the grammatical past tense marking. Nevertheless, Patty had problems with the realization of surface inflections, and thus, she sometimes had past tense morphology and sometimes omitted it. This finding supports Hawkins's claim that [+past] feature is not intrinsic, but can be parameterised.

Copula *be*

Lee & Huang (2004) point out that in Standard Written Chinese the copula verb *shi* is similar to the copula *be* in English. Chan (2004) also indicates that when the Chinese verb *shi* is used as a linking verb between the subject and its complement, it functions similarly to the English copula *be*, as shown in (2) above. However, in contrast to the English copula *be*, the Chinese verb *shi* cannot coexist with auxiliary verbs, such as *should*, *will*, etc., as shown in (3) below.

- (3) a. ? ta jinggai shi han lei
He should be very tired
'He should be very tired.'
b. *ta jiang shi chidao
he will be late
'He will be late.'

Lee & Huang (2004) point out some differences between the Chinese verb *shi* and the English copula *be*. There are two main forms of the English verb *be*: (i) a copula form, and (ii) an auxiliary form. A copula form is a relational process; that is, a relation has been set up between the subject and its complement. The complement can be a noun phrase, an adjective phrase, or a prepositional phrase, as shown in (4) below cited from Lee & Huang (2004: 213).

- (4) a. be + noun phrase
John is *the boss*.
b. be + adjective phrase
The table is *big*.
c. be + prepositional phrase
The exam is *on Sunday*.

As to an auxiliary form, the verb *be* plays a role in the formation of passive voice, and of different tense and aspect, as shown in (5) below.

- (5) a. passive voice
John was hit.
b. tense
Mary was here yesterday.
c. aspect
Peter is getting better.

For the Chinese verb *shi*, Lee & Huang (2004) contend that there are two important ways that the Chinese verb *shi* differs from the English verb *be*. First the Chinese verb *shi* can only be used as a copula and a focus marker in an emphatic sentence, and cannot co-occur with other voice or tense and aspect markers. This means that the Chinese verb *shi* is parallel to the English verb *be* in copula form but not auxiliary form. Consider the examples in (6) below.

- (6) a. passive voice
 ? ta shi bei laoshi ma
 he is be teacher blame
 ‘He was blamed by the teacher.’
- b. aspect
 *ta shi yijin bei gaozi
 he is have be tell
 ‘He has been told.’

Second, as a copula, the Chinese verb *shi* can only link a noun phrase to indicate someone’s profession or an identity, as shown in (7) below cited from Lee & Huang (2004: 213).

- (7) a. profession
 wo shi yisheng
 I be doctor
 ‘I am a doctor.’
- b. identity
 zhe shi wode mama
 this is my mother
 ‘This is my mother.’

This suggests that the Chinese verb *shi* cannot be used to link predicative adjectives or prepositional phrases that English copula *be* can. Consider the examples in (8) below cited from Lee & Huang (2004: 214).

- (8) a. adjective
 ?zhe zhang zuozi shi da
 this CLASS table be big
 ‘This table is big.’
- b. preposition
 *ta shi zai fangjian
 he is in room
 ‘He is in the room.’

From the examples above, it appears that the Chinese verb *shi* is similar to the copula form of English verb *be*, especially the structure of *be + noun phrase*. Indeed, in terms of the findings in Lee & Huang (2004) which investigated the acquisition of the English verb *be* by L1-Chinese-speaking learners, the results showed that participants

performed best in *be* + *noun phrase* structure. Furthermore, the overall results revealed that the L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English performed well in copula *be*, with correct use 80 % of the time, whereas there was only 10 % correct use in the auxiliary *be*. Regardless of the auxiliary form of English verb *be*, in the present study, only the copula form of the verb *be* is examined.

The study

The aim of the present study is to investigate how L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English acquire the three English morphemes – the third person singular *-s*, the regular past tense *-ed*, and the copula *be* – in their L2 learning. In order to examine the acquisition of the three English morphemes, the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH) (Haznedar & Schwartz, 1997; Prévost & White, 2000) is adopted. The Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis proposes that L2 learners have knowledge of functional categories and features in tense and agreement, but have problems in the realization of surface morphology. This suggests that the omission of verbal inflections is because of problems with the realization of surface morphology, but not due to the impairment of the features.

Prévost & White (2000) propose that L2 learners have acquired the features of terminal nodes in syntax (from their L1, UG, or the L2 input), but have not completely acquired the specified features of the related lexical items. Therefore, Prévost & White (2000) contend that non-finite forms are under-specified in L2 learners' grammar, whereas finite forms are specified. It appears that finite forms will occur only in finite positions; however, non-finite forms will occur sometimes in non-finite positions and sometimes in finite positions. As a consequence, L2 learners sometimes use non-finite forms to replace finite forms, resulting in displaying the verbal inflections optionally. This explains why L2 learners sometimes omit the verbal inflections and sometimes display them. Moreover, Ionin & Wexler (2002) assert that L2 learners associate morphological agreement with the verb-raising on *be* forms initially, so that L2 learners acquire the forms of *be* before the inflectional morphology of *in situ* thematic verbs.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses for the present study are illustrated as follows:

- Hypothesis 1: Assuming the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis, the L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English will show optionality in the acquisition of morphological inflections: they will sometimes produce non-finite forms to replace finite forms in the 3rd person singular *-s* and the regular past tense *-ed*.
- Hypothesis 2: Assuming the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis, the L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English will show the acquisition of English copula *be*. That is, they will perform better in copula

be than in 3rd person singular *-s* and regular past tense *-ed*. In other words, they will acquire the forms of *be* before the inflectional morphology of *in situ* thematic verbs.

Participants

20 L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English participated in the study. They were all school students in Taiwan, aged from 11 to 14. None of them went to a special ESL class or had a private English tutor. At the time of the test, participants had learned English for 4 years to at most 7 years, and none of them had ever lived in an English-speaking country.

Procedure

Odlin (2003) states that there are many different ways of data collection to examine the evidence of cross-linguistic influence, and speech samples provide useful data in examining the evidence of transfer. Therefore, in the present study, spontaneous production data were collected to examine the hypotheses. The data collection consisted of two parts: (i) 15 to 20 minutes interview, and (ii) a story telling task. Participants were tested individually at their homes or at schools. Before the test, instructions of the task were explained to each participant by the investigator and a short social talk was given to make participants feel comfortable but not nervous. Meanwhile, participants were encouraged to speak out as much as they could and were told not to worry about the grammars while speaking English during the task. Furthermore, translation was provided adequately when it was needed.

For the interview, each participant had a conversation with the investigator in English. Questions in the interview consisted of things in daily life, such as schools, friends, and places. After the interview, there was a 5-minute break before the story telling task. During the break, participants were asked whether or not they had heard the story - *The North Wind and The Sun*. If a participant had not heard of the story before, he or she was told the story by the investigator. To begin the story telling task, participants were asked to describe as much as they could in English from the pictures presented in the storybook. Time for the story telling task was about 10 minutes. Both interview and the story telling task were tape-recorded and transcribed later.

Results

Data of two participants were excluded from the analyses here. The two participants did not know the story *The North Wind and The Sun* before the test and were told about the story by the investigator, resulting in a different procedure from other participants. Therefore, only data of 18 participants were examined.

For the analyses, only the use of the three English morphemes – the 3rd person singular *-s*, the regular past tense *-ed*, and the copula *be* – in obligatory contexts was

examined. This is to say, the categories of irregular 3rd person singular forms, such as *has*, and irregular past tense verbs, such as *went*, were not computed in the results. Moreover, each morpheme token was coded in terms of three types of performance, namely, correct use, omission, and inappropriate use.

Table 1 below presents the raw numbers and percentages of the three types of performance in 3rd person singular *-s* and regular past tense *-ed*.

Performance	3 rd person <i>-s</i>	Past tense <i>-ed</i>	Verbal inflections (<i>-s</i> + <i>-ed</i>)
Correct use	29/176 (17%)	2/37 (5%)	31/213 (15%)
Omission	138/176 (78%)	35/37 (95%)	173/213 (81%)
Inappropriate use	9/176 (5%)	0/37 (0%)	9/213 (4%)

Table 1 Raw Numbers and Percentages of Performances in 3rd Person Singular *-s* and Regular Past Tense *-ed* (n=18)

In 3rd person singular *-s*, Table 1 showed that there was 17% of correct use, while 78% of omission. For regular past tense *-ed*, Table 1 revealed that there was only 5% of correct use, but 95% of omission. Accordingly, we may conclude that participants frequently omitted the English verbal inflections in 3rd person singular *-s* and regular past tense *-ed* in their L2 learning. Furthermore, there was 15% of correct use with regard to the verbal inflections (i.e., *-s* and *-ed*). This suggests that participants had knowledge of features in English tense and agreement to a certain level.

Turn now to the results of copula *be*. Table 2 below presents the raw numbers and percentages of the three types of performance in copula *be*.

Performance	Be + adj	Be + preposition	Be + noun	Overall use of copula <i>be</i>
Correct use	208/252 (82%)	9/12 (75%)	67/75 (88%)	284/339 (84%)
Omission	42/252 (17%)	3/12 (25%)	8/75 (12%)	53/339 (15%)
Inappropriate use	2/252 (1%)	0/12 (0%)	0/75 (0%)	2/339 (1%)

Table 2 Raw Numbers and Percentages of Performances in Copula *be* (n=18)

From Table 2, it is clear that the percentages of correct use were much higher than the percentages of omission in the three types of copula *be* structure. In *Be + adj*, there was 82% of correct use, while 17% of omission; in *Be + preposition*, there was 75% of correct use, while 25% of omission; in *Be + noun*, there was 88% of correct use, while 0% of omission. With regard to overall use of copula *be*, Table 2 revealed that there was 84% of correct use, while 15% of omission. A paired samples *t*-test was run for comparing the percentage of correct use and the percentage of omission. The result showed that there was a significant difference between correct use and omission ($p < .05$). It suggests that participants might have acquired the English copula *be* in their L2 learning.

Discussion

Odlin (2003) indicates that similarities between the previous acquired language(s) and the target language help learners in learning the target language; whereas, differences impede the acquisition. Moreover, Jarvis & Odlin (2000) state that cross-linguistic influence could involve either positive or negative transfer, and to have highly accurate morphological predictions will depend on how positive and negative transfer involved in the comprehension and production. In terms of the findings in the present study, the results are discussed based on three factors: (i) negative transfer, (ii) positive transfer, and (iii) other factors in second language acquisition.

Negative transfer

As demonstrated above, Chinese has no subject-verb agreement and tense marking at all, whereas English does. Hypothesis 1 predicts that the L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English will have L1 interference in the acquisition of English 3rd person singular *-s* and regular past tense *-ed* and show optionality in morphological inflections. The results shown in Table 1 above revealed that there was 15% of correct use in verbal inflections (*-s* + *-ed*), and 81% of omission. A paired samples *t*-test was run for comparing the two performances and the result showed that the difference between correct use and omission was significant ($p < .05$). Nevertheless, it is undeniable that participants had knowledge of features in English tense and agreement to a certain level. We may thus claim that participants had knowledge of the features, but had difficulties in the realization of surface inflections. As a result, they sometimes produced non-finite forms to replace finite forms in the 3rd person singular *-s* and the regular past tense *-ed*.

Recall the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis specified above, Prévost & White (2000) propose that L2 learners are (sometimes) unconscious that it is incorrect to use non-finite form in a finite position, because they have problems with the realization of using verbal inflections in their L2 grammar. Clearly, the finding of the present study is compatible with the hypothesis, and thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported by the data.

To explain the results, it can be ascribed to the L1 interference. Odlin (1989) indicates that transfer is a phenomenon associated with language mixing in second language acquisition. There are two factors in language mixing: (i) the influence of learners' L1, and (ii) the influence of the two co-existing language knowledge. In the present study, participants might mix the two languages and have interference of their L1 knowledge with regard to tense and agreement features in their L2 acquisition. Therefore, the high omission of verbal inflections in English 3rd person singular *-s* and regular past tense *-ed* might be due to the negative transfer from their L1.

Positive transfer

As indicated in section 2.3, in Standard Written Chinese the copula verb *shi* is similar to

the copula *be* in English, especially in *be + noun phrase* structure. Hypothesis 2 predicts that the L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English will show the acquisition of English copula *be*, and perform better in copula *be* than in 3rd person singular *-s* and regular past tense *-ed*. The results in Table 2 above showed that there was 84% of correct use in copula *be*, while 15% of omission. A paired samples *t*-test was run for comparing the two performances and the result revealed that the difference between correct use and omission was significant ($p < .05$). It suggests that participants might have acquired copula *be* in English.

Jarvis (1998, 2000) proposes a feature of transfer called 'intra-group homogeneity' which indicates that language learners have the internal consistencies in their native language and interlanguage. Furthermore, Andersen (1983) proposes 'Transfer to Somewhere Principle' which claims that language learners make inter-language identifications. Identifications are something similar between the native language and the target language. In the present study, participants might consider English copula *be* as somewhere for transfer from their L1. That is, participants might make an inter-lingual identification between the category in their L1 and the category overlap in the L2. As a consequence, similarity may explain why participants performed better in English copula *be* and had acquired this English morpheme.

Ringbom (1992) indicates that learners take advantage of similarities between the language(s) that have been acquired previously and the target language while learning. Chan (2004) also points out that the more similarities the L1 and the target language have, the more possibility the L1 assists the language learning. Therefore, we may assume that the similarity between the Chinese verb *shi* and the English copula *be* provides an advantage for participants in learning the English copula *be*. The results in Table 2 above showed that participants performed well on copular *be*, especially in the form *be + noun*, with 88% of correct use. It suggests that participants took advantage of the similarity and had positive transfer from their L1 in the acquisition of English copula *be*.

Comparing the results in Table 1 with the results in Table 2 revealed that participants performed much better in copula *be* than in verbal inflections (i.e., the 3rd person singular *-s* and the regular past tense *-ed*). There was 84% of correct use in copula *be*, while only 15% of correct use in verbal inflections. A paired samples *t*-test was run to compare the two data sets and showed that the difference was significant ($p < .05$). In light of this, we may claim that participants acquired the forms of *be* before the inflectional morphology of *in situ* thematic verbs (i.e., the morphemes of 3rd person singular *-s* and regular past tense *-ed*). Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 is upheld by the data.

Other factors

Besides negative and positive transfer, other factors in second language acquisition are also considered to cause the results of the study. The factors, including individual factors and effect of phonetics, will be discussed in the following sections.

Individual factors

Kellerman (1977, 1978) states the importance of subjectivity in a judgment of cross-linguistic influence. Subjectivity is associated with language learners' background, such as age, literacy, social class, and motivation. Odlin (2003) also points out that much of so-called cross-linguistic influence relies on the individual judgments of language learners. It suggests that individual factors play a role in the results of an empirical study.

In the present study, the results shown in Table 1 above revealed that participants performed better in 3rd person singular *-s* than in regular past tense *-ed*, with 17% of correct use and 78% of omission for the former, while 5% of correct use and 95% of omission for the latter. Looking at the data at hand showed that participants 8, 9, 13 and 14 performed better than the rest of participants in 3rd person singular *-s*, with 27% of correct use for participants 8 and 9, 56% of correct use for participant 13, and 23% of correct use for participant 14. The performance of participants 13 and 14 may be ascribed to their English proficiency. Participants 13 and 14 had learned English for 6 and 7 years respectively at the time of the test, which was higher than the average 4.8 years of learning English in the present study. Therefore, they were assumed to be more proficient than the other participants. For Participants 8 and 9, they had learned English for 4 years; thus, their performance was less likely to be due to proficiency, but due to individual judgments.

Effect of phonetics

The results shown in Table 1 above revealed that participants highly omitted the verbal inflections in English 3rd person singular *-s* and regular past tense *-ed*. Also, the omission of the regular past tense *-ed* was higher than the 3rd person singular *-s*, with 95% of omission in the former, and 78% of omission in the latter. One explanation for this result may be due to the effect of phonetics (since production data was used in the present study).

Fromkin & Rodman (1998) propose that the morpheme *-s* has three different phonetic forms, namely, [s], [z], and [əz]. Meanwhile, the morpheme of the regular past tense *-ed* also has three different phonetic forms, namely, [t], [d], and [əd]. Roca & Johnson (1999) state that when [s] or [z] is pronounced, the blade or the tip of the tongue is placed close to the right out of which the top teeth grow. If the air is blown through the narrow rift between the blade of the tongue and the upper tooth ridge, a hissing sound is produced, which is [s]. If a vocal fold vibration is added in the same manner of the articulation of [s], a voiced sound [z] is made. Moreover, if the blade of the tongue is placed roughly in the same position as [s], interrupt the airflow by constricting the contact of tongue and teeth, the sound [t] is produced. If a vocal fold vibration is added in the same manner of articulation of [t], a voiced sound [d] is made. In this regard, the place of articulation of the consonants [s], [z], [t], and [d] is the same, classified as alveolar. However, the manners of articulation are different. The consonants [s] and [z] are defined as fricative, strident, and sibilant; while, [t] and [d] are defined as oral stop and obstruent. Fromkin & Rodman (1998) propose that all

sounds except stops and affricates are continuants, which are produced with continuous airflow through the mouth. As a result, [s] and [z] are continuants, while [t] and [d] are non-continuants. We may thus assume that [s] and [z] sounds of the final affix in the contexts are more likely to be kept in the production than [t] and [d] sounds.

Specifically, Bayley (1991, 1996) and Lardiere (1998a, 1998b) had the same findings as the present study. Bayley (1991, 1996) investigates the deletion of final [t] and [d] in native Chinese-speaking learners of English. Bayley (1991, 1996) discovered that the L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English tended to omit the final [t] and [d] sounds in the regular past tense *-ed* marking. Bayley concludes that the salience of a verb (regular and irregular verbs) and the effect of the phonological environment (the consonant obstruent, such as [t] and [d], is deleted more often than the others) played a key role in the deletion of the final consonant [t] and [d] by the native Chinese-speaking learners of English. In Lardiere (1998a, 1998b), the native speaker of Chinese, Patty, had higher omission in regular past tense *-ed* than 3rd person singular *-s*. Lardiere (2003) claims that the high omission of the regular past tense *-ed* was due to phonological reduction.

In terms of what we have seen above, we may conclude that the effect of phonetics [s], [z], [t], and [d] in English plays a role in the results that the regular past tense *-ed* was omitted more often than the 3rd person singular *-s*.

Conclusion

In terms of the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH) (Haznedar & Schwartz, 1997; Prévost & White, 2000), this study investigated how L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English acquire the three English morphemes – the 3rd person singular *-s*, the regular past tense *-ed*, and the copula *be*. The results of the 3rd person singular *-s* and the regular past tense *-ed* showed that participants had knowledge of functional categories and features in tense and agreement, but had problems with the realization of surface morphology. The difficulty of the realization of surface morphology can be ascribed to the L1 interference. Furthermore, the better performance in 3rd person singular *-s* than regular past tense *-ed* may be due to the individual factors and the effect of phonetics in English. For copula *be*, the results showed that participants performed well on this morpheme, assuming that participants transferred their L1 knowledge of verb *shi* into the acquisition of English copula *be*. The fact that the better performance in copula *be* in comparison to inflectional morphology suggests that participants acquired the forms of *be* before the inflectional morphology of *in situ* thematic verbs.

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Working memory and Chinese learners' processing of complex English sentences

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Abstract

This study sets out to examine the relationship between working memory (WM) and Chinese learners' differences in comprehension of four types of self-embedded complex English sentences such as *Marry knows the fact that keeping clothes clean is absolutely necessary surprises the waiter*. Two groups (fifteen high WM and fifteen low WM) of advanced Chinese learners of English and one control group (fifteen high WM native English postgraduates) took part in a self-paced on-line comprehension test. Results showed that high WM native postgraduates had the shortest reading times and the best comprehension scores. High WM Chinese learners needed longer comprehension times and shorter reading times than low WM Chinese learners. There was little difference in comprehension accuracy between low WM Chinese learners and high WM Chinese learners, suggesting that WM had effects on Chinese learners' response times, but not on comprehension accuracy in processing the complex English sentences.

Introduction

First language (L1) processing research has revealed that working memory -henceforth WM, generally understood as a limited processing and storage capacity for carrying out a range of tasks (Baddeley & Hitch, 1974; Baddely, 1986, 1999, 2003), plays important roles in sentence comprehension (Clifton & Duffy, 2001; Gibson, 1998). King & Just (1991) found that processing syntactically complex sentences (e.g. object-relative vs. subject-relative) was more difficult for low WM subjects and negatively impacts their comprehension accuracy performance. Similarly, Just & Carpenter (1992) showed that individual differences in WM capacity may influence parsing behaviour: high WM subjects were able to use both syntactic and non-syntactic cues to aid in parsing, while low WM counterparts were not able to do so. Consequently, Just and Carpenter (1992) proposed the capacity theory, stating that WM capacity constrains the comprehension process and individual differences in comprehension arise from individual differences in WM capacity. Individuals with higher WM capacity have more resources left over for maintaining information during the processing of sentences. Individuals with lower WM capacity, by contrast, usually deplete a large proportion of the resource pool required for comprehension and so they have few resources left over for storage during the processing of sentences. In agreement with Just & Carpenter (1992), who emphasized the active role of WM in sentence processing, Caplan & Water (2002) assumed that differences in comprehension of structures were related to WM. High WM subjects have more resources to access, for example, syntactic rules, while processing a given complex sentence structure, and so are able to deal with them more efficiently. Low WM subjects, on the contrary, have less verbal WM space to access while processing the structures, and they are thus often unable to deal with the structures efficiently.

Compared with a number of studies on the role of WM in L1 sentence processing, relatively little is known about the role of WM in second language (L2) processing. It is likely that the overall picture of L2 processing is more complicated than that of L1 processing in terms of the burden placed upon parsing, as their retrieval of lexical and grammatical knowledge may be more difficult than that of L1 learners. In line with Just and Carpenter's (1992) theory that the size of WM is related to processing efficiency, high WM L2 learners in general may behave better than low L2 learners since low WM L2 learners may have to consume a great amount of resources in L2 processing. We may thus wish to investigate the role of WM in the complex picture. One way to carry out this investigation is to examine the role of WM in L2 learners' processing certain complex sentences in the target language. This paper sets out to examine the role of WM in advanced Chinese learners' comprehension of four types of self-embedded complex English sentences such as (1) *Marry knows the fact that keeping clothes clean is absolutely necessary surprises the waiter.*

The paper is structured as follows. First, previous work on WM in L2 sentence processing is introduced (section II). Then the empirical study of WM on Chinese learners' performance in comprehending the four types of complex English sentence is described (section III). Following this, the paper summarizes the findings of the

experiments (section IV) and presents a general discussion of the findings (section V). Finally, conclusions and suggestions are provided (section VI).

Background of the present study

The rationale of WM measurement

To study the role of WM in L2 sentence processing, one fundamental issue is how to operationalise the measurement of WM. This is because studies have differed in the operationalisation and measurement of WM and such differences may produce different results (for a useful overview, see Leiser, 2007). In studies of L2 sentence processing, the commonly used WM measurement is the reading span test (RST) developed by Daneman and Carpenter (1980). The RST was designed to tax both the processing and storage functions of WM. In the test, participants were asked to read sentences aloud that were typed on index cards, which were designed in sets of between two and six sentences. At the end of each set of sentences, participants were required to recall the last word of each sentence in that set. The recall words reflect the participants' WM capacity.

Daneman and Carpenter's RST, as pointed out by Omaki (2005), suffered from the limitation of not including semantic and syntactic acceptability judgments which were actually part of the RST. The other limitation of RST was that it was hard to define whether the recalled words on the RST were the result of remembering words or sentence processing (e.g. Turner & Engle, 1989). To compensate for the limitations, more recent ways of measuring WM include both sentence processing components (reaction time and sentence judgments) and word memory (Waters & Caplan, 1996; Leiser, 2007).

WM and L2 sentence processing

Studies on the role of WM measured by RST in L2 sentence processing have produced mixed results. Some studies (e.g., Ellis & Sinclair, 1996) found that WM can affect L2 syntactic processing and that the processing effects of syntactic complexity are related to the concurrent load of WM in L2 sentence processing. That is, syntactic complexity can have a significant effect on the efficiency of sentence processing, and this processing correlated with WM capacity.

Kuno (1974) proposed that WM capacity is closely related to the processing difficulty in comprehension of relative clause sentences. According to Kuno, because of limitations imposed by WM capacity, centre embedding which interrupts the processing of the matrix sentence with a relative clause, is perceptually more difficult to process than right and left embedding, where there is no such interruption. For example, sentence (2) is thought to be more difficult to process than sentence (3).

- (2) The cheese that the rat that the cat chased ate was rotten.

- (3) The cat chased the rat that ate the cheese that was rotten.
(Kuno, 1974, 119)

Izumi (2003) further examined Kuno's proposal for various native language-speaking (e.g. Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, etc.) learners of English as a L2 in comprehending centre- and right-embedded English sentences. The findings showed that L2 learners had greater difficulty in producing centre-embedded relative clauses than right-embedded ones. The results therefore supported Kuno's conclusion that ease of processing as a function of the position of the relative clause in the matrix sentence is related to WM capacity.

Additional research on the active role of WM was carried out by Ardila (2003), whose study showed that WM played an active role in L2 learners' processing of syntactically complex sentences. Compared to native speakers, L2 learners needed more WM in processing syntactically complex sentences. Consequently, L2 learners took longer in comprehension performance, but their comprehension accuracy was lower than that of the native speakers. Similarly, Sagarra (2005) investigated the role of WM in L2 sentence processing by beginning L2 learners of Spanish, with WM being measured by Daneman & Carpenter's (1980) RST in the subjects' native language. By examining the learners' grammar and reading performance during their second- and fourth-semesters of study of Spanish, she found that there were short-term effects of WM capacity, but not long-term effects, on the L2 test of grammar and reading performance. Interestingly, both short-term and long-term effects of WM capacity on listening comprehension were found in the investigation. This might be related to a statistical problem, as these results were obtained by only making regression analyses between WM and L2 test scores. However, Juffs (2004, 2005) reported that WM effects can only be observed in native speakers' comprehension performance, but not in L2 processing, as L2 learners' comprehension performance did not correlate with WM capacity in L2 sentence processing. Juffs concluded that WM measured by Daneman and Carpenter's (1980) RST is not a source of individual variation in online L2 performance, but WM measured by word span might be.

The mixed results mentioned above call for further studies to shed light on the role of WM in L2 sentence processing. This study sets out to examine whether WM may affect Chinese learner' performance in comprehending certain self-embedded complex English sentences (see below).

The present study

Aim

The experiment aims to investigate the effect of WM capacity on advanced Chinese learners' ability in comprehension of the four types of self-embedded complex English sentences.

Hypothesis

The advanced Chinese learners with high WM will have better comprehension accuracy and faster response times than the advanced Chinese learners with low WM in comprehending the four types of self-embedded complex English sentences.

Design

The experiment had two parts. The first part involved the selection of the participants, which included an English proficiency test (i.e. TOEFL) and Ariji *et al's* (2003) RST which is generally seen as an updated measurement on WM capacity. The second part was an on-line self-paced reading test with the participants. In this computer-based test participants were presented with all the four types of complex English sentences and reaction times and comprehension accuracy were measured. The test procedure is described in greater detail below.

Subjects

60 advanced Chinese learners of English participated in the experiment, 30 males and 30 females. Their mean age was 23 years. They had all received almost the same number of years of English schooling (i.e. twelve years). Their only exposure to English was via formal classroom instruction. Both English and Chinese were used in the instruction of the L2 (in approximately equal proportions). Learners were usually first instructed in English and this followed by the equivalent explanation in Chinese. None of them had ever been to English-speaking countries outside China. Participants in the experiment were MA students studying for higher university degree at Henan Normal University, China. The experiment was taken as a test for English proficiency for which attendance was compulsory. The 30 native English speakers were Masters postgraduate students studying at the University of Manchester. Their mean age was 22 years. Fifteen were males, fifteen were females. All the participants were paid ten pounds for the experiment. All participants were right-handed (Edinburgh Handedness Inventory; Oldfield, 1971).

Materials

The materials comprised sixteen English sentences (see Appendix A). Of these sentences, eight were experimental sentences adapted from Chipere (2001) and Juffs (2006), and eight were distractors. The experimental sentences involved four types of constructions: the complex NP structure, the TM structure, the PG structure and *wh*-movement structure (these are described in detail below). The constructions were chosen for two reasons. First, they can be assumed to place a heavy burden on WM during processing. Secondly, embedding levels (e.g. filler-gap) in the constructions help to observe the role of WM in Chinese learners' processing of the sentences, as WM capacity is related to embedding levels (Omaki, 2005). Therefore, these constructions

are likely to place more demands on processing than simple structures, thus allowing observation of the effect of WM capacity differences.

The complex NP structure

This structure involves verb complement structures in which the complement of the verb has a complex noun phrase (NP) subject. One example of such structure in the experiment is given in (4) below:

- (4) Tom thinks that the fact that keeping clothes clean is absolutely necessary surprises the waiter.

In this sentence, the verb complement subject NP (*the fact*) is embedded within another complement structure *that keeping clothes is absolutely necessary* to modify *the fact*.

The TM structure

In the tough movement (TM) structure, a *to*-infinitive is embedded within another complement structure, such as in the sentence (5):

- (5) The robber will be difficult to get the banker to vote for.

In the sentence, the *to*-infinitive *to vote for* is embedded within another complement structure *to get the banker*.

The PG structure

In the parasitic gap (PG) structure, two gaps are associated with the same filler, such as in the following sentence:

- (6) The student who John met after his girlfriend jilted took the eight o'clock bus.

In this sentence, the first empty position or gap is after the verb *met*; the second gap is after the verb *jilted*. The second gap is said to be parasitic on the first gap. The gap-filling is recursive.

Wh-movement structure

Sentences of this structure involve *wh*-related movement and relative clauses embedded to modify the antecedents such as in the sentence below:

- (7) Who did the manager that the secretary had pleased talk to at the office?

In this sentence, there is a long-distance *wh*-movement between the object of the verb phrase *who* and its verb phrase *talk to*. In addition, the relative clause *that the secretary had pleased* is embedded to modify the antecedent *the manager*.

Questions for each type of structure were ranked in difficulty by Chipere (2001). The first question (i.e. the key question) was the most difficult question to answer and was considered to be diagnostic of correct parsing. The second question (i.e. the backup question) was less difficult than the key question and was used to compensate for the possibility of guessing on the first question. The third question had two possible answers and was designed to test subjects' awareness of structural ambiguities (except in the TM construction where there was no potential ambiguity to be found). The fourth question was a give-away question.

Procedure

Participants were given the following tests: (1) Ariji *et al.*'s (2003) test of WM capacity; (2) an English proficiency test (i.e. the TOEFL Test); and (3) an on-line comprehension test.

Ariji *et al.*'s (2003) method for measuring WM capacity involves a calculation based on the sentences in which both acceptability judgment and word recall were correct. The 60 Chinese postgraduates read aloud sequences English sentences (see Appendix B) ranging in span size from two (i.e. sequences of two sentences) to five (i.e. sequences of five sentences). Each span size had five trials and a total of 70 sentences were created. All the test sentences were taken from Ariji *et al.*'s experiment. Almost half of the test sentences (32 out of 70) were unacceptable. At the end of each set of sentences, participants were required to recall the last word of each sentence and to give an acceptability judgment of each sentence in that set. One point was calculated per sentence when subjects performed accurately on both acceptability and recall. The cut-off point was 46 (following Ariji *et al.* (2003)). Participants who scored below or equal to 46 were categorized as low-span, while participants who scored over 46 were categorized high-span. In order to observe the effect of WM in comprehension performance, only high and low WM subjects participated in the experiment.

One week after the WM test, only the selected high WM and low WM participants took an English proficiency test (i.e. the TOEFL Test), which lasted approximately three hours. This was done because the experimental tasks involved structurally complex sentences, thus it seemed reasonable to only include subjects at or above the upper intermediate level (i.e. 590 to 637 TOEFL score) in the experiment. After the proficiency test, fifteen high English proficiency participants with high WM were randomly selected to form Group 1 (i.e. HWM Chinese learners). Correspondingly fifteen high English proficiency participants with low WM were randomly selected to form Group 2 (i.e. LWM Chinese learners). The same selection procedure was used for the native English speakers (Group 3). The participants' English proficiency and RST scores are summarized in Table 1.

Groups	English proficiency scores (M)	RST scores	SD
Group 1 (n=15)	620	55.67 (range: 47–65)	5.72
Group 2 (n=15)	615	38.11 (range: 20–46)	8.11
Group 3 (n=15)	629	57.93 (range: 48–67)	5.63

Table 1 Summary of the participants' English proficiency and RST scores

The selected participants then took the on-line comprehension test. In the test Groups 1 and 2, participants were instructed to read the sixteen complex English sentences and answer the comprehension questions. The laptop-based treatments were administered individually to the participants. At the start of the experiment, subjects read the instructions on the computer, and had an opportunity to ask the experimenter to explain anything they did not understand. Having understood the instructions completely, subjects were given a chance to practice clicking the response box to ensure that they were familiar with the method of stimuli presentation. Twelve practice trials were given to the participants prior to the commencement of the actual test.

After ensuring familiarity with the presentation method, the timed on-line comprehension test formally began. Subjects began the test by clicking the response box. All experimental sentences were followed by four comprehension questions, each of which was displayed in turn by clicking the response box button. Once the response box button was clicked, a whole experimental practice sentence was displayed in its entirety on the screen followed by the questions. Note that sentences were not displayed in a segmented fashion as in a pilot study this had proved too demanding for low WM participants. The presentation of the stimuli and end-of-sentence responses were controlled by the MS-DOS version of the Superlab Pro software package - response times, reading times and comprehension times were recorded by the software. The whole test lasted on average 35 minutes.

Results and discussion

If WM has an effect on comprehension performance, this should be reflected in response times (including reading times and comprehension times) and/or comprehension accuracy. In order to assess and compare differences between HWM group and LWM group in the online comprehension, statistical analyses were performed on both their comprehension accuracy and response time data. Only trials that were responded to correctly were included in the analyses of the response time data. Also, timeout trials exceeding 9000ms were removed from the groups - in three pilot studies with Chinese learners of English, 9000 ms was the maximum response time of the slowest learners. This threshold affected approximately 0.6% of the responses for each of the groups. To eliminate individual outliers, trials eliciting response times above 2.84 SDs (i.e. the mean SDs of the group) from each participant's mean response times per sentence were also removed from the data set, which affected 1.7% of each group's data. It should be pointed out that only the participants' accuracy

scores and response times for answering the comprehension questions were calculated. This is because accuracy scores may directly reflect the comprehension performance; errors in the comprehension questions may not reflect the accurate comprehension as they are caused by many factors (Hopp, 2006).

Comprehension accuracy

The comprehension questions yielded 32 responses from each subject (four questions per sentence x eight sentences). Comprehension scores were subjected to a four way ANOVA, i.e. three groups with fifteen subjects each x four structures x two sentence conditions x four Questions. The calculation of comprehension data is restricted to data from the key questions.

Overall, there were no differences between Group 1 (HWM group) and Group 2 (LWM group) in comprehension accuracy for the experimental sentences. Group 1's mean accuracy score was 78%. Group 2's mean accuracy score was 76%. Group 3's mean accuracy score was 79.5%. This indicated that the participants were paying full attention to the task and that they were reading the sentences properly. A mixed three-way ANOVA with subjects, sentence structures and sentence conditions submitted as factors showed no significant main effects or interactions, suggesting that the HWM and LWM groups did not differ from each other or from native speakers regarding their ability to comprehend the experimental sentences. Furthermore, neither control nor experimental sentences appears to have influenced the participants' accuracy scores.

Although no significant differences were found in comprehension accuracy of the four types of English sentences, the analysis of the response times yields some interesting results. The questions and answers to the complex sentence (4), repeated as (8), for HWM and LWM Chinese learners are given below.

- (8) Tom thinks that the fact that keeping clothes clean is absolutely necessary surprises the waiter.

Question: What does Tom think?

HWM Chinese learners' answer:

Tom thinks that the waiter is surprised by the fact that it is absolutely necessary to keep clothes clean.

LWM Chinese learners' answer:

Tom thinks that the fact surprises the waiter.

HWM native speakers' answer:

Tom thinks that the waiter is surprised by the fact that it is absolutely necessary to keep clothes clean.

The different answers to the same question for sentence (8) from the HWM and LWM learners indicate that they took a different analysis of the sentence: HWM Chinese learners seemed to be able to rearrange the constituents by shifting the complex NP to the end of the sentence. Thus *Tom thinks that the fact that keeping clothes clean is absolutely*

necessary surprises the waiter became *Tom thinks that the waiter is surprised by the fact that it is absolutely necessary to keep clothes clean*. The LWM learners, on the other hand, appeared to compress the entire complex NP into a much shorter phrase, for instance: *Tom thinks that the fact surprises the waiter*. If so, this indicates that the HWM learners were able to use a more sophisticated analysis than LWM learners. The HWM native speakers seemed to rely on the same kind of analysis as HWM Chinese learners, as they had the same responses as HWM Chinese learners.

In the TM structure, the underlying object of a predicate was realized as the surface structure subject of that predicate¹, such as in sentence (5), repeated as (9) *The robber will be difficult to get the banker to vote for*. In the sentence, *the robber* was the object of *will be difficult to get the banker to vote for*, even though *the robber* seemed to be the surface subject of that predicate. The underlying subject of the predicate was a generally implied person who was not mentioned in the sentence. In addition, the implicit subject of the top level *to*-infinitive (i.e. the person who would get *the banker* to vote for *the robber*) needed to be identified as well. Responses from the HWM and LWM learners showed that they were unable to identify the subject of the sentence. High WM native English speakers, however, were able to cope with this².

In PG structures such as (6), repeated as (10) *The student who John met after his girlfriend jilted took the eight o'clock bus*, if HWM and LWM learners can carry out gap-filling operations recursively, they both should be able to answer the question *who was the girlfriend planning to jilt* (question one). If only LWM learners but not HWM learners fail to do so, this might be due to the loss of the filler from memory as there is the long interval between the filler and the gap. If both HWM and LWM learners fail to answer question 1, the failure should not be ascribed to WM capacity.

If LWM learners fail to fill the second gap, they should also fail the question *who took the eight o'clock bus* (question three). Since this question requires an association to be made between the filler, which is the subject of the matrix clause, the verb phrase *took the eight o'clock bus* is the predicate of the matrix clause. If HWM learners succeed in filling the second gap, they should also be able to answer question three (given that WM is high enough to deal with this). If it turns out that LWM learners can determine *who took the eight o'clock bus* not *who was going to be jilted*, then this failure cannot be attributed to the loss of the filler from memory. Results showed that both HWM native speakers and HWM learners could associate the filler with the matrix verb and fill the second gap, but the LWM learners could not. The effects of questions (i.e. question one and three) is highly significant, $F(1, 28) = 38.12, p < .001$. Failure to fill the gap was therefore not due to decay of the filler from the memory, indicating that WM played no significant role in the comprehension of the PG structure.

In *wh*-movement sentence such as (7), repeated as (11) *Who did the manager that the secretary had pleased talk to at the office?* responses from the HWM and LWM learners suggested that they were all able to identify the actual subject (i.e. *the manager*) and its

¹ By using the notions of "underlying subjects", "surface structure subjects", etc., I am relying on traditional Generative Grammar terminology. Other ways of describing the grammatical functions in question are of course available, but the choice of terminology is not relevant to my argument.

² There might also be the differences in metalinguistic knowledge between native English speakers and Chinese learners, which I did not control for this in the selection of the subjects.

verb (i.e. *talk to*). While both HWM learners and native speakers were able to integrate the long-distance *wh*-movement *who* (object of the verb phrase) with the verb phrase *talk to*, neither groups of LWM subjects could. However, the LWM learners could compress the sentence to *who did the manager talk to at the office*. In addition, HWM Chinese learners and HWM native speakers both demonstrated the ability to recognize the relative clause *that the secretary had pleased* as modifying the antecedent *the manager*, while the LWM Chinese learners were unable to do so, suggesting that WM played a role in comprehension of the sentence.

Response times

Two kinds of response time data were obtained: 1) sentence reading time (SRT) (i.e. time spent studying a fully displayed sentence on the screen and before answering any questions) and 2) question response time (QRT) (i.e. time spent answering questions).

Overall, as might be expected for L2 processing tasks, both the high and low WM Chinese learners were slower to respond to the experimental stimuli than the high WM native speakers. The group mean SRT can be seen in Figure 1.

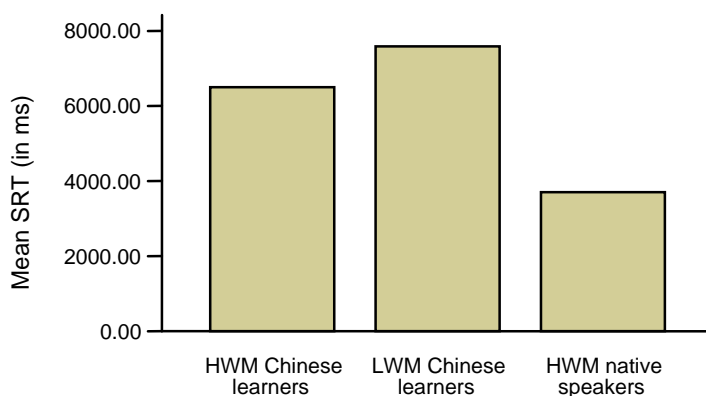


Figure 1 The group mean SRT

Figure 1 indicated that HWM native speakers had the shortest reading times (3700 ms, $SD=1687$), followed by HWM Chinese learners (6500 ms, $SD=2315$). LWM Chinese learners had the longest reading times (7588 ms, $SD=2934$).

The effect of groups was significant on individual sentence reading times, $F(2,45)=10.67$, $p<.05$. The fact that there were SRT differences among groups showed that WM capacity had an effect on reading times, which is indicated in Figure 2.

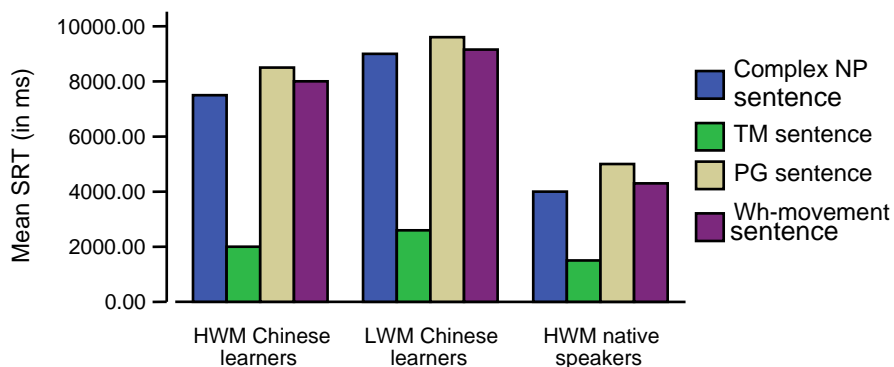


Figure 2 Sentence, mean SRT & group

Overall, the question response times showed that HWM native speakers had the shortest comprehension times (3350 ms, SD=892), followed by LWM Chinese learners (5028 ms, SD=1413). The HWM Chinese learners, surprisingly, had the longest comprehension times (5438 ms, SD=1851). This can be seen in Figure 3 below.

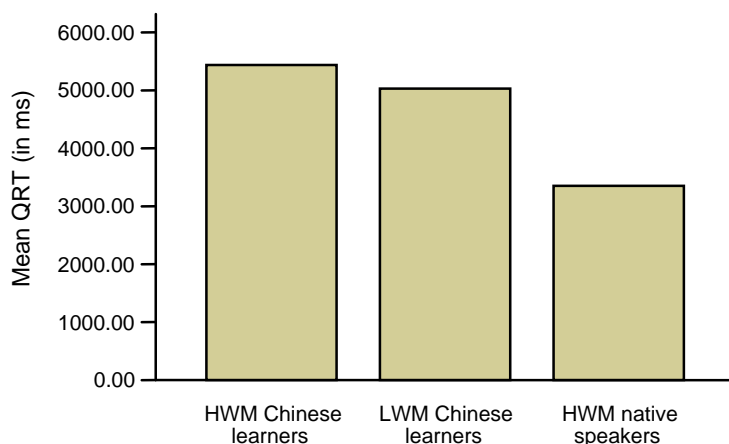


Figure 3 The group mean QRT

An analysis of group effect on QRT showed that it was marginally significant $F(2,45)=2.76, p=.074$, suggesting that WM capacity had a marginal effect on comprehension times, as indicated in Figure 4.

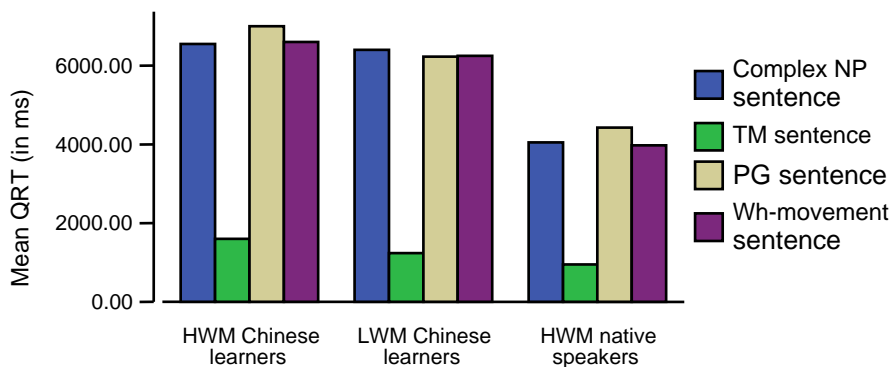


Figure 4 Sentence, mean QRT & group

A further analysis of the effect of questions on QRT can be seen in Figure 5. It indicates that there was an effect of questions on comprehension times, $F(3,44)=6.19, p<.05$.

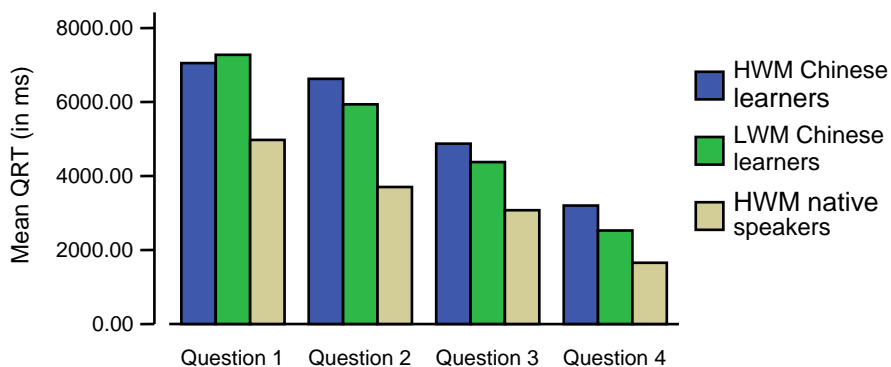


Figure 5 Question, mean QRT & group

Analyses of the effects of sentence conditions on SRT showed that this was not a significant factor, $F(1,94)=.086, p=.77$. The effects of sentence conditions on QRT showed that this was not significant either, $F(1,94)=.175, p=.68$.

It should be noted that statistical analyses of the data were focused on the participants' comprehension accuracy and response times. It may be possible that some participants sacrificed response times for accuracy, or accuracy for response times. To check the possible time-accuracy trade-off effects on participants' performance in the comprehension tasks, the Pearson correlation analyses on participants' individual mean response times and accuracy scores were carried out in the sentences. Neither the native speakers nor the Chinese learners showed any significant correlation, which suggests that the participants did not systematically trade response times for accuracy, or vice versa.

General discussion

Comprehension accuracy of the complex English sentences showed that HWM Chinese learners did not have higher comprehension scores than LWM learners. This is inconsistent with the prediction by Just and Carpenter (1992). Assuming that performance in comprehension broke down more often for people with low WM than people with high WM, LWM Chinese learners would be expected to have lower comprehension scores than that of HWM Chinese learners in comprehending the complex English sentences. But the results show that there were no significant differences in comprehension accuracy scores between the HWM and the LWM Chinese learners. The result might be explained by Juffs' (2004) account that there was little effect of WM on L2 learners' sentence processing.

The findings that LWM Chinese learners had almost the same comprehension time as HWM Chinese seems to give further support to Juffs's account. Assuming that WM is related to the efficiency of sentence processing, HWM Chinese learners should be more efficient and therefore have shorter comprehension times than LWM Chinese learners. However, the results do not support this interpretation. Hence, it appears that WM is unrelated to the efficiency of comprehension time in Chinese learners' comprehension performance.

Provided that Juffs's (2004) account is correct, how could we explain the findings that HWM Chinese learners had shorter reading times than LWM Chinese learners in the comprehension performance? This seems to indicate that WM had a positive role in the process of reading, which is consistent with Just and Carpenter's (1992) prediction.

The interesting finding in the experiment is that LWM Chinese learners were almost as fast as HWM Chinese learners in the comprehension performance. A possible explanation for this result is that learners with HWM analysed the sentences in a more deliberate manner. As the HWM learners are likely to have had more memorized information, they might have been using the information to work out consciously the correct interpretation of the sentences. This can be seen from the QRT of different structures (e.g. the complex NPs & PG structures) in Figure 4. However, this explanation raises the issue of parsing strategies. What information did the HWM learners use in the parsing? Do the HWM subjects employ the same/different parsing strategies as LWM learners (e.g. structural and/or semantic or both cues)? If HWM and LWM learners employed different stored information in the parsing, their comprehension scores displayed no difference. This seems to indicate that the information used by HWM and LWM learners did not contribute to the difference of comprehension accuracy. Most probably, there is some minimal amount of information necessary for comprehension accuracy. Once the minimal information is obtained, the other information seemed to be 'redundant' and may not directly affect comprehension accuracy.

Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between WM capacity and Chinese learners' differences in comprehension of the four types of complex English sentences. Overall, the results present a complex picture on the role of WM in Chinese learners' comprehension of the self-embedded complex English sentences. The finding that HWM learners had shorter reading times than LWM Chinese learners seems to indicate that WM may have a positive role in Chinese learners' complex English sentence comprehension performance. However, the findings that HWM Chinese learners needed longer to read the sentences than LWM Chinese learners seems to indicate that WM may have a negative role in Chinese learners' comprehension performance. It may be the case that HWM Chinese learners are able to process more linguistic factors than LWM learners, which lead to the increase of responding times. The finding that HWM Chinese learners, as well as the HWM native speakers, had the same comprehension accuracy scores as LWM Chinese learners seems to suggest that WM played no role in comprehension. The study has some limitations: the sample sizes were relatively small and the complex English sentences are features that are seldom encountered. Consequently one should be cautious in interpreting the results.

Follow-up research may explore the processing of other structures, such as the commonly used subject and object relative clauses as (12) *The girl that saw the accident upset the boy* (subject relative) and (13) *The girl that the accident terrified upset the boy* (object relative). Such future explorations may provide further evidence on the role of WM in Chinese learners' processing of complex English sentences.

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APPENDIX A

Complex Noun Phrase Construction

Peter knows that the fact that taking good care of himself is essential surprises Tom.

Questions and Answers

1. What does Peter know? That the fact that taking good care of himself is essential surprises Tom
2. What is essential? Taking good care of himself
3. For whom is something essential? Peter or Tom
4. What surprises Tom? The fact that taking good care of himself is essential

Tough Movement Construction

Alison will be hard to get Tim to give a loan to.

Questions and Answers

1. Who might give a loan to someone? Tim
2. Who might be given a loan? Alison
3. What will be hard? Getting Tim to give a loan to Alison.
4. Who will find it hard to do something? Someone not mentioned in the sentence.

Parasitic Gap Construction

The servant who Tim visited before overhearing the lady proposing to dismiss had lunch in a cafe.

Questions and Answers

1. Who might be dismissed? Servant
2. Who was proposing to dismiss someone? Lady
3. Who had lunch in a cafe? Servant
4. Who overheard something? Tim

Wh-movement construction

Why would the girl that the schoolboy had angered complain at the meeting?

Questions and Answers

1. Who would complain? The girl
2. Who would be complained about? The schoolboy
3. Who had angered someone? The schoolboy
4. What would be complained about? Something not mentioned in the sentence

Filler Items

1. Peter knew that Jim would get the job even if he was not really qualified for it.

Questions and Answers

1. What did Peter know? That Jim would get the job even if he was not really qualified for it.
2. Who might get something? Jim.
3. What might someone get? A job
4. Who was not qualified for something? Jim (or Peter).

2. Alex knew that the best way to find out whether or not the plan would work was to ask the man who played the guitar at the party.

Questions and Answers

1. Who wanted to find out something? Alex
2. What was played at the party? A guitar.
3. What did Alex want to find out? Whether or not the plan would work.
4. Who played something at the party? The man.

3. Elaine was well aware that, although the building had been designed by John and herself, only he would get the recognition which would ensure his future in the field of architecture.

Questions and Answers

1. Who was aware of something? Elaine.
2. Who had designed the building? Elaine and John.
3. Who would get recognition? John.
4. What was Elaine aware of? That, although the building had been designed by John and herself, only he would get recognition.

4. The professor that the students liked read a book at the classroom.

Questions and Answers

1. Who was reading something? The professor
2. Who was liked? The professor
3. Who liked someone? The students
4. What was someone reading? A book

APPENDIX B

SENTENCES USED IN THE ENGLISH READING SPAN TEST

The sentences are presented in the order in which they appeared in the reading span test. The underlined words are the target words for each sentence. The slashes indicate the segmentation pattern.

2-sentence condition

It was / the snow / that excited the skiers.

The award / pleased / the actor / that the review upset.

The singer / bought / the CD / that dropped the boy.

It was / the ball / that the boy threw at the window.

It was / the passenger / that delighted the music.

The painter / praised / the architect / that designed the museum.

The mayor / supported / the candidate / that the issue worried.

It was / the customer / that pleased the price.

It was / the composer / that the opera amused

The rain / ended / the game / that played the children.

3-sentence condition

It was / the flower / that the girl cherished.

It was / the war / that protested against the leader.

The dinner / disgusted / the manager / that owned the restaurant.

The thief / stole / the diamond / that watched the guard.

It was / the book / that the priest dropped on the floor.

It was / the banker / that paid in the cash.

It was / the researcher / that interested the lecture.

The map / guided / the explorers / that the storm frightened.

It was / the prince / that the apple ate.

It was / the prisoner / that escaped from the jail.

It was / the audience / that the tragedy entertained.

The discussion / followed / the lectures / that the participants bored.

It was / the carpenter / that the house built.

The coach / trained / the athlete / that the letter surprised.

The fire / burnt / the magazine / that read the family.

4-sentence condition

It was / the movie / that impressed the lady.

The secretary / sent / the money / that requested the author.

The land / excited / the sailors / that the journey exhausted.
It was / the wave / that the surfers frightened.
It was / the politician / that enacted the law.
It was / the scientist / that the experiment excited.
It was / the computer / that fixed the student.
It was / the beach / that the tourists visited.
It was / the student / that fixed the computer.
It was / the report / that the policeman astonished.
The poem / amused / the musician / that wrote the song.
The violinist / composed / the melody / that the dancers excited.
The earthquake / destroyed / the restaurant / that owned the manager.
It was / the surfer / that the wave frightened.
It was / the cash / that deposited the banker.
The nurse / greeted / the patient / that the medicine relaxed.
It was / the lecture / that interested the researcher.
It was / the girl / that the flowers cherished.
The pianist / scolded / the boy / that dropped the CD.
The assistant / brought / the medicine / that the patient relaxed.

5-sentence condition

The fan / praised / the dancer / that the music excited.
It was / the jail / that escaped from the prisoner.
It was / the apple / that the prince ate.
The terrorism / shocked / the family / that read the magazine.
It was / the bomb / that killed the spy.
The professor / praised / the museum / that designed the architect.
The activity / entertained / the participants / that the lectures bored.
It was / the opera / that the composer excited.
It was / the leader / that protested against the war.
The lightning / preceded / the storm / that the explorers frightened.
It was / the house / that the carpenter built.
It was / the skier / that excited the snow.
It was / the policeman / that the report astonished.
It was / the price / that pleased the customer.
The captain / wrote / the letter / that the sportsman surprised.
It was / the priest / that the book dropped on the floor.
The victory / delighted / the children / that played the game.
The minister / supported / the issue / that the candidate worried.
It was / the music / that delighted the passenger.
The noise / ruined / the song / that wrote the musician.
It was / the tragedy / that the audience entertained.
The thief / poisoned / the guard / that watched the diamond.
The weather / interrupted / the journey / that the sailors exhausted.
The editor / hit / the author / that requested the money.
The magazine / featured / the review / that the actor upset.

The discursive construction of Portuguese national identity: elite vs. lay participants discursive strategies in a phone-in radio show

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Abstract

This paper proposes to analyse the discursive construction of Portuguese national identity in the semi-public (media) discourse, namely how two apparently competing discourses on national identity (that of the elite and that of laypeople) represent and reframe the country's national identity. I am interested in how these different types of participants co-construct and negotiate (national) identities and how the rhetorical contrast is set between what the prior speaker has said and what the current speaker suggests as an oppositional action.

I will explore, from a discourse-historical approach and a conversation analysis framework, how the discursive practices of participants in an hour-long phone-in radio broadcast programme (whose topic was "is national identity in crisis?") are constructed along different identity dimensions. I will look at personal deictic forms in order to uncover the participants' allegiance and non-allegiance to certain groups referred to in the programme.

Introduction

The idea of a Portuguese national identity has been highlighted by the country's political elite since the later half of the 19th century, either to appeal against what was perceived as external threats or as a mobilizing factor when facing challenges such as the democratic revolution of April, the 25th, 1974 or, later on, joining the European Union in 1986 (Cabral, 2003; Mattoso, 1998). Drawing on Anderson's (2006) phrasing, the Portuguese "imagined community" has been investigated from various angles and approaches such as the historical, sociological, literary and socio-political. However, these debates have assumed, for the most part, an essentialist view of national identity (Almeida, 2002).

This paper presents a view of the discursive construction of national identity in a phone-in radio show. Coming back to Anderson's concept of "imagined communities", the research pinpoints the different "attachments" diverse social groups feel for "the inventions of their imaginations" (2006: 141). The data set for this study consists of an hour-long phone-in national radio programme called *Antena Aberta* (Open Antenna), broadcast live on 27th of June 2006 during the football World Cup, when the Portuguese team seemed a possible finalist. The programme was presented under the heading "Is Portugal's national identity in crisis?" precisely because this sports event brought about nationalistic feelings. Conversely, warning calls against these feelings, and voices of protest asking why these feelings only surfaced during this type of 'national' event, were also common at the time.

The concern of this article is twofold. First, it explores how the discursive practices of the participants are constructed along different dimensions on the explicit topic of national identity, within an overall Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter CDA) framework. Secondly, I explore the data according to two approaches: Conversation Analysis (hereafter CA) and the Discourse-Historical Approach (hereafter DHA). The data analysis stems from two main research questions framed in order to understand to what extent the various participants on the programme reproduce discourses on Portuguese national identity: (1) What discourses do semi-public lay participants and 'experts' draw on to construe and/or represent Portugal's national identity when discussing major national events of the present and the past? (2) How are the 'Us' and the 'Other' discursively represented when constructing national identity?

Theoretical framework

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and the discourse-historical approach (DHA)

In talk, discursive differences are negotiated; they are governed by differences in power, which are in part encoded in and determined by discourse and by genre. Therefore, texts and talk are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and battling for dominance (Weiss and Wodak,

2003). CDA in the methodological tool used here. One major tenet of CDA is the critical stance of analysts, who take explicit positions when understanding, exposing and eventually resisting social inequality while they focus on social problems and political issues in a multidisciplinary fashion (Van Dijk, 2001b). So CDA aims to make visible the “ideological loading of particular ways of using language” which are often invisible to people (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).

The study of language must be carried out with contextualization in order to give insights into social processes and consequently the application of multiple approaches is relevant when studying discourses (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009; Wodak et al, 1999). This study follows the CDA theoretical and methodological frameworks of Reisigl and Wodak (2001, 2009), Van Dijk (1993, 1995, 1996, 2001a, 2001b, 2004), Wodak (1990, 2001, 2006) and Wodak et al. (1999, 2008). As such, my data show the competing viewpoints from different social and/or political spheres on the issue of national identity. Finally, I will link my data to the concept of *public sphere*, defined as “the social sites or arenas where meanings are articulated, distributed and negotiated”, thus enabling “citizens to participate in democratic dialogue” (Koller and Wodak, 2008: 1).

The discursive events on the topic of Portuguese national identity are embedded socially, and more importantly, historically. The DHA focuses primarily on historical and political topics as developed by the Vienna School of CDA¹ and applied in various studies on national identity and on the discourse about nation and national identity in Austria (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; Wodak et al, 1999; Wodak and de Cillia, 2007). The DHA proposes three interrelated dimensions of analysis to be addressed recursively (de Cillia et al., 1999; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, 2009): (1) to identify the specific contents or topics of a specific discourse; (2) to investigate the discursive strategies; (3) to examine linguistic means and the specific, context-dependent linguistic realizations. This paper analyses the data in order to bring out some of these types of features.

The discursive construction of national identity

Discourse on Portuguese national identity deserves close inspection in the light of its historical dimension and diachronic change because, amongst other political and historical events, the 1974 democratic revolution constitutes a watershed moment from which I believe all current narratives on national identity construct their major reference.

For Anderson (2006) nations can be understood as mental constructs. De Cillia et al. (1999: 149) drawing extensively from Anderson, state that nations “are represented in the minds and memories of the nationalized subjects [...] and can become very influential guiding ideas”. They also argue that national identities are discursively “produced, reproduced, transformed and destructed”. Billig expands the argument further by introducing the term “banal nationalism” to cover “nationalism

¹ The DHA approach was developed to trace the constitution of an anti-Semitic stereotypical image as it emerged in public discourse in the 1986 Austrian presidential campaign (Wodak et al. 1990 quoted by Martin and Wodak, 2003: 7).

[...] as an endemic condition” (1995: 6) pervasive in all aspects of our daily life. The present research draws on the assumption that language used in discourses reshapes and reframes social processes and practices, and that “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258). Social practice and social processes reproduce, reshape and reframe unequal relationships through language in use. As a result, the link between language and social reality is a two-way, multi-varied relationship.

Conversation analysis (CA) and data

As this study focuses on a radio phone-in broadcast, and as some distinct features of this type of data, such as the local interactive processes of negotiating and conflict management, cannot be accounted for solely with the DHA, I also draw on a conversation analytical framework as the guiding resource for the initial approach to the data.

Together with CDA, CA is probably the most widely adopted discourse-analytical approach to the study of media talk. The present framework follows Ian Hutchby’s extensive work on media talk (1996, 1999, 2001, 2006). I argue that this method allows the analysis of the *organization of interaction*, one of the key features present in the data, and that helps to shed some insights into the immediate language or text-internal co-text. I also rely on some of Van Dijk’s (1999) and Hutchby’s (2006) arguments to claim that a good deal of CA links the properties of talk with ‘higher-level’ features of society. This triangulation of methodologies and perspectives (integrating the CA perspective within the broader DHA framework) allows me to explore, in this particular data set, how power relations are enacted and negotiated when constructing and reframing national identity narratives. Hutchby’s conversational analysis framework (1996, 2006) accounts for power as an integral feature of talk-in-interaction. Bringing DHA and CA together will thus overcome criticisms of the CA framework, such as Billig (1999) and Fairclough (1995), who claim that the CA approach is flawed by being “resistant to linking properties of talk with higher-level features of society and culture – relations of power, ideologies, cultural values” (Fairclough, 1995: 23).

Data analysis

Describing the data and method of approach

The phone-in radio show begins with two consecutive presenters (first a generic radio presenter followed by the host) introducing the topic of Portuguese national identity. Both presenters (re)produce topics on the discourse of national identity. They contextualize the programme’s theme by referring to the recent commemorations of the day of Portugal, the twentieth anniversary of Portugal joining the European Union and the Portuguese team’s winning streak during the football World Cup (2006).

However, they state how numerous Portuguese complain that the Portuguese people only “feel proud of being Portuguese” on these commemorative occasions. Therefore, the presenters argue, there is a good case for a debate on the topic of national identity. The host, besides echoing the radio presenter’s words, quotes several Portuguese poets and writers who have dealt with this issue and who have elected “language and culture as the main pillars of our [Portuguese] identity”. The host ends her long turn with questions that, according to her, are tormenting the country, such as: “Is there a feeling of national identity?” and “How did the European Union affect the country’s national identity?” The debate then follows a regular pattern: each caller is very briefly greeted by the host, who immediately hands over to him or her.

Fourteen people come on the programme, with different lengths of turn duration, ranging from 1 to 5-minute calls. However, there is the exception of C3 and C11,² who are both presented as university research professors. Significantly, in each of these two participations, the host intervenes six times, asking questions, asking for clarification or for practical examples of what is being stated. This exceptional behaviour will be discussed below.

One feature that makes these data particularly interesting is the fact that talk from ordinary members of the public is included. It therefore crosses between key sociological categories such as private and public, lay and professional in complex ways. Keeping in mind this key point, one can say that this spoken corpus is *semi-public* (Wodak et al, 1999), is *naturally occurring* (Taylor, 2001) and is *unscripted* or *fresh talk* (Goffman, 1981; Hutchby, 2006). I chose to designate the data as ‘semi-public discourse’ because lay participants publicly share their ‘authentic’ opinions and beliefs, following the rationale of authors who apply this label for data gathered in a focus group setting such as Wodak et al. (1999). I have also considered it to be ‘naturally occurring language’ (i.e. without any interference of the researcher), although the situational context has a declared purpose (the discussion of the topic of national identity) and a particular venue. Even though designating the data as *naturally occurring* is indeed controversial, my take here is that talk can occur in a natural way in more structured situations. Taylor (2001: 27) discusses this issue of ‘naturalness’, claiming that it does not necessarily refer to speakers being unselfconscious “but to the talk being uninfluenced by the presence of the observer”. Even though the researcher is not present or even conceived as such, the programme’s perceived audience will tend to constrain the participants. Nonetheless, and even though the amount of naturalness we may observe is arguable, I believe we can defend the ‘naturalness’ of these data, if compared to scripted talk.

I divided the data analysis into two main parts. The first (sections 3.2 and 3.3) is dedicated to describing how the host and phone-in participants negotiate identities. This closely follows Hutchby’s (2006) CA framework. In the second part (section 3.4), I focus on the construction of national identity using the DHA. According to Hutchby, the “differential distributions of discursive resources [...] enable certain participants to achieve interactional effects that are not available or are differentially available to others in the setting” (2006: 33). I will suggest that these features impact on the

² Each participant was ascribed a number according to the call sequence.

discourses produced on national identity, and on how participants claim various ‘truths’ about the nation, the country, and its people. Therefore, this approach to talk-in-interaction sheds light on how and why certain *topoi* are framed, produced and recontextualized, not only contextually, but also co-textually. Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 75) define *topoi* as the “content-related warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ that connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim.” They argue that they “justify (a shortcut) transition from the argument or arguments to the conclusion” (ibid.). *Topoi* are not always expressed explicitly, but can be made explicit as conditional or causal paraphrases such as ‘if x, then y’ or ‘y, because x’ (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 110).³ Discourses on national identity are built on systems of cultural representation that are based on *topoi* or presupposition of sameness, not only by the explicit construction of an in-group but also, I will argue, through the linguistically reconstruction of fallacious *topoi*.⁴ This point might be illustrated by the *topos* of threat, salient in the data as I illustrate below, based on the following conditionals: national identity is threatened by external and internal dangers (elites, politicians, Spain, European Union,) in various ways that should be stopped.⁵ In the first part, I also focus on semantic macro-areas or topics, as these can be conveyed through *topoi* when the argument is not explained or justified, and therefore there is a transition from the argument to the conclusion without the presentation of full argumentation.

Topic analysis shows that national identity is dealt with in relation to two themes. First, and most prominent, is the link to past historical events. And second, there is a constant reference to the economic and political situation of Portugal as it links to the people in power and to the European Union. There are two important semantic dimensions recurrent in this identity discourse: one is the semantic relation between identity and economic issues, therefore social class, as I illustrate below, and the second is the semantic relation linking identity to government. This means there are several instances where national identity becomes discursively linked to economic issues as well as to issues of political governance, as extract (1) illustrates:⁶

³ Myer (2005) and Valk (2003) offer a different viewpoint of the concept. For them, *topoi* or *loci communes* are often based on standard arguments that can carry the “socially shared identities of feeling” (Shotter, 1993 quoted by Myers, 2005: 536). Thus, *topoi* are best approached from the angle of commonplace phrasing, when people will draw on a shared repertoire or *topos* to convey and legitimate their (public) viewpoints, often reproduced as an uncritical judgement (Myers, 2005). Moreover, a *topos* can be regarded as a system of public knowledge, a discursive resource in which one finds arguments to sustain a conclusion (Van der Valk, 2003). Thus, *topoi* are general principles that support an argument without themselves constituting the argument itself, providing the standard arguments, typical of specific issues.

⁴ Reisigl and Wodak (2009: 110) following Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992) argue that fallacious *topoi* do not abide with the following rules: the freedom of arguing, the obligation to give reasons, the correct reference to the previous discourse by the antagonist, the obligation to ‘matter-of-factness’, the correct reference to implicit premises, the respect of shared starting points, the use of plausible arguments and schemes of argumentation, logical validity, the acceptance of the discussions results, and the clarity of expression and correct interpretation.

⁵ There are several instances of this *topos* in the data, namely “What will the Portuguese children being born in Spain say in the future?” (C4).

⁶ ? A question mark indicates a rising or questioning intonation.

- A dash indicates a false start or cut-off.

(.) A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates short pause.

(1) C8

one thing is (.) the identity of our country and another is the managing of our country now in relation to managing our country unfortunately (.) it has to be asked are our politicians man- managing umm with a true umm sense of national identity? ⁷

Following De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak's (1999) and Wodak et al.'s (1999) framework, I will list a few of the semantic macro-areas related to the construction of Portuguese identity and nation identified in the spoken data. Next, I will focus mainly on the specific content of the participants' utterances, as they illustrate topics and topoi. The analysis demonstrates that in various instances, topics are conveyed through topoi when the argument is not explained or justified. Therefore, and within the evoking of a common past, (common past being one of the discursive topics of national identity), participants might claim that "[they] don't like hearing youngsters say it would have been better if Afonso Henriques hadn't done what he did and that all of this should be Spain" (C5). This utterance presupposes that the audience, because they share a common past with the speaker, will immediately understand the argument implied.⁸

The main relevant topics highlighted by the data are as follows: (1) the topic of a common identity; (2) the topic of (absence of) "pride in being Portuguese"; (3) the concept of national defeat; (4) the narrative of a collective political and historical past; (5) the discursive construction of Portugal's membership of the European Union; (6) the discursive construction of the absence of a common future; (7) the discursive construction of Portugal vs. Spain; (8) the discursive construction of an in-group/out-group economic and class boundary: 'us' (the poor and workers) versus 'them' (the rich, the elite, the politicians).

Each of these semantic macro-structures or topics is conveyed through various claims or topoi. I will only focus on the following: (1) the topic of a common identity; (2) the topic of (absence of) "pride in being Portuguese". Several topoi or argumentation schemes are employed in the discursive legitimization of national identity: the topos of threat, the topos of history and the topos of culture.⁹

((laughs))	A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity.
(<i>italics</i>)	Single brackets indicate information added by the researcher to clarify the transcription or translation.
sou:::nd	Colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or word.
[]	Square brackets indicate where overlapping talk starts and ends.
<u>Underline</u>	Underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis.
=	The 'equals' sign indicates contiguous utterances.
(xxx)	Parentheses with xxxs indicate untranscribable talk.

⁷ All extracts have been translated from the Portuguese transcription of the programme. The translations are meant to convey the gist of the original rather than the exact wording. Many of the participants are grammatically inaccurate, very hesitant and repetitive. The translation attempts to keep these oral traits.

⁸ Afonso Henriques, first king of Portugal (1143AD), rebelled against his mother, whom he imprisoned, and declared unilaterally the independence of Portugal from the northern Spanish kingdoms, ruled by his cousin.

⁹ See Reisigl and Wodak (2001) for an overview of the main topoi concerning the discursive construction of discrimination and Wodak et al (1999: 34ff.) for topoi on the discursive construction of national identity.

Co-construction of meaning – interaction in spoken discourse

The co-construction of meaning in talk-in-interaction impacts on the discourse produced on national identity as certain topoi, topics or even agency and ‘othering’ strategies are framed, produced and recontextualized co-textually. I suggest that there are three causes affecting the usage of the ‘us and them’ deictics, and hence on the discourses produced on national identity in these data. First, there is the co-construction of arguments within the interaction; then, the asymmetric positions set up in the opening turn sequences between host and callers; and finally, the strong and deep seated hierarchical forms of address in the Portuguese language.

The opening sequences on a talk radio show are crucial to observe participants establishing their relevant institutional identities (Hutchby, 1999), and thus to help us understand the relationship between language use and social life. Hutchby (1999), following the initial research of Goffman (1961, 1974), advocates that the opening moments of newly forming encounters allow us to observe people manoeuvring into position and adjusting their frame. Therefore, the data show that talk radio calls routinely open by means of a single two-turn sequence as shown in (2) and (3) below:

(2) C2

Host: Elídio Santos good morning electrician is in Braga (.)(*town in the north of Portugal*) what is your opinion?

Caller: [Good morning I think tha::t Portuga::l

(3) C4

Host: I’m on my way to meet another participant Aureliano Burriga, he’s a baker, and is calling from Beja (*town in the south interior of Portugal*)(.) good morning=

=Good morning, Doutora Eduarda Maia.

Caller: We’re listening Aureliano.

Host: [look I’m going to talk about

In fact, Montgomery also points out the “fixed formulae of transitions between one phrase, episode or footing and another, such as greetings” (2007: 31). Hutchby’s (1996) claim about the asymmetry of host-caller positions in arguments (what he calls the potential action-opposition sequence) seems to fully apply to the data, since the organization of calls on talk radio requires callers to begin by stating their position, as extracts (2) and (3) illustrate.

Although the amount of interaction in terms of turn-taking is very limited for each of the twelve lay participants, I suggest there is, to some extent, co-construction of meaning. In fact, participants explicitly or implicitly refer back to what has been previously said: “I’m calling to talk about that professor who was there just now” (C4) or “our elites are to blame, contrary to what the gentleman said a while back (C5) or “I really enjoyed listening to this last lady” (C15). This of course relates to *situated* language use, within the process of meaning being created in the interaction. Each of the participants uses referential strategies to designate what has been previously said and to refer to the participants (such as ‘that professor’, ‘the gentleman’ and ‘this last

lady'). Hence, the audience witnesses a simulated dialogue or interaction, where each participant responds with a rejoinder or rebuttal using what Hutchby (2001: 128) calls the "You say X but what about Y" device. Therefore, there is in fact a rhetorical contrast between what the prior speaker has said and what the current speaker suggests as an oppositional action. Hutchby (*ibid.*) further argues that the "You say X" device signals the type of utterance under production, and listeners will recognize the argumentation pattern. Nevertheless, the data's originality lies in the explicit non-interactive nature between callers (since they are not talking amongst each other, but only to the host) which becomes quite clear when reading the transcript, yet the participants use the "you say X" device, with the modification of the addressee, so in this case the device should probably be modified to "s/he said X but what about Y".

Besides the asymmetry of host-caller positions in arguments, there is also a second type of asymmetric power relation evident in the forms of address in Portuguese, which links to the notion of conversationalizing institutional talk, discussed in the following section.

Authenticating and conversationalizing institutional talk

The way participants say things can be as important as what they say (Myers, 2005, 2007). Interaction may be constrained by conventions about who asks questions, how they are answered, who speaks next, and how topics and relevance to the topic are mutually defined by participants (2005: 81). These constraints appear to be determinant to the positioning of host and callers in the opening turn sequences.

The diverse positioning of participants' roles and social identities might be construed as hegemonic access to the media and therefore as unequal access to constructing a specific discourse on national identity. The host has the first opportunity for opposition within each call and this turns out to be a powerful argumentative resource (Hutchby, 1996). Bearing in mind this argumentative resource, let us consider two further strategies which also contribute to the asymmetric power relations, not only between lay participants and host, but also between lay participants and the academics who participate as experts. To consider these, the concepts of authenticating and conversationalizing institutional talk will be taken on board.

Thornborrow (2001) has considered hosts' discourse strategies to authenticate "the expert" and "the lay member of the public" that come in on radio programmes. A distinction between the two types of participants is drawn through the oppositional characteristics, which differentiate the discourse of professional speakers from that of lay participants. Thornborrow focuses on the talk of lay participants and the production of "authentic talk" within the mediated discourse that will authenticate the public role that is situationally available to them. This authentication of roles is "done" by participants by building relevant identities for themselves in the early moments of their talk.

In the Portuguese language, forms of address in any interaction are crucial in setting a person's social identity. Speakers addressing adult strangers usually select a form based on the social, professional or administrative position of the hearer, all of which require the third-person singular form of the verb (Oliveira, 2005). However, in

the phone-in radio programme, the host is considerably more informal with lay participants than with the two academics: she addresses lay callers by their first names exclusively and does not use any professional title. On the other hand, all lay participants defer to the host by using the more formal ways of address that the Portuguese language allows for. Forms of address in Portuguese take on a rather complex form; as such, the host never uses the more informal 'you' (*tu*) when addressing the participants directly. She chooses to address them by their first name which implies a certain degree of familiarity and equality in the relationship on her part: "Hi, António, good morning" (C6). In one instance, she even states "It's been a long time since I've heard from you" (*você* = in-between formal way of address) (C5). This in-between formal and informal way of address is not reciprocated by any of the lay participants who instead use the very formal and deferent forms such as "Ms. Eduarda Maio" (*Dona* Eduarda Maio or *Doutora* Eduarda Maio), or "Ma'am" (*Minha Senhora*).¹⁰ This unequal relation is enacted by each participant when coming on the show. This seems to indicate a perceived bottom-up class hierarchy from those who 'defer' to the host of the programme when phoning in. Traditionally, the Portuguese language has strategies that allow people to defer linguistically to people who are formally better-educated. However, in this particular broadcast programme, several participants are framed as being as educated as the host (i.e. having completed a university degree), therefore the asymmetric relationship is more striking when the participant does not reciprocate to the "Hi, António, good morning" on a first name basis with a possible "Good morning, Eduarda". In sum, the data reaffirm how the asymmetric power relations are profoundly embedded in the Portuguese social network and in the linguistic enactment of asymmetric dominance in the construction of social identities.¹¹

Montgomery (2007: 182ff) compared discourses of broadcast news in the 1980s and in the present day to conclude that "there is a tendency to greater naturalism and informality in delivery" (Montgomery, 2007: 196). Similarly, in open-line talk radio shows, there has been a move towards conversationalizing institutional talk by the shows' hosts, i.e. producing linguistic markers such as the use of first names, a preference for informal styles and registers and positive politeness such as talking to participants as if they were friends (see Cameron, 2001; Thornborrow, 2001). Therefore, institutional talk is borrowing features from 'ordinary' conversation.

However, and coming back to the data set, there is a marked difference between the host's register when introducing or interacting with lay callers and when interacting with the 'experts'. The latter are discursively framed within the role of experts by four different indicators: by the moderator's longer introduction, by the more significantly formal form of address, i.e. "professor", by the way the two 'experts' establish an equal-term relationship with the host by being, out of the 14 participants, the only two addressing her on a first-name basis. Finally, another means of contrasting their role is their rather long turns (C3, 08:01 min.; C11, 12:00 min.)

¹⁰ 'Dr.' which is short for 'doutora' is a form of addressing people with a university degree, very common in formal settings, and used for establishing hierarchical boundaries between interlocutors.

¹¹ See Oliveira (2005) for a detailed study on the Portuguese address form system.

compared to the other participants, whose longest extract is a 05:37 minute-long turn. Thus, to come back to what I have argued above, these diverse positionings of participants' roles and social identities convey hegemonic access to the media and asymmetrical access to constructing discourses on national identity. On the other hand, and from the audience's viewpoint these strategies authenticate their 'expertise'.

The construction of national identity – voices of authority and voices of lay people

Linguistic realization – personal deixis

In this section, I examine the different roles the lay and professional callers play in the programme and how their discursive strategies differ when discussing the topic of national identity. Krzyzanowski and Oberhuber (2007), drawing from the extensive research and illustrative examples of Wodak et al (1999), analyse the role of personal deixis in the discourses of European identities. They suggest that looking at various personal-deictic forms such as 'we' (and all possible conjugations of 'us', 'our', etc) or 'they' ('them', 'their') and/or on the switching between individual ('I', 'my') and plural deixis ('we', 'they') allows the analyst, on the one hand, to discover the participant's allegiance and non-allegiance to certain groups. On the other hand, it also facilitates the observation of how a speaker constructs his/her own agency in the actions accounted for in the discourse using 'I', or generalises those actions as an effect of collective endeavours using 'we' or 'us' (see table 1).¹² One of the most striking differences between the two types of participants relates to patterns that index participants' footing¹³ as there is a constant shift of referent (see table 1). For instance, C3 and C11, who come on the programme in the role of experts on the topic of national identity, behave in a different way from each other. When C3 uses "we" he is distancing himself from the object of study – Portugal – and "we" means 'we= scholars' or an addressee inclusive 'we'. C11 makes abundant use of 'we' as a whole-inclusive Portuguese people. Table 1 adapts the data to the list of potential meanings of first person plural pronouns used in the discursive construction of national identities proposed by Wodak et al. (1999: 46) and Wodak (2006: 112).

¹² See Wodak et al. (1999: 45ff) for an extensive discussion of these deictics.

¹³ Footing refers to instances of talk where participants' alignment, set, stance, posture or projected self is somehow activated (Goffman, 1981: 128).

PARTICIPANT	INSTANTIATION	SUBJECT POSITION	REFERENT
C2	Portugal is a bit run down due to the politicians we have because because only look at themselves, they don't look at the things of the poor	we I + you sg.+ they	the Portuguese people; the poor; the blue-collar workers (addressee inclusive)
		they	politicians
C3	we can observe that; we verify that	we I + s/he	the scholar; the academics (addressee partially inclusive ?)
C4	we go to France and we are welcome	we I + s/he	People who travel; I; one (addressee exclusive)
C5	the elites have led us to rock bottom so that we lose our national identity	us I + you sg.? + they	the Portuguese like myself (addressee inclusive?)
C7	we are not guided we we mainly when I say we I mean the people	we I + you sg.+ they	the Portuguese people
C11	one aspect of our society which is not healthy its that we always talk about the Portuguese as if they were other people in whom we do not include ourselves	we I + you pl + they	the Portuguese people (the whole inclusive we)
C13	our problem is no longer to know who we are our problem is that we do not know who we were because at a certain point we erased our history	we/our you ?+ they	the Portuguese people (speaker exclusive)

Table 1 The use of personal deictic-forms: the first person plural pronouns

Topics and topoi

1) The topic of a common identity and the discursive construction of national identity

The topic of national identity built on the topos of threat links to other topoi, that is, to other “routine flagging of nationhood” (Billig, 1995: 50), but the data show a distinctive discursive construction of national identity as an anthropomorphised entity which needs to be defended and protected from ‘them’, the out-group. However, this

'othering' - contrary to what studies on the discursive construction of various national identities seem to indicate - is closer to home and means primarily the national government and/or the elites (who appear to be a rather diffuse entity, but nevertheless indicate a clear class divide), Europe and/or the European Union, Spain, the media and, finally, the labour migrants (who are only mentioned within the dichotomy 'us and them' by one participant, C12, further discussed below).

According to the conceptual model proposed by the discourse-historical approach, one of the fundamental discursive constructive strategies of establishing a particular national identity is based on the national 'we-group' through particular acts of reference, for example using the pronoun 'we' in connection with the de-toponymical labelling 'Portuguese' i.e. "we, the Portuguese", which serves as a basis of appealing directly or indirectly to national solidarity and union. Conversely, strategies of dismantling and destruction will negatively present the in-group, will demolish existing national identities or elements of them, or will emphasise intra-national differences, as it is the case with the participants' emphasis on differences amongst social and economic groups. As such, presupposing intra-national sameness or similarity is juxtaposed to presupposing intra-national differences – the speaker presumes to speak for 'the Portuguese' as such, and takes for granted that there is a homogeneous 'we-group' with a shared mentality – imagined community.

On the other hand, the presupposition of differences between nations is a very common discursive strategy, and often leads to the negative debasing delimitation of an out-group which is considered as a different national collective (De Cillia et al. 1999). However, apart from one or two passages by the experts where inter-national differences are emphasised, these differences apparently do not serve the negative debasing delimitation of an out-group. Instead, highlighted differences emphasise the negative features of the in-group, i.e. the Portuguese. Again, this is a dismantling or destructive strategy. These negative attributes are not discursively constructed from the outside or imposed from the outside, but are the exclusive responsibility of 'we, the Portuguese people', whether regarded as a whole entity or as sections of the national group, such as 'they', 'the elites', 'they, the government', 'they, the state' or 'they, the politicians'. These types of strategies serve to de-mythologize existing national identities or elements of them, as extract (4) illustrates:

(4) C5

the so called between inverted commas elites have driven us at the end of the day we have lost our national identity (xxx) there are countries that have a very deep seated identity which is our case with 900 years of history

During the entire show, the topic of a 'common identity', and therefore, the argumentation scheme relying on the topos of 'threat' or 'danger', claiming that national identity may be in danger, is barely questioned, dismantled or discussed. In fact, and perhaps not surprisingly, precisely because "nationalism is an endemic

condition" (Billig, 1995: 6), the common identity might be perceived as being in crisis, but its nature is not questioned. There is a strong identification with Portugal as a concrete, living being, visible in the metonymies and personification. Portuguese national identity is discursively constructed as a tangible thing that is possessed, owned, can be lost, and most importantly can also be stolen, thus the use of possessive determinants 'its' and the verbs 'to have', 'to lose' and 'to steal', as extracts (4) above and (5) and (6) below show:

(5) C1

So Portugal if I'm not very mistaken (.) has been pract- practically for nine centuries with its identity (.) umm that the identity of these people is at risk? it is indeed and globalization and Brussels are enough cause of that

(6) C13

and I apologise for being rude this herd of pseudo-intellectuals stole from us(.) it is them who have controlled our destinies and in fact they stole from us that national identity

Finally, even though Portugal has changed its demographics from a country of emigrants during the 1950s and 1960s to an immigrant-receiving country by the end of the 20th Century, I found strikingly few strategies of other-presentation in relation to working migrants. Only C12 constructs his argument against immigration, as illustrated in (7):

(7) C12

I think that we're losing our national identity because of immigration [...] where I live there are hundreds if not thousands of people from Romania and as you may know these people eat and drink but won't work there's thousands of them

2) The topic of "pride in being Portuguese"

The topic of 'pride in being Portuguese', or rather the absence of this pride, is brought in to the show during the introductory opening of the programme by both the generic radio presenter and the phone-in host. Both refer to the topic of 'pride in being Portuguese' because of the "pride felt for our ancestry" (topos of history and topos of culture), quoting canonical writers and poets, who are collectively known for having discursively constructed representations of both the Portuguese people and the Portuguese 'motherland' (*patria*). This linguistic representation of national identity is contrasted by the first radio presenter by using a dichotomy in terms of lexical choices: "we give way to despair and fatalism and lack of interest after teaching the world not to be afraid of the sea."

When opening the debate, the phone-in host quotes several literary authors by naming them. Her last quotation is from the state's highest figure, the Portuguese

President, who is also quoted¹⁴ in having quoted the authors referred to above. Therefore, the initial 2-3 minutes of the programme are equating national identity and national pride with canonical writers, and with the state in a circular and interdiscursive fashion. The choice of verbs to indicate how the Portuguese feel towards their identity also indicates intertextuality with canonical Portuguese literature and poems, as illustrated in (8). This is the discursive representation of the hegemonic discourse on national identity as it has been reproduced in institutionalized and official settings. Thus, the topos of authority (based on the conclusion rule: Portugal is embedded with all these qualities because the canonical writers (authority) are correct) is fed by several rhetorical devices such as stereotypical positive attributions that implicitly construct positive difference and by visible dichotomies that enhance the country's positive identity. Thus, predication devices such as the ones that occur in extract (8) line 1 together with the contrast between "old country" but "main strength", the reference to the open "borders", and finally, the reference to "a people" who were the pioneers of "universalism" illustrate this idea. This is the state's 'official' discourse, subscribed to and reproduced by state figures in official state acts and ceremonies:

(8) Host

Portugal is an old country whose main strength lies in its people's soul (.) a people who have never closed themselves within borders and in a way umm have shown (.) the world (.) taught the world not to be afraid of the sea ((in breath)) a people who anticipated the European spirit pioneer of the universal spirit as Manuel Alegre says they cannot lose confidence in themselves and in the future of their country ((in breath))

The change in footing is noticeable in most lay participants, constituting a revealing discursive feature of the construction of Portuguese national identity in this particular setting. In fact, and according to C11 (the second academic), this shift in footing could be generalisable to most discourses on national identity uttered by the Portuguese in various settings:

(9) C11

one aspect of our society which is not healthy is that we always talk about the Portuguese as if they were other people in whom we do not include ourselves

The plural noun 'the Portuguese' refers in most instances to 'them' and seldom to 'us', even though it is 'our country'. Therefore, each of the lay participants assumes his or her implicit feelings for the country, but they question everyone else's. Extract (10) is indicative of this ambivalent construction. The speaker's footing signalled by the deictic *we* (including conjugated verbs in the first person plural, possessive pronouns and deitics) is original, because it is for most of the instances speaker exclusive. Indeed,

¹⁴ This programme was broadcast on the 27th June. The President usually delivers a solemn speech about 'the idea of Portugal' on *National Day of Portugal, Camões and the Portuguese Communities* (10th June).

'we' (the Portuguese) as active agents do not include 'I' (the speaker), who actually "knows who we (they) are" (line 2). However, the footing shifts between *we=they* and *we=us* and, from line 5 onwards, *we* becomes an all inclusive *I + you + they*:

(10) C13

our problem is no longer to know who we are ((*in breath*)) our problem is that we do not know who we were because at a certain point- point we erased our history our traditions our culture and the new slogan became being citizens of the world. citizens of Europe(.) and to become citizens of Europe we need to know above all how to be:: Portuguese the result of all this is that we are not respected we do not have any prestige and we are perceived in Europe as some poor devils umm in the European Union I am convinced that we are seen as the five-star hotel waitress whom the boss pats on the head

Conclusion

The critical discourse analysis and conversation analysis frameworks seem to function jointly in linking the models of identity proposed by the (political) elites or the media (the system world) and everyday discourses (the life world). Whereas CDA, or more specifically the DHA, focuses on various levels of contexts, CA (together with the DHA) highlights the co-construction of meaning, a crucial feature in talk. The CA framework illustrates how macro-topics such as the marked class divide can also become evident through the analysis of initial turn taking, participants' footing, forms of address and argumentation construction within the interaction. Within the same communicative event, I partially analysed the elites' discursive representations of national identity, the ordinary people's own representation and their reactions to the former. Most of this article was guided by this dichotomy, addressing the question of what discourses semi-public lay participants draw on to construe and/or represent Portugal's national identity when discussing major national events of the present and the past. In addition, I addressed the question of how the 'us' and the 'other' are discursively represented when constructing national identity, as it highlights one of the main discursive macro-strategies for constructing national identity.

Bearing these characteristics in mind, first, the data revealed features such as the hegemonic or dominant discursive construction of national identity to be very much embedded in the Portuguese collective past, collective history, collective memory and canonical writers - as the semantic macro-areas illustrate. Secondly, the data illustrate how ordinary participants fall back upon 'othering' the social groups whom they perceive as being responsible for the dominant national identity narrative: the elites, the politicians, the political and economic centres of power. As such, it is not the question of competing narratives of Portuguese identity, but rather of one dominant narrative which is superimposed. Thirdly, one of the curious results that needs further investigation relates to the destructive strategy aiming at dismantling parts of national identity. The data show that this strategy is regularly used: national

identity is discursively constructed as a tangible thing that 'others' can steal or destroy. The results show that this delimitation is targeted at the in-group, the Portuguese, and not at an out-group. Theoretically, and according to the DHA framework, this destructive strategy usually links to the constructive strategy focused on presupposing and highlighting in-group national sameness, which is constructed by contrast with constructing out-groups, namely ethnic, national or cultural minorities. However, and surprisingly (if we take into consideration the official numbers for legal and illegal labour migrants in Portugal), this is not the case in these spoken data. In fact, the data suggest that constructing national identity is also the site of social struggle between social classes instead, as research in other national contexts indicates, between 'us=the national group' and 'them=the labour migrants', or 'them=the ethnic minorities'. The constant shifting of perspective together with the various referential strategies for 'Portugal' corroborate these findings.

Finally, when studying the media we must keep in mind that "media production always walks the line between content orientation, factual representation, and the necessity to reach and entertain as many people as possible" (Koller and Wodak, 2008: 6). A show where a given topic is presented for open-line discussion raises questions as to the real public opinion of what is being talked about. As Fairclough (2003: 45) points out in relation to TV debates, the journalist "gathers 'views' from the audience but in a way which separates and fragments them leaving no possibility of dialogue between them". This foregrounds the need to reach a balance between consultation in the public sphere and the host's tight regulation of the interaction or, in other words, the contingent constraints, in the name of a "good show". According to Habermas' communication model of deliberative democracy, a "self-regulating media system" should grant "anonymous audiences feedback between an informed elite discourse and a responsive civil society" (2006: 411-412). The public sphere, then, should grant people free access to a space for eventual consensus with the possibility of marking the difference and leading to action. However, this is not present in my particular data genre, and it is questionable if it is ever present outside the realm of the ideal.

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How to make a drama out of (im)politeness: (Im)politeness in *The Joy Luck Club* (1993)

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Abstract

The Joy Luck Club (1993) is a film adapted from Amy Tan's best-selling novel of the same name (1991). It mainly deals with the differences in social/cultural and personal values between four Chinese-born mothers and their daughters, who are born in the United States. In this paper I focus on the story of one pair, Suyuan and her daughter June. I have chosen two extracts from two consecutive scenes in the film: (a) two mothers brag about their daughters' talents; (b) a family argument between June and Suyuan. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate (A) how politeness and impoliteness theories can help us to interpret the conversations from the two extracts, and hence our understanding of the characters' relationships, and (B) how the non-linguistic elements in the film (including paralinguistic and performance features) work together with the dialogue to reinforce the effects created in (A).

Introduction

Most of the work that has been done so far relating to stylistic textual analysis has tended to be on traditional literary genres, such as poems, prose and fiction. Even in the case of drama, it is mainly the dramatic text (i.e. the script) that the stylistic approach has been applied to (see, for example, McIntyre, 2006; Poole, 1994). McIntyre's (2006) book on point of view in drama mentions about the non-linguistic elements such as stage performance, which, however, is accessed mainly through *reading* the scripts. Why does the traditional stylistic analysis seldom cover the issue of integrating drama performance? To answer this question, Short (1998:7-9) suggests that a drama performance often changes from one to the next, and hence can be 'unfaithful' to the original script. For example, the director and the acting staff can give various interpretations to the original play of *Hamlet*, and then produce it in various ways, and/or in different theatres around the world. It can be difficult to provide a sensitive analysis of these variables in relation to live performances. Films, however, are recorded on video or DVD, which enables us to look through the performances repetitiously for a more detailed study. One may then ask how we can analyse dialogue in film. In traditional film criticism, the linguistic aspects of film dialogue are seldom dealt with in most film criticism. For example, the term "dialogue" is defined in Katz's (1998) exhaustive film encyclopedia as:

[...] in a film, all the spoken lines. Since the cinema is essentially a visual medium, dialogue is, or should be, used more sparingly than in the theatre, supplementing action rather than substituting for it. (1998: 366)

This definition suggests that film critics tend to view film dialogue as something less important in comparison with the visuals. Indeed, as McIntyre (2008: 312) mentions, typical film studies tend to focus more on either "macro-level analyses of issues pertaining to the film as a whole (e.g. narrative structure, the representation of particular ideologies)", or "are micro-analyses of film" (e.g. detailed analysis of lightening, or camera work, or editing, etc.). It is based on these that the stylistic multimodal analysis differs from the typical film studies. In order to account for not only what is said, but also how it is said, and also the contextual and co-textual elements, we have to examine our data with the most detailed transcript. Related to this, my textual analysis in sections 3 and 4 will be based on a full transcription of the two extracts, including images, dialogue, and description of visuals.

I shall make clear at this point that this difference in methodology in treating film dialogue is not intended as an attack on practices of film critics, nor cultural studies. A film should always be perceived as an organic whole, which outputs information spontaneously from the visual and the audio channels. However, due to space and time limitations, this paper cannot cover all the filmic elements from camera work to sound effects, from colour to lighting, etc. Instead, the issues mentioned above lead me to work towards an explanation of (a) what we can get from analysing the film dialogue (i.e. what a character speaks); (b) what the effects we can get by integrating (a) with, specifically, the paralinguistic features (i.e. how a character speaks) and

character’s performance (i.e. how a character behaves physically while speaking).

For purposes of illustration and analysis, I have chosen the film *The Joy Luck Club* (1993) which can be roughly called a family melodrama. It mainly deals with the personal conflicts in the mother-and-daughter relationship. This conflict-driven personal relationship is based on misunderstandings in relation to a cultural gap. Although I have selected two extracts, clearly, the amount of data is not large enough for providing a more significant analysis statistically speaking. However, it is hoped that future research can be carried in this area, including more texts from a greater variety of films.

Politeness

Politeness is normally perceived as a series of social practices of ‘good manners’. When person A refers to person B as ‘good-mannered’ or ‘polite’, she/he actually refers to certain behaviour person B performs, and in turn the comfortable feeling created on person A. Goffman (1967) was the first sociologist who brought the issue of politeness phenomenon to academic attention. He regards politeness as a social rule of human conduct (see Section 2.2) which is based on face-maintenance.

‘Face’ and the ‘extension of ego’

The concept of ‘face’ is firstly introduced by Goffman (1967: 5) and defined as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact”. It is commonly believed that the ‘polite acts’ are established within a certain community with certain cultural systems, and also they are performed within this community under the guidance of the cultural systems. Based on this, Liu (1986: 28) extends Goffman’s definition of face by introducing a useful diagram which demonstrates how one’s feeling of face is related to the elements concerning one’s daily life. The diagram is called “ego and the extension of ego”, and is given below.

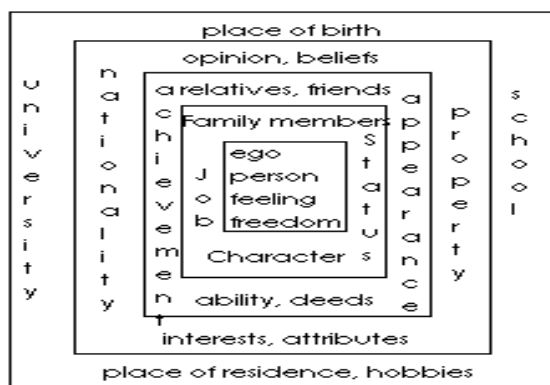


Figure 1 Ego and the extension of ego

The 'ego' located in the centre is considered as the most important element in relation to one's face, including personal feeling and freedom. Other elements around 'ego' are placed at different distances from the centre, according to the degree of impact they can have on face. This means, the further one element is situated from the 'ego', the less impact it would have on face. Since Liu's diagram is prototypical, the elements and their positions may vary from culture to culture, from place to place, or even sometimes from person to person. Hence, it is likely for us to have a situation where some of the components are foregrounded while others remain in the background. Liu gives an example based on the Chinese cultural context. In a Chinese middle school where the teachers hold a meeting with the parents of their students, it is often the parents, even the ones of high status (say, a government official or the owner of a company), who pay respect to the teachers. This is because the teacher-parent relation is foregrounded and other factors become less relevant. In one of my extracts where the two mothers brag about their daughters (see Section 3.1), the women's relationship as enemies takes over their friendship, and the (verbal and/or physical) interactions are more likely to create a face-threatening effect.

Co-operation in face-work

Goffman suggests that the *face-work*, which exists in all social encounters, follows a "guide for action, recommended [...] because it is suitable or just" (Goffman, 1967: 48). This is called *the rule of conduct*. It is this rule-governed nature that makes much face-work ritualized and conventionalized. Goffman's face-work consists mainly of two processes - *the avoidance process* and *the correction process*. The first is the process during which a person tries to avoid threats which are likely to occur in contacts by preventing particular topics arising and certain activities happening. When this effort fails, the participant will undertake the second process, i.e. to recognize them and to correct them. A commonly used strategy in being tacitly cooperative is *reciprocal self-denial*. Often the speaker takes a voluntary role to "depreciate" himself while complimenting the others. Such ideas are similar to the Maxims of Approbation and Modesty in terms of Leech (1983) (see Section 2.3).

Within the two processes, Goffman notes a strategy he calls *deference*. This refers to a "component of activity which functions as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed to a recipient of this recipient, or of something of which this recipient is taken as a symbol, extension, or agent" (1967: 56). Deference can be applied not only to someone in power, but also among social equals. There are two main forms of deference: *avoidance rituals* and *presentational rituals*. Whereas presentational rituals refer to acts like compliments, solutions and invitations made by the individual to show their concern towards their interlocutors (Goffman, 1967: 71), avoidance rituals refer to "those forms of deference which lead the actor to keep at a distance from the recipient and not to violate the 'ideal sphere' that lies around the recipient". The 'sphere' typically includes such matters that cause pain, embarrassment or humiliation to the recipient (Goffman, 1967: 62-65). As shown in the second extract below, the child June, although having less institutional power, penetrates her mother's 'ideal sphere' by bringing up a taboo topic (see Section 4.1).

Brown and Levinson: Face-threatening acts and politeness strategies

Borrowing the term partly from Goffman, Brown and Levinson refer to *face* as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (1987: 66). From this we can see that face can be transferred into wants - the desire that one’s actions be unimpeded by others or that one’s wants are desirable by others. The former kind of wants is named as *negative face*, where the latter is *positive face* (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 66). Whereas negative face is reflected in one’s desire “to have the freedom to act as one choose”, positive face refers to one’s desire “to be liked, approved of, respected and appreciated by others” (Thomas, 1995: 169).

Further, Brown and Levinson construct a Model Person (henceforth, MP) who is attributed with rationality and face, and they examine how this MP acts in different situations where politeness is involved. For Brown and Levinson, there are some speech acts that are inherently face-threatening, and are named as the “face-threatening acts” (henceforth, FTAs) - those social acts that intrinsically threaten face. There are negative FTAs, like issuing commands and asking for help or services, and positive FTAs, like giving criticism. Under normal circumstances, an MP always refrains from performing FTAs, but when it is no longer possible to avoid performing FTAs, the MP would tend to minimize the face-threatening effect of the FTAs. There are four possibilities if s/he decides to perform the FTA: (a) three sets of “on-record” strategies and (b) one set of “off-record” strategies. In (a), one can perform the FTA without any redressive action and produce the highest face threat – “bald on record”. One can also perform FTAs “on-record” by using positive or negative politeness. By “off record”, Brown and Levinson mean the FTA is performed in a way that “there is more than one unambiguously attributable intention so that the actor cannot be held to have committed himself to one particular intent” (1987: 69). That is, the FTA is performed by means of an implicature and always requires the hearer to make an inference (Grice, 1975). Brown and Levinson elaborate the “off-record” strategy into a list of fifteen super-strategies based on Grice’s Cooperative Maxims.

The strategy of using rhetorical questions is seen in western culture as a politeness strategy. Because of its indirectness, Brown and Levinson suggest that it is a violation of the quality maxim to redress a threat. In Chinese culture, however, rhetorical questions can sometimes threaten one’s face. The reason for this is that when a rhetorical question is produced, there is no answer expected from the hearer, either because “the answer is too obvious, or too difficult, or too much to the H’s disadvantage” (Liu, 1986: 76). Hence, the employment of rhetorical questions can be considered more impolite and face-threatening to the hearer, and should be viewed as a bald-on-record strategy. I will discuss this strategy in more detail in the discussion of the family argument (see Section 4.1).

Brown and Levinson’s work has attracted a great deal of discussion, including much criticism, e.g. that their description of FTAs implies that these acts are face-threatening to either the speaker or the hearer, whereas in reality, we can find examples where a FTA can threaten the face of the speaker *and* the hearer (e.g. an apology). I would like to add another point here which is relevant to my texts. That is, Brown and Levinson’s approach to politeness is based on a hypothetical Modal Person who is

assumed to be rational and care about other's face and feelings (1987: 66). Goffman also suggests, in his mentioning of the "ideal sphere" (see Section 2.2), that bringing up the topics which are painful and embarrassing or humiliating to the hearer can be impolite and hurtful to the hearer's feeling. All these seem to suggest that the social rite of politeness might not be working properly among people who have less control of their emotions or less sense of appropriateness in their social behaviour (sometimes, for example, children or adults who are drunk). We shall see in the later analysis that the child performs mostly impoliteness strategies and shows no consideration of the interlocutor's face. This is probably because a child is less "qualified" to be a Modal Person (see Section 4.2).

Leech's politeness principle (PP) and maxims

In this section I will discuss Leech's approach (1977, 1983) towards politeness, namely the 'Politeness Principle' (henceforth, the PP). According to Leech, it is normally used "to minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs' and 'maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs" (Leech, 1983: 81). By using the word "principle"¹, Leech explicitly suggests that the PP is more pragmatic than linguistic and is parallel to Grice's "Cooperative Principle" (1975). This enables Leech's framework to provide a more satisfactory explanation of those social/verbal communications in which Grice's CP fails to explain. I should make it clear that, although I will be mainly applying Leech's framework to my extracts, I am aware that there are problems with his work which have been discussed by a number of people². I shall present his PP here and comment at the end of this section.

Politeness maxims

Leech (1983: 131-8) explicates the PP by dividing it into the following maxims for polite behaviour:

- (1) The Tact Maxim
 - (a) Minimize the cost to others
 - (b) Maximize the benefit to others
- (2) The Generosity Maxim
 - (a) Minimize the benefit to self
 - (b) Maximize the cost of self
- (3) The Approbation Maxim
 - (a) Minimize dispraise of others
 - (b) Maximize praise of others
- (4) The Modesty Maxim

¹ Leech distinguishes *principles* from *rules* in this way: "Principles differ from rules in being normative rather than descriptive, which means that (a) they can be infringed without ceasing to be in force; (b) they can conflict with other co-existing principles; (c) they are relative rather than absolute in their application; (d) they tend to yield interpretations in terms of continuous rather discrete values" (1980 [1977]: 4; also 1983a:21-30).

² See, for example, Fraser (1990) and Thomas (1995).

- (a) Minimize praise of self
- (b) Maximize dispraise of self
- (5) The Agreement Maxim
 - (a) Minimize disagreement between self and others
 - (b) Maximize agreement between self and others
- (6) The Sympathy Maxim
 - (a) Minimize antipathy between self and others
 - (b) Maximize sympathy between self and others.

Due to the space limitations, I will focus only on (3) and (4) from the above list - the maxims of Approbation and Modesty - which are relevant to my examples. The two maxims seem to be two sides of a coin in that whereas the Approbation Maxim is more 'hearer-centered', the Modesty Maxim is 'self-centered'. The former is explained as avoiding saying unpleasant things about the hearer but giving more compliments. The latter requires the speaker, normally in a situation when they are praised and hence their face is enhanced, to say things which either deny or reduce the degree of the praise of the self.

Leech further suggests that the PP, co-existing with the CP with their respective goals and maxims, has a higher regulative role in daily communications. In other words, in order to maintain social equilibrium and friendly relations, sometimes the interlocutors would sacrifice Cooperative maxims to adhere to Politeness maxims (1983:82). I agree with Leech on this point, especially in some situations where interactions are based mostly on the social goal of mutual harmony, as we can see in the following example illustrated by Thomas (1995: 66):

- Example 1 [*Context: A is asking B about a mutual friend's new boyfriend*]
A: Is he nice?
B: She seems to like him.

B could have just answered with "No" or "Yes" which would be the precise amount of information A requires. Grice defines this kind of non-observance as *flouting* - "a speaker blatantly fails to observe a maxim at the level of what is said, with the deliberate intention of generating an implicature" (Thomas, 1995: 65). By flouting, the speaker has no intention of deceiving or misleading, but to "prompt the hearer to look for a meaning which is different from [...] the expressed meaning" (Thomas 1995: 65). Hence, in Example 1 above A would assume that B is somehow 'incapable' of speaking informatively and honestly. This leads A to look for another implicature (perhaps that B does not like the new boyfriend but tries to be polite). One possible implication is that, as Thomas explains (1995: 66), B's flouting stems from "a clash between the maxims of Quantity and Quality", because s/he has to speak on the basis of the evidence they have (i.e. the maxim of Quantity), but cannot say for sure whether the new boyfriend is nice or not (i.e. the maxim of Quality). In effect, this gives A the impression that B does not really like the new boyfriend, but in order to be polite and avoid threatening the boyfriend's positive face, B flouts the Gricean maxims of Quantity and Quality to uphold the Approbation Maxim in Leech's terms (i.e. minimize the dispraise of others).

Irony principle

Sometimes, however, when, for example, approbation is applied, the speaker might 'praise' the hearer for something which is actually bad (and both the interlocutors know it is bad). This is labelled by Leech as the "Irony Principle" (henceforth, the IP) and described as:

If you must cause offence, at least do so in a way which does not overtly conflict with the PP, but allows the hearer to arrive at the offensive point of your remark indirectly, by way of implicature (1983: 82).

The IP "enables a speaker to be impolite while seeming to be polite; it does so by superficially breaking the Cooperative Principle, but ultimately upholding it" (1983: 142). As we will see in one of the examples later³, the two Chinese mothers appear to be polite (at least to sound polite), but in fact is "indulging in an "honest" form of apparent deception, at the expense of politeness" (Leech, 1983: 83).

So far we might notice that this IP seems to produce more of an impolite impression on the hearer rather than a polite and "nice" one. With regard to this issue, Leech suggests that in a situation where IP is observed, the notion of 'politeness' is better thought of as *relative politenesses* – a kind of politeness that is "relative to context or situation" (Leech, 1983: 102). By this, we are encouraged to identify and interpret politeness based on the specific context/situation where the social communication is carried out. So in the case of IP, it is more important to identify in a specific situation, whether the IP is used with the intention to minimize impoliteness.

Although Leech was the first one who explicitly suggests that the PP is parallel to the CP, he does not to clarify the relationships between these two principles. He seems to indicate the principles come to play in order – "if the CP is violated, the PP is invoked, and if that is violated, the Irony Principle comes into play" (Dillon *et al.* 1985: 454). Like in Example 1 above, is it really the case that person B tries to observe the PP by violating the CP, or that B simply observes the CP because they do not know this new boyfriend well enough to give a judgment? Dillon *et al.* (1985: 452-6) provide an enlightening discussion of these sorts of issues. I will not go into more detail here due to the spatial limitations.

Linguistic theories on impoliteness

Culpeper (1996): Impoliteness strategies

On the basis of Brown and Levinson's model in Figure 2, Culpeper (1996: 356) suggests that every politeness strategy has its opposite, namely, impoliteness strategy to attack face. They are:

- (1) Bald on record impoliteness
- (2) Positive impoliteness

³ See section 3.1

- (3) Negative impoliteness
- (4) Sarcasm/mock politeness

The “bald-on-record” impoliteness normally occurs when FTAs are used “in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimized” (Culpeper, 1996: 356). For the purpose of a better distinction, Culpeper (1996: 356) claims that Brown and Levinson’s “bald on record” is a *politeness* strategy. It is normally used in situations where impoliteness is not intended (e.g. when the face concerns are suspended in an emergency, when the threat to hearer’s face is very small, or when the speaker has more power over the hearer). A parent, for example, has the power, right and duty to perform FTAs to the child, if, they think that it is in the child’s interest.

Impoliteness and characterization

So far we have covered generally the linguistic work on how speakers are polite through their verbal productions and how they mitigate impoliteness linguistically. In this section I focus on Culpeper’s (1998; 2001) approach to impoliteness in dramatic texts, especially to the issue of how impoliteness helps us understand a fictional character. Culpeper (1998: 83) suggests that the choice of an (im)politeness strategy of a particular character helps to increase our understanding of the personality of this character. More specifically, it helps us to understand “(1) how characters position themselves relative to other characters, and (2) how they manipulate others in pursuit of their goals” (1998: 83).

My interest here, however, is in whether or not children have a sufficiently adult-like comprehension of face to effectively conform to politeness norms in social interactions. Brown and Levinson’s proposal of a Modal Person (see section 2.3) seems to suggest that in normal circumstances children, due to their limited social experience and knowledge, are assumed to show less concern with regard to how they are perceived by the public. This leads to the assumption that, compared to adults, it is more likely for children to do FTAs without noticing that they are being ‘impolite’. Such an assumption can be reinforced by the fact that children are normally bound by fewer social obligations, which encourages them to be more expressive and direct in expressing their emotions. One study (Camras, Pristo, & Brown, 1985) suggests that children are still in the process of acquiring the appropriate sociolinguistic skills, politeness being one of them. This study also points out that the children with a hostile-aggressive nature, for example, would be more easily provoked and act less politely than the adults with the same nature.



(Im)politeness in *The Joy Luck Club*

In this chapter I use the concepts that I have explained previously on the two extracts from the film *The Joy Luck Club*. The extracts are mainly about two characters, the Chinese mother Suyuan, who has immigrated to the United States, and her daughter,

June, who is a second-generation American. When June was a little girl, Suyuan had too high expectations for her, hoping that she would be a piano playing prodigy. June resents her mother's pressure, and tries to get away with practising sloppily. Since her piano teacher, old Mr. Chong, is deaf, she can play incorrectly without him noticing. Suyuan's best friend, Lindo, is also ambitious about her daughter, Waverly, who is China Town's chess champion. There are competitions between the two mothers who always brag about their daughters when they meet. This feeling of competition has transferred to the young girls, who now dislike one another. In a school performance June plays terribly and makes many mistakes in front of her parents and their friends. June's performance failure embarrasses her mother publicly.

Extract 1: Suyuan and Lindo brag about their daughters' talents

Extract 1 below happens before June performs. My discussion will start with the linguistic analysis of the voice-over narration which helps us to contextualise the conversation. I will then carry out a more detailed politeness discussion of the conversation. Lastly, I will examine how the message we get from the linguistic analysis is reinforced by integrating the non-linguistic elements from this film extract. By 'non-linguistic elements', I mainly refer to how the speakers deliver their speeches verbally (i.e. the paralinguistic features), and what physical behaviour they exhibit (i.e. character's performance). A table with the dialogue and some general visual features is provided below. The audio information is further divided into diegetic sound (i.e. dialogue and other sound effects which are "presented as originating from a source within the film's fictional world") and non-diegetic sound (which is "represented as coming from a source outside the space of the narrative") (Bordwell & Thompson, 2001: 430, 432). In the extract below, the diegetic sound is the mothers' conversation whereas the nondiegetic sound is the voice-over narration (henceforth, VO). I have further divided shots 3 and 5 because of the some interesting changes in character's performance (see column 'Description of Visuals' in the table below).

Shot no.	Image	Description of Visuals	Diegetic Sound	Nondiegetic Sound
1		Little June stands behind the curtain, waiting for her piano performance. She looks out towards the audience.		[VO] When I was young, Auntie Lindo
2		The camera cuts to Lindo and Suyuan, who sit next to each other.		[VO] ...was my mother's best friend and archenemy.







3.1		June, still waiting at the backstage, takes a deep breath.		[VO] Their weapons of choice were comparing their children.
3.2		She then looks out towards the audience again.		Mom was sick of hearing Auntie Lindo brag about her daughter...
4		The camera is cut to a close-up of Lindo's daughter, Waverly. She sits with one of her hands supporting her chin.		[VO] ...Waverly, who was Chinatown's chess champion.
5.1		The camera cuts back to the two mothers.	[Lindo] I ask my daughter: "Help me carry grocery." She think this too much ask. All day long she play chess. I dust off all her trophy.	[VO] That night mom figured I'd redeem her with my international piano debut.
5.2		Lindo turns to Suyuan, starting to initiate a conversation. She also stretches out her hand to draw Suyuan's attention.	Appreciate me? No. You lucky. You don't have the same problem.	
5.3		Still within the same frame composition, Suyuan delivers her turn.	[Suyuan] My problem worsen than yours. If I tell June time to wash dish, she hear nothing but music. It's just like you can't stop this natural talent.	

Table 1 The two mothers' bragging in the school performance

Linguistic analysis of the voice-over narration (shots 1-5.1)

The VO in shot 1 immediately provides us with the contextual information concerning the two women's personal relationship. The phrase "best friend and archenemy" suggests that the relationship between Suyuan and Lindo is somehow paradoxical. According to Liu's (1986:28) diagram of ego and ego extension (see Section 2.1), the closer a personal element (in this case, the daughters' talents) is situated in relation to

the ego, the more one is concerned about face, and different personal elements can be more related to face depending on specific situations. Based on this, we can assume that the two mothers, although in normal circumstance are friends, have a clash of personal interest which is their daughters' talents and achievements. This is clearly indicated by the phrase "comparing their children" in the VO in shot 3.1. Also the value-laden word "weapons" indicates that the degree of hostility can overtake the friendship when the mothers are in a situation where their daughters are competing. This relationship positions the two mothers in an interesting situation where (a) they have to 'compete', creating a certain degree of impoliteness, but at the same time (b) to be polite (or at least pretend to be polite) for their friendship (i.e. any side's victory would cause face-loss to the other side). So we can view (a) as the conversational goal of the two interlocutors, whereas (b) is the social goal.

Based on our real-world knowledge, we know schematically that a school performance is normally seen as a good opportunity for children to present and feel more confident, but also for the parents to feel proud of their children. So in the above extract, Suyuan's face is already enhanced, even though her daughter has not yet performed. As a result, feeling the need to preserve her face, Lindo chooses to initiate the bragging in shot 5.2 about her daughter's chess-playing.

Linguistic analysis of the conversation (shots 5.2-5.3)

In terms of social identity, Suyuan and Lindo are not only homemakers and mothers, but also are first-generation immigrants from China. This is clearly indicated by their appearance, and also their shared dialect, namely, 'Chinglish' (i.e. the spoken/written English that is influenced by Chinese). As Guan suggests (2007: 9), Chinglish can be represented on various levels from phonetics to semantics, from syntax to discourse, etc. Due to the space limitations here, I will only point out one linguistic feature – no singular or tense markers for third-person verbs – that may be relevant to our general interpretation.

The third person singular verbs has no –s inflection (e.g. "she think", "she play", "you lucky" in shot 5.2; "she hear" in shot 5.3) – a simplification which is in line with what happens in Chinese. Since Lindo and Suyuan's use of English verbs are uninflected, it is difficult to identify whether the situations they describe are generalized situations or happened in the past. Take Lindo's speech in shot 5.2 for instance. She describes a situation by saying "I ask my daughter: 'Help me carry grocery'". This can be seen either as a reported direct speech presentation, suggesting a past event that she asked help from her daughter Waverly, or as a generalized presentation of Lindo asking for Waverly's help based on a series of iterative experiences. Then she reports the response of her daughter ("She think this too much ask"). This is more likely based on what Waverly said verbally (or maybe on repetitive occasions), which is now being presented by her mother in the form of an indirect thought presentation.

Since Lindo's conversational goal (to enhance her own face) conflicts with the social goal (to minimize praise of herself), she is faced with a choice concerning how she delivers her message – either to observe the CP (in which case she must tell the

truth that her daughter is very talented and hence attacks Suyuan's face) or observe the Politeness Principle (in which case she must NOT tell the truth by attacking her own face). As shown in the following discussion, the result is that Lindo exploits the PP (i.e. at least to *sound* polite) in order to uphold the CP.

As a whole, we can identify Lindo's speech as a complaint. The first two sentences can be seen as the spelling out of *preparatory conditions* in Searle (1969) terms. She then makes two direct complaints – “All day long she play chess” and “I dust all her trophy”. We know schematically that parents would seldom complain about their children's full engagement in talents, or about their achievements adding extra housework. This leads us to an impression that Lindo's complaints are clearly not true. There is hence an obvious breach of the Quality Maxim in terms of Grice's CP. The implicature generated from this violation is that Lindo is actually boasting about her daughter, but trying to make her boast sound modest. Arguably one can say that in Lindo's case, the Maxim of Modesty is upheld at the level of ‘what is said’, but at the level of ‘what is really meant’ the Modesty Maxim is actually violated. In effect, the viewers get a sense of irony and humour, since it is through the IP that Lindo delivers an indirect boast, a polite speech act through her ‘mock modesty’.

We shall now take a look at how Suyuan responds to Lindo's boast. She is faced with a choice – either to challenge Lindo's sincerity, which would be massively face-threatening, or to beat Lindo at her own game. We can see from shot 5.3 that Suyuan chooses the latter, in which she also tries to minimize the praise of herself in a mock manner. Suyuan starts her turn with an insincere complaint, saying “My problem worser than yours. If I tell June time to wash dish, she hear nothing but music”. From Suyuan's response, we can see that she successfully interprets Lindo's complaint in shot 5.2 as a boast. Consequently, by stating that she is in a worse situation, Suyuan indicates that her daughter, June, is actually more involved in her talent. Also the use of the IF-clause presupposes a situation where June would rather play the piano than helping her mother.

Integrating the non-linguistic features

Although I have used the word ‘non-linguistic’, I am aware that such term is too ambiguous. A typical film criticism can include aspects from lighting to costume, from performance to vocal quality, etc. Hence, it seems unfair to use such a grand word. Nevertheless, I still use it sometimes because the word ‘non-linguistic’ works more like an umbrella term that can include any aspect relevant and important for our interpretation. In the case of Extract 1, as I will soon cover in the following discussion, it is the paralinguistic features of the spoken dialogue and character's performance that are mostly related to our linguistic interpretation and also our understanding of the characters' relationship.

Unlike written literature, films provide us with the access not only to what it is said, but also to how it is said, through the paralinguistic presentations and characters' facial expressions. My discussion of the paralinguistic features is mainly based on Gillian Brown's *Listening to Spoken English* (1990: 112-37) where he gives a detailed and extended discussion of interpreting speaker's attitude through vocal features. Brown

(1990: 115-136) studies the paralinguistic features of spoken English based on a series of variables - (1) pitch span, (2) placement in voice range, (3) pitch direction, (4) lip setting, (5) pause and (6) tempo. The graphological changes in the dialogue below indicate the following: + standing for a pause, CAPITAL for stress, ↑ and ↓ for rising and falling pitch level, underline for slow tempo. Also for the purpose of clarification, I have added more specified paralinguistic descriptions which are italicised in square brackets.

Speaker	Dialogue
Lindo	[normal pitch level] <u>I ask my daughter. 'Help me carry grocery'. She think this too much ask.</u> ↑ [sudden rising pitch level] <u>All day long she play + chess.</u> [speed-up tempo] I dust all her TROPHY. Appreciate me? No. You lucky. You don't have the same problem.
Suyuan	[normal pitch level] My problem + worsen than yours. If I tell June time to wash dish, she hear nothing + but music. It's like you can't stop this natural talent.

Table 2 Paralinguistic description of the conversation in Extract 1

As Brown suggests (1990: 125), slow tempo itself has little significance in terms of interpretation, but can be more informative if there is any change in one's speech tempo, as we have seen in Lindo's speech from the above table. Lindo starts with a slow tempo which gives us an impression that she thinks carefully and is confident about what she is speaking. Lindo uses this feature to reinforce the sense of sincerity to her complaint about her daughter. But in fact, this feature of slow tempo effectively increases the humour effect since her 'complaint' is not at all true. Apart from this, Lindo starts her turn by speaking within a normal pitch range, but then raises her pitch level. So comparatively speaking, we can feel an obvious rise in her pitch level, from a "growl" range to a "squeak" range (Brown, 1990: 119). This in turn creates an impression that she really feels bothered by her daughter. What is also interesting is that Lindo uses once a pause just before the word "chess". It is not difficult to identify that this pause is used more for a rhetorical purpose, which is to draw her hearer's attention on the key information and to cue her hearer's to the correct implicature – that Lindo's daughter is very talented in playing chess. Similarly, the stress put on the word "trophy" reinforces the impression that Lindo is actually boasting rather than complaining.

In comparison, the paralinguistic features of Suyuan's speech seem to be less marked. She uses two salient pauses before "worsen" and "but music". Based on this, we can sense that Suyuan might try to draw Lindo's attention on her daughter's talent in playing the piano. However, I would suggest that, by using the two pauses, the intended perlocutionary effect of Suyuan is to defeat Lindo. Since Lindo always likes to brag about her daughter, Suyuan has to use her daughter in order to 'win the game'. The first pause before the comparative 'worse', for example, indicates clearly that Suyuan already places herself in a 'competition' with Lindo. In fact, such intention is

also indicated by the voice-over narration by the adult June: “Mom *was sick of* Auntie Lindo brag about her daughter...*mom figured I’d redeem her* with my international piano debut” (my emphasis). Here Suyuan’s wish world (Ryan, 1991) is described more as to save her face, rather than to enhance her face by showing off.

Now we shall look closer at the facial expressions of the two mothers while they are ‘competing’. Lindo’s facial expression, especially her eye and head movement, is much richer than Suyuan. I have given more specific descriptions (italicized and in brackets) of their facial expressions and body movements. Since most of the character movements are performed spontaneously with the utterances, I have place the specific performance description with the relevant speech in the same column.

Speaker	No.	Dialogue
Lindo	1	I ask... (<i>eyes looking downwards and stretching out her arm towards Suyuan</i>)
	2	(<i>looking down</i>) ‘Help me carry grocery’ (<i>looking up at Suyuan</i>).
	3	(<i>looking down</i>) She think this too much ask (<i>looking up at Suyuan and soon looking down</i>).
	4	(<i>looking down</i>) All day long she play (<i>looking up at Suyuan</i>) chess.
	5	(<i>still looking at Suyuan</i>) I dust all (<i>Lindo’s eyes move aside and then back on Suyuan</i>) her trophy.
	6	(<i>still looking at Suyuan</i>) Appreciate me?
	7	(<i>looking down, and touches on Suyuan’s hands</i>) No. You lucky.
	8	(<i>looking at Suyuan</i>) You don’t have (<i>looking to the front</i>) the same problem.






Table 3 Description of Lindo’s performance in Extract 1






As I have mentioned in the visual description of shot 5.2 (see Table 1), Lindo initiates the conversation by stretching out her arm to draw Suyuan’s attention. Such intimate behaviour occurs again in no. 7. In Chinese culture at least, intimate actions between the women such as holding or touching each other’s hands are more associated with friendship or intention for friendship. Based on this, in the above case of 7, we are given the impression that Lindo, realising that her boast threatens her interlocutor’s face, might be trying to reclaim her friendship with Suyuan. Such impression is reinforced linguistically by Lindo’s speech in which she delivers a compliment of Suyuan (“You lucky”).

So far I have demonstrated how the features in relation to paralinguistics and character performance can be related for the purpose of our interpretation. I will extend such discussion more by focusing on the second extract – a family verbal conflict between the mother (Suyuan) and the daughter (June).

Analysis of the family argument scene

The second example is taken from the scene immediately after the piano performance fiasco by which Suyuan's pride is punctured. Suyuan lost face in front of her enemy Lindo, which urges her to make June do more practice. Suyuan still believes that her daughter is talented and only needs to work harder. However, the fact that June puts little effort into playing the piano contradicts Suyuan's belief. This section will apply the framework of impoliteness (see Section 2.5) onto Extract 2. Then I will move on to discuss how their conversational behaviours (i.e. the paralinguistic and performance features) contribute to our understanding of this family argument and the mother-and-daughter relationship.

Shot no.	Image	Description of visuals	Diegetic sound	Nondiegetic sound
6		June is watching TV. Suyuan walks in. The camera is situated slightly lower than Suyuan, looking up at her.	SUYUAN: Four o'clock. Turn off TV. Practice piano time.	
7		The camera cuts to June, who is looking up at Suyuan, frowning, and then she looks down, back to watch the TV.		VO: I couldn't believe what she was saying, like I was supposed to go through the same torture again. Forget it!
8		Suyuan raises her eyebrows. The same camera work as in shot 6 is applied here.	SUYUAN: What I say? Four o'clock.	
9		June replies to her mother, but still lies on the floor without any physical sign going to play the piano.	JUNE: I'm not going to play anymore. Why should I?	
10		Suyuan steps forward, forming a close-up on her face. The short distance gives us a clearer picture of her facial expression-she frowns.	SUYUAN: What did you say?	

11		June still lies on the floor.	JUNE: I'm not your slave. This isn't China. You can't make me.	
12		The camera is cut to a long shot, showing us the overall physical conflicts between the mother and daughter. Suyuan pulls June up from the floor by holding at her arms, while June is resisting. Suyuan then drags June into another room where the piano is, and throws June at the piano chair.	SUYUAN: Get up!	
13		The camera is cut back to a close-up on June, who is crying.	JUNE: You want me to be someone I'm not! I'll never be the kind of daughter that you want me to be!	
14		Suyuan, frowning, and stands right next to June. Meanwhile, Suyuan keeps her eyes wide open.	SUYUAN: Be two kinds of daughter: obedient or follow own mind. Only one kind of daughter could live in this house: obedient kind.	
15		June is still crying	JUNE: Then I wish I wasn't your daughter! I wish you weren't my mom!	

16		Suyuan, still frowning, slightly opens her mouth to breath, trying to stop herself from crying.	SUYUAN: Too late to change this.	
17			JUNE: Then I wish I were dead, like them, the babies...	VO: That's when I remembered what we could about.
18		Suyuan closes her mouth and her face seems to be frozen.	JUNE: ...that you killed in China!	

Table 4 Verbal conflict between Suyuan and her daughter, June

Linguistic discussion of the verbal conflict

The conversation in Extract 2 takes place at home where less politeness is involved in the conversation between family members. Also, because of her institutional power and obligations as a mother, Suyuan is more likely to perform FTAs (e.g. imperatives) with less redress. This can be seen in her first turn in shot 6 where she performs an indirect command. By spelling out the felicity condition (“Four o’clock”; “Practice piano time”) for the command, Suyuan produces the command with less face-threatening effect. In turn we also get the impression that Suyuan is only reminding June of her daily routine with no intention to threaten her face. Since Suyuan gets no response from June, she produces a FTA in the form of a rhetorical question in turn 8 – “What (did) I say?”. By implicature, it can be seen as an indirect command, like ‘Do as I told you’. Similarly in shot 10 Suyuan produces another rhetorical question, creating the same kind of face-threatening effect on June (see Section 2.3). We are given the impression that Suyuan performs the FTAs with less redress, especially up to turn (11) where she simply delivers a direct command (“Get up!”). Till now we can get the strongest effect of tension and conflict.

June’s verbal production is also characterized by her choice of impoliteness strategies. June firstly violates the turn-taking norm by not responding to Suyuan in shot 7. Brown and Levinson include this as one of the FTAs (1987: 233). Secondly, June uses a bald-on-record impoliteness strategy in shot 9 by producing the negative statement below:

Shot 9) “I’m not going to play anymore. Why should I?”

This acts as a refusal of the requested future action and her mother's commands. Following this, June replies with a rhetorical question "Why should I?", with high face-threatening effect. By using the obligative modal verb *should*, June implies that she has no obligation to play for her mother and is questioning her mother's right to demand it. June's impoliteness strategy threatens both Suyuan's personal negative face (her wanting June to play the piano) and her institutional positive face (her role as a mother). By doing this, June tries to go against the 'dutiful-daughter' role which her mother is forcing her into. Moreover, June also attacks her mother's positive face by expressing impolite beliefs. She first attacks Suyuan's cultural and social roles as a Chinese and a mother in shot 11 below:

Shot 11) "I am not your slave. This isn't China!"

June expresses the unreasonable misbelief that she has been treated like a slave by her own mother, and that it is common in China for parents to do this. June soon launches the second attack on Suyuan's role as a mother in shot 15 by expressing explicitly her 'wish-world':

Shot 15) "Then I wish I wasn't your daughter! I wish you weren't my mom!"

Again in shots 17 and 18, June attacks Suyuan's positive face in the fiercest way:

Shot 17, 18) "Then I wish I were dead, like them, the babies that you killed in China!"

Here June not only attacks Suyuan's positive face by selecting a sensitive topic (Culpeper 1996: 357), but also violates the Maxim of Quality – "do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence or say what you believe to be false" (Thomas 1995: 63). In fact, the truth is shown immediately in the next flashback scene where Suyuan, under extreme duress from the war, has left her babies in a relatively peaceful village in order to protect them from harm and in the hope that they would be adopted.

Impoliteness and the characterisation of June

Throughout the verbal argument, June rebels against her mother's points, and effectively tries to threaten and/or blame her in order to achieve the goal of not having to play the piano. In the end, the family secret puts Suyuan in a vulnerable position, open to her daughter's accusation. One would then come to a conclusion about June's characterisation, saying that she is rude and aggressive, and shows no respect towards her mother. However, I would suggest that a judgment of the characterisation of June should be based more on the specific context - she is a child, and she is brought up in a completely different cultural and social context from her mother.

What is also interesting about June's conversational behaviours is how frequently she violates the CP and the PP (i.e. almost in every turn and sentence). This deviation in terms of quantity indicates that June is in a situation where she cannot

control herself. Grice assumes that his Cooperative Principle is based on adult speakers who are able to control their language. They know consciously or unconsciously whether they speak the truth. Children, on the other hand, often cannot fully control their use of language for exchanges in social purposes (including politeness).

Politeness is often seen as the “golden rule” for social harmony. This is perhaps why Brown and Levinson (1978: 69) base their politeness theory on a hypothetical Model person (MP) with rationality and consideration of face. This excludes certain kinds of people who lack self-control or take less responsibility in this aspect. June in Extract 2 belongs to this non-MP group, and can be described as “hostile and unsophisticated”. She behaves (linguistically and physically) as if she is unable to control her emotions and language. She can be easily provoked because she is less concerned about face and politeness. Also, June shows little concern for other people’s feelings. Brown and Levinson (1987: 66) suggest that using the speech act of complaint “threatens the positive-face want, by indicating that the speaker does not care about the addressee’s feeling and wants, etc”. June, for example, performs the speech act of complaints in order to protest that Suyuan forces her to do things against her will.

Shot 11) “You can’t make me!”

and

Shot 13) “You want me to be someone I’m not!”

Now we have seen that June’s violation of the CP and PP is more related to her nature as a child. Based on this, we can have more interpretations of June’s characters. As I mentioned earlier, the imperatives Suyuan deliver in shots 6 and 8 (see below) have little face-threat.

Shot 6) “Four o’clock. Turn off TV. Practice piano time.”

Shot 8) “What I say? Four o’clock.”

This is because she is the mother and has the power and responsibility to remind June of her daily piano-practice. More importantly, as Culpeper (1996: 356) notes, Suyuan has no intention of attacking her daughter’s face, and hence her FTAs are more like what Brown and Levinson (1987: 69) call “bald-on-record”. It is also likely to have a situation where a character in personal terms would act powerfully even though they have less social, economic or institutional power, as one can see from Extract 2 above. June, the ten-year-old daughter, appears to claim more personal power by challenging and attacking her mother’s face and emotions. This can be reflected in a clash of interest between the daughter and the mother. Suyuan wants her daughter to learn something useful for the future, whereas June wants to do whatever she likes to, and consequently, she feels that her negative wants are threatened.

Integrating the paralinguistic elements

Due to the spatial limitations here, I have chosen to focus only on the paralinguistic features in Extract 2, although interpreting the paralinguistic features cannot be isolated from the dialogue and the performance (see the “visual description” in Table 4). It is still worth noting that, although both extracts 1 and 2 present the verbal conversations between two interlocutors, the camera work and editing devices are used differently. In Extract 1 (see Table 1), we are presented with the conversation mainly through a single long shot and we get a balanced composition, where the each mother takes up half of the frame. In Extract 2 (see Table 4), however, most of the verbal conflict is shown with a series of cuts. This kind of shot/reverse-shot editing (c.f. Bordwell and Thompson 2001: 267) in Extract 2 is normally adopted in face-to-face conversations. Nonetheless, if we compare the choices of camera work and editing between the two extracts, the filmmaker intends to intensify the sense of conflict.

Again, I have presented the conversation in the table below with the paralinguistic indications by adopting G. Brown’s (1990) approach (see Section 3.1.3 for explanation of Brown’s approach to paralinguistic features).

Speaker and turn no.	Dialogue
Suyuan, 1	Four o’clock. ↑ Turn off TV. ↑ Practice piano time. [<i>extended pitch span - starting with a relatively high pitch range, and gradually dropping down to normal</i>]
June, 2	[<i>no verbal response</i>]
Suyuan, 3	What I say? ↑ Four o’clock. [<i>high placing in the voice range</i>]
June, 4	I’m not going to play anymore. ↓ <u>Why SHOULD I?</u> ↓
Suyuan, 5	What did you say? ↑ [<i>raising the pitch range even higher</i>]
June, 6	I’m not your SLAVE. This Isn’t CHIna. You <u>CAN’T MAKE ME.</u> [<i>increasing voice volume</i>]
Suyuan, 7	Get up! [<i>sudden drop into a ‘growl’ range</i>]
June, 8	No! [<i>starting to shout loudly, with a placing in the voice range higher than normal</i>]
	No! No, I won’t. [<i>Then the loudness of her voice is reduced, together with her placement of her voice range</i>]
	You want me to be someone I’m not! I’ll never be the kind of daughter that you WANT me to be! [<i>Crying and speaking in a rapid tempo</i>]
Suyuan, 9	Be TWO kinds of daughter: oBEdiant or follow OWN mind. [<i>shouting in a low ‘growl’ voice range, with a low volume</i>]
	Only ONE kind of daughter could live in THIS house: OBIDIENT kind. [<i>still shouting breathily, in a low voice range</i>]
June, 10	Then I wish I wasn’t your DAUGHTER! I wish YOU weren’t my mom!

	[<i>high in voice range</i>]
Suyuan, 11	+ Too late to change this. [<i>no more shouting; speaking with a lowered the voice range, softly</i>]
June, 12	Then I wish I were DEAD, LIKE THEM, the BABIES that you KILLED in China! [<i>still high in voice range, shouting, in a fast tempo</i>]

Table 6 Paralinguistic description of the conversation in Extract 2

In terms of the placement in voice range (c.f. G. Brown, 1990: 119-22), Suyuan and June show different patterns. Suyuan starts with a speaking range higher than her normal one (e.g. Suyuan 1, 3 and 5), but then her placement in the voice range falls down to normal, or even lower than normal. This is especially clear starting in turn 7 where Suyuan not only drops into a kind of ‘growl’ range, but also speaks with a kind of power - low in volume but with a certain degree of strength in terms of voice quality. In relation to the Suyuan’s speech in turn 7, she seems to re-claim her power as a mother through the above paralinguistic change, and to suggest that June should obey her orders. This is also the case in turn 9 which also gives us an impression of threatening. In turn 11, by putting stress on the words “daughter” and “you” (referring to Suyuan), June not only attacks Suyuan’s role as a mother, but also challenges the mother-and-daughter relationship. This is perhaps why Suyuan drops her voice range to the lowest point, and also her voice quality suddenly becomes soft. This leads us to assume that June really hurts her mother’s feeling without realising it, as we can see that June continues to attack her mother in turn 12.

As for June, the patterns of how she places her voice range and the tempo seem to be the opposite. June starts in a normal voice range in turn 4, while speaking in steady and normal tempo. Although in turn 6 she uses some stresses on certain words and also increases her volume, June still manages to speak steadily, in a normal voice range. We hence can assume that June tries to argue in reasonable manner for her rhetoric purpose - she wants to do what she likes rather than obeying her mother. However, June does not stick to this rhetorical strategy long enough to win the argument. Soon after Suyuan performs some physical threats through turns 7 and 8 (e.g. pulling and dragging June to the piano), June’s nature as a child is immediately exposed through what and how she speaks. In paralinguistic terms, June raises her voice range in turn 8, crying and shouting at Suyuan. Her high ‘squeak’ voice range with the certain degree of loudness keeps till the last turn of Extract 2. All these features indicate that June is incapable of fully controlling her emotions.

Conclusion

The (im)politeness approaches have enabled me to prove the significant role certain linguistic elements play in films. As can be seen from the example above, language becomes a weapon in the bragging for the mothers to enhance their face when

associating with their daughters and also in the verbal conflict to destroy the interlocutor's face and to manifest power (institutional or personal). Further, the non-linguistic features in relation to paralinguistics and character's performance help us to see more clearly the contradiction between the mothers' conversational goal to enhance the face of the self, and the social goal to 'protect' the other's face. It is through this contradiction that the sense of humour is created.

In the second extract, both the linguistic and the paralinguistic features are used in different ways by the mother and the daughter. I have also been able to show that June's conflict with her mother is mainly because she, as a child, has an incomplete understanding of some of the social politeness conventions. We are given the impression of June as a child who lacks capacity to control her own emotions struggles for her personal power and gives no tolerance and understanding to her mother. In turn, this leads us to sympathise more for Suyuan, as her traumatic past is brought up by June. We are hence more likely to view Extract 2 as part of the family tragedy where the misunderstanding is more resulted by the clash of two different wish worlds, the mother's and the daughter's.

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Exploring the linguistic landscape: the case of the 'Golden Triangle' in the Algarve, Portugal

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Abstract

Studies of the linguistic landscape (LL) are concerned with language in its written form, in the public sphere; language that is visible to all through texts such as billboards and other public signs. The LL is such a taken-for-granted part of our everyday experience that its importance as a form of social practice is often overlooked. Taking a mixed methods approach to the case of the linguistic landscape of the 'Golden Triangle', an area of tourist resorts which is gradually becoming a residential area in the Algarve, Portugal, I suggest that the discursive construction of a place is partly achieved through the highly visible texts of the LL which may also impact upon the discursive construction of the collective identities of those who inhabit the place.

Introduction

There has been a recent, and growing, interest amongst researchers in sociolinguistics and other areas of applied linguistics in the 'linguistic landscape' (LL), which is taken here to mean the amalgamation of all the linguistic tokens that are present in, and thus mark, the public sphere. Although the linguistic landscape constitutes the "very scene (...) where society's public life takes place" (Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006: 8), it is such a taken-for-granted part of our everyday experience that its importance as a form of social practice is often overlooked.

Gunther Kress has argued that "all signs are equally subject to critical reading, for no sign is innocent" (Kress, 1993: 174). Whilst it is debatable whether *all* public signs are ideological in nature, it seems reasonable to suggest that they are *potentially*, in some way, symbolic markers of status and power, operating within semiotic systems of social positioning and power relationships. Linguistic choices - including code choice or preferences - in public spaces serve to index broader societal attitudes towards different languages and, ultimately, their speakers. These attitudes may reflect the language policies of a particular nation-state or region, especially in territories which are officially bilingual or multilingual, or the more localized language practices of a particular community. In a country like Portugal, essentially a monolingual nation,¹ and as such with no apparent need for explicit, state-imposed, language policies, there are nonetheless multilingual language practices in evidence in some parts of the LL. Furthermore, it is through an examination of these practices that symbolic power relations may be revealed.

This paper presents a case study of part of the linguistic landscape of the Algarve, Portugal's most important tourist region, focusing on the small town of Almancil and the area surrounding it – the so-called 'Golden Triangle'. Besides exploring the symbolic functions of this specific LL, particularly through linguistic code preference, the main objective of the case study is to explore how the LL contributes to the discursive construction of place-identity, which can be understood here as the relationship between the discursive construction of place and the discursive construction of the individual and collective identities of those who inhabit the place.

I begin by discussing the concept of the linguistic landscape and what investigating it might uncover. I then review some of the empirical work that has been done on the linguistic landscape before presenting the case study.

The linguistic landscape

Studies of the linguistic landscape (LL) are concerned with language in its written form, in the public sphere; language that is visible to all in a specified area (Gorter, 2006). It is, according to Landry & Bourhis (1997: 25), "the language of public road

¹ The EC Special Eurobarometer Report 'Europeans and their Languages' (European Commission, 2006) reveals that of the 25 European countries considered in the survey, it was only in Portugal and Hungary that 100% of the respondents claimed the respective state language as their native language.

signs, advertising boards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings” which form the linguistic landscape of “a given territory, region or urban agglomeration”. The list provided by Landry & Bourhis in their definition includes only relatively fixed signs and texts – signs which have some degree of stability, at least as regards their spatial position – but we might add other, more ‘mobile’ forms of text to the list. Such texts could be leaflets and flyers being distributed (and perhaps discarded) in the street, advertising on vans, buses and other vehicles that pass through the streets of the area under study, free tourist maps and other publications available on counters and desks of hotels and tourist information centres and many more examples besides. Some texts are more visible than others, but they are all potentially readable in public spaces.

The texts making up the LL may be monolingual, bilingual or multilingual, reflecting the diversity of the language groups present in a given territory or region. However, code preference is never the result of an arbitrary decision. The linguistic code choices evident in the public sphere therefore serve to index broader societal (and governmental) attitudes towards different languages and their speakers. Thus the predominance of one language may reflect the relative power and status of the ‘in-group’ speaking that language as regards competing language groups, whether majority or minority groups.

In two of the earliest studies of the LL, Spolsky & Cooper (1991) and Landry & Bourhis (1997) suggested that code choice in the LL acts as both an informational marker and a symbolic marker of the territory or geographical space in question. According to Landry and Bourhis, the informational functions of the LL include serving as “a distinctive marker of the geographical territory inhabited by a given language community”; thus informing in-group and out-group members about the “linguistic characteristics, territorial limits, and language boundaries of the region they have entered”, and indicating that the language in question can be used “to communicate and to obtain services within public and private establishments” within that region (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 25). In this way, the LL may be said to index the geopolitical world in which we find ourselves. Thus a predominance of signs in, say, English or Chinese tends to index our location in the midst of an English-speaking, or Chinese-speaking, community (Scollon & Scollon, 2003: 116).

However, as Scollon & Scollon (2003: 118) quite rightly caution, assumptions made on this basis can be deceiving. The use of ‘foreign’ languages, particularly on commercial signs, may have a symbolic rather than indexical function. In the case of English, for example, shop name signs written in English but located in a Chinese-speaking community might be symbolizing foreign tastes, fashions or associations between particular products or types of businesses and English-speaking culture. It might also be that English is perceived as being more modern and prestigious than local languages, particularly when these local languages are spoken by very few people in the world beyond the regional or national borders (see Ben-Rafael *et al.*, (2006), for the case of Hebrew; Cenoz & Gorter (2006) for Frisian and Basque). On the other hand, a prevalence of signs in English often marks a ‘tourist space’ and can thus be interpreted as serving both informational and symbolic functions, since there is a need

to communicate with tourists via a *lingua franca* as well as to promote the image of the place as tourist-friendly and cosmopolitan.

We might argue then, following van Leeuwen (1993), that no matter how 'ideologically innocent' signs (and the social practices of which they are a part) may seem, they may in fact be powerful instruments in the (re)production of the social world in which they form part of the landscape. In multi-ethnic neighbourhoods or areas with large communities of immigrants, for example, the symbolic function of language use on public signs can be affectively charged, particularly in places where language has emerged as a strong marker of ethnic identity. The inclusion of the in-group language in the LL is symbolic of the strength or vitality of one's own language group in relation to other language groups, whilst the exclusion of the in-group language in the LL can give out the message that the language has no status in the public social world (Landry & Bourhis, 1997).

It is clear, then, that the public signs of the LL are potential symbolic markers of status and power. As Scollon & Scollon (2003: 7) argue:

All semiotic systems operate as systems of social positioning and power relationship both at the level of interpersonal relationships and at the level of struggles for hegemony among social groups in any society precisely because they are systems of choice and no choices are neutral in the social world.

The LL can therefore be considered to reflect the overt language policies of a state, or the more localized language practices of a community (particularly those tokens employed by the private sector) and to provide "a window into the power relations in a community" (Huebner, 2006: 32). As Cenoz & Gorter (2006) note, the relationship between the LL and the sociolinguistic context is bi-directional: the LL reflects the relative power and status of different languages in a particular sociolinguistic context, whilst at the same time contributing to the construction of that very sociolinguistic context.

In short, the LL appears to be a worthy object of investigation since:

- linguistic choices (including choice of code) in public spaces index broader social attitudes;
- linguistic tokens in public spaces may be symbolic markers of status and power;
- the study of the LL may therefore provide insight into the social identities and ideological orientations of a community.

The study of the LL to date has been largely driven by quantitative methods, usually by counting and classifying all the public signs in a specific area of a city according to the language(s) used and the 'producer' of the sign (a distinction is generally made as to whether the sign is 'officially' or commercially produced). There is a growing body of evidence to show that English is rapidly spreading through the streets of cities

around the world (e.g. Backhaus, 2006; Griffin, 2004; Huebner, 2006; MacGregor, 2003; McArthur, 2000; Schlick, 2003). Studies such as these have concluded that one reason for this is the proliferation of English as a *lingua franca* in tourist areas. A further reason has to do with the symbolic value of English for the local population, as a language of international prestige, or status marker (Backhaus, 2006; Huebner, 2006) or the language of global youth and fashion – an identity marker (Griffin, 2004). Such studies provide a useful snapshot of a particular LL, and some have indeed applied social theories as an interpretation framework to answer hypotheses about why a specific LL might be shaped in a certain way (e.g. Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006).

However, there is ample space in the field for a more qualitatively-driven, critical approach. Whilst it is useful to know how much English is visible at a given time in a particular public space, it is also pertinent to examine the nature of the texts themselves and to ask why this particular text is in this particular place, at this particular time, in this particular language. In other words, a study of both the situational context in which the LL is embedded along with a more detailed examination of the interactional context of the signs themselves would help to reveal something about the collective identities and ideological orientations of the social groups that make up the community in question.

A useful methodological approach in this case might be informed by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Proponents of CDA claim that discourse, as a social practice, is both socially conditioned and socially constitutive (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). For van Dijk (2001a), however, a CDA perspective needs to take cognitive processes into account, since cognition mediates between society and discourse. One of the principal ways in which this mediation is achieved is through social representations, which emerge from ideologies shared by a social group. Ideologies, in this sense, form the organizational basis of what group members believe is “good or bad, right or wrong, *for them*, and to act accordingly” (van Dijk, 1998: 8). The producers of the LL may thus be acting on the basis of their ideological orientations. In this way, the LL may be contributing to the reinforcing of hegemonic ideologies by the (re)production of particular social representations. Furthermore, we might argue that identities (of both places and people) are often based on ideologies and beliefs about the characteristics of social groups and the implications of belonging (or not) to them (De Fina, 2006). It would seem, then, that a CDA perspective would lend itself perfectly as a complementary means of exploring the LL and the more complex social realities which contribute to its shaping. It may also reveal something about the social identities of the place in which it is embedded and the people who ‘consume’ it.

The following case study of the LL of a particular part of the Algarve therefore uses mixed methods. On the one hand, I carried out a quantitative study of one of the main streets in the town of Almancil, in order to get a more objective feel of the LL in terms of linguistic code choices and preferences. The fixed signs in the street were counted and classified, firstly according to the languages used and then according to the category of producer and the type of discourse produced. On the other hand, although I use the term *case study* here primarily in the sense that it involves a delineated choice of what is to be studied rather than a methodological choice (Stake, 2003), case studies are particularly associated with qualitatively-driven fieldwork

methodologies such as ethnography and participant observation. These methodologies typically yield unstructured data, with researchers seeking to construct cases that emerge from naturally occurring social situations (O'Reilly, 2009: 24). A case study approach generally entails drawing in multiple perspectives, often from multiple data collection methods (Lewis, 2003). The study is therefore complemented with ethnographic data, including descriptions of the area under study and photographs of signs and billboards. Other relevant background data is also introduced, including an examination of the legislation governing the LL. Finally, the texts of some signs are used as data for a more critical, qualitative exploration of the discursive construction of the identity of the 'Golden Triangle' and those who inhabit it.

Case study: Almancil and the 'Golden Triangle'

The Algarve, in the south of Portugal, is a region which has witnessed tourism development on a massive scale since the 1970s. Over the last two decades, in a parallel process many coastal resort areas, including the so-called 'Golden Triangle' of the Algarve (Figure 1), have been undergoing a gradual transformation into more residential places, becoming increasingly popular among northern European lifestyle migrants² and second home owners (mainly British, Irish, Dutch and German).



Figure 1 (Approximate) location of the 'Golden Triangle'

² I take 'lifestyle migration' to mean the discernable north-south migration trend in Europe which is clearly different from more traditional migration patterns in that it is not motivated by economic hardship or the search for work or some form of financial security. Lifestyle migrants are already 'relatively affluent' individuals (O'Reilly, 2007) who have made a conscious choice not only about *where* to live but also about *how* to live (Hoey, 2005).

The 'Golden Triangle' area, which roughly corresponds to the *Freguesia* (parish) of Almancil,³ includes the upmarket golf and beach resorts of Vale do Lobo and Quinta do Lago. These resorts were first developed for tourism in the late 1960s and early 1970s on sites which previously had been scarcely populated and were characterized by sand dunes, scrubland, pine woods and agricultural small-holdings. The construction of 'luxury' resorts in such an undeveloped, rural setting by the sea led to a phenomenal increase in the value of the land, and the coining of the 'Golden Triangle' name by the (predominantly northern European) real estate agents operating in the area, since land prices rose rapidly to reputedly become among the highest per square metre in Portugal.

It is worth considering how this name has become part of the discursively constructed identity of the place. Place naming is one of the most basic ways that places are given identity. As the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1991: 688) has argued, "naming is power – the creative power to call something into being, to render the invisible visible, to impart a certain character to things". The use of the adjective 'golden' calls into being a place with a character that is irrevocably associated with wealth, luxury and privilege. It also has connotations of magic, myth and fairy tales (e.g. the Golden Goose, King Midas and his golden touch). Cresswell (2004: 98) further notes that the act of naming locates places in wider cultural narratives. The cultural narrative in question here is clearly one that belongs to the 'new' residents of this place, for whilst the northern Europeans residing in this area are certainly familiar with the designation 'Golden Triangle', the name appears to be restricted to the English language. It is therefore not widely known by the Portuguese, even the Algarvians themselves. On the other hand, the fact that this English name for the area has spread beyond the doors of the real estate agencies and has acquired a relatively stable, fixed status in the English-speaking community is evident in the way that it appears in the titles of free local English language publications such as *Inside Almancil & the Golden Triangle* magazine and *The Golden Triangle Directory* (Figure 2) which are distributed widely throughout the area and as such are part of the 'mobile' linguistic landscape.

³ This *Freguesia* is part of the Loulé Municipality. It has an area of 63.4 km² (12 km of beaches) and 8799 inhabitants, according to the 2001 National Census. Before the arrival of tourism, the traditional activities of this area were small-scale agriculture (cereals, fruit, almonds, carob, figs, vines, olives), fishing and salt extraction.



Figure 2 Covers of free publications

The area also includes the small town of Almancil, which, although located just 12km to the west of Faro (the regional capital and site of an international airport) and 6km from the coast, is not generally thought of as a tourist town. Indeed, despite being considered the northern apex of the 'Golden Triangle', the town itself has very little to recommend it to tourists. It has no seaside, no historic monuments, no picturesque streets and very little in the way of nightlife or other forms of entertainment. Even the restaurants are not particularly popular with tourists, who tend to prefer the restaurants with outdoor dining areas along the country roads outside the town or near the beaches. Most tourists seem to do little more in Almancil than pass through on their way to the coast, perhaps stopping for food shopping, the bank or the post office, or maybe visiting one of the countless estate agencies with the idea of buying a second home in the Algarve.

Almancil is in fact known as being a 'support' centre for the tourism developments in the municipality of Loulé and for the growing numbers of northern European second-home owners and migrants who have settled in the surrounding area. In the town itself, there are communities of African origin - originally immigrants from the former Portuguese colonies - and migrant workers from the rural areas of northern Portugal and Eastern European countries, attracted by the employment opportunities offered by the construction and service industries in the area. Due to the lack of tourist attractions in the town itself and its generally rather shabby and down-at-heel appearance, relatively cheap rented accommodation is in plentiful supply.

In certain parts of the Algarve, particularly along the coast, the huge volume of and dependence upon international mass tourism, originating principally from the UK, Ireland and Germany, means that the use of English (and, to a lesser extent, German) has become commonplace in the LL, and can be largely explained by the "good reasons/meeting expectations" hypothesis proposed by Ben-Rafael *et al* (2006: 9-10). From this perspective, the structure and characteristics of the LL should be interpretable in terms of rational choices on the part of the LL producers. These choices

are informed by perceived attainable goals. In other words, producers of signs are concerned to meet the expectations of tourists, since they are themselves expecting to benefit from attracting tourists.

However, the town of Almancil is interesting both for what it is not (an obvious centre of tourism) and for what it is: a place where communities of different geographic, ethnic and social origins live side by side.⁴ The immediate surrounding area, on the other hand, is an area of upmarket tourism characterised by ‘luxury’ resorts and expensive villas that is gradually taking on a more residential character and is increasingly populated by communities of wealthy northern Europeans.⁵

In the next section, an LL analysis of one of the principal streets in Almancil is presented. This is followed by an investigation of the legislation governing the LL in Portugal, and then by an exploration of the LL of the area outside the town, the ‘Golden Triangle’.

The linguistic landscape of the Rua da República, Almancil

The Rua da República is generally considered to be the centre of Almancil. It is about 100m long and is generally busy during the weekdays as it includes the town’s post office, a large newsagent, two cafes and an assortment of shops (see Figure 3).

Electro Edir ELECTRICAL MATERIALS & APPLIANCES	Papelaria Viegas NEWSAGENT & STATIONERY	Cinema Miranda (NOW DERELICT BUILDING)	Al-Mansal Villas REAL ESTATE	Battering Plaice ‘FISH & CHIPS’ TAKEAWAY	Correios POST OFFICE	Café Palmeira
--------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------

RUA DA REPÚBLICA

Photo Viegas PHOTOGRAPHERS’	Crédito Agrícola BANK	Pastelaria Aladino	British Butcher	(House)	Rumours	(House)	Ristorante Grissino RESTAURANT	(House)	O Nosso Café RESTAURANT	Ervanária Saúde HEALTH FOOD SHOP	MECHANICS
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Figure 3 Layout of the shops and businesses on the Rua da República, Almancil

⁴ According to figures from the Immigration Services (SEF), 3906 foreigners were registered as living in Almancil in 2005, accounting for over 40% of the population. 25% of students in state schools in Almancil schools are foreign, with 30 different nationalities represented (the largest groups being Cape Verdian, Romanian and Ukrainian).

⁵ In 2005, 1143 residents from the UK, Ireland, Germany and Holland were registered in the parish of Almancil (source: SEF). The private international school located near the resort of Vale do Lobo currently has around 300 students enrolled.

Most of the shops are locally-owned and have been there for many years, as has the mechanics' workshop and a branch of the Crédito Agrícola bank.⁶ At night, there is a bar frequented mainly by British residents, a 'British' fish and chip shop and two restaurants, one of which (an Italian restaurant) has a mainly foreign clientele. The other, a fairly 'typical' Portuguese family-owned restaurant, is popular with local residents, both Portuguese and foreigners. The street has obviously seen better days, however. The former cinema now stands boarded up. The floors above the shops and businesses of the somewhat run-down terraced buildings on the other side of the street provide rented accommodation, mostly for migrant workers.

The fieldwork for this case study was carried out in September 2007. The first stage was to count and classify all the fixed signs visible in the street or in the shop windows.⁷ In order to decide what qualifies as a 'sign', the unit of analysis I used was Backhaus' (2006: 55) definition of "any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame", regardless of size or salience. A total of 225 signs were counted and classified according to the language(s) used, and the type of discourse (regulatory, infrastructural, commercial or transgressive). Further discussion of these discourse categorisations will follow below.

Table 1 shows the language(s) used on each of the signs counted.

Language(s)	Nº of signs	%
Portuguese only	112	49.77%
English only	74	32.88%
German only	1	0.44%
Portuguese and English	30	13.33%
Portuguese and Italian	1	0.44%
English and Italian	2	0.88%
Portuguese-English-French	1	0.44%
Portuguese-English-Italian	1	0.44%
English-German-French	1	0.44%
Portuguese-English-German- Russian	1	0.44%
Portuguese-English-German- French	1	0.44%
TOTAL Nº SIGNS	225	100%

Table 1 Language(s) on signs in Rua da República, Almancil

⁶ This bank was originally set up in order to give loans to farmers and still has branches in most small towns and villages in Portugal

⁷ Only signs actually attached to the windows were counted, even where it was possible to see other signs inside the shops or businesses.

I had expected to find a good deal of bilingual signs in Portuguese and English, given that the street potentially caters to a great deal of northern European tourists and residents, but in fact only 13.3% of the signs counted can be classified as such. Half the signs were in Portuguese only, and, perhaps surprisingly, given that the municipal regulations for signs state that all signs must be written in Portuguese (see below), a third of the signs were in English only. Only five signs used more than two languages.

When considering the total number of signs that display some use of each of the languages found in the LL of this street (i.e. on both monolingual and multilingual signs), we can see that English appeared on around half of the signs (Table 2). Only 65% of all signs contained some Portuguese, which means that a striking 35% did not. German, French and Italian (the first languages of many tourists visiting the area) figured only marginally in the LL of this street, and Russian appeared only once, on a fly-poster advertising Portuguese language courses at a local language school.

	% of all signs displaying a language
Portuguese	65.0%
English	49.3%
German	1.8%
Italian	1.8%
French	1.3%
Russian	0.4%

Table 2 Percentage of signs on which each language appears

Other Eastern European languages were found to be completely absent from the LL. In the case of Romanian this is surprising, given the large community of Romanians in Almancil.⁸ The lack of Romanian in the LL therefore suggests that this language has no status in the local public social world. In fact, contrary to the communities of northern Europeans, Eastern European migrants are expected to (and indeed do) learn Portuguese rapidly in order to integrate and work in local society. Their own languages are only spoken amongst themselves and remain ‘invisible’, with no symbolic capital in the region, positioning speakers of these languages as a linguistic out-group. English, on the other hand, is the language of symbolic power in the Algarve. The predominance of English in the LL reflects the relative status of the ‘in-group’ speaking that language as regards competing language groups.

Having thus obtained a general picture of which languages make up the LL of the street, and in what proportion, we now turn to the questions of how and why this particular LL composition has come about. One of the first lines of inquiry is to consider who the producers of the signs are, and what their intentions might be in producing texts with linguistic code preferences.

It is useful here to divide the signs into categories according to their producers. Other studies of the LL have looked at the differences between items which have

⁸ According to the Immigration Services (SEF), almost 700 Romanians were officially registered as living in Almancil in 2005, which was around 7% of the town’s registered population.

variously been termed 'official' and 'nonofficial' (e.g. Backhaus, 2006), 'governmental' and 'non-governmental', (e.g. Huebner, 2006) or 'top-down' (issued by national and public bureaucracies, administrations and institutions) and 'bottom-up' (produced by individual social actors, and including all commercial enterprises) (Ben-Rafael *et al.* 2006). Besides the top-down/bottom-up distinction, I take the categorisation a step further to consider the type of discourse represented by each sign, as this gives some indication as to the intention of the producer of the message. In their discussion of the semiotic aggregate of a particular place, i.e. the convergence of multiple discourses in that place, Scollon & Scollon (2003: 181) distinguish four general categories into which they claim the discourses commonly found in town and city streets fall: regulatory discourses, infrastructural discourses, commercial discourses and transgressive discourses.

I found that in the Rua da República, just eleven of the 225 items counted could be classified as 'top-down' (Table 3). Of these, eight were examples of what might be classified as 'official regulatory discourse', such as parking restrictions, or the display of the municipal business licence in a shop window. The remaining three belonged to 'infrastructural' discourse (a plaque displaying the street name, for example). Unsurprisingly, all these signs were in Portuguese only, since Portuguese is the only official language of this country.⁹

Production type	Type of discourse	N ^o signs (n = 225)	Languages used
Top-down	Official Regulatory	8	PT only
	Infrastructural	3	PT only
Bottom-up	Commercial	210	PT, ENG, FR, GER, IT,
	Transgressive	4	RUSSIAN PT, ENG

Table 3 Production type and discursive function of signs

It is in the 'bottom-up' signs, however, that languages other than Portuguese, primarily English, are used. The main type of discourse is, unsurprisingly, commercial. For the sake of convenience, this is taken here to mean any discourse produced by commercial entities, with the main functions of commercial signs being selling (or persuading to buy) and informing (about shop and business names, opening hours, or monitored security systems, for example). As all the shops and businesses in this street may potentially cater to a non-Portuguese speaking clientele, it is therefore likely that they would wish to target these clients in a language they might understand. As in many parts of the world, English is the obvious choice for the *lingua franca*, and producers of commercial signs using English may thus be applying the 'good reasons' principle

⁹ This does not mean that all top-down items in the Algarvian LL are Portuguese-only, however. I have observed, in other locations, a growing number of signs produced by official entities that are bilingual (Portuguese and English), for example public information signs by the beaches.

referred to above. This certainly seems to be a reasonable assumption in the case of the bilingual signs. The machine selling stamps outside the post office has its information and instructions for purchase in both Portuguese and English (Figure 4), thus facilitating the stamp-buying process for tourists wishing to send postcards home, for example.



Figure 4 Stamp machine, Rua da República

In fact, in the age of electronic communications, it might be that the post office sees tourists, with their tradition of writing postcards, as a good source of clients. This would account for the advertising poster on display in the post office window where English is clearly salient (Figure 5).



Figure 5 Poster in post office window, Rua da República
'Everything but the words. Só faltam as palavras. Prepaid postcards with stamp included. Buy here. Postais ilustrados com selo incluído. Compre aqui'

However, as already noted, the majority of signs observed in this street were *not* bilingual but monolingual, either in Portuguese or English, with many of the shops showing a clear preference for one language or the other, thus perhaps indicating that identity work is being done here. The English-only signs outside the Rumours Sports Bar, advertising sports matches to be shown on TV, ‘today’s specials’ and regulating the entrance of animals, along with the Union Jacks in the windows, make a clear statement about the identity of the bar and its clients (Figures 6a and 6b); likewise the Battering Plaice across the street which announces that it sells ‘British Fish & Chips’ and displays a menu in English only in its window (Figures 7a and 7b).



Figure 6a Rumours Bar in the Rua da República Figure 6b Sign outside Rumour’s Bar



Figure 7a The Battering Plaice Rua da República Figure 7b Menu on display in window

Other shops and establishments, particularly the longer-standing ones, seem to prefer Portuguese only in their signage. This was the case of the electrical shop, the photographer’s and the mechanics workshop (Figure 8).



Figure 8 Mechanic’s workshop, Rua da República

On the other hand, the code preference may simply be due to a lack of knowledge of other languages on the part of the producer. More research would be necessary here for a greater depth of understanding – for example by conducting interviews with the shopkeepers and business owners.

I found four examples of ‘transgressive’ items in the Rua da República (all small stickers calling for social action, placed on top of other signs or unauthorised places). The choice of language on these stickers appears to have been chosen according to the intended receiver of the message. One sticker (Figure 9), found on a municipal rubbish bin, has text in both Portuguese and English. However, it is interesting that the message addressed directly to the receiver, by means of the imperative ‘NÃO ENVENENEM MAIS ANIMAIS’ (which translates as ‘Don’t poison any more animals’) is in Portuguese, implying that the agents of the verb ‘poison’ are Portuguese speakers. The poisoning of dogs and cats is a fairly frequent occurrence in the Algarve and, as I have often witnessed, a common topic of conversation among British residents. Since the Portuguese are stereotypically seen by the northern European community in the Algarve as being generally insensitive to animal welfare (this opinion is evident, for example, in the Letters to the Editor pages of the local English-language press), it is certainly the Portuguese who are seen by this group as the perpetrators of domestic animal poisonings. On the other hand, the sender of the message, the Action Against Poisoning group,¹⁰ chooses to ‘sign’ the message using the name of the group (which might also be interpreted as an activist slogan) in English. This signifies that it is the English-speaking community who are perceived by the addresser as being concerned enough about this problem to take ‘action’ against it.



Figure 9 Sticker, Rua da República

Another sticker, found on a traffic sign, was in English, asking for support (presumably financial) for people with AIDS, whilst the other two were in Portuguese (‘Defende a vida, faz o teste do VIH/Sida’), urging people to take an HIV/AIDS test (this sticker, on the stamp machine, can be seen in Figure 4 above). These stickers seemingly have different addressees in mind, employing different code choices accordingly.

¹⁰ A visit to the website advertised on the sticker reveals that Action Against Poisoning is an international association based in the Netherlands.

Shaping the LL: Legal requirements and possible restraints

A factor which may reasonably be expected to affect the production of commercial signs, including choice of language(s), is the law. In Portugal, Municipal Councils draw up their own sets of regulations defining the criteria for granting licences for any kind of advertising or publicity which emanates from commercial activity. Therefore, the Municipality of Loulé, which includes Almancil and the 'Golden Triangle' area, has its own 'Regulations for Publicity and Advertising'.¹¹ The kinds of advertising or publicity that require licensing include: all kinds of fixed signs, illuminated or electronic signs, billboards, sandwich boards and other movable objects to be placed on the pavement, flags and banners, shop awnings, posters, inflatables and balloons, mobile billboards and vehicles. The Regulations are lengthy and detailed, giving specifications as to size, materials and positioning, for example, as well as to restrictions imposed. As far as language use is concerned, Article 14 specifies that:

- (1) Advertising messages must be written in the Portuguese language.
- (2) The inclusion of foreign words and expressions can be authorized in the following situations:
 - a) In the case of registered brands or names of companies;
 - b) In the case of names of people appearing in the message or film, theatre, variety or sports titles or events.¹²

In other words, these regulations permit bilingual or multilingual signs in some (very limited) circumstances, but do not allow for monolingual signs in languages other than Portuguese at all. Yet, as already discussed above, there are countless examples in the area of signs which are written only in English, in a seemingly flagrant disregard for the local regulations.

I visited the department that receives applications for advertising licences in the offices of the *Junta de Freguesia de Almancil*¹³ to ask why there are so many signs in apparent contravention of the Regulations. The members of staff I spoke to suggested that possible reasons might be that the signs date from before 2005 (the date of the latest Regulations), that there was a certain amount of 'ignorance' as to the law, or that there was perhaps not enough official monitoring and therefore many people were 'getting away with it'. Despite the highly restrictive regulations on language use, the fact that they are widely ignored coupled with the fact that the local authorities do not seem, in practice, to be particularly concerned with the issue implies that the Municipal Regulations are not systematically applied.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the Municipal Council must respect the principle of 'hierarchy of sources', and therefore should not contradict the national legislation. If, in the case of a conflict, the matter were taken to court, the national law

¹¹ 'Regulamento da Actividade Publicitária na Área do Município de Loulé' de 6 de Janeiro de 2005

¹² My own translation

¹³ Each Municipality in Portugal is divided into 'Freguesias', the smallest of the administrative areas, each of which has its own elected 'Junta'.

would be applied. This is another possible explanation for why so many businesses do not bother themselves with local regulations, for if they are familiar with national law, they know they are ultimately safeguarded by the National Advertising Code.

All advertising in Portugal is governed by the law as set out in the National Advertising Code, originally passed in 1990¹⁴ and last updated in 1998. The law regarding the use of languages other than Portuguese in advertising is stipulated in clauses 3 and 4 of Article 7, which concerns what is 'permissible' in advertising:

- (3) The use of languages of other countries in advertising messages, even when used in conjunction with the Portuguese language, is only permitted when the advertising message is directed exclusively or primarily at foreigners, with the exception of the provision in the following clause.
- (4) The exceptional use of words or expressions in languages of other countries is permitted when they are necessary to the attainment of the desired effect in the conception of the message.¹⁵

Two things stand out from the discourse of this extract of the law. Firstly, there is an obvious attempt on the part of the government to control the use of languages on non-official signs in public places, by defining what is permitted and when. Secondly, there is a striking appeal to a national identity through exophoric spatial deixis which associates language with geopolitical borders. The Portuguese language is set against not merely other languages, but 'languages of other countries'. The implication here is that there is only one language used by the citizens of the nation-state Portugal, thus reproducing the discursive representation of a monolingual country, despite the fact that there are more than a quarter of a million immigrants with legal status as residents in Portugal,¹⁶ plus an untold number of those without legal status, many of whom certainly bring 'other languages' with them.

However, a salient point of this law is that there is no actual stipulation to *always* include the Portuguese version of the advertising text. The interpretation of the phrase 'even when used in conjunction with the Portuguese language' has to presuppose situations where the other language is being used *without* the Portuguese language, for example signs in English only. Furthermore, the possible interpretation and hence the application of the legislation appears to be rather deliberately open, for who is to decide to whom the message is 'exclusively or primarily directed'? It is certainly the case that in the Algarve many businesses could claim to be directing their services primarily at international tourists, thus giving them the legal right to use languages other than Portuguese. It is also noticeable that businesses, shops and other commercial services which cannot make this claim do advertise in the LL almost exclusively in Portuguese. This is the case for most banks, for instance, and large supermarket chains.

¹⁴ Decreto-Lei nº 330/90 de 23 de Outubro

¹⁵ My own translation

¹⁶ Sources: Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE); Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF).

To investigate this further, I photographed large (and therefore highly visible) advertising billboards found along the roadsides around the Almancil area. A striking case of the contrast between advertising in English-only and Portuguese-only can be seen in Figure 10. Here, two supermarkets are advertising side by side, just outside Almancil. One of these supermarkets, Apolónia, is a local, Portuguese family-owned supermarket which over the years has built up a huge clientele of Northern Europeans (both residents and tourists from around the Almancil area and beyond) as it stocks a wide range of imported goods, as well as delicacies, specialities and luxury foodstuffs which cannot be easily found elsewhere in the Algarve. The text of the billboard tells us (in English only) that Apolónia is “where shopping is a pleasure. It’s like being back home... they’ve got everything!” The fact that the text is clearly aimed at a foreign clientele is evident not only through the choice of English for the text, but also the deictic expression ‘back home’. Their claim to stock ‘everything’ and to make shopping a ‘pleasure’ is equated with the experience of shopping ‘back home’. The implication is that Apolónia provides not only a non-typical Portuguese shopping experience, but a better one, thus creating an identity for the supermarket-as-place which is positioned as being superior to other, ‘local’ places through its association with foreignness.

Aldi, on the other hand, is an international chain of discount supermarkets, with branches throughout Portugal and indeed Europe. The billboard announcing the new Almancil branch features only Portuguese text. The content of this text has a primarily informative function, giving the location, opening times and stating some of the products and produce available (fresh meat, fruit and vegetables, frozen food, non-food products). There is a simple slogan, in a smaller font at the bottom of the text: “Qualidade máxima, preço mínimo” (*Maximum quality, minimum price*). The explanation for the Portuguese-only text may be due to company advertising policy, possibly in compliance with the law. Perhaps the supermarket expects to attract mainly Portuguese-speaking shoppers.



Figure 10 Supermarket advertising hoardings, near Almancil

In any case, the juxtaposition of these two billboards (and indeed the actual supermarkets) is quite revealing in terms of symbolic power relations. Apolónia,

through its range of products, its higher prices, its reputation for impeccable customer service, and its northern European clientele, is associated with what is perceived as an exclusive, economically and socially powerful group in the Algarve. By advertising in English, the language comes not only to represent this group, but also to exclude those who do not understand it. This both reflects and reinforces the widely-held belief in the Algarve that the English-speaking *estrangeiros* (foreigners) are uniformly wealthy and therefore economically powerful. In contrast, on the Aldi hoarding, Portuguese is the language that represents those who potentially wish to shop in cheap, discount supermarkets.

The linguistic landscape of the ‘Golden Triangle’: advertising billboards.

In the ‘Golden Triangle’ area, to the south of Almancil, where the real estate prices are supposedly the highest per square metre in Portugal, a distinctive feature of the linguistic landscape are the billboards lining the roadsides advertising the services of real estate agencies and property developers. The texts of these billboards are frequently written in English only (Figure 11), or, when Portuguese is also present, it is the English text that is salient, typically coming above the Portuguese text, in a larger font size and stronger colour (Figure 12).



Figure 11 Real estate advertising, near Quinta do Lago



Figure 12 Real estate advertising, near Almancil

This salience gives a clear message about the relative importance and status given to the language by the producers of the sign. Once again, English is the code of an elitist, exclusive in-group. It seems to be the assumption of the producers of these texts (estate agents and property developers who are often of northern European origin themselves) that it is primarily those belonging to this in-group who will have the economic power and motivation to consider buying property in this area and therefore there is little point in advertising in Portuguese.

Although 'elite' membership status is clearly grounded in economic privilege, it is not a clear-cut, structural social category. An 'elite' identity is an ideological subject position; it is semiotically achieved and enacted through social practices, including discourse (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2006). Membership is therefore relatively open – and through the repetition and routinization of discursive practices such as the processes of symbolic differentiation (including, in this case, through the foregrounding of English rather than the local language in highly visible LL texts), elitist identities are reproduced and reinforced.

The discursive construction of an elite identity is also realized linguistically through the actual texts of these billboards. In Figure 12, readers are urged to 'live the difference'. Like much advertising discourse (see, for example, Cook 2001), the connotations of this metaphoric expression are perhaps intentionally ambiguous, leaving the receiver of the message to work out what the 'difference' is and how it should be 'lived'. However, the images of a leisure-based lifestyle and a luxurious villa, besides being intertextual references from typical tourism promotional media, also activate cultural schemata that suggest the difference is based on social class.

At the same time, the identity of the 'Golden Triangle' is being consistently reproduced as a place where English-speaking people have their homes: a sense of place with boundaries (symbolic and ideological rather than material) is being constructed for these 'outsiders' who may have no real sense of physical, cultural or ancestral ties with the place they have chosen as home. An ideology that equates 'home' with private land or property ownership is being reinforced. In this way, a sense of place and feelings of belonging are created which are simultaneously both integrating (through in-group membership) and exclusive, since a 'frontier' of difference is constructed leading to a powerful sense of distinctive social identity.

The billboards advertising the Vale do Lobo resort make the promise of 'exclusivity' explicit (Figures 13 and 14), once again with the English text in an unmistakably salient position. Through the use of the nominalization 'exclusivity' as actor in the metaphorical process "exclusivity awaits you" (Figure 13), the place itself is positioned as being synonymous with a privileged, elitist lifestyle and identity. This is reiterated through the slogans 'exclusive living since 1962' (Figure 13) and 'Vale do Lobo: an exclusive way of living' (Figure 14).



Figure 13 Billboard, Vale do Lobo
(Box on the right: 'Vale do Lobo, EXCLUSIVE LIVING SINCE 1962')



Figure 14 Billboard near Almancil

In short, the texts on the majority of roadside billboards in the Golden Triangle are clearly directed at English-speaking groups of foreigners from the north of Europe who are seeking second homes or alternative places of residence. The aspirations of these potential property buyers appear to be based on the premise of an extension of the tourism experience – an escape from ‘reality’ to a place where leisure, luxury and exclusivity are constant possibilities. In other words they are involved in a social practice whereby they are stylizing themselves as members of the ‘super-elite’ (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2006) whilst simultaneously being strategically stylized in the same way by others - the ‘producers’ of the LL, who of course stand to gain economically from the selling of goods (particularly land and property) perceived necessary to embody this identity.

Conclusions and indications for further research

Tourist destinations throughout the world increasingly have a great deal of English in their LLs, since English is internationally recognised as the *lingua franca* of choice for tourists. The study of the public signs visible in the Rua da República in Almancil, which revealed a strong presence of English (found on almost 50% of signs), could easily be taken as evidence of this. Furthermore, since it is in the ‘bottom up’ production type of signs with a predominantly commercial discursive function that

English is used, it would appear that as tourists undoubtedly contribute to the local economy, the use of English in this particular LL is the result of a rational choice by the producers, based on expected material benefits.

On the other hand, given that most signs in this street are not bi-lingual Portuguese-English but show a preference for one language or the other (despite the municipal regulations which state that Portuguese should always be present), it could also be argued that something seems to be going on in terms of identity construction and the creation of symbolic boundaries between social groups – (non-) English-speakers and (non-) Portuguese-speakers.

In order to investigate this more thoroughly, advertising hoardings in the surrounding area were examined. The majority of the billboards in the 'Golden Triangle' area advertise land and property sales/development, predominantly in English. This contributes to a social representation of the area as being up for sale to English-speaking buyers, through English-speaking intermediaries. Furthermore, a closer examination of some of the discourse features of these advertisements reveals the discursive construction of an elitist place-identity based on privilege and difference. It is in this way that the LL functions as a kind of interface between between place and identity, since these highly visible texts of the LL are part of the process of the discursive construction of a place and also impact upon the discursive construction of the individual and collective identities of those who stake a claim to the place by material investment in it.

In short, the sense of place being created by the predominance of English in these LL texts is not merely that of a tourist space, but an ideologically constructed place of luxury and privilege. Through allegiance with an elitist identity and subject position that have been, in part at least, discursively achieved, the choice of the English language as the preferred code in this LL creates an in-group/out-group boundary that surely has something to say about the symbolic power relations between social groups living in the area. Further investigation of this would seem to suggest a logical next step in the research, for although I have suggested in this paper that a CDA approach to this particular LL may uncover such power relations, I am aware that I have barely touched the surface of this. Much more could be said about the social contexts in which the LL is embedded, and a far more detailed and systematic discourse analysis of the LL signs needs to be carried out. Although the relatively limited analysis permitted by this small, exploratory case study does appear to reveal something about the place-identity of northern European lifestyle migrants in the 'Golden Triangle' area, it should be reiterated that places have multiple identities and meanings for different groups of people, and that there are many social groups (for example, other migrant groups and both the local Portuguese residents and Portuguese tourists) who also have connections with the place and 'consume' the LL. The relations between place, identity and the LL for these groups of people need to be further explored to gain a broader understanding of the impact of the LL on a community.

As a final consideration on the limitations of this study, it should also be noted that linguistic landscapes are not fixed in time, but are constantly shifting and changing. Therefore, a longitudinal study would be needed in order to get a sense of how the LL alters according to evolving social contexts.

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Shape categories revealed by English quasi-classifiers — A case study of *sheet*

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Abstract

Classifiers are overt linguistic categorisation devices and “a unique window” into human cognition (Lakoff, 1986). English is traditionally regarded as a non-classifier language, but a closer look shows that English also possesses classifier-like words, called ‘Quasi-Classifiers’/QCLs. This paper focuses on the cognitive categorisation process underlying English QCL usage, and takes the two-dimensional shape-based *sheet* as an exemplar. 120 concordances of *sheet(s) of* are extracted from the British National Corpus and then regrouped. It shows that *sheet* can collocate with words like ‘paper’, ‘bronze’, ‘water’, ‘clay’, ‘flame’, ‘sound’, etc., extending from the saliently flat-shaped to the shapeless and the amorphous, and from the concrete to the abstract. The extension is realised by various cognitive mechanisms, typically via active zone and metaphor. The study will contribute to a general knowledge of human cognition of categories.

Introduction

As Lakoff points out, “[t]here is nothing more basic than categorization to our thought, perception, action, and speech” (Lakoff, 1987: 5), categorisation is a fundamental human ability. The categorisation process is present at all levels of human cognition; distinguishing individual items and taxonomically grouping them is one manifestation of this cognitive process, e.g. the distinction between cups and bowls (Labov, 1973). Linguistically speaking, the categorisation process may be overtly represented by a linguistic device, in this case ‘classifiers’, which provides “a unique window” into human cognition (Lakoff, 1986). This study will take this as the start point and examine how the categorisation process is reflected by the counterpart of classifiers in the language of English. As a typical example of numeral classifiers, classifier cases from Mandarin Chinese are taken as a special reference.

Categorisation and classifiers

Although lacking definitional consensus, classifiers are generally acknowledged as an overt noun categorisation device (see among others, Aikhenvald, 2000; Allan, 1977; Craig, 1986; Grinevald, 2000, 2007). They define categories by arranging nouns into separate groups (Colette Craig, 1986: 2). Some examples from Mandarin Chinese are:

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) | yī <i>zhāng</i>
one [CL: flat] | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{zhǐ (paper)} \\ \text{pí (skin)} \\ \text{chuáng (bed)} \\ \text{liǎn (face)} \end{array} \right.$ |
| (2) | yī <i>tiáo</i>
one [CL: long] | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{shéngzi (rope)} \\ \text{shé (snake)} \\ \text{lù (road)} \\ \text{lùxiàn (guideline)} \end{array} \right.$ |

In Chinese, quantitative constructions, ‘nouns’, are usually mediated by classifiers before they are quantified by quantifiers, typically in a ‘Quantifier + Classifier + Noun’ construction as illustrated above. For instance, the classifier *zhāng* in (1) denotes ‘flatness’ in shape and collocates with nouns like ‘paper’, ‘skin’, ‘bed’, ‘face’, etc. In this paradigmatic collocation, ‘paper’, ‘skin’ and ‘bed’ are arranged into one group that is characterised by the feature of ‘flatness’. Similarly, the classifier *tiáo*, denoting a long shape, collocates with ‘rope’, ‘snake’, ‘road’, and ‘guideline’ and groups these nouns into a class featured as ‘long’. As Craig (1986: 2) argues, in this “completely overt arrangement of objects into classes, classifier systems may indeed expose how the process of categorization works in more graphic ways than lexical taxonomies”.

Typologically speaking, classifiers are of different types, e.g. numeral classifiers, predicate classifiers, relational classifiers, noun classifiers, etc. (Aikhenvald, 2000; Allan, 1977). The classifier examples quoted above from Mandarin Chinese are of the ‘paradigmatic’ type of classifier (Senft, 2000: 21), numeral classifiers, on which this

paper will concentrate.

Numeral classifiers (NCL) occur in quantitative constructions and appear next to quantifiers (Aikhenvald, 2000), and they are primarily found in Asian languages, e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Burmese, etc., and some Amerindian languages. The literature describes NCLs as performing two basic functions (Aikhenvald, 2000; Craig, 1992; Denny, 1986; Dixon, 1982; Frawley, 1992; Loke, 1983; Lyons, 1977; Tai & Wang, 1990; Wiebusch, 1995). On the one hand, NCLs are believed to ‘unitise’ (Foley, 1997) or ‘individuate’ (Greenberg, 1977) nouns into definable counting units. In this light, as part of quantitative constructions, they work with quantifiers to measure nouns in terms of *quantity* and perform a fundamental role of *quantification*. This function is especially obvious in container-based NCLs, e.g. ‘yī (one) *bēi* (cup) *shuǐ* (water)’ in Chinese, standard measurement NCLs, e.g. ‘yī (one) *gōngjīn* (kilogram) *miàn*’ (flour), and collective NCLs, e.g. ‘yī (one) *qún* (group) *rén* (people)’. These predominantly quantitative NCLs are called ‘Mensural Classifiers’. On the other hand, some NCLs specify some perceived *feature* of the collocated nouns, e.g. ‘flatness’ or ‘long length’. By this token, classifiers highlight certain quality properties of the quantified nouns and are qualifying. They are called ‘sortal classifiers’ (Aikhenvald, 2000; Craig, 1992; Dixon, 1982; Frawley, 1992; Loke, 1983; Lyons, 1977). The shape-based classifiers *zhāng* and *tiáo* in (1) and (2) are examples. In fact, classification functions are primarily realised by sortal classifiers. Their usage tells us the way people perceive and categorise the world and provides a window into the cognitive categorisation process.

English quasi-classifiers/QCLs

English is traditionally regarded as a non-classifier language, but this does not entail that there is no overt linguistic classifier categorisation device in English. On the contrary, after a close examination, English is found to possess words that are very similar to NCLs in classifier languages like Chinese. Some examples are:

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (3) | a <i>cup</i> of tea | a <i>sheet</i> of paper |
| | a <i>bunch</i> of flowers | a <i>cube</i> of sugar |
| | two <i>pairs</i> of trousers | a <i>grain</i> of rice |
| | a <i>group</i> of people | four <i>head</i> of cattle |

The italicised words above occur in quantitative constructions, appear next to quantifiers or numerals, and occupy a position between numerals and nouns, which is called the ‘classifier slot’ in classifier constructions (Downing, 1996: 8). Structurally speaking, these English phrases match neatly with the NCL phrases proper, e.g. (1) and (2) in Chinese. Functionally speaking, these expressions fully exhibit the two basic roles performed by NCLs, e.g. they quantify and qualify the following noun, and the left and right columns in (3) represent the qualification and quantification roles respectively. The correspondence between these English quantitative words and real numeral classifiers has been observed by many linguists (e.g. Allan, 1977: 305; Dixon, 1982: 211; Foley, 1997: 210; Lehrer, 1986; Loke, 1983: 11; Lyons, 1977: 462; McEnery & Xiao,

forthcoming; John R Taylor, 2002: 360). Evidently, English NCL-like words are a systematic rather than accidental phenomenon. These words are called ‘Quasi-Classifiers’ (later abbreviated as ‘QCLs’).

Distinguishing the word group of QCLs out of quantitative words in English helps highlight a hidden function of English quantitative constructions. In parallel with the subtle difference between mensural and sortal classifiers, at least some English quantitative constructions function to categorise nouns while quantifying. These categorising QCLs are of the sortal type and are an overt linguistic categorisation device in English. English sortal QCLs and the categorisation process revealed by them are the research focus in this study.

A shape category: the *sheet* category

In the process of categorisation, “visual perception appears to play a major role in determining category membership” (Clark, 1978). Not surprisingly, in NCL languages, shape is the most common semantic feature classifiers express (Foley, 1997: 235) (see also Aikhenvald, 2000; Downing, 1996; Haas, 1942; Shi, 1996); *zhāng* and *tiáo* in (1) and (2) are both shape-based classifiers, reflecting categories of shape. Similarly, in English, a considerable number of QCLs are devoted to the interpretation of this major physical feature, e.g. *column*, *slip*, *stick*, *sheet*, *slice*, *square*, *block*, *chunk*, *cube*, etc. This study will focus on shape-based QCLs and shape categories expressed by them, and specifically, on the category of a frequently used QCL: *sheet*. *Sheet* denotes ‘flatness’ in shape, i.e. ‘paper-like’ in folk terms and ‘two-dimensional’ in technical terms. In cognitive terms, shape falls within the domain of SPACE. Presumably, members of the *sheet* category all extend in space and are two dimensional in shape. The following study will find out to what extent this presumption is true.

Data and methodology

As discussed above, nouns collocating with the classifier compose members of the classifier categories. Following the methodology by Lakoff (1986; Lakoff, 1987) and Tai and others (Tai & Chao, 1994; Tai & Wang, 1990), this study collected collocated nouns of *sheet* and examined the category organisation. The most comprehensive and large-scale corpus of British English, the British National Corpus, i.e. the BNC is taken as the data source, from which collocated nouns with the QCL *sheet* are extracted.

English QCL phrases are highly diversified in form, ranging from ‘a *cup* of water’ to ‘the big *cup* of the cold mineral water’. In the mutable QCL structure, ‘QCL + of’ is the only stable connection with merely a variation in QCL plurality, e.g. *cup of* and *cups of*. Thus, collocated nouns of the QCL *sheet* are collected by searching for the string *sheet(s) of*. A concordance search for *sheet(s) of* in the BNC returns 1216 hits. To reduce the data to a manipulative scale, one tenth of the overall data, i.e. 120 concordances, are selected by the BNC’s ‘random thin’ function. However, not all *sheet(s) of* cases are QCL usages. Some *sheet* occurrences are not quantitative constructions, thus of non-QCL

usages, e.g. (4) and (5), and are filtered out of the data analysis. Altogether fourteen unqualified cases are eliminated from the 120 concordances, leaving 106 QCL usages for analysis.

- (4) The balance *sheet of* the company must contain a statement from the directors, ... [FEJ 1315]¹
- (5) He left her and set about smoothing the *sheet of* her bed with touchingly serious clumsiness. [FSC 1743]

The collocated nouns from the 106 remaining QCL concordances constitute members categorised by the '*sheet* category'. These nouns will be examined, differentiated, re-categorised, and compared, in the process of which, the following questions are addressed: First, what nouns are qualified by *sheet* and thus included by the *sheet* category? Second, why are these nouns qualified by *sheet* and thus portrayed as two-dimensional? Third, how are these nouns connected with each other?

Category members

The first question cropping up for the *sheet* category is what members are found in the category (are they two-dimensional)? This sub-section will examine these sample members in detail, and based on the nouns' *general* meaning, i.e. before they collocate with the QCL, identify the nuances or divergences of their physical features and re-categorise them into fine-grained ontological groups.

At first glance, the *sheet* category appears rather random, including entities of divergent forms and shapes. Distinguished further, these mixed members can be roughly divided into three groups. The tokens of all members are listed below, and the numbers of their occurrences are indicated in brackets.

- (A) *Typically flat solids* (70):
*Paper, cardboard, hardboard, parchment, underlay, Kleenex, tissue*₁.

Nouns in this group all denote one type of solid: they are all paper and paper-like things and are prototypically flat or two-dimensional. This sub-category occurs in the largest proportion among *sheet* collocates. '*Tissue*₁' refers to the sense of 'tissue paper' (e.g. (6)) and is obviously paper-like in appearance. This is to be distinguished from '*tissue*₂', 'biological aggregation of cells' (7), as will appear in (B-1).

- (6) Soft pastels meant taking *sheets of* tissue to protect each sketch. [G21 660]
- (7) The ultimate implant remained; and one day Lexandro was opened up surgically — superficially and for the final time — to insert the *sheets of* black tissue beneath his skin. [CJJ 1268]

¹ Letters and numbers in [] are indications of the file numbers in the BNC.

(B) *Solids without definite shapes* (26)

Another considerable group of *sheet* nouns are found in (B), i.e. solids without prototypical shapes. These range from objects to collections and then to masses. They are of the following four sub-types:

- (B-1) Objects with un-determinable shapes (1): Tissue₂
- (B-2) Malleable solids (20): Bronze, copper or pewter, iron, aluminium, metal, steel, glass, plastic, acetate, foam, elastometric.
- (B-3) Concrete substances (3): Ice, lava, clay.
- (B-4) Substances (2): Cells, molecules.

Different from the normally flat shape of 'tissue paper' in 'tissue₁', the shape of biological tissues in 'tissue₂' is far more difficult to determine. For one thing, their shapes typically vary with functions, e.g. muscle tissue differs from nervous tissue, and even muscle tissue is different in shape depending on where it is. More importantly, biological tissues do not appear independently in reality, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe their shape. Therefore, the shape of biological tissues, as far as people's experience is concerned, is un-determinable in general cases.

Those in (B-2) do not have definite shapes either, being typically mouldable, e.g. we can have glass sticks, cubes, balls, etc. Those in (B-3) are usually masses without definite shapes, but unlike the intentionally moulded discrete solids in (B-2), they are substances which may have no perceptible bounding edge and thus have no 'shape' in their own right; being the result of a process of natural sedimentation, they are perceived in aggregation.

In (B-4) 'A *sheet of cells*' may appear similar to 'a *sheet of tissue*' in (B-1), both situated in a biological domain. However, the former differs from the latter in that it is an assembly of separate individuals, i.e. a collection, instead of an integral, undifferentiated whole.

(C) *Shapeless entities* (11): Water, rain, spray, flame, light, blue, sound.

Apart from solid objects and substances with drastically varying shapes, flowing liquids are also categorised by the two-dimensional *sheet*. 'Water' is generically fluid and is a type of mass in material entity. 'Rain' and 'spray' are even more elusive in form. Conceptualised by the mode of 'summary scanning', (Langacker, 1987: 144-5), they can be perceived as *a static state*, like a mass or aggregate composed of dispersed particles of droplets. More importantly, since once they reach the ground, they are no longer rain/spray but water, rain and spray possess an important temporal feature related to the domain of time, like the non-spatial activity of 'running'. That is, both rain and spray are mobile. Typically neither water nor rain/spray is described in terms of shape.

Even more erratic than liquids is incorporeal 'flame'. Being flickeringly mobile, they are also related to the domain of TIME. Even more abstract than the 'flame' come colours, 'light' and sound. They are all intangible and amorphous. It needs even more

cognitive effort to perceive them as having any actual ‘shape’. The collocation ‘a *sheet* of sound’ does not appear in the 120 concordances that are sampled, but is present in the BNC and is listed here to represent a major extension of the *sheet* category from the above sub-groups: however different, all other nouns are entities perceived by the sense of vision; ‘sound’, nevertheless, is an auditory experience. Here, the category of *sheet* sees an extension from the visual to the non-visual. The presence of this member in the spatial *sheet* category pushes the category boundary beyond the domain of vision and renders the category a cross-domain comprehensive structure.

Shape features of the category members

As is clear from the above, the *sheet* category appears rather mixed, incoherent, and inclusive. The question of why these nouns are categorised as two-dimensional naturally follows. One probable reason is that they all possess prominent expansions on two dimensions and are perceived ‘flat’ in the given contexts, by one means or another. Actually it is the flat bed-sheet-like appearance of the nouns that readily motivates the linguistic usage of QCL *sheet*. In other words, from a language producer’s point of view, the perceived two-dimensionality of the entity induces the two-dimensional QCL *sheet* and thus motivates the linguistic form of ‘a *sheet* of Noun’. Although all being ‘flat’, the ‘flatness’ of these nouns is different: some nouns are realistically flat, some perceptually, and some imaginarily. This sub-section looks at the different ways in which they appear to be two-dimensional. An experiential and cognitive perspective is taken to uncover the perceived dimensionality features of these nouns, and to discover how they manage to assume these features.

(A) Flat objects

Paper and paper-like objects in (A) appear prototypically flat in shape. Although as material entities they actually possess three dimensions, their third dimension of thickness is proportionally so small that it can be cognitively ignored; the evoked image by ‘paper’ is typically an extension on two dimensions. Naturally, these virtually ‘flat’ objects are categorised by *sheet*. In the three-dimensional material world, paper, with its negligible third dimension, can be argued to be a best example for two-dimensional entities. This intrinsic affinity of paper with two-dimensional *sheet* may be corroborated by the BNC collocations. Among the ten MI-score collocations of *sheet(s) of* with the highest frequencies in the BNC, at least seven are directly related to ‘paper’, either acting as modifiers of paper-specific properties (e.g. ‘blotting’, ‘greaseproof’), or are themselves ‘paper-like’ (e.g. ‘cardboard’, ‘parchment’). Objects of this group can be reasonably argued to be the ‘prototype’ members for the *sheet* category.

(B-1) Objects perceived as flat

The shape of biological ‘tissues’ is theoretically undeterminable, but in experiments or medical operations, biological tissues usually appear as thin sheets. As a matter of fact,

experiments and medical operations are probably the only direct interaction human beings can have with biological tissues; that is to say, entities of ‘tissue’ are paper-like as far as human perceptual experience goes. This obviously explains why biological tissues can be classified as 2-D by *sheet*.

(B-2) *Malleable solids moulded flat*

Malleable solids of ‘glass’, ‘metal’, and ‘plastic’ can appear in any shape, e.g. spherical, cubic, or long, but in the given contexts, they are moulded flat. Although the two-dimensionality of these malleable solids can be much less ‘flat’ than paper, e.g. the iron sheet can possess a considerable thickness (“half an inch thick” [HP0 2782]), and it can even be ‘corrugated’ ([CGJ 286], [CJD 755]), yet their extension on two dimensions is cognitively so salient that they appear flat as a whole. It is this perceptual salience of the two-dimensional feature that motivates the usage of *sheet*. This two-dimensional feature is revealed by various linguistic items. Sometimes, this revelation is rather explicit, e.g. by the adjective ‘flat’, as is underlined for emphasis in (8) and (9).

- (8) The small pipe has been formed from a flat sheet of bronze. [G2Y 1352]
- (9) On the floor was a large flat sheet of steel on which patterns were drawn in chalk. [B22 1239]

Sometimes, the two-dimensional extension is indicated more implicitly. For instance, in the sample data, malleable solids collocating with *sheet(s) of* are often found as instruments for a ‘covering’ action, e.g. (10) and (11). In fact, to ‘cover’ something, an entity has to extend in both width and length so as to rest on the surface, and the very verb ‘cover’ implies a two-dimensional extension. Similarly, these entities act frequently as objects for the prepositions ‘on’ and ‘onto’, e.g. (12) and (13), which presupposes a planar surface. All these expressions corroborate the perceptual ‘flatness’ of these entities.

- (10) [For SEED SOW] Most annuals can be placed straight into the propagator, providing it is set at a temperature within the stated range, but some need to be covered with a polythene bag or *sheet of* glass. [ACY 1268]
- (11) A *sheet of* plastic covered the woodpile. [AMU 2131]
- (12) ... imagine that the paper was magnified to a width of two feet and pasted onto a *sheet of* wrought iron, half an inch thick. [HP0 2782]
- (13) Is the method of offering a pen-drawn circle on a *sheet of* acetate to a map satisfactory? [G2Y 150]

(B-3) *Substances perceived as flat*

‘Ice’, ‘clay’, and ‘lava’ all designate homogeneous masses composed of fine particles. Unlike the deliberately wrought flat objects of (B-2), their formation results from natural sedimentation of originally loose substances, and are obviously shaped more irregularly and sometimes uneven and thick. However, in the given context of the sample, these somewhat ‘non-flat’ entities extend prominently in area, and this

- (16) Semer Water is one of the few natural *sheets of water* of any size in the Dales. [EWB 302]
- (17) In places, it escapes from confining boulder slopes and low cliffs and gives uninterrupted views across a wild moorland interspersed with *sheets of water* to the distant mountains soaring abruptly skywards in complete isolation as though not on speaking terms with each other. [CJH 260]

(C-2) *Dynamic states imaginarily construed as flat*

'Water' in (18) is different from the above. It does not refer to the flat surface of stationary water spread, but to a dynamic temporal state of water: rain in (19) and spray in (20).

- (18) The rain fell incessantly until it seemed they travelled through *sheets of water*, the old cobbled road turned into a muddy mire, sometimes dangerous with potholes, where a man could plunge waist deep in water. [H9C 3326]
- (19) He was looking out over the prison courtyard, watching the *sheets of rain* falling, the brightness of the observation lights along the prison walls reflecting in his eyes. [G01 3761]
- (20) They were an awe-inspiring sight, with the sea thundering against great black precipices and hurling shattered *sheets of spray* high up the face of the rock; [H0A 1407]

When raining hard, water pours down with such a speed and volume that it seems to form a 'seamless' (as indicated by 'incessantly' in (18)) curtain made of water. In this case, the mobile state of water liquid is perceived, rather imaginarily, as a static curtain-like entity, in a texture as dense and unitary as a sheet, and stretching vertically on two dimensions. In fact, 'rain' can also be perceived as two-dimensional from another perspective. When rain falls from the air down to the ground, the two dimensions of rain's height and breadth are more salient to human perception than the third dimension, i.e. the distance the rain goes; thus, rain in human perception appears a somewhat planar happening, not spreading horizontally on the length and breadth like lake surfaces, but stretching vertically on height and breadth. Further, when the third dimension of rain, that is, the distance to which the rain covers, is brought into cognitive awareness, the planar water curtain is seen to be reduplicated, and '*sheet of rain*' will appear in plural forms, as most cases of '*sheet of rain*' do in BNC (7 out of 9 occurrences are plurals). The case of 'spray' in (20) is slightly different from 'rain'. As produced by sea waves, it does not extend from top to bottom, but rises up to the air. However, the difference in direction does not change its two-dimensional perception. 'Sprays' also spread on much smaller dimensions than the sweeping rain sheets, so it is 'shattered' in (20).

Compared to the dynamic fluid of rain and spray, highly mobile 'flames' in fire are intangible and immaterial. Since 'flames' typically extend in space on all three dimensions (i.e. not only horizontally, but also vertically), they are three-dimensional in reality. Like other shapeless entities, the shape of 'flames' is perceived and construed by human conception. Similar to rain sheets, spreading flames can appear rather high and

broad (e.g. ‘colossal’ in (21)), extending considerably in both breadth and height. The vertical surface of flames is cognitively salient, which helps flames to be construed as two-dimensional sheets.

- (21) As these squads withdrew, Montgomery threw an incendiary into a shed, sending it up ‘in a colossal sheet of continuous flame’. [CCS 542]

(C-3) *Amorphous entities referring to other perceived flat entities*

Both ‘light’ and ‘blue’ are intangible and immaterial ocular experiences. On a closer look, however, both words actually mean something else.

- (22) No *sheet* of Olympic-proportion aqua-blue but a curving arc of pale green water set in natural stone with palm-frond umbrellas shading rustic wooden tables round the edge. [JY4 1399]
- (23) Towards evening dark clouds gathered again over the mountain at the mouth of the valley, slashing its face with rain in a slanting *sheet* of steel-grey light. [BNU 1059]

‘Aqua-blue’ in (22) is a colour, but it actually refers to the material which possesses this colour: water. Here, the property, i.e. colour, is employed as the ‘entry point’, in Kövecses and Radden’s term (1998: 40), to the target, i.e. the property-possessor, water. This is a ‘defining property for the category’ or ‘possessed for possessor’ metonymy (Kövecses & Radden, 1998: 53, 57). The real *sheet* category member is not the immaterial colour of ‘blue’, but the material underlying the colour, ‘water’ as a mass entity. As analysed in (C-1), when kept still, e.g. in the swimming pool of (22), the spread of water is perceived with its cognitively salient horizontal extension as a flat existence.

Similarly, (23) is another case of POSSESSED FOR POSSESSOR metonymy: the “slanting *sheet* of steel-grey light” is also used as a ‘reference point’, in Taylor’s term (2003: 126), for the entity giving out this light, i.e. the ‘cloud’. When seen from afar, cloud is easily perceived as a two-dimensional spread in area and appears as a plane. Thus, here, both amorphous entities are used metonymically to refer to other entities which are construed as flat.

(C-4) *Non-visual sense imagined as flat*

In this category is example (24) below. It appears strange to portray ‘sound’, which is perceived by hearing, as a spatial two-dimensional entity. Underlying this unusual member of the two-dimensional category is a cross-domain mapping.

- (24) They fired back — so many bullets that they cracked against the outside walls of the film company office in a *sheet* of sound lasting several seconds. [ANU 1004]

As underlined above, the sound lasted several seconds. The considerable continuation is projected from the TIME domain onto a space frame, where the non-stop dense cracking of bullets are seen as continuous as a spreading cloth sheet, and where the temporal continuous sound is perceived to extend on the dimension of spatial length and breadth. Obviously, this non-visual entity is construed as two-dimensional with much help of imagination.

Summary

In all, it can be seen that all entities classified by *sheet* are perceived as 'flat', by one means or another. Some entities are realistically flat by themselves, e.g. paper in (A); some are perceived via cognitively salient parts and thus appear flat, e.g. tissue, bronze, ice, and cells in (B), and water in (C-1), along with colour and light in (C-3) which metonymically refer to other entities; still some entities are imaginarily construed as flat, e.g. rain and flame in (C-2), and sound in (C-4). Going from the prototypical members of (A), further to (B), and then to (C), the *sheet* category members gradually changes from the concrete to the abstract, and more cognitive effort is required.

Category coherence

Another question naturally follows: *how* are these entities categorised by *sheet*? This subsection is to examine the function of QCL *sheet* upon the category members. By so doing, the overall category coherence will be constructed.

As discussed above, the *sheet* category members are rather diverse, some being three-dimensional material entities, some being amorphous or immaterial. These entities of various dimensionalities are all construed as two-dimensional by the usage of *sheet*, which functions upon the nouns differently, basically in three distinct ways.

First, *sheet* draws attention to an existent two-dimensional feature of the categorised entity. Paper and paper-like objects in A prototypically evoke an image of two-dimensional extensions, which is reinforced by the usage of *sheet*. Here, the QCL serves to highlight the dimensionality feature of inherently flat objects. As Langacker points out, '[e]ntities are often multifaceted' (Langacker, 1987: 272). All entities designated by nouns are encyclopaedic concepts, with an array of potential properties, or 'subdomains' (Langacker, 1987; Barcelona, 2000), e.g. the shape, function, etc. Even in terms of shape, cognitively speaking, all material entities extend on three dimensions, including typically 'flat' paper (no matter how thin paper is, it has thickness). On the other hand, the QCL *sheet* carries an apparent denotation of two-dimensional extension and is a rather specific concept in the dimensionality domain. When *sheet* collocates with nouns, the dimensionality schema is carried over to the original encyclopaedic concepts of the nouns, whose dimensionality domain is consequently activated. Here, the shape facet of the noun is highlighted by the QCL *sheet* and becomes more active in conceptualisation, while other aspects are subsumed into the background. This is what Langacker (1991: 189-201) refers to as the 'active zone' phenomenon. See Diagram 2.

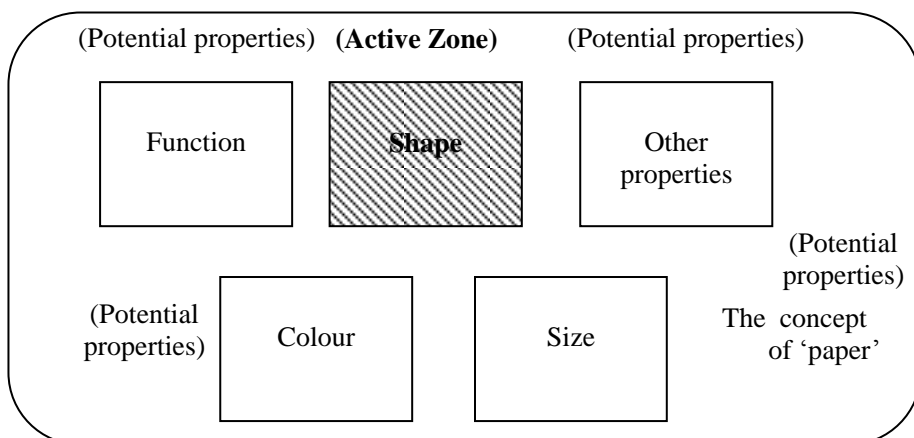


Diagram 2 Active Zone phenomenon in ‘sheet of + noun’

The second way in which *sheet* works is to bring about a hidden two-dimensional feature in the categorised entity. Different from flat paper, malleable objects like glass and metal and substances like clay can appear in any shape. However, when collocating with *sheet*, a potential feature, i.e. ‘to be flat’, is foregrounded, and the undetermined shape is specified. Here, the usage of *sheet* helps mould the otherwise unshaped entities and brings about a hidden characteristic of the nouns. Similar to ‘a *sheet of paper*’, the shape, and specifically the two-dimensional extension, of the encyclopaedic entity is the active zone in conceptualisation. Though ‘a *sheet of bronze*’ can be thick and ‘a *sheet of water*’ can be rather deep, only two dimensions are perceptually salient and activated by the usage of *sheet*, and the third dimension is cognitively ignored. This is illustrated by Diagram 3 below.

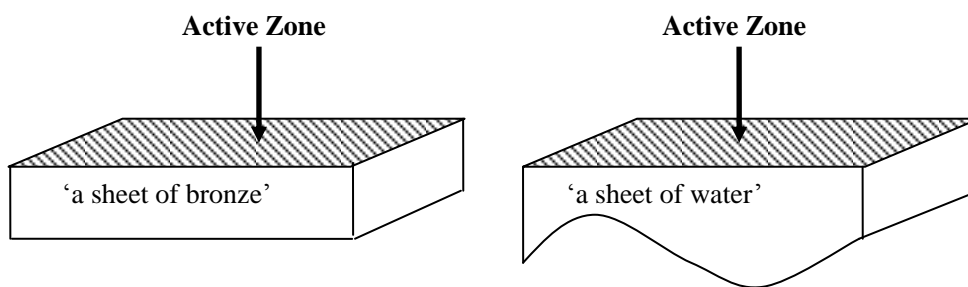
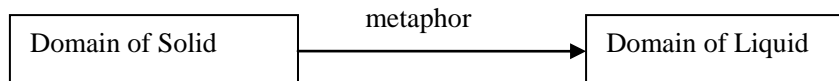


Diagram 3 Active Zone in ‘a sheet of bronze/water’

The third way in which *sheet* functions upon the classified noun is that *sheet* endows the categorised entity with a two-dimensional feature. The cases of ‘a *sheet of rain*’ and ‘a *sheet of sound*’ are different. Rain and sound are not two-dimensional, either realistically or potentially, but the use of *sheet* construes these non-dimensional things with a two-dimensional feature, with much imagination.

As discussed above, when rain pours heavily, the dense screen of liquid is imaginarily perceived as a unitary solid sheet, thus engendering a metaphoric mapping from the domain of liquid to the domain of solid. For ‘a *sheet of sound*’, the temporal continuation of sound in the domain of time is metaphorically projected onto the domain of space, making the non-stop audio experience a visual spatial perception. Both cases are realised by metaphor, as illustrated below.

‘a *sheet of rain*’:



‘a *sheet of sound*’:

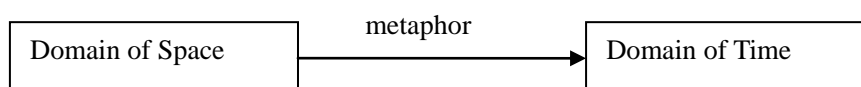


Diagram 4 Metaphors in ‘a *sheet of rain/sound*’

To summarise, the seemingly unrelated members of the *sheet* category are all linked by the category-wide attribute of a two-dimensional extension. They are either inherently (e.g. ‘paper’), or potentially (e.g. ‘glass’, ‘clay’, ‘water’, etc.), or imaginarily (e.g. ‘rain’, ‘sound’) flat in their encyclopaedic conceptualisation. By co-occurrence, the QCL *sheet* draws attention to the specific aspect of the object’s ‘flatness’, or highlights a potentially possessed plane, or interprets the originally shapeless concept as a two-dimensional entity. Here, the cognitive mechanisms of active zone and metaphor are at work respectively.

Significance of this study

This paper has adopted the concept of classifier to the language of English and introduced the notion of English Quasi-Classifiers. Focusing on a particular QCL of *sheet*, it examines the reflected shape category and analyses the cognitive mechanisms in the categorisation process. This study sheds lights on the categorisation device in English quantitative constructions which has usually been neglected. Hopefully, it will provide insights into how English speakers categorise the world and will contribute to the knowledge of human cognition of categories in general.

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