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Contents

Local literacies in a Cameroonian village

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Abstract

This paper explores the uses of literacy in a rural area in a developing country, and applies the ensuing insights to an examination of the provision of basic literacy teaching to adults in that context.

Adopting the perspective of literacy as a social practice, I describe the literacy practices which I have found in my research so far among the Mofu-Gudur people of northern Cameroon, using the framework of vernacular literacy practices identified by Barton and Hamilton (1998). Following Rogers *et al.* (1999) and Street (2005), I demonstrate how the application of the social practice view of literacy together with adult learning theory reveals important issues to be addressed by the designers of adult literacy programmes.

1. Introduction

In this paper I will explore the uses of literacy among the Mofu-Gudur people of Cameroon using categories developed by Barton & Hamilton (1998) in their study of literacy in Lancaster, and demonstrate how an awareness of local literacy practices can lead to suggestions for the improvements in the provision of basic literacy teaching to adults in that context. I will show how similar practices exist in Cameroon and Lancaster, although in an area where few people are able to read and write there is significant difference in the degree of prevalence of these practices. I will also show that literacy for reading the Bible is highly valued in this area, but that this is not apparently recognised in local adult literacy provision, even in the programme operating within the churches. I will propose some reasons for this.

My research is based on the premise that teaching people to read and write is not a matter of teaching only basic skills without an acknowledgement of how those skills will be applied, but rather requires paying careful attention to the uses and significance of literacy in the community. As Street (2005, my italics) points out,

> If we want learners to develop and enhance the richness and complexity of literacy practices evident in society at large, then we need curriculum and assessment that are themselves rich and complex and *based on research into actual literacy practices*.

This view has not always been recognised, even though it has much to offer those looking for ways of improving the effectiveness of adult literacy provision.

The research reported here forms part of my ongoing research into the uses and conceptions of literacy in this part of Cameroon.

2. Theoretical Background

My research is informed both by literacy theory and by adult education theory. I will outline first the main aspects of literacy theory which are relevant to this discussion, followed by those of adult learning theory.

2.1 Literacy as a social practice

Within the last twenty years, literacy has come to be seen in terms of a social practice (Barton, 1994; Street, 1984, 1995, 1993). Whereas the traditional view of literacy regards literacy as a skill acquired by individuals through an educational process typically located in the classroom, the social practice view focuses on the ways in which people make use of literacy as individuals or as communities of people. It locates literacy in the community and in everyday life.

Fundamental to this view is the concept of literacy practices. According to Barton & Hamilton (1998: 6-7),

> Literacy practices are the general cultural ways which people draw upon in their lives. In the simplest sense, literacy practices are what people do with literacy. […] Literacy practices are more usefully understood as existing in the relationships between people, within groups and communities, rather than as a set of properties residing in individuals.

This view of literacy therefore places literacy in the realm of interpersonal communication, offering people an additional channel for meeting their needs as individuals and for functioning as members of their wider society. This does not necessarily reject the view of literacy as a product of education or as a skill which people need to learn; it rather complements it and serves to remind educators that the skill which is typically taught in schools or in some other educational setting does not exist independently but rather is applied in the world outside the classroom, and that the world outside in turn affects what is learned inside the classroom.

The social view of literacy is particularly helpful in showing that literacy practices vary from place to place and from person to person, and also that literacies do not all have the same status. Dominant literacy practices are those associated with the formal institutions of a community such as school, government or the Church where the manner in which literacy is used follows certain predefined norms. Being established as norms, these practices enable those who can make use of them to acquire status, and potentially power, within those institutions. In contrast, vernacular practices are those of individual people who make use of literacy in the ways they choose and for the purposes of their own choice. If dominant literacy practices are found in the institutions of the community, vernacular literacy practices are found in the home and in the everyday lives of the people who make up the community.

Although much research into literacy practices has been conducted in industrialised countries, a significant body of research has taken place in developing countries. Both Kalman (2001) and Maddox (2001), in Mexico and Bangladesh respectively, have pointed to the failure of adult literacy programmes to take adequate account of the specific literacy needs of the learners. Furthermore, the Department for International Development in the UK funded a project in Nepal to provide literacy support tailored to the needs of the specific local groups; this was based on extensive research into literacy practices in the community (Chitrakar, 2005). Much, however, remains to be done if adult literacy programmes are to take as much account of learners' needs as is necessary for teaching and learning to be fully effective.

2.2 Adult learning theory

Current theories of adult education argue that adults generally learn best when they see a clear reason for their learning and when learning programmes are based on research to identify their specific needs, such research being ideally undertaken with the learners themselves. A 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate (Knowles *et al.*,

1998; Vella, 2002). As applied to literacy work, adult learning theory suggests that, instead of presenting the learners with a repertoire of decontextualised skills which they need to learn in order to be literate, it is educationally more effective for programmes to respond directly to the purposes which have brought the learners to the literacy class, and to provide curriculum which addresses these purposes in an explicit manner. Facing, and overcoming, real tasks in the course of learning ensures that what is being learned is immediately reinforced through being put into action; learners are therefore more likely to retain what they have learned and also acquire a greater degree of independence. As Rogers *et al.* (1999: 54) indicate,

> …literacy learning programmes which apply adult learning principles will help the participants to learn through their own literacy experience, to learn by doing in reality. Just as it is impossible to learn to swim without swimming in real water, or to learn chicken rearing or rice growing without actually rearing chickens or growing rice, so it is impossible to learn reading or writing or calculating without engaging in real reading, writing or calculating in real situations — wherever possible with the assistance of a facilitator.

Such an approach also provides a response to the commonly observed phenomenon of many adult literacy learners failing to continue in their classes for long enough to acquire an adequate mastery of literacy skills. Learners who see recognition of their felt needs and the immediate application of their learning to those needs are more likely to continue in their learning (Lauglo, 2001; Oxenham *et al.*, 2002).

Adult learning theory thus joins with a social practice view of literacy to emphasise the principle that adult basic education programmes need to pay particular attention to identifying and responding to the practical literacy needs of the learners.

3. Methodology

Having worked in the northern part of Cameroon for nearly three years in the late 1990s as a literacy consultant with SIL, I was somewhat familiar with the area in which I am now conducting my research. SIL is a faith-based NGO specialising in the development of unwritten languages, through the provision of alphabets and literature and the training of the speakers of such languages in translation and literacy activities. In many SIL projects, an explicit goal is the translation of the Bible for the benefit of the local churches. Nevertheless, my research interests concern the effectiveness of literacy programmes of all kinds, both those with a religious goal and those with other purposes.

In order to explore as fully as possible the conceptions of literacy of the people and literacy programmes in this area, I have adopted an ethnographic approach involving participant observation, informal involvement in local activities and semi-structured interviews.

Up to the time of writing, I have spent approximately five months in Cameroon, almost all of this in Mowo, a Mofu-Gudur village. I have involved myself in

local life, shopping in the local markets, attending services at four different churches in the area and observing various activities and meetings relating to the growing of cotton, a major activity of the Mofu-Gudur people. I have also attended four different literacy classes for adults, and have interviewed a total of 59 people, including 15 people who are attending literacy classes, 9 people who teach literacy to adults in the area, and 24 other people from the village. I have also interviewed 11 people who are involved in literacy work regionally or are in positions of responsibility in the community, including the local chief and two church leaders. These interviews have been conducted in French with a Mofu-Gudur interpreter who is my research assistant. Using an interpreter is inevitable in view of my lack of knowledge of the language. Although it would be preferable if I were able to converse directly with my respondents, having an interpreter on hand at least provides me with a readily available colleague who is familiar with the culture and with whom I can discuss issues as they arise.

4.   The Mofu-Gudur people

Mofu-Gudur is one of approximately 270 indigenous languages in Cameroon and is spoken by about 60,000 people in a small area in the north of the country (Gordon, 2005). The term Mofu-Gudur can be applied to the area in which the Mofu-Gudur language is spoken as well as to the speakers of the language. Most Mofu-Gudur people are subsistence farmers. Farming is difficult in this arid area and many people are short of food for a certain period of each year. People commonly grow cotton as a cash crop for Sodecoton, the national cotton company.

It is estimated by Kenneth Hollingsworth, the SIL linguist resident in the area, that only about 15% of adults are able to read and write (personal communication). This overall figure hides considerable variation between younger and older people and between men and women. Many adults have little or no formal education as the first primary schools were established in the area only in the last twenty years. Although most children now attend primary school, not all complete the normal six years of primary education and only a small minority go on to secondary school. Questions also have to be asked about the quality of education available in local schools, since not all teachers are trained and there may be 80 pupils or more in a class. Lessons are taught in French but as children do not encounter this language much outside of school, they generally have an imperfect mastery of it. There are no secondary schools at the present time in the area.

There are few employment opportunities locally, particularly for those with limited education. For this reason, many young men go to the major cities of Cameroon and other neighbouring countries in order to find work. This is generally of an unskilled nature such as guards or street vendors.

Mofu-Gudur is not the only language in common use. Although it is the language of choice for most local people, which they use at home and in daily life, many people speak at least one other language. Those who live near the edge of the

area closest to the neighbouring languages speak these languages to some extent, and many speak Fulfulde, which functions as the language of wider communication in much of the northern part of Cameroon. Those Mofu-Gudur people who travel, or who are in positions of responsibility, are likely to speak this language. It is also commonly used within the Mofu-Gudur area in the cotton industry and also many of the churches. Apart from Fulfulde, French is used by those who have most education, although there is considerable variation in their level of competence. As with Fulfulde, men are more likely than women to be able to speak and use French.

A similar multilingualism exists in the use of written language in the area, but whereas Mofu-Gudur is the language which is used most orally, it is least used in written form. Conversely, French, which is mastered by few, is the language which is most often seen publicly and in the homes of the local people in its written form, usually in the context of official documents.

The relative paucity of written materials in Mofu-Gudur is due to the fact that a writing system for it was not developed until the late 1970s when linguistic research and language development was begun in the area by SIL. In the last thirty years, a body of literature in Mofu-Gudur has been published locally. Most of this, apart from pedagogical materials, is of a religious nature, and includes extracts from the Bible, but there are some booklets of folk stories and others relating to health issues including the treatment of diarrhoea and malaria. The publication of the New Testament in Mofu-Gudur is expected within the next two years.

Fulfulde is found in its written form, as in its oral form, primarily in two distinct contexts, namely Sodecoton, which produces all its documents bilingually in Fulfulde and French, and the Protestant churches where the most commonly used translation of the Bible is in Fulfulde. The Catholic churches, however, use Bible extracts in Mofu-Gudur.

If literacy teaching aims to equip people for the literacy tasks which occur in their environment, then all these socio-economic, educational and linguistic features of the Mofu-Gudur area have implications for the provision of literacy teaching. These will be discussed below.

5.   Uses of literacy in Mofu-Gudur

Barton & Hamilton (1998), in their research in Lancaster in the UK, observed that the purposes for which the people in their study made use of literacy could be divided into six broad categories as follows: a) organising life, b) personal communication, c) private leisure, d) documenting life, e) sense making and f) social participation. These are not in any order of priority or frequency of occurrence. There is some overlap between them and each involves a range of different literacy practices, but together they provide a helpful starting point for exploring how literacy is used in the Mofu-Gudur area. In due course my research may uncover an alternative analysis more appropriate for this context.

Each of these categories will now be considered in turn in the context of Mofu-Gudur. In spite of the significant socio-economic differences between Mofu-Gudur and Lancaster, and the much less frequent use of literacy in Mofu-Gudur, it will be seen that similar types of practices exist in both places. An analysis of the uses of literacy in this area will then lead on to a discussion of their implications for the local literacy programmes.

5.1 Literacy for organising life

One of the principal functions of literacy at the vernacular level is that it enables people to organise their time and resources. In Lancaster, people were found to use literacy to keep an appointment diary or an address book, to take notes of things of importance to them and to compile lists such as of items which they need to buy when shopping. Their homes were likely to show the evidence of literacy with notice boards and calendars on display.

Busy people find literacy useful for this purpose. There are busy people in Mofu-Gudur such as the leaders of the local churches who commonly keep such a diary, and my research assistant keeps a record in his pocket of the hours he has worked. Further research will undoubtedly uncover more instances of this practice. However, so far it does not appear that those who are able to read and write use literacy for this purpose as much as people in industrialised societies.

One reason for this is that the resources which are needed for using literacy in this way are not always readily available. Frequently interviewees have told me that they do not even have a pen or paper in their house, and that they would need to buy them if they needed them. In an area where incomes are very low, it is not surprising that only the essentials of life are normally on hand at home.

5.2 Literacy for Personal Communication

People live in community, whether in families or in society as a whole, and give expression to their relationship with those around them in various ways. Being able to read and write to communicate with others provides a way of doing this in addition to oral communication. In Lancaster, this literacy practice was manifest, for instance, in the letters which people sent to relatives, friends, and others, and in the greetings cards which they posted on particular occasions. It was evident too in the notes which people wrote on ordinary pieces of paper and left for members of their family at home, or the announcements which they placed in the newspaper on the occasion of significant family events.

In Mofu-Gudur, people feel the same need to keep in touch with one another. Those who have remained in the home area often wish to communicate with members of their family who have moved away to find work. Many of those whom I have interviewed have expressed the view that this is one of the most important uses of literacy for them. Although there is no local postal service, so that letters have to be sent by hand with people travelling in the right direction, this does not discourage

people from wanting to remain in touch with the members of their family. There is often the very practical need to ask relatives working in the city to send money home.

In view of the personal nature of much communication by letter between family members, it is not surprising that Mofu-Gudur people often mention, as one of the primary advantages of being able to read and write, that literate people no longer need to make use of another person to write letters on their behalf or to read those which they receive. As one of the village leaders has told me,

> If I want to write to someone, I have to get someone to write the letter for me. Then I send the letter and the person who receives it has to get someone else to read it to him. So that makes four people involved in sending and receiving the letter. (Djaouro Koutkobei, interviewed 28/02/06; ref P50 line 558).

Keeping secrets is a high priority, especially when many letters concern financial matters, so the fewer people who know the contents of a letter, the better.

5.3 Literacy for Private Leisure

Being able to read and write enables one to use literacy for the purpose of relaxation or entertainment, be it reading a book or even writing a poem as many people in the Lancaster study apparently enjoyed doing. Books are not the only object of literacy for leisure: magazines, newspapers and catalogues can fulfil the same function.

The use of literacy for leisure purposes is much more limited in Mofu-Gudur, even among those who are able to read and write. This is partly the effect of the difficulty of obtaining books, magazines and newspapers in the area, since there are no bookshops or libraries. The Sodecoton publication, *Le Paysan*, is distributed through the local groups of cotton growers and may well be the only periodical to reach Mofu-Gudur homes. Mofu-Gudur people commonly do not possess any books. If they do, these are most likely to be a Bible or Bible extract, or a school text book used by their children. Some Christians have reported that they read the Bible at home, so this may be the primary example of leisure reading, even if it overlaps into the area of literacy for instruction and self-improvement, a function akin to that of literacy for making sense, as discussed below.

5.4 Literacy for Documenting Life

Being able to read and write is also useful for the purpose of keeping records of one's activities in the past and in the present. In Lancaster, Barton and Hamilton found that people not only kept their birth and marriage certificates but also their school records and cuttings from the local newspaper as well as other items such as scrap books which served to record significant moments in their lives. Such literacy artefacts may be kept because of the obligation to have official documents such as a birth certificate, or because the owners have chosen to keep them because of some personal significance.

In Mofu-Gudur, people keep such records of their lives but they are considerably more limited. Many people do not have a birth or marriage certificate. However, they are very likely to have an identity card since these are often required to be shown to the police. They are also likely to have a receipt for the taxes they have paid and a card indicating that they are on the local register of electors. Mofu-Gudur people possess these documents irrespective of their level of literacy. Even those who are unable to read are aware of their significance. This inability may not lead to any disadvantage in most cases, but this is not true of the receipts which people receive for their cotton when it is weighed and taken away by Sodecoton. Only two years ago in one local village, many of the cotton growers were defrauded out of some of the money they were due because they had been unable to read the scales or the figures on their receipts and to verify that the weight of their cotton recorded was the same as what had been weighed. Unbeknown to them, a certain amount of their cotton was credited to a fictitious person by the people in charge of weighing, who subsequently attempted to claim the amount due for themselves.

In most cases, Mofu-Gudur people have these documents because they are required to have them and they serve an immediate purpose. This is not true of all personal documents. For instance, some interviewees have shown me out of date membership cards for the political party or the local church. Sentimental reasons may come into play. One of my respondents has shown me the identity card of his father who died some years ago; he has kept it as it bears the only photograph of his father which he possesses.

In the context of the cotton growing industry, keeping records has a particular value. The local growers are organised into groups of between 10 and 30 people such that the group as a whole takes responsibility for each of its members. If one member fails to grow sufficient cotton to repay the company for the seeds and fertiliser which he has received on credit at the start of the season, the whole group has to make up the payment. Many of the leaders of these groups as well as the majority of the growers are unable to read and write, and it is reported that there are frequent disputes between them concerning how much money each should receive when Sodecoton makes its payments. Without written records which are understandable to those most affected by them, there is ample opportunity for misunderstanding, whether accidental or manipulative.

In my research I have met several respondents who have expressed frustration at their inability to read and write and, by implication, their inability to make use of literacy for purposes which are important to them. As one man commented,

> Someone who can read and write beats me because he can write down what someone says so as not to forget it. With me, my head has to do all the work. (Moussa Baydam, interviewed 21/03/06; ref P72 line 0855)

The village leader mentioned earlier also commented that being literate would make his job much easier as he would no longer have to rely on his memory about decisions which had been taken, or tasks which he needed to carry out. "You have to realise that you can't remember everything. You have to write things down so as not to forget

them. If I was literate, when I had issues to deal with, I could write them down and then put them on one side and just go back to them when I needed to." (Djaouro Koutkobei, interviewed 28/02/06; ref P50 line 552).

5.5 Literacy for sense making

In Lancaster, Barton and Hamilton found that people used literacy in order to find out what they did not previously know. This may be reading instruction booklets for household appliances or sustained enquiry into a specific area of specialist knowledge, as when people suffering from medical conditions try to find out more than their doctor has told them. The reading of religious materials is another aspect of this type of vernacular literacy. In Lancaster, many resources exist for those who wish to find out about something which interests them. Apart from the local library, there are several bookshops and, of course, in recent years the internet has opened up new opportunities for accessing information.

Such a wide range of opportunities does not exist in Mofu-Gudur, but the same desire to find out is evident. It finds expression most often among the many Mofu-Gudur people who are Christians and who wish to read the Bible. Scriptural texts are the only texts found in the Mofu-Gudur area in all three languages most commonly spoken – Mofu-Gudur, Fulfulde and French. Those people who possess any kind of reading matter are most likely to have a Bible or Bible portions in their homes, and to read them on a more or less regular basis. The ability to read the Bible is highly valued and, alongside letter writing, it is the purpose for literacy most often identified by my respondents, both literate and non-literate. Seven out of the nine of my interviewees who were involved in church based literacy classes stated that they desired to read the Bible.

5.6 Literacy for social participation

Barton and Hamilton also noticed that many people in their study were members of local groups or at least took an interest in their activities. Literacy promoted their participation in a world wider than their immediate family and circumstances.

In Mofu-Gudur, there are fewer opportunities for social participation through literacy, not least because of the near absence of newspapers or newsletters. Being able to read enables Mofu-Gudur people, at least in principle, to read the public notices which are displayed in prominent places; these may relate to vaccination campaigns or, as recently, to the arrangements for the national census. However, being literate does not necessarily facilitate understanding when such notices are normally written in French. Thus, for many local people, social participation in this case is only through literacy mediators who are able to understand what is written and translate its meaning to them.

Literacy does, however, promote participation in some limited circumstances. Church members often meet in groups for Bible study and those who are able to read are able to take part in a different way to those who are not, as they are able to read passages aloud for the benefit of the other members of their group.

To summarise this survey of vernacular literacy practices in Mofu-Gudur, it has been shown that, in spite of the obvious social and economic differences between a city in the UK and a rural area in Cameroon, the vernacular literacy practices in the two places appear to differ only in terms of extent of occurrence and not in terms of the range of purposes. As in Lancaster, people in Mofu-Gudur use literacy to organise and document their lives, to communicate with one another, and to find out about subjects that interest them. They also use literacy for leisure purposes and to facilitate their interaction with their wider society. The inference could be drawn that these vernacular uses of literacy have a universal dimension. However, as my research develops, I expect to explore in greater depth the similarities and differences between the literacy practices in the two places, and to develop a set of categories which is more distinctive of the Cameroonian context.

6.   Literacy provision for adults in Mofu-Gudur

Before considering some of the implications for literacy programmes of the vernacular literacy practices which I have described, I will outline the range of organised programmes which currently exist for Mofu-Gudur adults who want to learn to read and write.

All of the available classes are provided by non-profit organisations and normally take place only during the period between January and April when people are not occupied with work in their fields. Churches throughout the area offer literacy classes in the Mofu-Gudur language and several hundred people attend these at any one time. Classes, varying in size from a handful to more than twenty learners, are taught voluntarily by church members who have received training at short courses organised by CALMO (Comité d'Alphabétisation en Langue Mofu-Gudur), a local voluntary organisation. The teachers are put forward by their local churches and many have received little formal education. The programme is structured around a pre-primer for complete beginners, two basic primers and a post-primer for the highest level.

For those people who want to learn French and also to read and write at the same time, literacy classes in French are available, at least in the village of Mowo where I have been living, through CROPSEC (Conseil Régional des Organisations Paysannes de la Partie Septentrionale du Cameroun). A small group of women meet three times a week under a grass shelter and are taught by a local lady trained by this NGO which pays her a small sum for her work. French literacy classes are also available at Mowo Baptist church, organised by a French lady. These are taught at beginners and advanced levels. About 15 women attend the two classes.

Literacy classes in Fulfulde have also been available in the past. The teachers were trained by Sodecoton but the cost of the training and the materials had to be met by the local cotton growers' organisation. These classes are not currently running for lack of funds.

These four programmes approach the literacy teaching task in different ways. All of them teach basic literacy skills but, in addition, the CROPSEC programme seeks to help the learners to increase their knowledge of useful information, with some of the reading texts concerning health and other matters. This is also true of the French literacy classes in the Baptist Church. Likewise, the materials in the Fulfulde programme contain a good deal of functional content very directly related to what is required for growing cotton; this includes the forms which the growers encounter in their interaction with the cotton company. The programme also includes a strong element of numeracy teaching, again related to the mathematical skills, including measuring and weighing, which are required for cotton growing.

On the other hand, the CALMO literacy programme does not include any functional content except at the highest level. The reading texts relate only to the adventures and activities of a fictional local family except in the post-primer. However, this is not commonly taught, so the focus of the programme remains on the discrete skills of reading and writing rather than on the use of these skills to access new topics of practical application to the lives of the learners.

7.   Implications for literacy provision

The exploration of vernacular literacy practices in Mofu-Gudur has described a context in which the use of literacy is considerably limited by the inability of most adults to read and write and by the lack of books and other reading material. Against this backdrop, however, the study has shown that the Mofu-Gudur people place a high value on literacy, especially for the two purposes of communicating in writing with other people, particularly family members living away from the area, and of reading the Bible. The study has also revealed the highly multilingual nature of the area in which several languages are in use orally and in writing, although not all to the same degree.

Can the available programmes do more to take local literacy practices into account and thereby become more effective in enabling learners to meet their own literacy needs? This is important since, by doing so, these programmes may become more attractive to the large proportion of the potential beneficiaries who at present fail to take advantage of them. I will focus here primarily on the largest programme, which takes place in the churches.

This programme is very successful in that more adults take part in the classes than in any other programme. It is striking, however, that it appears to give little recognition to the expressed desires of the learners, particularly to be able to read for the purpose of reading the Bible. This is surprising, given that there is a high degree of consensus among the learners as to this purpose of literacy and that the programme is organised within the churches, so that it would be well placed to respond to this desire. Typical of the traditional adult literacy programmes described by Rogers and Uddin (2005), the primary aim of the programme at present is to teach basic literacy skills, a task which it accomplishes by providing an extensive and thorough grounding in the

phonemes of the language, with each lesson focusing on one sound and the letter which represents it. This approach is highly structured; each letter is introduced in turn and words created by combining each new letter with those previously taught. However, it is only by completing the whole course that the learners encounter all the 32 letters of the Mofu-Gudur alphabet in their various combinations. This process takes some three years.

It would not be difficult to introduce the learners to reading the Bible at a much earlier stage, either by altering the content of the reading lessons or by providing additional material alongside them. A structured curriculum including Biblical material of an appropriate level would not necessarily be more demanding of the teachers than the present curriculum focusing on everyday stories. The low level of education of most of the teachers in this programme need not be a barrier to the introduction of such an approach.

The reason for the current content of this programme may well lie in the desire of the programme organisers to ensure that the programme is open to all, both Christians and others. In reality, however, virtually all the present learners in this programme are Christians and more or less active members of their churches, so this reasoning does not appear to be valid. It would seem perverse to limit the content offered to those present for fear of discouraging others who have no desire to attend.

Another reason may be that the programme has failed to recognise the change in the literacy environment locally over the last twenty years. When literacy classes began, there were almost no reading materials in Mofu-Gudur apart from the pedagogical materials needed for the classes. Since then a number of texts have been published, many of them being extracts from the Bible, which has opened up the possibility of introducing different and relevant content into the literacy classes. This opportunity has not been taken, probably because of lack of resources and manpower. That many people still attend the classes is perhaps a reflection that the classes are successful in meeting a felt need at one level; however, further adaptation of the programme would result in these needs being met more effectively.

The classes in this programme, and in the other programmes I have examined, also do not assist the learners with the process of writing letters to their family members and others. Again this lack would appear to be due to the focus of the programme on the basic skills of reading and writing, of decoding and encoding, to the extent of not making application of these skills for particular uses. This focus arises from the philosophy of education on which the programme is based, namely that literacy consists of discrete skills which can be taught in isolation from their application in everyday life. Accordingly, this programme emphasises the formation of the letters of the alphabet and the construction of individual words using the letters which have been taught in preceding lessons. but the learners rarely construct whole sentences. The programme makes the questionable assumption that once learners are equipped with this knowledge they will feel able to use literacy in any context without further help. As is shown by my own observations, as well as by the example given by Rogers & Uddin (2005) of one man in Bangladesh who, after attending a literacy class for a year, felt that he had still not learned to read and write, this does not seem to be borne out in practice.

As my research continues, I will be able to discuss in more depth the extent to which the CROPSEC and the Baptist Church French literacy classes are responding to the ways in which literacy is used in the area. The multilingual nature of the Mofu-Gudur area also has implications for the adult literacy programmes. Adult learning theory would suggest that the literacy programmes should reflect the plurality of languages in daily use; but, on the other hand, principles of pedagogy (and andragogy) would suggest that to introduce literacy to adults through a language which they do not know, or through more than one language at a time, would undermine the learning process.

At the present time, the Mofu-Gudur literacy programmes do reflect the multilingual nature of the area if they are regarded as a whole, and, if literacy classes in Fulfulde were also available, they would do so even more clearly. However, the individual programmes are each limited to literacy in one language. To truly reflect the multilingualism of the area, the programmes would need to offer a progression from one language to another so that for instance, those learners who had learned to read and write in Mofu-Gudur could continue their studies by learning to speak and to read and write in French. This would demand a higher degree of training for teachers and also a greater supply of teachers capable of speaking French well, so it would not be easy to achieve. A straightforward step in this direction, however, would be for a relationship to exist between the literacy programmes such that adults could be encouraged to move easily from one to another. In a small community such as Mofu-Gudur it should not be difficult to promote this through the creation of opportunities for the literacy teachers in the various programmes to come together, albeit informally.

8. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to outline briefly how literacy is used informally by the Mofu-Gudur people of Cameroon, and to indicate how the study of their vernacular literacy practices raises important issues for the provision of literacy teaching to adults in the area. It has shown the value of the perspective of literacy as a social practice, and how the insights which arise from this approach can highlight ways in which adults can be helped to make greater and more effective use of literacy to meet their communicative needs. Although adult educators are already conscious of the importance of taking the needs of the learners into account when developing educational programmes, the theories of literacy as a social practice and adult learning offer the possibility of more detailed understanding of the learners and their context, and the opportunity to further improve adult literacy programmes.

There is certainly a place for more research. Apart from examining local uses of literacy, there is a need to uncover what potential beneficiaries of a literacy programme understand about literacy and what expectations they hold, both of literacy itself and the classes in which literacy is taught. My ongoing research will explore these areas and identify further implications for literacy programmes in the Mofu-Gudur area and elsewhere.

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Code-switching between English and Mandarin Chinese on postings in the college-affiliated bulletin board system in Taiwan
A functional approach

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Abstract

The aim of my study is to contribute new insights in functional approaches of code-alternation on postings in college affiliated bulletin board system, so called BBS in Taiwan. In one bilingual or multilingual community wherever two languages are in contact, the attitudes of favor or disfavor towards the languages involved can be discovered. In Taiwan, although English is not spoken as a native language, with its global importance, English has gradually gained its significance in people's lives. With the necessity for all the students to take English courses and achieve a certain level of proficiency, code-alternation between English and Mandarin Chinese in daily lives becomes frequent. Under such circumstances, will globalization of English influence Taiwanese society, especially its impact on the way college students' use of languages in educational settings? The overarching research question I plan to address in this paper is: *'What underlying pragmatic functions do language or code choices serve on postings of BBS in Taiwan?'*

This study takes a qualitative and ethnographic approach. Data collected include online BBS postings within one year drawn from two different departments in NSYSU. As regards my analysis, I would like to apply a heuristic approach in terms of Gumperz's (1982) theory in conversational code-switching with Chen's (1996) theoretical frameworks, and, concurrently, make allowances for the changes of medium from spoken conversation to written texts. Through observing the phenomenon of code-alternation in students' daily written communicative media, BBS, the features and motivation in various language uses amongst adolescents could be defined.

1. Introduction

Gumperz (1982: 59) defines code switching as "juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems." In fact, code-switching is not merely a simple phenomenon in bilingual or multilingual society, for it demonstrates something else of importance: one's background and cultural identity. According to Appel & Muysken (1987), the choice of language when speaking is a reflection of a person's identity. In bilingual or multilingual society, language choice is not only an effective medium of communication but also an act of identity. By choosing one or more languages in one's linguistic repertoire, a person reveals his or her social relationships with others and constructs individual identity.

In Taiwan, although English is not spoken as a native language, with its global importance English has gradually gained significance in people's lives. With the necessity for all students to take English courses and achieve a certain level of proficiency in order to graduate from college in Taiwan, code-mixing or code-switching between English and Mandarin Chinese in their daily lives using MSN Messenger or electronic bulletin boards is becoming increasingly frequent. As a consequence, will the globalization of English influence Taiwanese society, and more specifically, will it affect college students' writing in an educational setting? With this question in mind, I would like to investigate language choice in computer-mediated conversation (CMC) in Taiwan. The data will be the genre of written texts surrounding college students' everyday lives: that is, postings on the electronic bulletin board system, or BBS.

BBS, standing for bulletin board system, a relatively new medium on the Internet, is one form of online discussion forum or message board. 'Visitors' have the possibility of registering as users and posting messages on the website, identified by a self-selected nickname (Hinrichs, 2005: 49). BBS is categorised as an asynchronous situation. The interactions are stored in a certain format, and they are available to users upon demand, so the users can catch up with the discussion or add or reply to it at any moment, even after a long period of time (Crystal, 2001). Hinrichs (2005: 30) adds that postings in the discussion forums include interactive characteristics similar to text-type e-mail. The fundamental difference is that in the discussion forums, interaction is of a one-to-many or many-to-many format, whilst e-mail is usually a one-to-one mode.

Although BBS messages are in written form, in fact, they share certain qualities with spoken discourse. People can express their feelings or thoughts by using written-out laughter, verbal descriptions of actions or face marks such as emoticons. Herring (1996) has mentioned that computer-based messages are typed, but in fact exchanges are usually informal and fast, more like spoken conversation. Synchronous chat, e-mail and discussion list postings online tend to have certain speech-like characteristics (Herring, 1996; Yates, 1996).

Emphasizing this point, Sebba (2003: 165) agrees that electronic mail or other CMC keeps the features and spontaneity of spoken discourse with some technological constraints. It is apparent that the writers of e-mail do not feel limited by the constraints applied to other public or formal texts. Spelling in e-mails is less regulated

or formal. It can be said that e-mails, chat rooms or bulletin boards provide a medium for writers to communicate without worrying about conventional constraints on written languages, including the conventions of orthography.

Within this online community, the talk or communication not only transmits a message, but also demonstrates a writer's characteristics and individuality. However, unlike a face-to-face (FTF) interaction protocol, this so-called 'individuality' may belong to either 'fixed' individuality or 'invented' individuality due to the properties of CMC, in which each individual's identity marker could be highlighted by the linguistic choices whilst simultaneously the role of other identity markers, such as race, gender or class is masked (Warschauer, 2000).

To summarise, the aim of my research, which is fundamentally sociolinguistically based, is to examine the electronic texts on BBS drawn from different departments of colleges at National Sun Yat-Sen University (NSYSU) in Taiwan. As a primary focus, I would like to investigate the sociolinguistic and pragmatic functions of code-mixed electronic texts. Concurrently, I would like to investigate college students' identity construction and how they encode the texts by using different languages or codes to serve as their individual or group identity markers. The overarching research question I plan to address is: What are the discoursal features and characteristics of code-switching in online discussion forums amongst college students in Taiwan?

2.   Sociolinguistic background in Taiwan

2.1   Language in Taiwan

2.1.1 Mandarin Chinese

Mandarin Chinese implies the standard Chinese language, literally known as the 'national language' or *guoyu*, which is the official language in Taiwan. When officials make statements on television, or teachers give lectures in school, Mandarin Chinese is their first choice of language. Generally speaking, everyone in Taiwan learns how to speak and write Mandarin Chinese from the beginning of schooling. In fact, since 1946, the government assigned Mandarin Chinese as the common language and made all students in primary school in Taiwan learn and use it (Taiwanese Language, 2000).

On formal occasions, such as official meetings, conferences or broadcasts, participants are accustomed to writing and speaking Mandarin Chinese, which is the language of official transactions and the mass media.

2.1.2 Taiwanese

Originally, Taiwanese meant the language derived from the coastal area of Fu Jian in the southern province in Mainland China. It is known as the dialect *Minnan*, and is used by the majority of Taiwanese residents especially in the south of Taiwan (Background on Taiwanese, 2000). Due to the origin of Taiwanese in the dialect, *Minnan*,

most people 'speak' Taiwanese instead of 'writing' it.

Taiwanese has its own written system, but due to an insufficiency of knowledge about this written system and its dialectal origin, most Taiwanese speakers have not tried writing Taiwanese. According to Hsiau (1997), there are associations between some Taiwanese words and Chinese characters; approximately 70 percent of Taiwanese words can be codified through Chinese characters, but the other 30 percent cannot be written with the characters in current use. Instead, people write Mandarin Chinese and then translate (Writing Taiwanese, 2000). Although it is acknowledged that the mixed usage of Taiwanese and Mandarin Chinese occurs more and more frequently as time goes by, and Taiwanese is even used on formal occasions, usually Taiwanese is reserved mainly for colloquial and spoken purposes. Therefore, Taiwanese generally functions in oracy rather than literacy in society.

2.1.3 Hakka

As well as Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese, other languages are spoken by residents in Taiwan, including Hakka. This dialect of Chinese kept features of the old Han language, which was formed in the Tsin and Tang Dynasties. Most Hakka people were from the northern part of Mainland China. Due to war, people moved from the north to the south, and then to Taiwan (A Brief Introduction to Hakka, 2000). Most people from the central part of Taiwan are able to write or speak Hakka.

2.1.4 Aboriginal group languages

Aboriginal group languages found in Taiwan include Ami, Puyuma, Atayal, Saisiat, Bunun, Tsou, Paiwan, Rukai and Tao, which belong to the Austronesia group of languages (Taiwanese Language, 2000). Different aboriginal groups spread throughout Taiwan use these languages.

2.1.5 English

English holds an important position in the world. It goes without saying that, as an international and global language, it has become a significant medium for communication. The global spread of English users on the Internet gradually solidifies its role as a lingua franca. To go a step further, people using English to communicate with each other are even categorized as belonging to a higher social group, or highly educated.

With the upsurge in the significance of English, more and more people in Taiwan tend to mix in English terms frequently to 'emphasise' their social status. Generally speaking, English in Taiwan is learned compulsorily in primary school. Students are required to learn English from their third year of primary school (10 years old); then, depending on the type of school they go to, the opportunities to learn and use English will vary.

Nevertheless, in the Taiwanese educational system, the ability to communicate in

written English is more highly prized than the ability to speak it. Usually, schools offer written examinations only. Oral ability in English is usually neglected. Under such circumstances, reading and writing become the major focus for students to learn English. As for Taiwanese people in general, it can be said that usually those who accept further English teaching have the ability to write in English with facility, although most of them still lack the ability to speak English properly.

2.2 Writing and word processing in Taiwan

According to DeFrancis (1984), the Chinese writing system is morphosyllabic. Each character has its meaning, with a single-syllable pronunciation. Since Chinese characters are completely different from the roman alphabet, the keyboard used in word-processing contrasts as well. Some special software is required. Su (2003) points out that, in general, there are two main popular programmes for computer users. One is called *Zhuyin,* input by sound, which is probably the most accessible to the public; the other one is called *Cangjie,* input by shape. *Zhuyin*, or Mandarin Phonetic symbols, is composed of 37 symbols, each of which is part of a Chinese character in phonetics.

As for *Pinyin,* this is a Mandarin Romanization system created in the 1950s in China (DeFrancis, 1984). The *Pinyin* system remains unused by most Taiwanese. In reality, Pinyin is rarely used on the Internet in Taiwan.

3. Literature review

The terminological issue concerning 'code-switching,' 'code mixing' or 'borrowing' is always debated. As for the relation between 'code-switching' and 'code-mixing,' Romaine (1989) mentions some researchers consider these two terms share a similar definition, whilst others argue differences exist between 'code-switching' and 'code-mixing.' The difference is that 'code-switching' means an inter-sentential switch, where one sentence is followed by another sentence in a different language. 'Code-mixing' involves intra-sentential switches, meaning switches within the same 'sentence'.

Blom & Gumperz (1972: 422-423), relying upon empirical data from their study, proposed two types of code-switching practice. The first one is *situational switching*, caused by a change in the situation or social setting such as topic, setting, and relationship between participants, community norms and values. In a particular situation only one language is appropriate, and people need to change their choice of language to match changes in situational factors, in order to maintain that appropriateness.

Another type is *metaphorical switching*, where speakers switch the language when the situation remains the same. In some situations, speakers switch from one language to another in order to achieve particular communicative results without a change of setting. Gumperz (1982) regards *metaphorical code-switching* as symbolic of alternative interpersonal relationships, and this is of relevance to the sociolinguistic focus I am

going to discuss later. Building upon Gumperz's (1982) research on code-switching, Myers-Scotton (1983) and Auer (1988) further develop theories of language choice.

Myers-Scotton (1983: 116) suggests the 'Markedness Model (MM)' of language choice in terms of sociolinguistic perspective. In this theory, people use language choice to negotiate interpersonal relationships. Myers-Scotton (1983: 116) stated that MM directs speakers to "choose the form of your conversational contribution such that it symbolizes the sets of rights and obligations which you wish to be in force between speaker and addressee for the current exchange." MM is focused on the idea that speakers make language choices because of their own goals. Speakers make language choices or switches to promote their own self-identities.

A more recent development in language choice is by Auer (1998). He criticizes fixed categories in functions of code-switching, and argues that code-switching is used in a creative manner, so indeed its functions are in principle *infinite*. Therefore, instead of characterizing speaker's language choices according to well-tailored functional categories, Auer (1988) proposes that code-switching should be analysed as a *contextualisation cue*.

The notion of *contextualization cues,* in which listeners find social meanings in conversations by paying attention to various pointers in the discourse, was first proposed by Gumperz (1982: 131). The *cues* give listeners the context in interpreting the speakers' meanings. Auer argues that code-switching should be analysed as a *contextualisation cue* by interpreting 'discourse-related code-switching' and 'participant-related code-switching'. 'Discourse-related code-switching' contributes to the organization of ongoing interaction, whilst participant-related code-switching depends on participants' preference for or competence in one language or another. In order to view code-switching as contextualization cues, conversation analysis or CA (Levinson, 1983) should be applied. CA views social meanings as a product of the conversation itself as they are constructed by participants. Language choice serves as part of participants' identity construction.

Auer (1988) argues that code-switching is used in a creative way and its functions should be infinite without a pre-established set of functional categories. Nevertheless, I am going to employ Gumperz's (1982: 75-81) taxonomy of functions in conversational code-switching in order to link them to my study as a basic analytical framework. However, Gumperz admits (1982: 82) that his taxonomy of functions lacks precise explanation in terms of listeners' and receivers' perceptions. Therefore, I would like to build a typology of pragmatic functions in code-switching that particularly exist in written texts in CMC.

Based on Gumperz's (1982) categories, firstly code-switching is usually used to show *reported speech* or *quotations*. Gumperz (1982: 82) illustrates that "the speech of another person which is reported in a conversation will be in a different language." Code-switching in quotations or reported speech may be related to what Labov (1982) highlighted as "the most reportable events" for a bilingual speaker to make use of his bilingual repertoire. The second function proposed by Gumperz (1982) is called *addressee specification.* The purpose is to direct the message to one of several possible addressees. In this function, a particular code should be used to include or exclude a

group of readers and concurrently, to ensure that messages are addressed to a specific group of people. Thirdly, code-switching may serve as *interjections* or *sentence fillers*. These fill a linguistic need for lexical markers, such as discourse markers. The next function is *reiteration*. Switches between different codes are used to reiterate or repeat what has just been mentioned or said, in order to amplify a point or emphasise a message. In relation to my study, I intend to examine whether or not, in CMC texts, posters repeat texts by switching languages or codes. The fifth one is called *message qualification*. It involves switches consisting of qualifying constructions such as sentence and verb complements or predicted following a copula (Gumperz, 1982: 79). The last function is *personalisation vs. objectivisation*. Participants are likely to interpret personalisation as a 'we' code (minor group) to show involvement, whilst objectivisation s labeled as a 'they' code (major group) in order to indicate objectivisation of speaker distance.

Although I adopt Gumperz's (1982) taxonomy of conversational functions in code-switching in my research, I have to admit that his categories are less informative in terms of recipients' perceptions and interpretation process. Heller (1990) argues that Gumperz's taxonomy lacks a social framework, and has been less successful in linking the interactional level with broader questions of social relations and social organization.

Therefore, beside Gumperz's (1982) categories, I am also going to adopt Appel and Muysken's (1987) taxonomy of code-switching in spoken discourse to build my own pragmatic functions in written code-switching on a sociolinguistic basis. The first one is the *referential function*. It involves lack of knowledge of one language on certain subjects. Some subjects or topics may be more proper in one language, and the introduction of such a subject or topic may result in a switch. The second one is the *expressive function*. Speakers emphasize their perceptions through the use of two languages in the same single discourse. The next one is the *phatic function*, indicating a change in tone of the conversation in order to highlight the information being conveyed. This is followed by the *metalinguistic function*, in which code-switching involves commenting directly or indirectly on the languages concerned. Speakers may switch between different codes to impress others with a show of linguistic skills (Myers-Scotton, 1979). Usually this function can be found in public domains. Finally, there is the *poetic function*. Switching in this case involves puns or jokes in different languages in order to make fun or jokes in the context.

In my study, I assume that the pragmatic functions proposed by Gumperz (1982) and Appel & Muysken (1987) may also be applicable to written electronic texts in part, since their theories are fundamental and generally applicable in spoken discourse. I therefore employ the aforementioned categories as the basic theoretical frameworks to examine the data I collected. To a certain extent, I would also like to identify particular pragmatic functions that exist only in written texts in online discussion forums.

4.   Data and methodology

As for the texts, all the postings that I draw on are on the West Bulletin Board System from National Sun Yat-Sen University, located in Kaohsiung in the south of Taiwan. The West BBS is not only the principal bulletin board system in National Sun Yat Sen University, but also the most significant one amongst most southern Taiwanese colleges. The majority of the students will chat or post messages related to their daily lives on this bulletin board. In this system, students from each department in each grade have their own individual board to post messages. In most cases, students will not use their real name on the board. They will register on the system with a pseudonym or anonymously. Those who have not registered yet, so-called guests, can only browse messages without making any postings. In computer terms, they can also engage in "lurking."

I intend to draw on two different groups of subjects for my study. The postings were collected from late August 2005 till early June 2006. My hypothesis is that students with longer hours of exposure to English environments tend to apply more inter-sentential switches, while students who lack the opportunity to speak or write English display less frequency of code switching with English in everyday communication. This assumption is similar to Poplack's theory that "an inter-sentential switch can be thought of as requiring greater fluency in both languages than tag switching since major portions of the utterance must conform to the rules of both languages (Poplack, 1980).

Therefore, in my research, my primary focus is to investigate grammatical and pragmatic functions of language choices and codes in two groups with distinctive educational backgrounds, in response to my empirical research questions on BBS texts.

Group 1
Analysis will be based on 25 postings from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature (DFLL). The class has been exposed to an English environment since the first year. All the classes are conducted in English with the exception of a compulsory Chinese course in the first year.

Group 2
Here I intend to draw on 25 postings from the Department of Materials and Optoelectronic Engineering (MSOE). It is compulsory for them to attend English classes only during the first year; in the remaining three years, they do not have to take any English courses. The rest of the lessons are all conducted in Mandarin Chinese.

In the examples in the following analysis section, an English translation is provided in parenthesis, and bold-faced type indicates words or sentences being switched.

The ethical issues of the internet require special consideration. Although Herring (1996) agrees that messages posted on boards are public, he argues that if the researchers avoid mentioning specific messages or information, the posters' privacy is

not violated. Privacy problems could happen in my data because each individual pseudonym could be recognised by each student within his or her class. In order to maintain participants' anonymity, I have removed the usernames of the sender of the posting and specific places, people or events within the text.

As for my consent form, I registered in the system and posted a statement of consent form to illustrate that the board was going to be observed for research purposes. I personally posted a message which stated the purpose of the study on each board. As for the role of researcher, my participation was on the basis of an outsider (teacher) to insider (student) relationship. Instead of being a member of a peer group, I conducted research in their 'private space.'

5. Analysis and results

5.1 Linguistic/grammatical function

In my analysis, I found that most of the words being switched are single items, particularly switches of nouns. According to Poplack (1980), nouns accounted for the largest proportion of switches. As for discourse markers, in spoken discourse, there are several frequently used ones, such as *well, now, I mean, you know,* or *then*. In my data, amongst all the common discourse markers, the most frequent markers in written electronic discourse are *oh, and, or,* and *so*. *Oh* is viewed as an exclamation or interjection. When it is used alone, without any sentence following, *oh* is said to indicate strong emotional feeling, such as surprise, fear, or pain (Oxford English Dictionary, 1971, Fries 1952). According to Schiffrin (2001), *oh* has a role in information state transitions because it marks a focus of the participant's attention.

The second frequent use of discourse markers is categorised as discourse connectives, such as "and," "but," and "or," and with grammatical function in English including exchange and action structures or in participation frameworks. For example, *and* is a coordinator of ideas which has pragmatic function as a marker for continuation. *but* also marks a contrasting action. As for *or*, it is used as an option marker in the discourse (Schiffrin, 1987). Like the previous connective markers (*and, but* and *or*), *so* has a grammatical function and belongs to the markers of cause and result. The above discourse markers perform linguistic functions in spoken discourse; and they are frequently applied in written electronic discourse as well.

However, the most salient markers in spoken discourse such as *you know* and *well* are rarely displayed in the written data. The result exactly matches what Crystal (2001) mentions: "studies of email and chatgroup interactions have shown that they generally lack the very features of spoken language which indicate most spontaneity - notably, the use of reaction signals (*m, mhm, uh-huh, yeah…*) and comment clauses (*you know, you see, mind you…*).

Furthermore, one exception which occurs in written discourse is in the application of verb tense. The switch to English words is used to show the tense, since in Mandarin Chinese, no precise rule for verb tenses can be applied and demonstrated. Therefore,

students tend to add 'ing' directly to emphasize the action happening at that moment. For example:

(1) 荷包縮水 ing. (DFLL)
(A pouch is decreas**ing.**)

(2) 恭 喜 可 愛 的 亭 吟 學 妹 當 選 第 一 屆 的 校 園 親 善 大 使 啦 啦 啦~超 開 心 ing. (DFLL)
(Congratulations on cute TinYin being selected as the first campus cheer leader~ so happy-mak**ing.)**

5.2 Pragmatic/discourse function

After I analysed the data I collected, I mainly classified the discourse functions into four categories: expressive function, referential function, phatic function and metalinguistic function. Since the expressive functions account for the largest proportion, I classify the data into another category when they indicate more than simply the expressive function on the postings.

5.2.1 Expressive function

The following examples possibly demonstrated that the poster felt bad about making a mistake, so s/he switched to the word *sorry* in English. In MC, two expressions are used to show 'sorry': '對不起 (Dui Bu Qi*), '抱歉 (Bao Qian*). For example:

(3) 搞錯了啊, sorry! (DFLL)
(My mistake, **sorry**!)

(4) 可能沒記到, sorry (MSOE)
(Maybe I forgot to jot it down, **sorry**)

(5) 然後延期的時間會在 po 版跟大家說~ 嗯哼 再次 sorry~ (MSOE)
(Then, the date will be announced to everybody and **po** it on board~ Again **sorry**~)

In order to modify the feeling of apology, the poster switches to English. In Taiwanese society, the verbal expression of an apology in English would become less strong and alleviate the embarrassment of interlocutors in conversation. I presume there is a similar effect in online texts as well. Saying *sorry* in English might make posters feel less guilty, and connote the meanings without blaming themselves directly as well - although I have to emphasise that the right interpretation still needs to be verified through interview follow-up.

The expression in MC to show 'apology' or 'regret' is straightforward and formal in spoken discourse in Taiwanese society. Presumably, the addressees are supposed to be the ones being respected, such as elders or members from a higher social status. If adolescents post '對不起 (Dui Bu Qi*), '抱歉 (Bao Qian*) to peers, social distance between each other will be built.

In the three examples above, the poster was trying to express an apologetic feeling to peers instead of elders, so s/he switched in English to alleviate the sense of guilt and strengthen intimacy. The language use in MC to show apology might be due to the requirement of sincerity.

The second expressive function is served when there is a use of tabooed topic or words. Mandarin Chinese will be replaced with English equivalents. In the example below, the sound 'song' is a very impolite, vernacular and rude usage in spoken discourse in Taiwanese, the equivalent of 'shit' in English. The student took the similar phonologic word 'song' to replace it. In this group, the class board in the Department of Materials and Optoelectronic Engineering, the male-dominated group tends to demonstrate more examples of taboo language. For example:

(6) 熱火贏了, song! (MSOE)
    (Heat wins 101:100, **song**!)

The third expressive function is to switch to English in order to emphasise strong feelings, such as surprise or sending greetings or wishes. In written electronic texts, exaggerated use of spelling and punctuation, and the use of capitals, spacing and special symbols or marks for emphasis are applied. Examples such as repeated letters (*aaaaahhhhh, hiiiiiii, ooops, sooo*), repeated punctuation marks (*no more !!!!!, whole ????, hey!!!!!*) are included (Crystal, 2001). For example:

(7) 我也不是很確定 ^^**a** Good luck! :) (DFLL)
    (I am not so sure ^^**a Good luck!** :)

(8) 喔耶! So happy!!!!!! (MSOE)
    (Oh! **So happy!!!!!!**)

(9) 我期待我們下次的暢談 Happy Birthday!!!! (DFLL)
    (I expect our meeting next time **Happy Birthday!!!!**)

The next expressive function is to form a special code by using English, similar to emoticons. This one is distinct from the feature in spoken discourse and occurs quite frequently in written electronic texts, whether in e-mails or postings. Gumpert (1990: 151) defines it as "electronic paralanguage". "Electronic paralanguage" is "emotive icons". According to Metz (1994: 40), there are several different forms of "emoticons": those used to verbalize physical cues, such as *hehehe* (laughter); those used to capture the physical actions in words between two asterisks, such as **hug** and **kiss**", those used for emphasis, such as *no, I *won't* go*; and those used as a shorthand form for the description of a physical condition, such as ':)' for a smiling face. The following examples belong to the fourth one: used for the description of a physical condition. For example:

(10) **:P** or 學長姐
      (**:P or** second year students)

(11) 我好像忘記拿錢給你了喔 XD
(It seems that I forgot to give you money **XD)**

(12) 真是對不起各位.... orz
(Sorry for everyone.... **orz)**

In the first example, the colon stands for eyes; while *P* stands for a mouth with a tongue. As for *XD*, it is a very common usage amongst college students in my data collected in both classes, which means a laughing face, and better than 'lol' (laugh out loud)". The vast majority (80%) of postings include the usage of *XD* symbolizing a smiling face. As for *Orz*, it is a Japanese-based emoticon of a man pounding his head on the floor.

5.2.2 Referential function

As for the referential function, I classify this function into four subcategories. The first one is to use English words and letters due to the lack of readily available Mandarin Chinese equivalents. Those English words are usually jargon or acronyms. NBA stands for National Basketball Association, and MSN refers to Messenger. For example:

(13) 我要去睡覺了, 先看場 NBA. (DFLL)
(I want to go to bed, and watch **NBA** first.)

(14) 8:00--8:30　(大一 vs 大二) (MSOE)
(8:00--8:30 (first year **vs** second year) (MSOE)

(15) 開始期待今天的 MSN 發燒星了吧~~ (MSOE)
(Look forward to the discussion of today's **MSN**~~)

(16) P.S.有任何問題請向各直屬學長反應. (DFLL)
(**P.S**. If there is any question, contact senior directly.)

The second referential function involves English terms whose Mandarin Chinese equivalents lack semantically equivalent connotations, including switching when giving titles of original English textbooks. This function is similar to research on features existing in code-mixing in Mandarin Chinese popular songs (Wang, 2006) in which some Mandarin Chinese words are switched into English because of the lack of proper semantic equivalents in Mandarin Chinese. For example:

(17) 疲憊 but still high. (DFLL)
(exhausted **but still high**.)

(18) The norton anthology of world masterpieces mythology 就這兩本囉. (DFLL)
(**The norton anthology of world masterpieces mythology.** The answer is those two books.)

(19)　　喔! by the way, 請給我十顆球. (DFLL)

　　　　(Oh! **by the way**, please give me ten balls.)

(20)　　我記得我撞球系運很早就 PO 了吧 (MSOE)

　　　　(I remember that I **PO**sted another activity about pool competition a long time ago)

(21)　　我可以先 check. (MSOE)

　　　　(I can **check** first.)

(22)　　今天真的是很 high 耶! (DFLL)

　　　　(I feel really **high** today!)

College students also tend to use English terms which posters are more familiar or acquainted with in English than in Mandarin Chinese, or to refer to an Anglophone-culture origin. Examples include the name of a brand, or the usage of 'pass' and 'fail' in a course, or the size of clothes. For example:

(23)　　只要給我回條就 Ok! (DFLL)

　　　　(Give me the receipt **Ok**!)

(24)　　聖誕 party!!! (DFLL)

　　　　(Christmas **party!!!)**

(25)　　各位填一下營服的 size 吧! (DFLL)

　　　　(Everyone tells me what your **size** is!)

(26)　　想參加的都算 ok (MSOE)

　　　　(Everyone willing to go is **ok**)

(27)　　補考分數 PASS 標準 (MSOE)

　　　　(The criterion to **PASS** is announced)

The final referential function is transition to English to change the tone or connect to a previous or later sentence. I categorize those coordinators in this last referential category. *So*, *or*, and *and* are discourse connectives and perform important pragmatic functions in conversation. However, in written discourse, these functions are applied as frequently as in spoken discourse. For example:

(28)　　不知道你是學弟 or 學妹? (DFLL)

　　　　(I don't know whether you are male **or** female)

(29)　　報告是書面 or 口頭 or 分組? (DFLL)

　　　　(The presentation will be paper **or** oral **or** group one?)

5.2.3 Phatic function

The next category is called the phatic function, involving repetition or reiteration of one single word in a sentence. This function is similar to Gumperz's (1982) analysis that code-switches sometimes repeat what has just been said; the purpose is to clarify or emphasize a message. For example:

(30)　nonono　那個感覺不一樣　(DFLL)
　　　　(**nonono** That feeling is different.)

(31)　拜...託....了...please (DFLL)
　　　　(pl..ea....se...**please**)

5.2.4 Metalinguistic function

As for the last one, it is called the metalinguistic function. In other words, in some examples, teenagers tend to switch from Mandarin Chinese into English for quotation or reporting a speech. Gumperz (1982: 82) explained that "often the speech of another person which is reported in a conversation will be in a different language". For example:

(32)　感動感動　學長姐超優的　~ ;)
　　　　"It's time to toss the dice.
　　　　- Motto of the Band of the Red Hand."
　　　　 (The second year seniors are awesome ~ ;)
　　　　 "It's time to toss the dice.
　　　　- Motto of the Band of the Red Hand.")

(33)　我覺得綁一百顆鉛球都不夠　Lebron SHU!!!!!!!!!!!!!
　　　　"I surprise myself every morning when I wake up..."
　　　　(I feel even one hundred is not enough. **Lebron SHU!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
　　　　"I surprise myself every morning when I wake up...")

6.　Conclusion

In this study, I analysed the linguistic and discoursal functions of code-switching between Mandarin Chinese and English in the written electronic texts of two groups of college students with contrasting backgrounds in English. I found that having a greater degree of English education influences code-switching between Mandarin Chinese and English in some aspects, including the choice of the words in English, or the length of English expressions. For example, students from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature (DFLL) have a greater tendency to switch the whole sentence in English if compared to students from the Department of Materials and Optoelectronic Engineering (MSOE). The theoretical and methodological approaches

in previous studies related to functions in code-switching are still applicable to the data I have collected, although some unanswered questions are acknowledged including gender issues in online discussion forums.

In the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature (DFLL), the class is female-dominated. In such a board, the switches to English are more related to English words with referential and the expressive functions. On the other hand, the switches in the Department of Materials and Optoelectronic Engineering (MSOE) are more related to tabooed language in single nouns or items. As for emotive icons, such as *XD* or *Orz*, the percentage is quite similar (and shows quite a high frequency) in both groups of college students.

In terms of discourse markers, the switched words demonstrate a difference between spoken and written discourse. In spoken discourse, *you know*, *I mean* or *well* accounts for quite a high percentage of all switches. On the contrary, in written electronic discourse, words most often used as switches are *and, or, so,* and *because* as coordinator connectives.

After analysing the data, in addition to Mandarin Chinese and English, I further discovered code-switching occurring in other languages and dialects, such as Taiwanese written in English or *Zhuyin* (37 phonetic symbols in Mandarin Chinese). Some French or Japanese is even 'playfully' written with Chinese characters on BBS postings. To a certain extent, the creativity of language use amongst college student would be another intriguing aspect worth exploring; and the idea of an in-group online community should be considered, too. Viewing BBS as an in-group practice should not be neglected, since a new user has to undergo socialisation to learn to be a fully competent participant in that community. Then, the analysis would be more convincing.

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Self-presentation via direct speech in Greek adolescents' storytelling

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the investigation of direct speech in Greek narratives. More specifically, the aim of this paper is to examine how the producers of oral narratives present themselves as interactional protagonists via direct speech representation in personal stories. In particular, this study focuses on the use of direct speech within the conversational narratives of Greek adolescent groups. I consider direct speech as an important device because of its saliency and functional richness in the narratives told by the adolescents. I will argue that, in the present narrative data, direct speech is very frequent and functions as a means of presenting oneself.

1. Introduction

The representation of other voices through discourse, generally referred to as *reported speech*, has been examined by many scholars (see among others, Chafe, 1994; Clark & Gerrig, 1990; Coulmas, 1986; De Fina, 2003; Holt, 1996; Mayes, 1990; Myers, 1999; Voloshinov, 1971) who have adopted various and different approaches regarding the forms and functions it embeds either in written and/ or in spoken language.

This study deals with the exploration of the use of *direct speech representation* in Greek conversational narratives. As I will show, direct speech is salient and performs multiple functions in the specific conversational data. In particular, I will argue that direct speech can be employed as part of a narrative strategy that serves the reporters' current conversational goals (see also De Fina 2003; Georgakopoulou, 1997; Tannen, 1989). More specifically, the employment of direct speech on the part of narrators contributes to the emergence of aspects of the narrators' identities, and therefore functions as a means of presenting oneself and other characters.

In order to analyse my narrative data I will first distinguish between the kinds of stories found in my data, following the study of Coates (2003). Then, based on quantitative results, I remark that direct speech is a frequent narrative resource. Furthermore, I investigate the type of acts encoded within the direct speech instances. For this purpose, I follow Brown & Levinson's (1987) and Culpeper's (2005) theories of politeness and impoliteness. On the basis of these theories, I distinguish between *face-threatening acts* (where face-threat is usually minimized via the use of hedging) and *impolite acts* (where face-threat is deliberate and is maximized via the use of offensive markers) reported by the narrators. These distinctions will be further discussed in the analysis sections.

Taking into consideration the analysis of politeness and impoliteness, I argue that narrators use their own voices and the voices of others to implicitly evaluate elements of the story. In particular, I illustrate that my informants present themselves and other characters of their stories as (not) performing specific types of (speech) acts in order to serve their current conversational goals, namely to present themselves in various roles. More specifically, my narrators construct themselves in different ways through the politeness or impoliteness strategies they employ within direct speech. In this way, my narrators talk about themselves in (verbal) action within the stories they tell. Finally, my claims with regard to the narrators' self-presentation are supplemented by the ethnographic observations I have collected concerning the narrators in question.

2. Theoretical framework

In terms of theoretical framework, this study follows the line of research that deals with the narrative construction of identities. In particular, I adopt a dynamic, social constructionist approach (Sarbin & Kitsuse, 1994) on identity construction that does not view identity as something stable. Rather, identity is viewed as a process that emerges

contextually and is negotiated discursively (see, among others, Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998). To this end, narratives play an important role in identity construction. As Schiffrin argues (1996:170), the content of our stories (what we tell about), and our story-telling behaviour (how we tell our stories) are all sensitive indices not just of our personal selves, but also of our social and cultural identities. From this perspective, narrative forms the "linguistic lens" (Schiffrin, 1996: 199) through which narrators display aspects of their identities.

For the purpose of categorisation of the direct speech instances I also adopt politeness theory (see Brown & Levinson, 1987). In order to discuss the terms I will be using, I will first refer to the notion of *face* which is the starting point of politeness theory. Erving Goffman (1967: 5) defines *face* as the public self-image a person effectively claims for him/herself. According to Brown & Levinson (1987: 61), this involves two aspects, *positive face* and *negative face,* which correlate with two basic desires and wants of any individual in any interaction. "*Negative face* refers to the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others" (ibid.: 62). "*Positive face* refers to the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (ibid.).

Brown & Levinson argue that "the notion of face is sensitive, as it can be lost, damaged, maintained or enhanced in interaction" (1987: 61) and any threat to face must be continually monitored during an interaction. Indeed, everyday interaction is formed in a way that both aspects of face are inevitably sometimes threatened or damaged. Brown and Levinson (1987: 65-8) discuss types of speech acts that lead to face threat and constitute *face threatening acts* (FTA's). In particular, they outline four main types of politeness strategies a speaker may consider when performing an FTA. These four different politeness strategies embed different degrees of face threat. Therefore, according to Brown & Levinson (ibid.) an FTA may be performed *bald on record*, that is, in a straightforward way. However, it may also be performed via the use of hedging, namely with a *redressive act* of either positive or negative politeness. Additionally, it may be produced *off record,* that is, indirectly. These terms will be used throughout my data analysis concerning the classification of different direct speech instances in terms of face threat.

3. Data and methodology

The data I am using constitute part of a broader set of narrative data that have been collected for the purposes of a longer research project[1] I have participated in as a researcher. The project involved the collection of naturally occurring conversational narratives amongst young residents of the town of Patras in Greece. For this purpose, a group of seven researchers including myself tape-recorded authentic conversations between male and female informants which resulted from our interactions with them. The informants did not feel as though they were submitted to an interview. This is because they felt comfortable talking with us, since we had got acquainted with them

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[1] K.Karatheodoris *2425*, Research Committee, University of Patras, headed by Dr Argiris Archakis.

for almost two months. At the same time, we collected ethnographic observations concerning each one of them. For the purpose of this paper, I focus on 310 naturally occurring conversational narratives involving both male and female informants. More specifically, 190 narratives were produced by male informants, and 120 narratives by female informants. In the following section I will discuss the kinds of stories I have come across in the specific data.

3.1 Kinds of stories

In order to present the kinds of stories included in this data, I adopt Coates' terms (2003) and therefore make a distinction between *stories of self-disclosure* and *stories of achievement*. According to Coates, stories of self disclosure reveal personal feelings; also, via these kinds of stories, narrators present themselves as people who go through difficult experiences and who are aware of their own vulnerability. More specifically, in the present data I have come across *stories of embarrassment*; that is to say stories where narrators describe situations that made them feel uncomfortable and embarrassed. Furthermore, I have come across what I will call *stories of exam stress* in which narrators present themselves as stressed, anxious or confused during exam writing. Via the employment of the above-mentioned stories, my narrators expose their feelings and reveal weak aspects of their characters, since they admit that they felt embarrassment, stress or confusion.

On the other hand, I have come across stories of achievement where narrators present themselves as successful and thus focus on their ability to act confidently in the world. Furthermore, I argue that in stories of achievement narrators give emphasis to the result of the story, for example how they managed to win at gambling; whereas stories of self- disclosure are self-referential because in these stories emphasis is placed on aspects of the protagonists' characters and on personal feelings.

3.2 Verbal action in the stories

What is particularly important in the present narratives is the fact that the kind of action that takes place within the stories is usually verbal action. That is to say, my informants choose to tell stories that involve speech representation as the core of the complicating action. This means that resolutions are very often achieved via speech[2]. According to Toolan (2001: 154), social relations are characterized by verbal interaction, and people's everyday lives necessarily involve talk, as part of satisfying their needs. Indeed, the vast majority of the stories revolve around the students' everyday school and family life and involve the employment of informal talk. Therefore, verbal action is very often the core of these stories. In quantitative terms, 220 (71%) out of the 310 (100%) stories include speech representation whereas 90 (29%) out of 310 (100%) do not include speech representation.

Furthermore, the form of speech presentation that predominates in the specific narratives is direct speech. This means that my narrators select to represent in direct

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[2] See section on female self-presentation.

speech what they have heard or said in previous contexts. The role of direct speech is crucial to these stories because it involves various functions. In general, my narrators animate an interactional world within the story itself, since they represent verbal interactions embedded in their stories. Moreover, they are able to construct their stories by shifting from represented interactional worlds to the current storytelling worlds. Put differently, they are able to make comments on the represented interactions. Thus, narrators are able to highlight and therefore evaluate certain aspects of the story and of the represented voices of the story participants. Therefore, direct speech constitutes a strategy of interpretation (De Fina, 2003). In a similar vein, via direct speech, they construct themselves as story participants and therefore reveal certain aspects of their identities, since particular kinds of identities stem from ways of talking about the self in action (De Fina, 2003).

In the following section, I will discuss how my narrators select direct speech in order to represent themselves as interactional protagonists in different ways, and therefore project different aspects of their identities. For this reason, I will focus on the content of the represented direct speech utterances within stories of achievement. I will provide two indicative examples. The first one consists of an achievement story produced by a female narrator, and the second one constitutes an achievement story produced by a male narrator.

4. The narrators: ethnographic observations

The two narrators in question come from a different educational, cultural and social background. More specifically, Areti, who is the narrator of the first story, lives in a middle class neighbourhood. She also attends a school that is located in the same area. She is in the last grade of high school and her performance at school is very good. Her goal is to go to university. For this reason she also receives private tuition at home. This is common practice for the vast majority of Greek students who aim to go to university. During weekends, when she has some spare time, she goes out with friends. Overall, her everyday routine mainly revolves around school attendance, private tuition, and individual study.

Yannis, the male narrator, forms part of a "close knit group of intimates" (Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou, 2003: 4). According to my ethnographic observations, this group seem to have strong friendship bonds, as well as common ideas and perceptions that lead them to the adoption of a specific world view. In a nutshell, they consider themselves as anarchists, they dress untidily and remain unwashed, and they take pride in their bad performance at school. Additionally, they have invented a bizarre type of amusement, namely what they call "car walking". This means that during the night they walk on top of parked cars and they see that as having fun. Finally, a very important observation is that they maintain a scornful attitude towards most of their teachers, the political parties (and their schoolmates who belong to them), their parents, the clergy and the police. On the basis of the above, it could be argued that they seem to reject the norms of the establishment, since they

deliberately deviate from the traditional values and norms they observe around them. In particular, according to the narratives they produce, they do not seem to accept social relations reflecting positions of power, and they do not accept social conventions.

In the following sections, I will discuss how the two narrators' linguistic behaviour corresponds to the above-mentioned ethnographic observations.

4.1 Female self-presentation

The following story has emerged from a conversation between two female informants, namely Dimitra (D) and Afroditi (A), and a female researcher. In particular, this forms the last story of a series of five narratives that revolve around school teachers. All five stories are set in school and involve verbal interactions between students and teachers regarding school issues. Via the story under investigation, the narrator explains how she persuaded the headmaster of the school to reconsider the issue of the students' educational day trip to Athens. It should be noted that the headmaster had cancelled the students' trip because the school had been previously occupied by students who protested against a newly introduced educational law. The student/narrator decides to go to the headmaster's office in order to request him, on behalf of the students of her class, to repeat an assembly so that the teachers would discuss the students' educational trip.[3]

> **A:**   So I knock on the door I go in and I say::, **Mr Mpouropoule**[4] I say**, can we occupy you for a second? um::,** he says **yes yes,** I tell him **sir** I say**, I know** I say**, we have tired you with the issue of the excursion, but it is something** I say **something sir that we want so much, if you want** I tell him I say:: **if you want I can tell you a few words and this'll be the last time we bother you ok** he says**, you haven't tired me up** whatever he was saying, and I say **sir** I say::**,** you told us I say **that the teachers have been informed about the subject,** I say::, I say **but we asked two teachers, and they didn't know anything** I say**, nor that:: the exhibition ends at the seventh of January nor that:: um:: the theatre is what we also want to play and we want an idea.** He told me **I know I know anyway** I say to him**, I asked the:: um::, the teachers and they told me that they don't know about it,** I say **is there any possibility** I say**, that you had <u>one</u> more assembly, so that** I say to him **we will have time to inform the teachers, meanwhile** I tell him **we we don't go to Athens for fun** I say**, we have a certain goal, if we wanted** I tell him **to go for fun, we would go somewhere else em: we are** I say to him **pupils**

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[3] The following transcription conventions are used:
- /   self-repair
- (...)   unintelligible talk
- <u>text</u>   stressed parts of utterance
- text::   extension of syllable
- ,   short pause (2-3 seconds)
- {text}   clarification points made by the author
- ( )   omission of speech

[4] All parts that include direct speech representation are emboldened.

> **from the humanities area, serious kids , I don't believe** I say to him **that you've heard anything bad about us, that we are something like causing trouble and such at the school, or** I say to him **concerning the school-occupation I don't believe** I say to him **that in one day, the gaps of two weeks occupation, could be therefore covered** and he says:: to me, **alright** he says to me **it is not that the issue, then** I say to him **what's the issue?,** he says to me **the other kids** he says:: to me**, they had arranged to go to the::,** where they had arranged to go?

D: To Dimokritos?

A: Yes:: **but they won't go** he tells me**,** I say to him **however these kids can go there anytime they want, Dimokritos will not move its place, whereas** I say to him **the exhibition ends** , you know I had found an answer// [to each subject he says to me]

D: // [Yes it's what he told her, and she told him]//

A: //he was also looking at me and meanwhile he was quite laughing, now I say:: to myself **nothing else will happen in here, but anyway alright** he tells me**, we will make another assembly tomorrow, but I don't believe** he says to me **that you'll have any positive results alright** I say to him**, please do the assembly as soon as possible, and if nothing happens, at least** I say **we won't worry that something could have happened to us.**

In the specific story, the narrator-protagonist carries out a plan in order to realize her wish, namely to go on the trip. This involves the persuasion of the headmaster to repeat an assembly where all teachers would vote on this issue. However, in the Greek educational context, this plan involves the performance of face-threatening acts on the part of the student, since she will be requesting something from the head teacher. More specifically, from the very beginning of the story the narrator presents herself as acknowledging that her initiative, namely to enter the headmaster's office in order to discuss with him the issue of the excursion, involves a face-threatening act (FTA). She decides to perform it, though, via the use of hedging, in order to realize her wish. For this reason she reports in minute detail the words uttered from both parties, namely the teacher's and hers; these words, which as we will see are of paramount importance for the outcome of the story, are reported in direct speech.

More specifically, the utterances she presents herself as producing involve the use of redressive negative politeness strategies in order to reduce the face-threat. From the very beginning she uses linguistic markers that pay deference (*Mr Mpouropoule*) as well as markers that minimize the imposition (*can we bother you for a second? If you want I can tell you a few words and this will be the last time we bother you*). Furthermore, she underlines that she is aware of the threat imposed to the teacher and takes it into account in her decision to perform the FTA (*Sir I know we have tired you with the issue of the excursion*). In Brown & Levinson's terms (1987: 188) she admits the impingement, which is a form of apologising. In addition, she adopts positive politeness strategies (*but it is something… something sir that we want so much*) in order to secure empathy from the head teacher; according to Brown & Levinson (1987) empathy and understanding

are characteristics of one's positive face, since they refer to the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others.

Then, she presents her arguments one by one, which she also enriches with positive polite-ness strategies (*we we don't go to Athens for fun … we have a certain goal … we are … pupils from the humanities area, serious kids, I don't believe … that you've heard anything bad about us, that we are something like causing trouble and such at the school*). It could be argued that, by uttering these words, the narrator intends to appeal to the head teacher's emotions.

Finally, she makes her request (to ask him to repeat the assembly) twice, which also consists of a face-threatening act. The first time she utters it, she adopts the redressive act of distancing the hearer from the particular FTA (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 204). This is achieved by switching the tense form present to past. The second time she makes her request at the end of the narrative, she is more direct (*please do the assembly as soon as possible*); however, she employs the linguistic marker **"*please*"** which minimizes the threat. Also, the narrator adds evaluative comments that present herself as able to provide an answer to the headmaster's objections *(you know I had found an answer to each subject)*, as well as presenting herself as acting with confidence, because she makes no evaluative comments on anxiety on her part.

In addition, there is a tendency to report the interaction with a lot of detail about the exact words that the narrator and the headmaster are supposed to have used. Of course it is not possible to establish whether those words were actually uttered the way they are reported, and, more importantly, it is unlikely that she can remember the words verbatim,[5] but the narrator gives the impression that she remembers exactly what was said. Tannen (1990: 141) notices that detail gives the impression of verisimilitude to the hearer and thus makes situations appear very real.

Overall, the narrator presents herself as adopting politeness strategies that give deference, which forms the appropriate behaviour one should adopt towards the headmaster of a school in Greece. I observe that the story ends with the potential realisation of the protagonist's wish world. It should be remarked that she achieved the solution to the problem verbally and although she performed a series of face-threatening acts, she presents herself as having managed to maintain social harmony. Therefore, the state of disequilibrium which existed in the narrative universe has been converted to a state of equilibrium, since the protagonist's desires will be potentially fulfilled. Overall, the narrator presents herself as successful in the maintenance of social harmony after her verbal encounter with the headmaster. Also, it should be remarked that she did not need to have reported the whole conversation in so much detail. However, she does so in order to highlight her ability to **"manipulate"**speech so as to behave in a polite way, and therefore reinforce the importance of her polite behaviour. I could therefore conclude that, by offering this narrative, the narrator aims at self-promotion because she presents herself as capable of persuading the headmaster of the school with regards to an important issue that concerns many students, by behaving appropriately. Finally, there is a focus on the result of the story, namely that

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[5] This confirms the constructed nature of reported speech (see Tannen, 1989).

the assembly will be repeated. This is presented as an achievement on the part of the narrator/ protagonist which constitutes a result of her polite verbal behaviour.

4.2 Male self-presentation

The following story emerged from a conversation between two male informants and two researchers, namely one male and one female. It is the 20th. narrative out of the 65 identified in the specific conversation; it forms part of a series of six narratives that revolve around incidents concerning the students and some of their teachers. Via these six stories, either the narrators display achievement which emerges from the represented interactions with the teachers, or teachers themselves are denigrated via their represented words and/or actions. In particular, the following story is set in the school environment, and describes a rather heated disagreement which results in conflict between the narrator and his Latin teacher during the Latin class.

> Υ: The person who is teaching us Latin Latin/ I was writing you know, a poem in his class, my grammar book was open, my reading book was open, <u>everything open</u> he sees me writing/ he comes up he comes slowly with the Latin book over me and while he was reading Latin, <u>bap, he gets my notebook</u> I grasp the notebook too he was pulling it, **let go** he tells me **let go I'm not letting go** <u>I am pulling</u> it buf on the desk /my desk **if you please sir lower <u>the tone of your voice</u>** he tells me I say to him, **the tone of my voice** I say to him   **would be better if your behaviour was more appropriate** <u>I tell him</u> **what kind of bullying is this you coming and taking my notebook?** he went yellow he went white he went red he went you can't imagine ready to die **say another word say <u>one more word</u>** he says **and I'm taking you in one more word,** he was stuck the man was foaming

At the beginning of the story the narrator presents himself as writing a poem and not paying attention to the lecture, but he is presenting himself as cleverly avoiding detection by keeping his Latin books open on his desk. However, the teacher observes it and then the verbal conflict begins; the conflict is again reported in direct speech.

First, the narrator presents himself as refusing to defer to the teacher (*I'm not letting go*). Then the teacher is presented as performing a face-threatening act (*if you please sir lower the tone of your voice*) because he asks the student to change his behaviour; however, the teacher reduces the threat by using hedges, namely he employs *please* as well as the **"*if* condition"** which distances the hearer from the particular FTA. At this point, the content of the student's utterances is unexpected and totally inappropriate to the specific circumstances. More specifically, not only does the student not obey his teacher's request, but he presents himself as verbally attacking the teacher. In particular, he performs face-threatening acts that attack the teacher's positive face, since he judges his behaviour. The degree of face threat is maximized if we take into consideration social relations, namely the fact that in Greece a student is not allowed to attack a teacher's face especially in the context of a school class. Moreover, the vocabulary choices (*bullying*) of the above utterances reveal a purposeful

verbal attack on the teacher on the part of the student. In particular, the attack involves the student presenting himself as the victim of abuse.

The notion of intentional face-attack has been introduced by Culpeper (1996, 2005) as an indicator for the consideration of an utterance as impolite. More specifically, Culpeper (2005) suggests that impoliteness comes about when: "(a) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (b) the hearer perceives and/ or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (a) and (b)" (ibid: 38). Impoliteness, then, has two aspects: "the offensive information being expressed by the utterance and the information that it is being expressed intentionally" (ibid: 39). Indeed, the present narrative data include various reported utterances like the above that aim at an intentional face-attack via the use of offensive markers (i.e. *bullying*). Via the above impolite reported utterances the narrator presents himself as having managed to make his teacher upset. This is made evident by the employment of evaluative hyperbolic comments which describe the teacher's mood (*he went yellow, he went red, he went you can't imagine ready to die*). The last reported words that belong to the teacher, as well as the narrator's evaluative/ hyperbolic comments, indicate the teacher's fury and loss of control.

According to the analysis above, the narrator presents himself as capable of upsetting a person with authority by performing a series of impolite utterances. In other words, the narrator presents himself as having managed to disrupt social harmony. Also, in the specific story verbal conflict is not resolved; on the contrary, the story ends with the teacher being upset and furious. The above result is presented as an achievement on part of the narrator-protagonist who displays heroism by presenting himself as capable of attacking a person with authority, and therefore able to reverse power relations. This is because the student is presented as giving orders, whereas the teacher is presented as losing control of the verbal encounter. It should be remarked that in Greek contexts, the specific behaviour on part of the student would certainly lead to punishment. However, no punishment is reported, since the narrator constructs direct speech as well as the whole narrative according to his conversational goals, namely to present himself as successful after a verbal conflict with his teacher. The addition of relevant evaluative comments contributes to this purpose.

5. Summary and conclusions

The present analysis has showed that direct speech is a frequent and important device in adolescents' narratives, through which they relive their verbal encounters with others. At the same time, this recollection of past experience allows narrators to evaluate the narrated events and express their stance towards them. Hence, via the representation of words in direct speech, the adolescents in question construct a represented story world (De Fina, 2003) in which certain characters and actions are highlighted, thus projecting particular interpretations of the original speech event. In this way, they are able to present themselves and project aspects of their identities through direct speech representation in various ways.

In particular, in the above study, I provided two indicative examples, and discussed how two different informants present themselves as interactional protagonists via the stories they produce. More specifically, I examined how the two narrators present themselves as having achieved their goals via the employment of speech. The female informant narrates her verbal encounter with the head teacher of the school where she presents herself as strategically employing a series of politeness strategies that reduce the threat on the teacher's face. Therefore, the narrator presents herself as having achieved her goal by maintaining social harmony and not having damaged the teacher's face. In contrast, the male informant presents himself as successful after a verbal conflict with his teacher. More specifically he is presented as having intentionally attacked his teacher's face by performing impolite utterances that resulted in the disruption of social harmony.

The employment of direct speech in storytelling could thus be related to the projection of aspects of the narrators' identities, namely alignment with traditional values and norms in the case of maintaining social harmony, and deviation from traditional values and norms in the case of disrupting social harmony. These aspects of identity displayed by the two informants can be further related to the ethnographic observations concerning them. As discussed in the preceding sections, the male narrator forms part of a close knit group of intimates who tend to adopt, among others, an aggressive behaviour towards authority figures, since they refrain from mainstream thinking in various ways. The female narrator seems to be much more aligned with mainstream thinking, based on her ideas and actions concerning the traditional values and norms. On the basis of these observations, I would argue that the narrators' linguistic behaviour reflects their ethnographic background. Therefore, I argue that the recollection and dramatization of verbal encounters with people with authority that is achieved through direct speech might be a vehicle for adolescents to express who they are, share their beliefs, or crucially project and construct aspects of their identities. In other words, the present narrators have presented who they are by representing what they did and said to specific people on specific occasions.

This function of direct speech has proved to be a general tendency of the adolescents in the vast majority of my narrative data. However, I would like to underline that that my selection of two narratives produced by narrators of different genders was random. Thus, I do not aim to make binary comparisons between the two different genders regarding self-presentation through the use of direct speech. I would therefore like to point out the explanatory nature of my analysis. This means that the analysis of direct speech in a larger number of narratives might provide different results. Additionally, the investigation of direct speech in the stories produced by different narrators emerging in different contexts might well also lead to different conclusions.

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The politics of social justice:
A visual and verbal analysis of *poverty* in the news

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Abstract

In 2005, the *Make Poverty History* campaign gained media attention as an attempt to articulate the possibility of ending a form of structural and economic violence: poverty. The campaign sought to involve the public in a more active role in relation to this issue. This paper looks at how poverty was represented in the media during this campaign from a critical discourse perspective. Using Kress & van Leeuwen's (1996) framework for analyzing the discursive strategies of visual images, the paper discusses how the issue of poverty was constructed and problematized in newspapers and magazines. In addition to the analysis of visual semiotics, a corpus of news articles over the same period of time was constructed and analyzed.

The analysis focused on patterns of usage of the word *poverty* using various concordance analyses. I will argue that both the visual and linguistic analysis of these texts shows how the dominant discourse of charity reinforces a traditional orientation to poverty, which is distanced and at odds with the discourse of activism. This textual problematization of poverty creates an effective barrier to looking at systemic causes and solutions, and therefore, reinforces the dominant ideology of developed countries when representing this issue in the media.

It then relates the visual and verbal semiotics of the texts to the characteristics of peace journalism (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005), with respect to the representation of social actors, their relationship to the reader, the degree of contextualization and the truth-value of the reporting. The paper concludes that despite attempts to re-position the issue, the media's discursive strategies evoke a discourse of charity as opposed to the desired outcome of activism.

1. Introduction

The complex problems in Africa, such as poverty and disease, have typically been portrayed at once as being distant and removed from the average newspaper or magazine reader in the UK or North America, while at the same time arousing sympathy and pity through the striking visual images of starving or sick children. This type of representation has served to enforce a safe social distance from the affected areas, while simultaneously creating an emotional appeal for help from viewers in Western countries. It has positioned the issue in such a way that the causes and complexities of the problem are obfuscated behind a veneer of pity, asking for charity, rather than understanding and responsibility from the world community. As Lister & Wells (2001: 78-79) point out in their analysis of visuals from a cultural studies perspective,

> …the manner in which famine is represented ignores the role of capitalism and the history of imperialism in bringing about a situation whereby African economies are crippled by long-term debt repayments, the use of fertile soil to grow cash crops for export, and dependency on short-term emergency aid.

Recently an attempt to re-position this issue in the media has been made with the *Make Poverty History* (MPH*)* campaign of 2005. The campaign, started by a Christian Aid Funding Coalition, was announced in late 2004 and declared the ambitious goal it was named after, for the year 2005. The campaign included a number of high profile media events in 2005, such as the selling and wearing of white wristbands for fundraising, the LiveAid concert in London, promoted by rock stars Bono and Bob Geldof to generate funds and attention, and a large protest near the G8 summit in Scotland. The MPH campaign was also actively taken up by Tony Blair as part of his agenda for the G8 summit and by the creation of the Commission on Africa to support fair trade practices, debt relief and aid. Both of these government initiatives were linked to the Millennium Development Goals set forth by the United Nations (one of which is to eradicate extreme poverty by 2015) and were seen as Blair's response to these goals.

The MPH campaign aimed to constitute a fundamentally different discourse about poverty than had ever been heard before, and the high profile of all the events in the media in 2005 guaranteed that this discourse was heard by many. This discourse problematized poverty as an issue that had a solution, which could be achieved through the involvement of the public to buy and wear the wristbands, attend the concert, and make their voices heard to governments of other countries by protesting at the G8 summit. This type of active involvement from the public was different from passive appeals for charity that have characterized NGOs such as *Save the Children*. It endeavoured to involve readers in a participatory manner, as activists, in terms of achieving solutions, but in order to achieve this a different understanding of an abstract word like *poverty* needed to be discursively constructed in the media.

Abstract terms like *poverty* and *peace* represent complex social phenomena involving a myriad of social actors, relationships, causes and agendas. Yet the

construction of these issues in the news media often isolates them from the daily reality of viewers, and frames them in oversimplified ways.

> The way planners, development actomaniacs and politicians living off global poverty alleviation campaigns are presenting their case, give the uninformed public a distorted impression of how the world's impoverished are living their deprivations. Not only are these people presented as incapable of doing anything intelligent by themselves, but also as preventing the modern do-gooders from helping them (Rahnema, 1992).

Contextualization is necessary to create a deeper understanding, but is often considered antithetical to immediacy, and can be construed as holding a biased position by journalists. The media's pervasive influence on how global events in distant places are conceptualized and presented is a conspicuous component in creating understanding about issues for readers, and for soliciting action. No report can tell the whole story of any event; it inevitably suppresses as much as it reveals. As Caldas-Coulthard (2003) points out, news is the recontexualization of an event. Through a series of choices including sources, perspectives, content and opinions made by reporters, photographers and editors, a cultural construct of the event is formed and communicated to the reader.

> It's those decisions, above all, that control access to the information and communications and, in the process, construct the world around us. But journalism is stuck in the reality-based community of empiricism, still trying to convince us that it is 'up to' nothing more than sending reporters out with a blank page, to reflect what they see and hear. (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005: xvii)

In order to better understand how complex world issues are communicated and how readers conceptualize these issues, more attention needs to be paid to how the issues are constructed in media discourse.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Poverty as structural violence

Poverty is a form of structural violence that is the result of unjust economic and social practices. This view of poverty comes from the field of peace studies research and the definition of peace put forth by Galtung (1969) and Curle (cited in Fiske & Schellenberg 2000: 20-22), and elaborated by other scholars (Reardon, 1993). It starts with the definition of peace as having two dimensions: negative and positive. Negative peace refers to how most people use the word in their ordinary speech: the absence of war or what is known as direct, physical violence. But the absence of war is not enough to ensure that people can live in relationships that allow for equal access to resources, and support humans living to their potential with dignity. For this to occur, there also

needs to be positive peace, which is conceived of as the conditions that allow for mutually beneficial relationships for all to occur. In this expanded definition of peace, violence is then seen as any kind of intentional or avoidable harm (Reardon, 1993) and can take many forms such as: direct, structural, economic, gender, interpersonal, social and cultural. These manifest themselves in many forms such as systemic and discriminatory policies, racism and sexism. In the case of structural violence this can be seen in social practices and structures which cause harm to victims, such as the system of slavery, gender inequality or poverty.

Reardon points out that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be used as a diagnostic tool in assessing the conditions necessary for positive peace.

> Positive peace requires the reduction and elimination of structural violence, the violation of life and well-being that derives from social and economic institutions. Should we need indicators of the conditions of justice and equity that comprise positive peace, we need only refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for an inventory of factors that deny human freedom and impede the fulfillment of security needs (Reardon, 1993).

It also provides an alternative framework for constructing these issues, in that they are not conceived of as natural results of 'the system' but are seen as violations of fundamental human rights. As mentioned previously, poverty and many other human rights issues are usually not constructed in this manner by the media, leaving audiences with a distorted sense of the issue. Poverty is often constructed as a natural part of modern life that involves some element of choice or will on the part of the participants. It is not seen as a systematic discrimination of human rights based on economic and social structures and practices.

2.2. Peace journalism

Peace Journalism is a relatively new journalistic concept, first put forth by Galtung (1992) and recently elaborated by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005). It looks at the journalistic practices and conventions which are typically used when reporting conflict and which constitute how the story is framed. It eschews classical liberal 'freedom of the press' notions of objectivity with an aim of providing more balance, fairness and accuracy to the reporting of conflict. As such it can be considered a more socially responsible approach to reporting which could be expected to include a human rights based approach when reporting structural violence such as poverty.

Based on theories of conflict analysis and transformation, peace journalism seeks to value non-violent responses to conflict by including other contextual features and framing the conflict as a multi-party situation with a variety of possible outcomes, instead of as a two-party win-lose conflict characteristic of war journalism (see Table 1 below). This journalistic model holds that the construction of conflict has consequences for how the public, and actors in the conflict, conceive future courses of action. If all reporting is in fact unbiased, then conflict coverage oriented towards non-violent and

developmental responses can be a remedy for systematic shortcomings or distortions in coverage, arising out of patterns of omission and marginalisation.

Table 1. Peace/War Journalism

Original Johann Galtung chart, adapted by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005)

PEACE/CONFLICT JOURNALISM	WAR/VIOLENCE JOURNALISM
I. PEACE/CONFLICT-ORIENTATED • explores conflict *formation*, x parties, y goals, z issues • general 'win, win' orientation • open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture • making conflicts transparent • giving voice to all parties; empathy, understanding • see conflict/war as problem, focus on conflict creativity • humanization of all sides; more so the worse the weapons • *proactive*: prevention before any violence/war occurs • focus on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/ culture)	**I. WAR/VIOLENCE ORIENTATED** • Focuses on conflict *arena*, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war • general zero-sum orientation • closed space, closed time; causes and exits in arena, who threw the first stone • making wars opaque/secret • 'us-them' journalism, propaganda, voice, for 'us' • see 'them' as the problem, focus on who prevails in war • dehumanization of 'them'; more so the worse the weapon • *reactive*: waiting for violence before reporting • focus only on visible effect of violence (killed, wounded and material damage)
II. TRUTH-ORIENTATED • exposes untruths on all sides / uncovers all cover-ups	**II. PROPAGANDA-ORIENTATED** • exposes 'their' untruths / helps 'our' cover-ups/lies
III. PEOPLE-ORIENTATED • focuses on suffering all over; on women, aged children, giving voice to voiceless • gives name to all evil-doers • focuses on people peace-makers	**III. ELITE-ORIENTATED** • focuses on 'our' suffering; on able-bodied elite males, being their mouth-piece • gives name to their evil-doers • focuses on elite peace-makers
IV. SOLUTION-ORIENTATED • Peace = non-violence + creativity • Highlights peace initiatives, also to prevent more war • Focuses on structure, culture, the peaceful society • Aftermath: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation	**IV. VICTORY-ORIENTATED** • Peace = victory + ceasefire • Conceal peace-initiative, before victory is at hand • Focus on treaty, institution, the controlled society • Leaving for another war, return if the old flares up again

This paper will look at both the visual and verbal modes of communication, to see how the abstract issue of *poverty* is framed in print media. In particular it will focus on the period of the MPH campaign to look at patterns of usage of the word *poverty*, and accompanying news photos to better understand how the media problematized poverty during the campaign, and to what extent these representations of structural violence can be seen as consistent with the peace journalism model for the reporting of violence. This paper will focus on three questions: (1) How was poverty constructed in the news media during the campaign? (2) What visual and verbal discursive strategies were used? (3) To what extent do the discursive strategies that were used, frame the issue from a socially responsible, human rights perspective, of the kind put forth by the peace journalism model?

This study is exploratory in that it attempts to create linguistic indicators, through corpus and multimodal analysis, of some of the characteristics of the peace journalism framework. Peace journalism was originally conceptualized to address how direct physical violence in conflict situations was reported in the media. This study is also an exploratory use of the framework to assess the level of social responsibility in the reporting of structural violence, such as poverty, through the linguistic indicators.

2.3 Previous research

The linkage between how social issues and conflict are communicated has been researched in various disciplines including media, cultural and feminist studies and applied linguistics. The approach used by Lister and Wells (2001) derived from cultural studies, and looked at visual culture through photographs. It analyzed how meaning and power relations were encoded in the photographic images and included a section on images of poverty. Many studies have used Kress & van Leeuwen's (1996, 2001) framework for multimodal analysis to examine how current social issues such as political conflict, current events, suffering, war and racism are constructed in the news (Chouliraki, 2006; Machin & Jaworski, 2006; Scollon, 2003; van Leeuwen, 2000; Wells; 2007). Wodak (2006) pointed out the need for analyzing photographs and images which serve as icons in global society, from a critical discourse perspective.

Corpus analysis has also been used to look at social issues, as in Baker & McEnery's (2005) study of the discourse of refugees in newspapers, and Hamilton *et al.*'s (2007) study of the meaning of 'risk' in ordinary language. Schaffner & Wenden's book *Language and Peace* (1995) examines the issues of social discrimination, war and ideology from a discourse perspective, and Wenden's more recent work (2003) continues to identify the need for a linguistic framework, such as critical discourse analysis, that identifies how language communicates ideologies in relation to issues of peace and social justice.

Since the concept of peace journalism is relatively new, research in this area is just beginning to grow and has mainly looked at how the mainstream media exhibits peace journalism characteristics, using content analysis techniques from the field of media studies (Lynch, 2006).

The discourse of poverty has also been the topic of research, but mostly in the field of international relations where Wilkin (2002) examined it in relation to discourses

of security, and by Jefferes (2002) who identified the colonial discourses that were evoked in charity fundraising campaigns. This paper situates itself as looking at the issue of poverty as a form of structural violence, in order to better understand how the conflict reporting techniques identified in the peace journalism framework construct this type of violence. In order to do this, it relies on linguistic indicators of the peace journalism characteristics using corpus and multimodal analysis.

3. Data

3.1 The visual texts and analysis

Images report more than just factual reality; as van Leeuwen (2000: 335) says, "If images seem to just *allude* to things and 'never say them explicitly', we need to make these allusions explicit". To explore the research questions, the analytical framework that will be used is Kress and van Leeuwen's theory of visual communication (1996, 2001) which looks at the semiotic potential for communication of various semiotic modes other than language. The semiotic modes can be seen as systems of motivated signs which "have arisen out of the interest of social groups who interact within the structures of power that define social life, and also interact across the systems produced by various groups within society" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996: 159)

To address the conceptualization of the issue, the modality and composition of the visuals will be considered. Modality refers to the truth-value or credibility as depicted through the degree of naturalness in the visuals. It is realized through modes such as colour, degree of background detail, and contextualization of the visual elements. Aspects of the composition such as the information value created by the placement of images, salience of elements in the images, and the framing of elements will also be considered. The nature of the relationship between the reader and the depicted people that is constructed in the text will be analyzed by looking at the degree of social distance, the nature of the social relationship and the social interaction, as realized through the modes of camera distance, camera angle, and the gaze of the depicted people.

The visual texts chosen for this project are reproduced in the following pages. They come from two genres: newspaper articles and magazine covers. This paper will first consider two front-page stories on African poverty and illness from the UK daily newspapers, *The Guardian* and the *Independent*, that appeared on the same day near the beginning of the *Make Poverty History* campaign. These will be compared with each other, and with magazine covers from *Time* and *The Economist* on the same topic.

As mentioned, modality refers to the degree of naturalness in the picture and can influence how the proposition represented visually is perceived by the reader, in terms of being real, true and immediate (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). In Figure 1 (from *The Guardian*), the modality is high by the use of natural colour and sharp focus, creating a high truth value, yet there is no recognizable background or contextual features to identify the situation or problem.
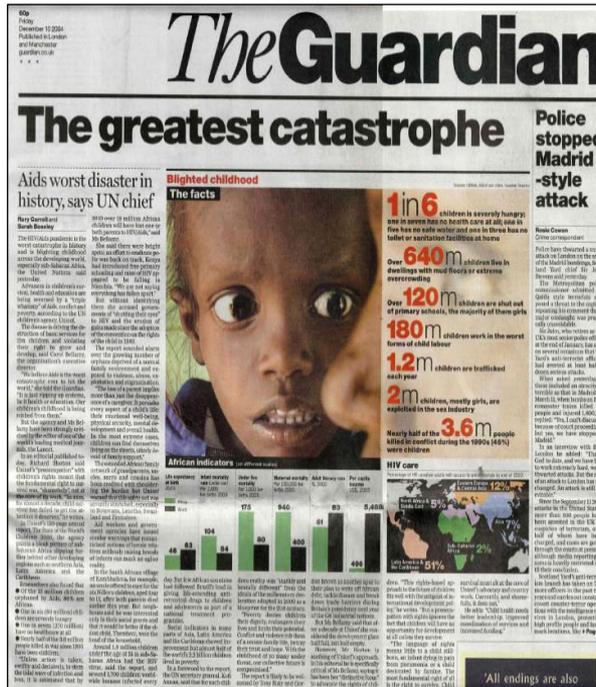
Figure 1. The *Guardian* Dec. 16, 2004

The image of the child is symbolically representative of the problem of poverty and illness, but is not differentiated as an individual by any name, title or other type of identification. Rather, the child is a generalized representation of a group that is defined only by the colour of their skin, and the sad expression on their face. The lack of any identifying detail in terms of clothing or background even obscures the sex of the child.

The composition of the picture shows a strong centre-orientation made by the child's face and signifying importance. Yet the extreme and blurred close-up of a nose on the right side of the frame also becomes salient through the vector created between the child's eyes and the nose. Although there are no discernible identifying features of the nose, its size gives it a connotative value of being an adult in comparison to the child, yet without any identifying features the relationship to both the child and the overall conceptualization is unclear. If we step back from the photographic visual and consider the other three graphic elements we can see the effect of what Kress & van Leeuwen (1996: 186) refer to as Given-New placement value. Elements on the left side represent the status quo, or given conditions which the viewer is familiar with, whereas those on the right represent new, unknown or possibly problematic information. In Figure 1, the child, as a generic representation of the problem and the culture it is located within, represents the current condition, but interestingly is given less prominence then the table of statistics on the right. The numbers in this table not only represent high value knowledge in our market-driven society, but are given salience through the use of the colour red, their size, and the vector created by the gaze of the child to the right side. While this chart represents new and important factual information about the problem, it also serves to dehumanize it, by its prominence in relation to the photograph on the left.

Further, the three graphic visuals form a frame that encloses the human element of the photograph. This creates a kind of compartmentalization of the human aspect of the problem and distances the reader from it. The headline 'the greatest catastrophe' completes the boxing off of the human element and further depersonalizes it by the use of abstract naming. The use of the word 'catastrophe' implies that the situation is accidental or a natural phenomenon, as opposed to being the product of systematic practices of inequity.

The relationship with the reader is realized first through social distance, and the type of camera shot, which in this case is an extreme close-up. Images which are on the same plane as the viewer reinforce a sense of alignment between the depicted persons and the viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996: 140). The social interaction between the depicted participants and the reader is realized through either direct or indirect gaze. Gaze can function as either a "demand" through direct visual engagement or as an "offer" of information through an indirect gaze (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996: 126). Although less social distance is created by the extreme close-up, and a sense of alignment with the viewer, coming from the horizontal and frontal angle of the shot, the indirect gaze of the child inscribes the viewer into the interaction as an observer, not a participant. The reader, as observer to the situation in the photograph, is "offered" information with what, in linguistic terms, would be the equivalent of a declarative sentence. This makes the relationship less personal between the reader and the problem, and further emphasizes the value of the less human aspects of the problem as represented by the numbers on the right.

The cover story on *The Independent* (Figure 2, overleaf) offers a very different conceptualization of the issue. The photograph is much higher modality, and therefore has a higher degree of naturalness or truth. This is realized through the use of colour, clear focus, the amount of background and the context that are included in the photograph. The child is again alone, so serves to generically represent the problem, but some other cultural markers such as the landscape and the skull provide contextual elements, although they are not drawn together in a clear way, and therefore provide no narrative to the photograph. This creates a feeling of confusion for the reader in terms of the disparate nature of the elements that we would expect to see with a child, and again reinforces a distance. The composition of Figure 2 shows very strong centre-orientation in the photograph itself, but is also echoed and reinforced in the layout of the entire front page. This also serves to emphasize the Top-Bottom information values which Kress & van Leeuwen (1996: 193) consider to represent the ideal and real. In their framework the top corresponds to the ideal or 'what might be' and is more emotive in nature, whereas the bottom represents reality or 'what is' and tends to be more informative.

Figure 2 – *The Independent* Dec. 16, 2004

The salient elements for both the photograph and the overall front page are the white skull, made prominent by its centre placement and white colour, and the numerical figure of 1 billion also made prominent by its size, placement and colour. The number represents high information value and factuality, but because of its centre and top placement it is given a heightened position of importance and symbolizes the possibility of what might happen in the future if the problem is not tackled. It is contrasted with the reality of the current situation, symbolized by the photographic image of the isolated child with a skull. This symbolizes the reality of the deaths that have occurred. Despite the emotional and exclamatory appeal of the number and the macabre skull, the lack of meaningful context in the picture reinforces the conceptualization of the problem from a results-oriented perspective, as opposed to explicating the contextual and contributing factors. This way of focusing the problem at once simplifies and distances it from complex interdependent relationships with countries outside of the immediately affected areas.

The relationship with the viewer is again a distant and passive one in Figure 2. The long shot, from a somewhat higher angle, distances the viewer and puts them in a position of power and non-alignment with the child. The child's indirect gaze positions the viewer as an observer and constitutes an 'offer' of information, but as shown above, this information is generalized and lacks contextual relevance and complexity in terms of explaining the nature of the problem. Therefore the role of the viewer in terms of action regarding the problem is also unclear. The generalization of the problem is further echoed in the headline, which uses the passive voice to emphasize the action of 'failure' by the world, but does not offer clear ideas of what constitutes this failure. The overall conceptualization of the issue focuses on results rather than the causes of the problem, and creates an essentially passive role for the

reader as observer. A human tragedy is cut off from the contextual factors that have created it, thus reducing the level of responsibility or connection to the readers' lives.

Figures 3 and 4 consider how another genre, magazine covers, approaches the issue of poverty in contrasting ways. In terms of modality, both covers are low modality but achieve this differently. The *Time* magazine cover (Figure 3) is black and white, but the focus is clear and it includes a fair amount of background as context. Although this detail enhances the photo's truth-value, the colour abstracts it from the world of the reader, and creates a distancing effect. *The Economist* cover (Figure 4), provides clear and naturalistic colour images, but they are completely decontextualized with no natural background included. This portrayal renders an abstract conceptualization of the problem that is not related to the reader's world or to the context in which the situation occurs.
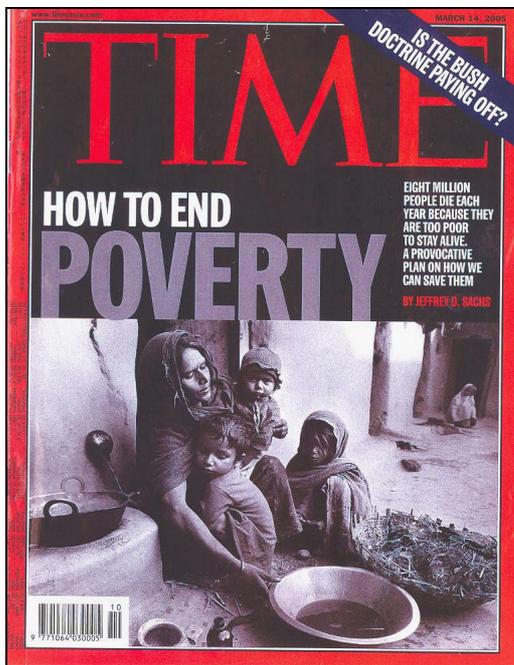

Figure 3. *Time* March 14, 2005
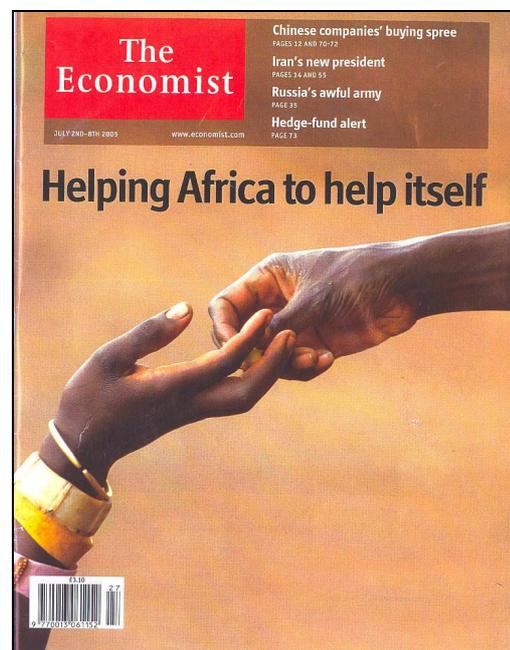
Figure 4. *The Economist* July 2, 2005

In terms of composition, Figure 3 again shows a centre-oriented composition, which, coupled with the use of black and white, gives an old-fashioned mood to the picture. This tends to reinforce the problem as being part of a backward country or area, and symbolically associates this notion with developing countries. The most salient aspect is the word 'poverty' because of its size and tight positioning over the photo. The grey colour causes it to blend into the picture and the strong vertical lines make it seem like it is part of the buildings in the picture. Its tight placement over the heads of the people in the photograph has an oppressive quality, since it does not allow for any 'head room'. Its dominance in terms of positioning and salience can also be read as symbolizing the superiority of literary skills over the lifestyle depicted in the photograph. Also of salience is the woman in the picture, because of the lighter tone of her skin and the fact that the letter 'V' points down towards her. She is also not distinguished as an individual, but as a generic representative of the problem.

However, the inclusion of background elements such as the buildings, bowls and other children create a narrative rather than symbolic representation of the issue.

The most striking aspect of Figure 3 is how the overall distant and removed impression of the issue, as shown above, is coupled with the text. The headlines 'How we can save them' and 'How to end poverty' are reminiscent of the genre of self-help literature, and construct a place of involvement for the reader, not through a command, but through a declarative statement which will provide the knowledge to remedy the problem. The use of 'we' is conspicuous in the sense of who is actually included. *Time* is aimed at upper middle-class, educated readers, presumably many of which would be involved in business. The 'we' that the magazine itself represents could be construed to mean the American publisher, advertizers and perhaps by extension, right leaning viewpoints which are represented by the magazine. This group of elite international business leaders represented by 'we' is clearly positioned in a dominant role over the image at the bottom. The bottom image represents the reality of the poverty, but is distanced and framed in a disconnected manner from the rest of the world community. The verbal text represents the superiority of knowledge and education, and informs of its ability to solve the problem. This presents an idealized solution through the top placement, as opposed to the helplessness as represented by the bottom image of the weakest members of society: women and children. The separation between 'we' and 'them' is further reinforced by the cause given for the problem in the headline on the right. In ascribing the reason for poverty to the victims themselves by '…they are too poor to stay alive' (Figure 3) it denies any responsibility for this situation to anyone outside the group constituted by 'they'.

The relationship between the depicted participants and the reader is one of distance where the reader is inscribed as an observer to the situation. The social distance is achieved through the use of a high-angle long shot, which positions the reader in a distant position of power towards the participants. The gazes of the participants are all indirect, which creates a visual 'offer' of information about the situation for the reader, but enforces the distant observational position. Only the smallest child in the middle of the image appears to be looking directly at the camera, which creates a 'demand' for help. Although the centre placement of the child gives it prominence, the relative size of the participant compared to other elements in the frame provides only minimal impact on the reader.

By contrast, Figure 4 in *The Independent* approaches the problem in a less oppressive manner. As mentioned above, the modality is higher because of the use of natural colour, but the absence of any background or context also creates a feeling of distance and a lack of connectedness between the issues of Africa and the rest of the world. The horizontal angle brings the reader into alignment with the issue, but the lack of detail makes this alignment seem more like a position of solidarity rather than responsibility for either the causes or solutions of the problem. The point where the hands touch is made salient through its centre-placement, and the lighter pink colour of the inside of the hands. Interestingly, the hands do not approach this meeting from equal positions, symbolizing a power difference between them. The absence of contextual details prevents an interpretation of that difference, and the images function as symbolic representations of the problem; however, a generalized cultural marker is

presented by the inclusion of the bracelets on the left side. From a Western perspective, the bracelets could be considered feminine, thus representing a correspondence between the lower, and weaker, left hand with bracelets as opposed to the more powerful, presumably male, right hand. The cultural marker could also be considered negative in another way, since it may be seen as being representative of primitive cultures. This undercuts the use of natural colour to create a more truthful and natural conceptualization of the issue, and ultimately achieves a similar effect to the use of black and white in reinforcing backward and primitive images of developing countries where poverty occurs.

Also, despite an effort to create an atmosphere of self-sufficiency for Africa by the propositional content of the headline and the choice of two black hands in the image, , this is also undermined. The headline omits the subject of the sentence, which would presumably be 'we are'. There is an implication of another party's involvement that would be doing the 'helping'. The absence of this party being named directly does not negate its influence, nor minimize its position as being related to the resolution, but not the creation of the problem. By the same token, the text is placed in a dominant position over the image, as was seen in Figure 4, reinforcing the superiority of the agent doing the 'helping' as described in the headline. Because of the lack of any background detail, the verbal text in a sense speaks for the image in describing the significance of the image and what it is meant to symbolize. However, at the same time it reinforces a superior and literate ability, represented by the text and by extension the 'we' that is implied, over the image, which does not have words to speak for itself.

The relationship with the reader shows a decreased social distance by the use of a close up shot that it on the same plane as the reader. These two aspects of the image bring the reader close to the participants. However this is undermined significantly because there are no faces shown, so the reader is again 'offered' information as only an observer to the situation.

3.2 The corpus data

The corpus used for this analysis consisted of newspaper and magazine articles from three sources: *The Guardian* newspaper, *Time* and *The Economist* magazines. All of these publications devoted cover stories and other articles to the issue of poverty during the period when the MPH campaign was announced in December 2004, and leading up to the LiveAid concert and G8 summit in July 2005. This articles were collected from the three publications from December 10, 2004 until roughly July 10, 2005. Using the internet-based database *Proquest*, articles in these three publications were searched for, using the key word *poverty*, and then were included in the corpus. In this sense this is a specialized corpus dealing with *poverty*, since a pre-selection of material was used. Because of the large number of articles that included this word, it is inevitable that some of them were not dealing with the issue of African poverty. The corpus represents a sampling of print media discourse on the issue of *poverty* published during that time period and, as Baker (2006) points out, can provide only a broad overview of how the issue was discussed at that time. Various journalists with varying

viewpoints wrote the articles that were used, so the corpus cannot be considered to represent a coherent ideological viewpoint from any of the three publications.

Collocations and concordances will be analyzed in the news-poverty corpus to investigate and interpret various patterns of usage and what implications these might have for how readers interact with the issue of poverty through media texts.

3.3 The corpus analysis

The corpus of 192,811 words was analyzed using *Wordsmith Tools* (Scott, 1998). A quantitative collocation analysis was carried out on the news-poverty corpus to see what types of words were frequently associated with *poverty*, and if the associations tended to be negative or positive in nature (Table 2). The words most frequently used with *poverty* to the left tend to fall into two groups: those that are adjectives and describe types of poverty (*extreme, world, child, global, African*); and those that are verbs in the progressive tense (*eradicating, reducing, fighting, tackling, ending*), describing a process involving getting rid of poverty. Despite the fact that all of the verbs connote movement towards ending poverty, they are also somewhat extreme in nature and signify by their intensity that this is a difficult problem to deal with and to overcome. Some of the verbs such as *fighting, tackling and eradicating*, with *against*, also convey a sense of a battle.

Table 2.   Collocates with *poverty* from news-poverty corpus

Word one place to the left (#)		Word one place To the right(#)
extreme (65)	poverty	
global (16)	poverty	
child (16)	poverty	
world (16)	poverty	
reducing (13)	poverty	
fighting (11)	poverty	
against (10)	poverty	
African (7)	poverty	
ending (7)	poverty	
reduce (7)	poverty	
eradicating (5)	poverty	
tackling (5)	poverty	
	poverty	reduction (26)
	poverty	line (6)
	poverty	alleviation (5)

Various concordance analyses were carried out in order to examine patterns of usage of the word *poverty* that would indicate how the issue is conceptualized. This type of qualitative analysis allows for a closer examination of how words are used in context (Baker, 2006). The concordances were cleaned, by eliminating any repetitions of text that had occurred when the corpus was compiled, leaving a total of 628 lines. The

corpus was then sorted in various ways to the right and left of the word *poverty* to investigate the contextual occurrences found in the collocations.

To investigate the *processes* that were found in the collocations (Figure 5a), the corpus was sorted by 1 place to the left and then 2 places to the left. As noted previously the use of the progressive tense gives the sense of an incomplete process that is being undertaken with regards to *poverty.* However another interesting feature is that all of the words that are used such as *eradicating, tackling, ending,* and *fighting* are words that would be used when discussing sicknesses or illnesses such as cancer or AIDS. A check of the BNC revealed that the most common collocates for *eradicating* includes diseases such as malaria, tumours and liver disease. The use of these types of words with *poverty* creates an image of it as a naturally occurring phenomenon, not a product of economic policies and practices. In this sense the causes are subsumed in the notion of needing to work hard to find a 'cure'. This essentially forward focus on the problem disavows liability for its genesis, and serves to disconnect it from the reader and their daily lives.

N	Concordance	
71	ch will focus on tackling	poverty, especially in Afr
72	eir promizes on tackling	poverty in Africa." Christ
73	ct" methods of tackling	poverty, such as subsidi
74	arshall plan" for tackling	poverty and debt in Afric
102	was spent on reducing	poverty. If Zambia is to
103	as focused on reducing	poverty among children
105	declaration on reducing	poverty and improving ed
106	e "miracles" in reducing	poverty have occurred al
110	k of interest in reducing	poverty and inequality. T
113	rship aimed at reducing	poverty in Africa by enco
114	prove better at reducing	poverty than despotism
363	lopment goals of halving	poverty, heavy investme
364	s hence--include halving	poverty and hunger, arre
406	evoting 2005 to fighting	poverty, and has made
407	d committed to fighting	poverty and championing

Figure 5a. Concordance of *poverty* sorted 1 and 2 places to the left – *Process*

Similarly, Figure 5b, which was also sorted one place to the left and 2 places to the left, shows how the metaphor of war and battle is revealed in the use of words like *war on, fight, beat* and *targets.* By positioning poverty as a natural enemy that is to be fought against, like a disease, it absolves society from identifying or accepting responsibility for the causes of the problem. The issue is seen as a natural enemy that must be conquered like *disease* in line 420, and as tenacious an enemy as *terrorism* in line 419.

N	Concordance	
136	countries wage war on	poverty and despair. We
137	ow to pay for the war on	poverty. As well as the f
138	ht be won in the war on	poverty in 2005. Some
139	ing up the global war on	poverty in response to a
140	t is right to wage war on	poverty and hardship as
141	lso announced a war on	poverty and despair in th
144	nch a direct assault on	poverty and unemploym
418	ocratic--it wants to fight	poverty, not a false phil
419	ould join forces to fight	poverty, terrorism and dr
420	issionaries there to fight	poverty and disease, sta
421	eighbors, and also fight	poverty in the places wh
503	big ideas for eliminating	poverty and oversaw a h
548	irepower needed to beat	poverty. In rich countries
553	such crucial targets as	poverty, ill-health, educa
599	finance the fight against	poverty. This would not
600	shed in the fight against	poverty. In order to "ma

Figure 5b. Concordance of *poverty* sorted 1 and 2 places to the left – *Battle*

Poverty is also conceptualized as something that can be quantified according to some kind of measure or scale that does not reveal itself as being numeric. As shown in Figure 5c, which was again sorted one place to the left and 2 places to the left, various words are used to measure and quantify poverty, such as *extreme, absolute, relative, abject, relentless,* and *dire*. These seem to indicate levels of poverty, but are also very abstract terms so that the classification system remains elusive and interpretive according to the reader.

Although some of these modifiers, such as *extreme,* do refer to a specific index of poverty, this would probably not be known or clearly understood to the average reader. By being imprecise in its measurement, this system of classification serves to distance the reader and also to dehumanize the issue through the use of abstract modifiers that are typically used with other abstract ideas like *danger* or *fear*. This also brings a negative association to the issue.

N	Concordance	
91	g, abject and relentless	poverty and we have had
92	g, abject and relentless	poverty". He also promi
93	like moderate or relative	poverty, extreme poverty
94	like moderate or relative	poverty, extreme poverty
96	barely. Being in relative	poverty, defined by a ho
98	e their lives. But relative	poverty at home is not
182	composite measure of	poverty, ill health and b
185	shocked by the level of	poverty he saw. "We tak
202	ere are three degrees of	poverty: extreme (or abs
368	ians still live in grinding	poverty, making it the c
369	aving families in greater	poverty because of the l
426	cut the world's extreme	poverty in half by 2015,
427	n Africa, where extreme	poverty is concentrated.
428	bring an end to extreme	poverty and look forward
432	sia in reducing extreme	poverty between 1990 an
433	elative poverty. Extreme	poverty, defined by the
467	task of ending extreme	poverty is a collective on
472	choose to end extreme	poverty by the year 2025
475	e can describe extreme	poverty as "the poverty t
482	n of alleviating extreme	poverty and the reality:
508	e and this person's dire	poverty. If you sent it ba
509	grets. I know about dire	poverty. I saw it in Niger
515	s a recipe for deepening	poverty. Brown's only co
520	he Philippines' crushing	poverty. But these chan
619	y: extreme (or absolute)	poverty, moderate povert
620	opians living in absolute	poverty has fallen only sl
621	tic policy from absolute	poverty (now a rarity) to
625	break the grip of abject	poverty and avoidable su
626	eople can live in abject	poverty with more dignity

Figure 5c. Concordance of *poverty* sorted 1 and 2 places to the left – *Quantity*

Poverty has an abstract spatial quality, as seen in how it is measured, and in that it seems to take up an area that people need to get *out of*. Figure 5d, which was also sorted one place to the left and 2 places to the left, shows that this idea of escaping some sort of container can apply to people or countries.

N	Concordance		
159	a million children out of	poverty	- but not a singl
160	e. That is the way out of	poverty	and illness. That
166	ould take millions out of	poverty	. "Politics is abo
167	signed to lift them out of	poverty	." The company
168	00 million people out of	poverty	. These industria
170	very poor country out of	poverty	. But this is cert
172	easants to break out of	poverty	. They may accu
177	ocessing and get out of	poverty	as a result." Thi
179	uld help lift Africa out of	poverty	. The theory is t

Table 5d. Concordance of *poverty* sorted 1 and 2 places to the left – *Spatial*

A sorting of the concordances 1 place to the right and 2 places to the right of the word *poverty* revealed spatial classifications of the word poverty either as a *line* or a *trap* (Figure 5e). The use of the word *trap* connotes some form of agency in terms of how it was set, and the presumed effort that would be required to get out. Traps are not naturally occurring and connote intentionality. *Line* is a seemingly more neutral term in that it only signifies a dividing point; however, how the dividing point is assessed and by whom is conspicuous, and needs to be considered. In both cases, unspecified agents or forces have responsibility for the condition of poverty, but these are obfuscated from the readers' conceptualization of the issue through this indirect representation of the phenomenon. This has a distancing effect on how the issue is conceptualized by limiting any associations with how the situation has been created.

N	Concordance		
28	ical Africa is caught in a	poverty	trap. Simply put,
29	ce Africa in a desperate	poverty	trap. Escaping w
192	pulation lives below the	poverty	line. U.N. High C
193	ians who live below the	poverty	line. Pessimists
194	lightly above the Bank's	poverty	line--remains a w
195	f people living below the	poverty	line, one-half in
196	rty (56% lived under the	poverty	line in 1993 com
197	ad been lifted above the	poverty	line already. The

Figure 5e. Concordance of *poverty* sorted 1 and 2 places to the right - *Line/trap*

4. Conclusion

Despite the increased focus on the issue of poverty in the media in an attempt to mobilize global awareness and action, the manner in which the problem is constructed can be seen as one of charity evoking discourses of colonialization. The problem is conceptualized in terms of its results, and makes no effort to link these with the daily living conditions of the reader, or of those affected. Although it is a human problem in terms of results, the economic conditions which cause it are not alluded to in these representations. The images foreground the results in terms of human suffering, but this suffering is seen as symbolic of backward cultures that lack skills and knowledge. The participants are generalized members of the affected communities, but they are effectively isolated and distanced from the readers of these publications, so that the readers' relationship to the problem is one of observer. This serves to diminish the possibility of illuminating complexities and interdependencies that involve developed countries in the problem. The continuing portrayal of the problems of poverty as distant regional issues, rather than as the effects of global economic inequalities, maintains the reader's position as observer, not activist, and maintains a safe social distance for the reader.

The social relationship with the participants that is depicted reinforces this distance by continually portraying the participants out of context and as icons of suffering, rather than as people living in regions where the economic realities are related to the global community. The distanced relationship with the readers as observers casts them in a more powerful position, giving them the ability to *help* the situation and the depicted people. Through both communicative modes, a colonial view of the issue is created that does not allude to global and historical responsibility, nor exhibit any possibilities for alternative ways of understanding or being involved in the issue.

This distancing effect is reinforced in the verbal analysis, by the construction of poverty as an enemy or disease which needs to be controlled. Poverty is made a problem that is separate from the reader by portraying it as 'the other' or an enemy, and agency or causality are not pursued. The increased use of war metaphors further emphasizes this construction.

The use of verbs in the progressive tense in the news-poverty corpus seems to be designed to involve the reader in the process of attacking poverty. Despite the place that is constructed for the reader by this feature, the conceptualization of the issue continues to lack specificity, and therefore does not allow the reader to make connections between poverty and aspects of their own daily lives. Abstract naming devices and quantifiers obfuscate clearer and more relevant explanations of the complexities of the issue.

Overall this construction of poverty does not frame it from a socially responsible perspective, in that it does not reflect a human rights approach to the problem. A human rights approach to the issue of poverty would acknowledge the denial of human dignity to those affected. Yet by verbally casting it as natural enemy this connection is not made, in the sense that it is not seen as a problem created by humans, or as the result of systemic inequalities. This is further achieved through a

lack of context, and the iconization of suffering that is seen in the visual images. The problem is represented largely in the here and now, with little reference to historic factors that have contributed to the inequalities. This limited time and space aspect of the problem focuses on the human results of the problem while at the same time largely removing the human causes. By doing so it objectifies those that it represents, which dehumanizes them and denies them a voice.

These characteristics of the reporting, which focus on only the visible effects of structural violence, and locate it within the closed time and space of the here and now, are consistent with what Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) identify as war journalism techniques (Table 1). Thus, despite the efforts to reposition the issue of poverty through the MPH campaign, it is still constructed as a distant yet, natural enemy that is removed from the lives' of readers and as such has much in common with the war journalism reporting techniques that are typically used when reporting the enemy as "the other" in conflict situations of direct violence.

This study can be considered exploratory both in terms of using linguistic indicators to describe the discursive characteristics of the peace journalism model, and in that it addresses the reporting of structural violence, within that framework. The multimodal and corpus analysis can give some insights into how this issue is discursively constructed, but further research would also need to involve close text analysis, and develop linguistic indicators for other aspects of the framework, to more fully explore and compliment these initial findings.

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Now I am alone:
A corpus stylistic approach to Shakespearian soliloquies

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Abstract

A popular interest in Shakespeare has been matched in recent years by an increasing number of computer-assisted analyses of the plays. Although not without their critics, corpus stylistic studies have offered scope and reliability in the study of literary texts, particularly through key word analyses. In this paper, I show how *Wmatrix*, a web-based corpus processing environment (Rayson, 2003, 2007), in conjunction with other corpus tools, can systematically extend such key analyses from words, to parts of speech and semantic fields. By so doing, a greater understanding of linguistic aspects of an author's literary output may be achieved. This study is based on a key word, grammatical category and semantic field analysis of soliloquies and asides in 12 Shakespeare plays. An investigation of the linguistic characteristics of soliloquies/asides as opposed to dialogic speech reveals the overuse of the interjection *O* and words related to the body. Comparisons of soliloquies across genres tend to match intuitive assumptions. Finally, soliloquies written in the later period (1596-1606) tend to have a far greater proportion of 'the (noun) of (noun phrase)' structures. The paper ends by suggesting that more empirical work of this nature is needed to underpin qualitative literary judgements.

1. Introduction

Shakespeare, it seems, is as popular as ever. In 2006, the Royal Shakespeare Company produced a cycle of all his plays. The historian and broadcaster Michael Wood has documented his life in a TV series entitled *In Search of Shakespeare* (Wallace, 2003), while modern adaptations of his plays bring them to new audiences in *Shakespeare Retold* (Percival *et al.*, 2006). New books abound on almost every aspect of his life and work (e.g. Shapiro, 2005), and Rough Guides, better known for travel guides, has even produced *The Rough Guide to Shakespeare* (Dickson, 2005). Shakespeare's celebrated use of language continues to receive attention (Alexander, 2004; Kermode, 2000), while an anthology of soliloquies displays "Shakespeare's poetic genius in all its richness" (Kerrigan, 2002). At the same time, computers and the Internet are having a considerable influence on approaches to Shakespeare with online databases such as WordHoard (Mueller *et al.*, 2006), Shakespeare's Words (Crystal & Crystal, 2004) and Hyperhamlet (Engler *et al.*, 2003) offering users multiple opportunities to investigate all aspects of the Bard's output.

Parallel to this popular interest in Shakespeare, there has been a rise in the use of computer-assisted textual analysis in the field of literary stylistics, although not as much as one might expect (Wynne, 2005) and met with resistance by some literary critics (see Louw, 1997). In its defence, McEnery & Wilson (2001) point out that the whole concept of style rests on the notion that authors choose to express their ideas using certain linguistic resources in preference to others, which logically must be measurable to some degree. While complete objectivity in the analysis of style may be an unattainable goal, "without quantitative confirmation, statements on style lack the support of concrete evidence" (Leech & Short, 1981). The underlying characteristics of a corpus-based approach to language study are that it is empirical, it uses a large corpus of natural texts collected on a principled basis, computer and manual analyses of the corpus are carried out, and both quantitative and qualitative techniques of analysis are employed. The consequent strengths of such an analysis lie both in its scope and reliability (Biber *et al.*, 1998).

Another advantage of using computer software that has been pointed out is its ability to identify potentially significant textual features which have gone unnoticed by literary critics (Stubbs, 2005). Researchers (e.g. Barnbrook, 1996) often advocate using a larger general corpus as a norm for comparison against which smaller corpora can be measured to enable us to "marshal hosts of instances too numerous for our unassisted powers" (Burrows, 2002). Indeed, it has been with the aid of computers that some of the most interesting stylistic work on Shakespeare has taken place in recent years. Recent corpus-based studies have examined aspects such as differences between female and male language (Sobhan Raj Hota & Moshe Koppel, 2006), key semantic domains and metaphor in love tragedies and love comedies (Archer *et al.*, 2005), characterisation in *Romeo and Juliet* (Culpeper, 2001), and imagery in *Macbeth* (Zyngier, 1999).

In presenting the arguments above, I do not, of course, intend to suggest that quantitative techniques in corpus-based approaches to the analysis of literary style can or should supplant qualitative analysis. Semino & Short (2004) make the valuable point

that one need not preclude the other, and indeed they should be interdependent. It is my firm belief that quantitative treatments of corpora are preliminary steps to qualitative assessments of the resulting output. Like Semino & Short, I do not see corpus-based studies as competing with other forms of stylistics, but rather strengthening the analytical rigour of stylistic research.

Within corpus linguistics, the notion of key words, words whose frequency in a corpus is unusually high when compared with a norm,[1] has become a useful way of characterising the 'aboutness' of a text or corpus. Two word-lists, from the study and reference corpora, are compared. By doing this, it is possible to find out which words characterize the former, the latter providing data for reference comparison. Software such as *WordSmith Tools* (Scott, 1999) and *Wmatrix* (Rayson, 2003, 2007) use the log-likelihood statistical test to calculate keyness. Key words which are statistically significantly more frequent in the study corpus than in the reference corpus are called 'positive key words', and statistically significantly infrequent ones 'negative key words'. The basic premise behind this study is that key words, key parts of speech or key semantic fields as defined by software can provide the stylistician with a valuable tool in textual analysis.

The overall aim of this paper then is to show what a corpus stylistic analysis can reveal about the linguistic nature of soliloquies as opposed to dialogue in Shakespeare's plays, and to what extent this methodological approach can highlight distinctions between comedies, histories and tragedies, and early plays as opposed to mid-career works. For the purposes of this study, I define *soliloquy* as a speech spoken by a single actor who does not intend the words to be heard by any other character (Hirsh, 2003). I have also included asides not directed at another character as instances of self-talk. Following an exploration of the nature of soliloquies and self-talk in section 2, I provide the rationale behind my selection of plays for consideration in section 3. In section 4, I demonstrate how I used Paul Rayson's *Wmatrix* web-based corpus processing environment (Rayson, 2003, 2007) to carry out a key word analysis of various corpora of soliloquies. I present the findings and discussion of my analysis in section 5. Section 6 concludes the paper by summarising the main results and suggesting avenues for further research.

2. Soliloquies and self-talk

The fourth-century work *Soliloquies* by Saint Augustine is, in fact, a dialogue between Augustine and the personification of a faculty of his mind called Reason. The term *soliloquy*, from the Latin *solus* (alone) and *loqui* (place), was not used in a theatrical sense until the late seventeenth century and consequently, it is highly unlikely that Shakespeare was familiar with the term (Crystal & Crystal, 2005). As already stated above, Hirsh (2003) defines the word *soliloquy* as a speech spoken by a single actor who does not intend the words to be heard by any other character. He notes, however, that

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[1] The two corpora are referred to as the 'study corpus' and the 'reference corpus' respectively.

the word has tended to be used indiscriminately to refer to three types of theatrical practice, namely:

- audience-addressed speech, in which the character is aware of and speaks to playgoers;
- self-addressed speech, in which the character is unaware of playgoers and speaks only to herself; and
- interior monologue, in which the words merely represent thoughts passing through the character's mind.

No evidence exists of a soliloquy representing interior monologue before the middle of the seventeenth century, claims Hirsh (2003: 18), so consequently only the first two conventions were employed by Shakespeare. Similarly, Hirsh notes that the term *aside* has been used to describe four types of stage behaviour:

- a speech directed at one character, but guarded from another;
- a speech directed at playgoers, but guarded from others onstage;
- a speech addressed by a character to herself, despite the presence of others; and
- an interior monologue, representing thoughts passing through a character's mind, despite the presence of others onstage.

Of the four, all but the first match Hirsh's definition of soliloquy, and together with the first two types of soliloquy, could also be described as 'self-talk' (Goffman, 1981). Goffman (1981) notes that people can and do make comments aloud when solitary, and by so doing, split themselves in two, both projecting talk and being an appropriate recipient of the same. Thus natural interaction undergoes a transformation. In a theatre, a secondary transformation occurs as an actor plays a character, members of the audience existing merely as "supernatural out-of-frame eavesdroppers". Such ritualized ethological transformations have been called "routine licences of situation" (Leech, 1969: pp.186). In this paper, I will interchange the terms *soliloquies/asides* and *self-talk* for reasons of stylistic variation.

Although aspects of Shakespearean soliloquies have been studied in terms of linguistic theories such as politeness (Brown & Gilman, 1989), speech acts (Porter, 1979; Rudanko, 1993), Gricean maxims (Gilbert, 1995, 1997) and cognitive metaphor theory (Freeman, 1998), no corpus linguistic study of soliloquies has, to the best of my knowledge, thus far been undertaken. Soliloquies have, of course, received extensive critical attention, but only a few studies are devoted solely to the subject (Arnold, 1911; Clemen, 1964, 1987; Hirsh, 2003; Newell, 1991; Skiffington, 1985). The research presented in this paper aims to shed a little more light on what in my view is an aspect of Shakespeare's work which has much to gain from a corpus stylistic methodological treatment.

3. Selection of plays

A comprehensive study of self-talk in all of Shakespeare's plays was beyond the scope of the present study, so a principled selection of plays was necessary to address my research questions. In order to have a representative enough corpus to be reasonably sure of my findings, I decided to base my study on 12 plays: four comedies, four histories and four tragedies, with two of each from an early period (1591-95) and two from a later period (1596-1606), all as far as possible containing a large degree of self-talk.

To determine which plays had most self-talk, I turned to Arnold (1911), who provides a soliloquy line count for each play. By taking the total number of lines per play (Dunton-Downer & Riding, 2004), I was able to calculate Arnold's lines of soliloquy as a percentage of the number of lines per play (see Table 1 below). Although there were obvious problems with this approach, not least in that Arnold provides no details of how he made his line count, and also that the number of lines per play has always been a hot topic of debate (e.g. Hart, 1932), I felt the calculation provided a reasonable enough basis for my selection. The dates given for each play are based on the earliest conjectured dates of composition (Dobson & Wells, 2001; Wells & Taylor, 1987).

Table 1: Arnold's soliloquy line count as a % of Shakespeare's plays

Play	% of play	Play	% of play
1. *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1590)	13.30	20. *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598)	4.57
2. *Henry VI Part 3* (1591)	11.97	21. *A Winter's Tale* (1609)	4.55
3. *Cymbeline* (1610)	11.46	22. *Alls Well That Ends Well* (1604)	4.20
4. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595)	10.95	23. *Troilus and Cressida* (1602)	4.13
5. *Macbeth* (1606)	9.89	24. *Henry V* (1598)	4.06
6. *Romeo and Juliet* (1595)	9.47	25. *Pericles* (1607)	4.06
7. *Twelfth Night* (1600)	8.58	26. *The Comedy of Errors* (1594)	3.47
8. *Timon of Athens* (1605)	8.36	27. *King John* (1596)	3.44
9. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597)	7.47	28. *Henry VI Part 1* (1592)	3.33
10. *Hamlet* (1600)	7.23	29. *Titus Andronicus* (1592)	3.32
11. *Henry VI Part 2* (1591)	7.07	30. *The Tempest* (1611)	3.21
12. *Richard III* (1593)	6.59	31. *The Taming of the Shrew* (1591)	2.95
13. *Julius Caesar* (1599)	5.99	32. *Richard II* (1595)	2.82
14. *Love's Labour's Lost* (1594)	5.55	33. *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606)	2.57
15. *Henry IV Part 2* (1597)	5.44	34. *Henry VIII* (1613)	1.82
16. *King Lear* (1605)	5.29	35. *The Merchant of Venice* (1596)	1.54
17. *Othello* (1604)	4.83	36. *As You Like It* (1599)	1.35
18. *Henry IV Part 1* (1596)	4.67	37. *Coriolanus* (1608)	0.94
19. *Measure for Measure* (1603)	4.61		

As mentioned above, I decided to concentrate on four plays each from the genres of comedy, history and tragedy, two of each genre being from the early part of Shakespeare's career, and two from a later period. Looking at Table 2, it can be seen that most plays (in **bold**) selected themselves on the basis of percentage of soliloquy:

Table 2: Plays selected for analysis

	1590-1595	**1596-1606**
Tragedy	*Titus Andronicus (1592)*	*Hamlet (1600)*
	Romeo and Juliet (1595)	***Macbeth (1606)***
Comedy	***Two Gentleman of Verona (1590)***	***The Merry Wives of Windsor (1597)***
	A Midsummer Night's Dream (1595)	***Twelfth Night (1600)***
History	***Henry VI Part 2 (1591)***	***Henry IV Part 1 (1596)***
	Henry VI Part 3 (1591)	***Henry IV Part 2 (1597)***

I selected *Titus Andronicus* despite it having relatively little soliloquy, because it was the only other tragedy apart from *Romeo and Juliet* written in the early period and I felt it might reveal something about Shakespeare's earliest attempts at tragic soliloquy. Although *Cymbeline,* classed as a tragedy in the First Folio of 1623, comes third in the list, I rejected it as most critics consider it to be a romance or tragicomedy (e.g. Greenblatt *et al.*, 1997). Similarly, *Timon of Athens* has more tragic soliloquy than *Hamlet*, but the latter ("the one Shakespearian tragedy from which almost every speaker of English can quote at least one or two phrases" (Dobson & Wells, 2001:179)), particularly in respect of its soliloquies, obliged me to exclude the former, "which enjoys the dubious distinction of being perhaps the least popular play in the Shakespeare canon" (Dobson & Wells, 2001:475).

4. Methodology

Having selected plays for analysis, my next task was to choose a reliable electronic source for the texts. I decided to use WordHoard (Mueller *et al.*, 2006), a joint project of the Perseus Project at Tufts University, The Northwestern University Library, and Northwestern University Academic Technologies. The text is derived from *The Globe Shakespeare*, the one-volume version of the *Cambridge Shakespeare* (Clark *et al.*, 1891-3). Standardized spellings are used throughout, an important consideration when doing any form of corpus analysis. As I constructed my corpora of soliloquies and asides, I consistently compared the WordHoard text with *The Norton Shakespeare* (Greenblatt *et al.*, 1997) to ensure greater reliability. It was then a relatively simple task to copy WordHoard versions of the plays into Microsoft Word documents, and then proceed to separate out soliloquies and asides from interactional language based on a careful

reading of the 12 plays and comparison with the Norton text. I also removed all character names and stage directions using simple Find and Replace procedures.[2]

I thus created a soliloquy/aside document and an interactional language document for each play, and calculated the percentage of self-talk per play based on token[3] counts. For example, we can see from Table 3 (overleaf) that *Hamlet* contains 2,302 words of self-talk, of which 2,260 words are in soliloquies and 42 words in asides. I also named combined files, T SOL being all self-talk in tragedies, etc. Thus, the four tragedies contain 8,072 words of self-talk, a figure which represents 9% of all the words in these four plays. In addition, we can see that the 'Total T' row shows how many words of self-talk occur in tragedies written from 1590-95 (3,589) and those between 1596-1606 (4,483). The total amount of early self-talk across the four genres represents a total of 13,110 words, compared to 11,539 in the later group. The total amount of self-talk for all 12 plays is 24,649 words, and for all interactional talk, 236,149 words.

Needless to say, there were a number of problem cases where a principled decision had to be taken for a passage's inclusion or exclusion as self-talk. I included the following as instances of self-talk:

- where a character continues to soliloquize, unaware of another character, as in *Titus Andronicus* III.1.22-26, when Lucius' entrance goes unnoticed by Titus. Similarly, in *Romeo and Juliet* II.2.23-30, Friar Laurence is not conscious of Romeo's presence. Or it may be the case that other characters are asleep, as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* III.3.36-46;
- where a stage direction makes it clear that a character's words are an aside, as the character comes onstage but fails to see that other characters are already there, as when Proteus comes onstage in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* I.3.45-50;
- where one character is aware of another's presence but their utterances are private, as in Romeo's speeches in the famous balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* II.1.67-74;
- where a character recites lines of verse, as Puck does in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* III.2.397-400;
- where asides occur mid-speech or even mid-line, as in *Henry VI Part 2* I.1.207 or *Henry IV Part 1* III.3.189-90 when Falstaff calls for the Hostess;
- where a character reads from a letter, as Malvolio does in *Twelfth Night* II.5. The contents of the letter are not counted as self-talk, but the character's commentary on the letter is;
- where a whole scene is a series of soliloquies, as in *Henry VI Part 3* II.5;

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2 Another possibility would have been to manually tag the text for characters, soliloquies and asides and then use text extraction software to create soliloquy files, etc. Although this would have been time-consuming and unnecessary for the purposes of the present study, I would not rule out such a possibility for future studies as it may have analytical advantages over the present method.

3 Tokens are each word form which occurs in a text, irrespective of whether they are repeated or not (as opposed to types, which are multiple instances of the same token) (Stubbs, 2002).

- where madness is concerned, as in the cases of Lady Macbeth, *Macbeth* V.1; Ophelia, however, in *Hamlet* IV.5 explicitly directs her comments to the other characters, and cannot therefore be said to be engaging in self-talk;
- where soliloquy-type speeches are presumably overheard, as in *Macbeth* V.3.20-30 and V.5.16-27;
- where a character quotes another in soliloquy, as in *Twelfth Night* I.5.259-261;
- where there are speeches by formal choruses, as in *Henry IV Part 2* (Rumour and Epilogue), *Romeo and Juliet* (Prologue and Chorus II.0). *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Puck's Epilogue). Hirsh (2003) justifies such audience-addressed speeches as soliloquies on the basis that they are spoken by a single actor who does not intend other characters to hear them.

Table 3: Token counts for self-talk in 12 Shakespeare plays

	1590-1595	Self-talk (sol./aside[4])	1596-1606	Self-talk (sol./aside)	Self-talk totals by genre (as % of plays)
Tragedy (T)	*Titus Andronicus (1592)*	827 (579/248)	*Hamlet (1600)*	2,302 (2,260/42)	**8,072 (9.00%) T SOL**
	Romeo and Juliet (1595)	2,762 (2,566/196)	*Macbeth (1606)*	2,181 (1,533/648)	
Total T		**3,589**		**4,483**	
Comedy (C)	*Two Gentleman of Verona (1590)*	2,982 (2,699/283)	*The Merry Wives of Windsor (1597)*	1,532 (1,354/178)	**7,845 (10.75%) C SOL**
	A Midsummer Night's Dream (1595)	1,735 (1,673/62)	*Twelfth Night (1600)*	1,596 (1,409/187)	
Total C		**4,717**		**3,128**	
History (H)	*Henry VI Part 2 (1591)*	2,026 (1,641/385)	*Henry IV Part 1 (1596)*	1,814 (1,814/0)	**8,732 (8.91%) H SOL**
	Henry VI Part 3 (1591)	2,778 (2,596/182)	*Henry IV Part 2 (1597)*	2,114 (2,045/69)	
Total H		**4,804**		**3,928**	
Total by period (as % of plays)	**13,110 (10.53%) EARLY SOL**		**11,539 (8.47%) LATER SOL**		**24,649 (9.45%) ALL SOL**
Total interactional language[5](as % of plays)					**236,149 (90.55%) ALL DIA**

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4 All asides except those directed at another character.

5 Spoken and written.

Having checked that the word totals of the combined files corresponded with the figures in Table 3, I then saved the documents as plain text files and uploaded them to *Wmatrix* to create 'workareas'. I used the Early Modern English (EmodE) version, in which a variant detector regularizes words such as *i'* to *in*, or *hath* to *has* before part-of-speech tagging occurs. The CLAWS (Constituent Likelihood Automatic Word-tagging System)[6] tagger (96-97% accuracy) adds part-of-speech (POS) tags to the text before the USAS (UCREL[7] Semantic Analysis System)[8] tagger (92% accuracy) adds semantic field tags, based on 21 general domains and 232 semantic fields[9]. The next step in my analysis of linguistic features of soliloquies and asides was to compare smaller frequency lists against larger normative corpora (on the basis of the token counts in table 3). So, for example, I compared the smaller All SOL (all soliloquy) corpus with the larger All DIA (all dialogue) corpus to see how self- talk compared with interactional language use. The complete list of corpora I compared is shown in table 4.

Table 4: Corpora used for key analysis

Smaller corpus		Larger corpus
All SOL		All DIA
Comedy SOL		History SOL
Tragedy SOL	compared with	History SOL
Tragedy SOL		Comedy SOL
Later SOL		Early SOL

I carried out these comparisons at the word level, the POS level, and the semantic level. *Wmatrix* employs the log-likelihood (or G2) statistic to calculate significant key items.[10] The advantage of the G2 statistic is that it does not assume a 'normal distribution' of words in a text, nor does it over-estimate the significance of rare events, as the commonly-used Pearson chi-squared test does (Leech *et al.*, 2001). My aim in this study was to look for statistically highly significant items with log-likelihood (LL) values of above 15.13 ($p < 0.0001$ 1 d.f.).

There were two further stages in my analysis. One was to look for n-grams (consecutive word sequences) among a number of selected findings from the previous stage by using a Multilingual Corpus Toolkit (Piao *et al.*, 2002). This allowed me to uncover further layers of meaning than those provided by individual words. The other was to carry out concordances on selected findings using *WordSmith Tools* (Scott, 1999) to determine frequent collocations. Both of these procedures are referred to in the next section.

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[6] See http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/ucrel/claws/ for further information.

[7] University Centre for Computer Corpus Research on Language.

[8] See http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/ucrel/usas/ for further information.

[9] See http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/ucrel/usas/semtags.txt for the complete list.

[10] See http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix.html for further details

5. Findings and discussion

Before analysing the *Wmatrix* output, the first thing I noticed was that my own token count data generally gave higher percentages than Arnold's line counts (see Figure 2), particularly in the case of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and to a lesser extent, *Henry IV Part 1* and *Macbeth*. This was probably due to my inclusion of asides as instances of self-talk, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* having no fewer then 57 lines / 283 words of asides. The data also provides some clues to one of my research questions, namely how soliloquies evolved over Shakespeare's career.

With the selected plays arranged in chronological order of composition, the graph in Figure 1 shows that both Arnold's and my own 'Lineal' lines display a noticeable tendency towards a general reduction in self-talk as a percentage of the play, *Titus Andronicus* and *Macbeth* being exceptions to this trend.
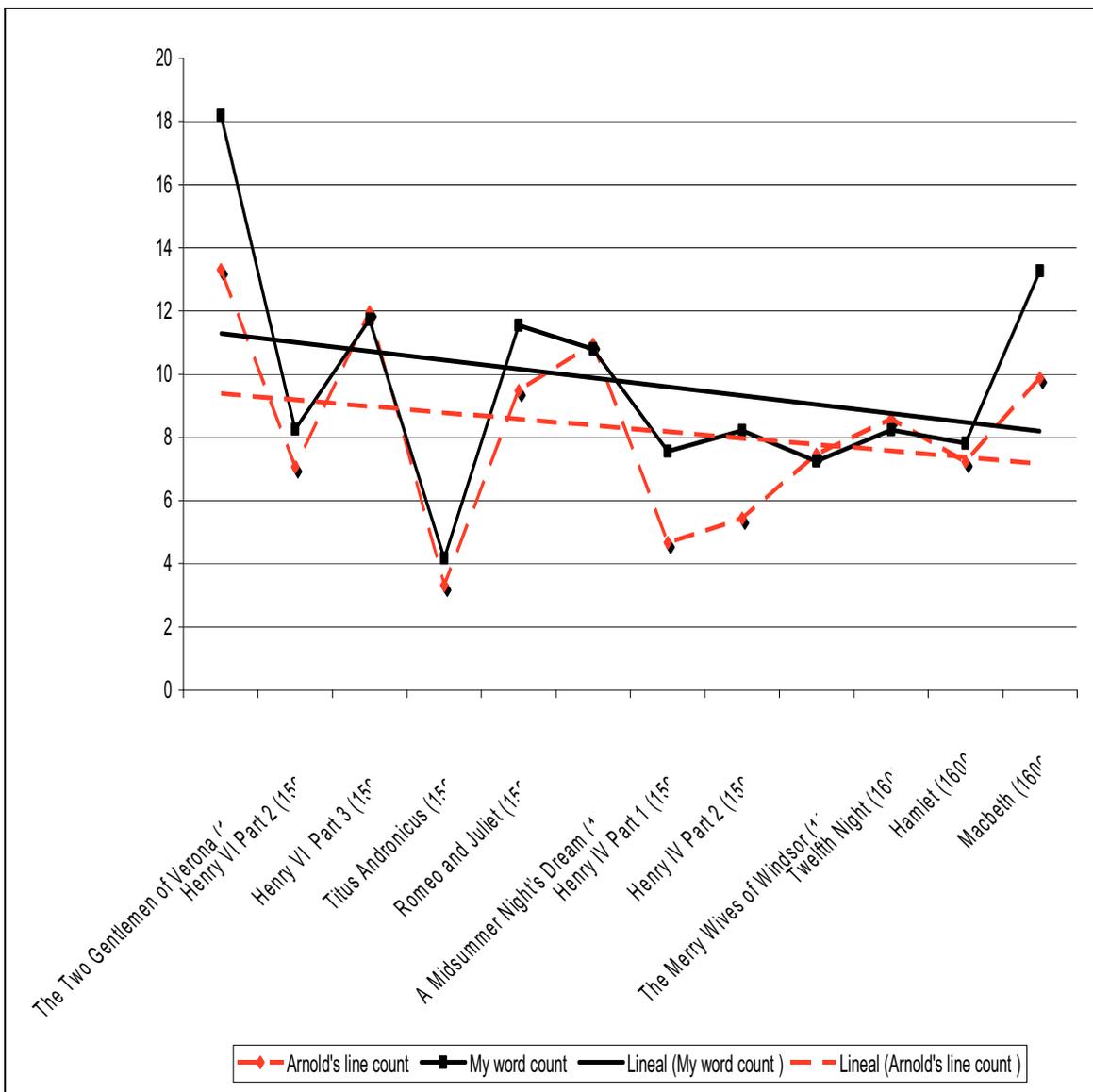

Figure 1: Self-talk as a % of selected plays

How could this be explained? Did Shakespeare gradually become less interested in the convention of the soliloquy, or was there a conscious or even a subconscious change in style which required fewer words? Skiffington (1985:117) offers the following explanation:

> Primitiveness is undeniably resident in numerous speeches from the histories presumed to have been written within the first five or six years […].The greatest incidence of sophistication occurs in tragedy soliloquy of the later fifteen years or so, as in […] *Hamlet* […] and *Macbeth*.

He goes on to assert that both primitiveness and sophistication are present in all soliloquies but the early plays comprise "extravagances in language, such as elaborate conceits, catachresis, the veritable piling-on of images, and occasional floods of Senecan rhetoric." He uses the following example from *Henry VI Part 3*, in which Henry ponders the simplicity of a shepherd's existence, to make his point:

> O! God! methinks it were a happy life,
> To be no better than a homely swain;
> To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
> To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
> Thereby to see the minutes how they run,
> How many makes the hour full complete;
> How many hours brings about the day;
> How many days will finish up the year;
> How many years a mortal man may live.
> When this is known, then to divide the times:
> So many hours must I tend my flock;
> So many hours must I take my rest;
> So many hours must I contemplate;
> So many hours must I sport myself;
> So many days my ewes have been with young;
> So many weeks ere the poor fools will ean;
> So many years ere I shall shear the fleece:
> So minutes, hours, days, months, and years,
> Passed over to the end they were created,
> Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.
> Ah, what a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!
> (*Henry VI Part 3* II.5.21-41)

The repetition of *How many* and *So many hours must I* seems laboured and artificial.[11] Hussey (1982) criticizes the soliloquy as "too 'poetic' and too rhetorical", which suggests unwarranted prolixity. By contrast, Macbeth's regretful overheard soliloquy is replete with ordinary, common imagery.

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[11] The Norton Shakespeare notes that this soliloquy of 54 lines from the Folio text is reduced to 13 lines in the Octavo text. Perhaps even audiences in the 1590s found it tiresome!

Seyton! — I am sick at heart,
When I behold — Seyton, I say! — This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
Seyton!
(*Macbeth* V.3.20-30)

The contrast between the succinctness of "a 'real' man fallen from former grace and noblesse, as contrasted to poetic posturing suitable for fallen kings in romantic chronicle plays" (Skiffington, 1985: 129) may be representative of a reduction in quantity of soliloquy, but an increase in quality, possibly influenced by the popularity of essays by Montaigne and Cornwallis (Shapiro, 2005)[12]. It remained to be seen if the *Wmatrix* data would confirm or refute such a thesis (see section 5.3).

5.1 Soliloquies versus interactional language

5.1.1 Key words

Comparison of soliloquies/asides with interactional language enabled me to gauge the 'aboutness' of the former. I was particularly interested in common words with a relatively high frequency in both corpora, so I discounted low frequency items like proper names (e.g. Demetrius), and words with a highly localized significance in particular plays (e.g. *shoe* in Launce's soliloquy in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* II.3.1-28). Table 5 shows the seven most positive key words (p < 0.0001) in soliloquies/asides:

Table 5: Positive key words in soliloquies/asides (p < 0.0001 1 d.f.)

Top 7 key words	Observed frequency in All SOL	Observed frequency in All DIA	Log-likelihood score
lord	16	850	+75.46
Jove	11	16	+51.88
O	120	621	+33.01
yet	83	404	+27.04
I	780	6203	+22.63
a	496	3775	+21.69
my	465	3554	+19.62

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[12] I am grateful to Professor Keith Johnson for drawing my attention to this.

It is perhaps unsurprising to find vocatives (*lord, Jove*), an interjection (*O*), and words relating to self (*I, my*). *O* most frequently collocates with an adjective and noun:

> O excellent motion (3), O bosom black (3), O wretched state (2), O weary night (2), O reverend tribunes (2), O piteous spectacle (2), O limed soul (2), O heavenly Julia (2), O gentle sleep (2), O exceeding puppet (2), O bloody times (2).

This emphatic nature of these vocatives, interjections and pronouns not only acts as a powerful directorial indicator to actors, but also invites playgoers/readers to "live with the emotions of the characters" (Taavitsainen, 1998:195) and empathize with their joy or predicament.

The keyness of the item *yet* (as a sentence rather than temporal adverb) and its most frequent collocate *and* (25 of the 83 occurrences) reveals how self-talkers are often troubled by doubt and anxiety, a point which has previously been noted in relation to Juliet's character in *Romeo and Juliet* (Culpeper, 2001). The following examples reinforce this view:

> Laertes: (aside to Claudius) My lord, I'll hit him [Hamlet] now.
> Claudius: (aside to Laertes) I do not think't.
> Laertes: (aside) **And yet** it is almost against my conscience.
> (*Hamlet* V.2.238-240)

> Malvolio: M, O, A, I; this simulation is not as the former: **and yet**, to crush this a little, it would bow to me, for every one of these letters are in my name.
> (*Twelfth Night* II.5.122-124)

> Falstaff: I have forsworn his company hourly any time this two and twenty years, **and yet** I am bewitched with the rogue's company.
> (*Henry IV Part 1* II.2.15-17)

Investigation of the ten most negative key words revealed that six could be termed as 'interactional pronouns' (*you, your, we, thou, our* and *us*) - perhaps not a very surprising finding, but one which emphasizes the interpersonal function of such words in dialogue.

5.1.2 Key word classes

Table 6 shows positive key parts of speech. By examining the concordance for *comes*, the most common *-s* form of a lexical verb, it is possible to see the reason for its keyness, as 12 of the 20 occurrences collocate with *here* and serve as stage directions for the characters (Clemen, 1987; Hirsh, 2003):

> Falstaff: I have led my ragamuffins where they are peppered; there's not three of my hundred and fifty left alive; and they are for the town's end, to beg during life .
> [Enter Prince Harry]
> But who **comes here**?
> (*Henry IV Part 1* 5.3.35-38)

Table 6: Positive key parts of speech (p < 0.0001 1 d.f.)

Key word classes (*most common words within the class*)	Observed frequency in All SOL	Observed frequency in All DIA	Log-likelihood score
-s form of lexical verb (*comes, makes, gives, lies, speaks*)	358	2478	30.27
general adjective (*good, true, sweet, fair, great*)	1572	13004	28.66
1st person sing. subjective personal pronoun (*I*)	767	6105	22.05
plural common noun (*eyes, men, tears, words, thoughts*)	932	7683	17.79

General adjectives are key items in soliloquies/asides, with both positive (*good, true, sweet, fair*) and negative (*poor, old, dead, cold*) semantic prosodies. This suggests an evaluative function of soliloquies, allowing the audience to see how soliloquizers view people and events. As regards the third most key item, an N-gram analysis revealed that *I will (not) / I shall / will I / shall I* account for 160 of the 767 occurrences of *I* (20.9%), suggesting that a typical characteristic of self-talk is to reveal the speaker's intentions (Clemen, 1987). Plural common nouns are also significantly more frequent in soliloquies/asides, perhaps indicating a tendency for speakers to generalize as in the following examples:

> Helena: Love looks not with the **eyes**, but with the mind.
> (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* I.1.234)

> Aaron: Let **fools** do good, and fair **men** call for grace
> (*Titus Andronicus* III.1.203)

> King Henry: And let our **hearts** and **eyes**, like civil war,
> Be blind with **tears**, and break o'ercharged with grief.
> (*Henry VI Part 3* II.5.77-78)

This could be related to a moralizing function of many soliloquies, which may be partly due to their origins in medieval morality plays (Arnold, 1911).

5.1.3 Key concepts

Semantic analysis (Table 7) reveals that by far the most key semantic category in soliloquies/ asides is anatomy and physiology.

Table 7: Positive key concepts (p < 0.0001 1 d.f.)

Key semantic fields (*most common words within the field*)	All SOL	All DIA	LL score
anatomy and physiology (*eyes, heart, blood, sleep, hand*)	549	3579	+63.83
mental object: conceptual object (*thoughts, dream, thought, matter, subject*)	69	298	+29.88
colour and colour patterns (*golden, pale, black, light, white*)	116	643	+25.79
relationship: intimate/sexual (*love, kiss, cuckold, lovers, in love*)	111	636	+22.02
evaluation: true/false (*lie, lies, false, forsworn, deceive*)	70	360	+19.61

Nowhere is this more evident than in *Macbeth*, as the partial concordance in Figure 2 shows:

I may pour my spirits in thine	**ear** ;	And chastise with the valour o
chastise with the valour of my	**tongue**	All that impedes thee from the g
d fill me from the crown to the	**toe**	topfull Of direst cruelty ! make
direst cruelty ! make thick my	**blood**;	Stop up the access and passage
ct and it ! Come to my woman 's	**breasts**,	And take my milk for gall , yo
gement here ; that we but teach	**Bloody**	instructions , which , being tau
our poisoned chalice To our own	**lips**.	He 's here in double trust ; F
l blow the horrid deed in every	**eye**,	That tears shall drown the win
horrid deed in every eye , That	**tears**	shall drown the wind . I have no
efore me , The handle toward my	**hand**?	Come, let me clutch thee . I
ceeding from the heat-oppressed	**brain**?	I see thee yet , in form as pa

Figure 2: Anatomy and physiology semantic concordance in *Macbeth*

It has been suggested that in terms of cognitive metaphor theory, the body-based figurative language that pervades *Macbeth* and gives it such thematic intensity, is indicative of a CONTAINER schema (Freeman, 1998), of which the body is the most basic container, and the one which Macbeth violates by stabbing Duncan to death, a view which this data supports. The other key concepts (mental concepts, colour, intimate relationships, truth and falsity) would seem to back the contention that Shakespearian soliloquies are very much a "psychophysical blend of the abstract and the concrete" (Clemen, 1987).

5.2 Soliloquies compared by genre

The three-way comparison of genres involved comparing the smaller corpus with the larger one in each case. As I was interested in both corpora, I looked for both positive and negative key words, POS and semantic fields. The findings given in table 8

(overleaf) suggest that comedic self-talk is, as one would expect, very much about interpersonal and intimate relationships.

The keyness of *master* reminds us that these are Elizabethan comedies about masters and servants, yet it is the latter who wonder about the former, rather than vice-versa. Soliloquizing characters in both comedies and histories are more likely to use *I* than tragic heroes, but in histories, they also compare things, as in Falstaff's proverbial *The **better** part of valour is discretion* (*Henry IV Part 1* V.4. 117-118), and contemplate *war* (*soldiers, battles*). Tragic self-talk, on the other hand, seems more concerned with existential questions of *death* and religion (*heaven, soul, hell*) as the protagonists wrestle with their consciences and ethical dilemmas.

Table 8: Positive and negative key words in soliloquies compared across genres
(p < 0.0001 1 d.f.; * p < 0.001 1 d.f.)

Genres	Keyness	Word	POS	Semtag
Comedy History	+	*he, she, love*	3rd person sing. subjective personal pronoun (*he, she*)	pronouns; relationship: intimate/sexual
	-	*and, the*	plural common noun	warfare, defence and the army; weapons
Tragedy History	+	*Romeo, She*	*is**	religion and the supernatural*
	-	*I*	1st person sing. subjective personal pronoun (*I*)	evaluation: good/bad*
Comedy Tragedy	+	*I, her, master*	1st person & 3rd person sing. subjective personal pronoun (*I, s/he*)	pronouns (*I*)
	-	*death*, upon*, heaven**	plural common noun	life and living things (*death*)

5.3 Early soliloquies versus later soliloquies

My final task was to compare the later soliloquy corpus (11,458 tokens) with the early soliloquy corpus (13,110 tokens), the results of which are given in Table 9.

Table 9: Key words in the later soliloquy corpus compared to the early soliloquy corpus

	Keyness	Freq.	POS	Semtag
Later (1596-1606)	+	of	*of* (as preposition)	evaluation:- good/bad (*well*)
Early (1590-1595)	-	love	singular proper noun (*Jove, God*)	relationship: intimate/sexual (*love*)

The most interesting finding here was the overuse of *of* as a preposition in the later soliloquy corpus. Examples include *bank and shoal of time*, *a deal of scorn*, *whole school of tongues*, etc. Why did Shakespeare, consciously or subconsciously, begin to use *of*

significantly more frequently in instances of self-talk? To answer this question, I followed the example of Michel Stubbs (2005) and looked at recurrent lexico-grammatical patterns with *of*. *WordSmith Tools* (Scott, 1999) showed that *of* collocates most frequently with *the*, two places to the left in both corpora (early: *the* 61 *of* 207; later: *the* 103 *of* 325).

If we compare a representative selection of 24 such strings from each corpus (Table 10), we can appreciate the relative simplicity in the early soliloquies, many of the examples being titles or geographical names (5, 8, 10, 12, 17, 21), or fairly conventionalized comparisons (2, 3, 9, 14, 20). Relatively few are 'poetic' in that they bring together uncommonly matched words to create striking and memorable images, exceptions, perhaps, being 6, 7, 23, 24. Some have a poetic feel, but 1, 4, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 22 may not be entirely original expressions. By contrast, many of the phrases in the later soliloquies are characterized by their unusually powerful figurative imagery (26, 27, 31, 32, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45) and their alliterative and assonantal patterns (25, 28, 29, 30, 36, 44). Such an interpretation fits well with Skiffington's (1985) notion of "early primitiveness" and "later sophistication", but we can also reasonably conjecture that as Shakespeare's career developed, he may have become more aware of the fact that the 'the (noun) of (noun phrase)' structure afforded not only greater poetic possibilities, but also the potential for more varied expression and the suggestion of greater depth of feeling and heightened emotional states.

Table 10: Collocations of '*the (*noun*) of (*noun phrase*)*' in the early and later soliloquy corpora

Early (1590-1595)		Later (1596-1606)	
1.	**the** agent **of** her heart	25.	**the** adoption **of** abominable terms
2.	**the** beauty **of** the sun	26.	**the** badge **of** pusillanimity
3.	**The** brightness **of** her cheek	27.	**the** blanket **of** the dark
4.	**the** cradle **of** the fairy queen	28.	**the** cankers **of** a calm world
5.	**the** Duke **of** Suffolk	29.	**the** canopies **of** costly state
6.	**the** fury **of** this mad-bred flaw	30.	**the** dread **of** something after death
7.	**the** honey **of** thy breath	31.	**the** flame **of** bold rebellion
8.	**the** house **of** Lancaster	32.	**the** grief **of** a wound
9.	**the** manner **of** it	33.	**the** honey **of** his music
10.	**The** name **of** Henry the Fifth	34.	**The** insolence **of** office
11.	**The** name **of** valour	35.	**the** milk **of** human kindness
12.	**the** realms **of** England, France	36.	**The** observed **of** all observers
13.	**the** remembrance **of** my former love	37.	**The** pangs **of** despised love
14.	**the** secrets **of** the state	38.	**the** perfumes **of** Arabia
15.	**the** shepherd **of** thy lambs	39.	**the** ports **of** slumber open wide
16.	**the** soul **of** love	40.	**the** purging **of** his soul
17.	**the** state **of** Normandy	41.	**the** rearward **of** the fashion
18.	**the** terror **of** the place	42.	**the** salt **of** most unrighteous tears
19.	**the** thoughts **of** desperate men	43.	**the** seeds **of** Banquo kings
20.	**the** time **of** night	44.	**the** smile **of** safety
21.	**the** title **of** John Mortimer	45.	**the** table **of** my memory
22.	**the** Venus **of** the sky	46.	**the** uses **of** this world
23.	**the** wings **of** night	47.	**the** valour **of** my tongue
24.	**the** yoke **of** inauspicious stars	48.	**the** warming **of** the blood

6. Conclusions

In this paper, I have aimed to make a methodological contribution to the study of soliloquies by making accurate word counts of self-talk and its percentages in plays, and I have carefully tracked its development over Shakespeare's career. It is clear that there are important linguistic differences between self-talk and interactional language (such as the overuse of interjections like *O*, and the expression of doubt with *and yet*). We have also seen what soliloquisers do (they give implicit stage directions, they reveal future intentions, and they generalize). In terms of topics, they appear to talk at great length about anatomy and physiology, thoughts, colours, love and deception. Comedic soliloquies are very much about love and relationships; tragic heroes contemplate religion and the supernatural; and historical figures seem to contemplate themselves (*I*). In later soliloquies, we find an increasing number of '*the* (noun) *of* (noun phrase)' structures, displaying a growing maturity in poetic expression as Shakespeare's career as a dramatist progressed.

Many avenues for further research suggest themselves, the most obvious being to include more plays in the analysis, preferably all 38 in the canon, bearing in mind that a number of plays were probably co-authored. In terms of genre, it would also make sense to add the category of Romances to study plays such as *Pericles*, *A Winter's Tale*, etc. Gender-based comparisons (Sobhan Raj Hota & Moshe Koppel, 2006) could potentially yield significant results regarding the nature of female and male soliloquies. It would also be interesting to compare verse soliloquy with prose soliloquy, and individual character's soliloquies with their dialogic speech, perhaps even across plays, as in the case of Falstaff in *Henry IV 1*, *Henry IV 2*, *Henry V* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

The limitations of automatic analysis of texts should always be recognized; after all, computers will still only do what humans tell them to do. Nonetheless, I believe that I have shown that a corpus linguistic approach to studying Shakespearean self-talk can highlight features of soliloquies and lead to new perspectives, thus enhancing the value of literary corpus stylistics.

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Older learners of German and their use of language learning strategies

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Abstract

In the past, studies in first and second language acquisition focused mainly on children and young adult learners. Research on older adult language learners was neglected and findings were unspecific and contradictory (Singleton & Zolt, 1995). Recently, however, a growing interest of older learners in languages has generated deliberations towards an adult language learning methodology (foreign language geragogy), with first insights into aspects of this learner group such as motivation, attitude, characteristics and expectations (Berndt, 2001a, 2003). This article reports on the initial findings of a study on the use of language learning strategies by older adult language learners (50+). The study focused on learners of German as a foreign language, investigating the following research question: *What strategies do older learners of German use?* Think-aloud protocols were employed with 15 older learners of German of various levels of language proficiency from a local University of the Third Age (U3A). This method of data elicitation was chosen to gain a better understanding of ongoing processes involved while learning strategies were applied on a variety of tasks (reading, speaking, listening, writing). The study reached the following conclusions. The research instruments applied proved resourceful for data elicitation in the context of language learning strategies involving older learners. Mainly metacognitive and cognitive strategies were applied and adopted according to the individual learner's needs. Strategy use was closely linked to the language skill, but less closely to the level of language proficiency.

1. Introduction

Recently, researchers have started to investigate aspects of language learning relating to older learners (termed *foreign language geragogy*), in particular motivation, language learning biographies, specific learning difficulties and socio-economic characteristics (Arthur & Hurd, 2001; Berndt, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c). However, research on older language learners (whom I define as aged over 50) has still not given sufficient attention to learning strategies, although such strategies can be valuable instruments for supporting learners' progress and increasing learners' autonomy. Examining the use of these learning strategies more closely may provide a clearer idea of the ways in which older learners approach language learning and, consequently, provide more insight into individual learner differences. Thus the main question to be investigated is: *Which language learning strategies do older students use*?

Increased insight into strategy use by older learners may be used in future to maximize the language learning potential of such students. The learner is understood to be a "problem solver", a cognitive agent trying to work out ways of learning and maintaining another language (Ellis, 2001: 76). In the wider context, such knowledge could have implications for language teaching, teaching material and learning opportunities. Consequently, older language learners can be better understood and provided for.

2. Background

2.1 Why older learners?

One might wonder what could be so special about learners over 50. Do they not simply count as adult learners? Older people in the UK can now expect to live with overall improvements in health, fitness and productivity. Their children tend to be independent without any need for further care. McNeir (2001: 22) remarks that "most people will now spend more of their lives outside the workforce than in it: a dramatic reversal of the picture a generation earlier". Social gerontologists, who theorize about older people, identify this later phase in life as different from earlier phases (based on different activities and social roles which dominate during different phases in the life course), despite certain social characteristics which older and younger people share (e.g. trends such as the importance of youthfulness or interest in travel and leisure activities). It is the concurrence of social factors such as longevity with a decrease in overall birth rates, which has led to a "greying society" and to the development of the theory of the Third Age (Laslett, 1996), which is employed in this study. This theory considers various aspects of ageing, among which learning is identified as an important factor for "successful ageing" in later life, stressing the importance of individual factors. It acknowledges that the increase of individual time after retirement usually coincides with fewer childcare responsibilities, as well as more wealth and better health, all contributing to the crystallisation of the Third Age. The period of the

Third Age now covers about a third of the lifespan. It is a time for personal fulfilment, for undertaking things which could not necessarily be enjoyed earlier as intensively as desired, such as travelling, taking up hobbies or following dreams such as learning another language. These chosen activities become "a more important part of an individual's identity and self-concept" (Hendricks & Cutler, 2004: 231). Learning is one of the many options now at our disposal.

2.2 Age in Second Language Acquisition

Within individual learner differences, age has been identified as a relevant factor alongside others, such as gender, and has attracted research interest (e.g. Harley, 1986; Singleton, 1989; Moyer, 2004). However, research into language learning has been unspecific. At one end, it focuses on very young language learners (aged up to about 16). At the other end are the adult language learners (16+). The latter are mainly treated as a single group of learners without any differentiation in terms of age. This bipolarity emerged from Lenneberg's concept of a critical period hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967). His hypothesis assumes that the ability to learn languages after puberty is restricted due to neurological processes which lead to brain maturation, limiting the faculty of language learning. Studies focusing on specific aspects of language learning in older age - for example, pronunciation, vocabulary or syntax - show a much more complex, at times contradictory, picture where older learners performed either equally as well as younger ones (e.g. for vocabulary) or progressed faster at the beginning (Singleton & Zsolt, 1995) than Lenneberg's critical period hypothesis would have predicted. However, the language skills investigated are fragmented, focusing on one aspect of language use/learning only, such as pronunciation, vocabulary or reading. Further, the age groups investigated did in the main not fall within the third age span (50+), or where they did, the studies were based on rather small numbers. In order to test Lenneberg's hypothesis (e.g. studies reported in Singleton & Zsolt 1995), participants were mainly around the age of puberty to either confirm or refute his assumptions, paying less attention to the growing number of older language learners above 50.

2.3 Language Learning Strategies

In the realm of learner autonomy and discussion around characteristics of the good language learner, a considerable body of literature on language learning strategies has developed over the past 30 years (e.g. Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Cohen, 1998; Naiman *et al.*, 1978; Oxford, 2003; Wenden & Rubin, 1987). Despite variations in the identification of their nature and classification over time, and problems in their investigation (e.g. Macaro, 1997) and teaching (e.g. Hassan *et al.*, 2005), learning strategies are recognized as crucial techniques for independent learning processes to improve learning and use of a foreign language.

For the present study, I draw on Graham (1997) who based her work on O'Malley & Chamot (1990) and developed it further. Similar to O'Malley & Chamot (1990), who define learning strategies as "the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (1990: 1),

Graham (1997) sees them as inner processes which are difficult to observe, in contrast to study skills, which Graham identifies as being more visible, overt techniques. However, this distinction between overt and covert is not as clear-cut as Graham suggests, as she also includes observable strategies such as naturalistic practice opportunities (talking to native speakers of the target language) under learning strategies. In my understanding of Graham (1997) and O'Malley & Chamot (1990) the terms *strategy* and *technique* can be used interchangeably, both referring to consciously engaging in language learning, language processing and language application in the target language.

Graham (1997) classifies learning strategies into metacognitive, cognitive, social/affective and communicative. Metacognitive strategies are those which help to control, plan and evaluate language learning and language or strategy use. Cognitive strategies enable learners to work with the target language by taking certain actions, such as memorizing, inferencing and guessing from other languages. Social/affective strategies can help to control the more emotional side through strategies such as self-encouragement or seeking clarification by native speakers. The communicative category summarizes all those techniques applied to overcome any communicational breakdown by using paraphrases or code switching. One might point out that this category entails strategies more for language use than for language learning in the narrowest sense.

3. Methodology

Trying to find out how older learners apply learning strategies requires capturing strategies in use and getting learners to reflect on them. I decided in favour of a more interpretivist paradigm, understanding that "all phenomena can be studied and interpreted in different ways" as "realities are not abstract objects" (Burgess *et al.*, 2006: 55). This, I hoped, would then lead to a more descriptive understanding of the phenomena, allowing for and acknowledging:

- Subjectivity in participants' description of the phenomena under scrutiny.
- Understanding of the influence of the researcher on the research, acknowledging that opinions, attitudes and values play a role in the research process.

Although the overall approach is more qualitatively orientated, some quantitative aspects are included as well where instances of strategy use are counted and related to protocol length, level of language proficiency of students or the overall number of strategies used. However, generalisability and reliability of findings were expected to be limited, owing to the study taking place in a particular setting, with a non-representative sample, at a particular point in time and aiming to explore new ground.

3.1 Participants

A total of 15 students at three different levels of language proficiency participated, chosen mainly following the criteria of local accessibility; the majority came from a pool of learners of all language courses at a local University of the Third Age, and the remaining three from two adult education colleges in a university town in South England.

Table 1. Outline of participants

Language class	Level of language proficiency	University of the Third Age	College 1 and 2
German	intermediate	10	
German AS-level	advanced		3
German Conversation	near-native	2	

3.2 Think-aloud protocols (TAPs)

TAPs were chosen as the research instrument to provide the best insight into processes of strategy use while working on certain language tasks. Observation and diaries were excluded from the present study. Observation has proved ineffective (Naiman *et al.*, 1978; Chamot, 2001) as learning strategies are rather complex inner processes. Diaries require a high level of commitment and training on the part of the participants and were therefore unfeasible. Questionnaires and interviews are successfully used in strategy research (e.g. Graham, 1997; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) and were also applied to further the present study. However, this article will only report on the TAPs. In language learning research, TAPs have been used mainly to explore reading and writing processes, or as a pedagogical tool for raising awareness of language learners (e.g. Kucan & Beck, 1997; Oxford, 1996), but also in a number of studies on language learning strategies (e.g. Graham, 1997; Rubin, 1981).

For the present study TAPs were audio-recorded only, not video-recorded, as the focus was on verbal protocols rather than body language. In addition, video-recording might have changed the behaviour of participants and produced negative feelings towards the procedure and the study. In order to minimize the effects of the presence of the researcher, students were asked to carry out the tasks at home and were provided with audio tapes on which to record their TAPs. A previous pilot study with 5 participants had concluded that the presence of the researcher during the recordings influenced the production of the TAPs to a great extent. Participants tried 'to please' the researcher by aiming to provide the 'correct answers', constantly double-checking regarding the appropriateness of their protocols produced and waiting for some form of confirmation. The involvement of an unfamiliar native speaker as a partner for the speaking and listening was also ruled out due to the substantial likelihood of an increase of anxiety, which could have impacted negatively on the participants and resulted in an unnecessary stressful situation.

Reading, writing, speaking and listening were selected as the main skills for language use. The study explored new ground by also including speaking and listening for the use of TAPs. The emphasis was on concurrent (reading, writing) and retrospective (speaking, listening) reflection whilst undertaking the language tasks, and on the way students solved the tasks rather than how well they performed. Participants could either use their first language (L1) or German (L2) to express their thoughts in order to minimize constraints on TAPs produced by their individual language proficiency and confidence.

The TAPs for each level of proficiency contained five language tasks: a warm-up reading task plus tasks relating to reading, speaking, writing and listening. A warm-up is recommended to accustom participants to the procedures involved during the protocol (Leow & Morgan-Short, 2004: 36). The underlying hypothesis was that different strategies would be triggered, depending on the language skill used. The inclusion of these four major language skills also catered for individual participants who had different skill preferences. The tasks were ordered to allow students to move from a more receptive task (reading) to the more proactive task (writing, speaking). Listening came last due to the listening extract being recorded on side B of the audio tape provided. The reasons for choosing particular tasks followed Graham (1997: 18):

- They suited the different levels of the participants,
- the general topic area accommodated individual interests,
- they were challenging enough to trigger German language production.

To facilitate comparison, speaking, writing and warm-up tasks were almost identical at all levels.

- **Warm-up reading**: Advanced and near-native speakers received the same extract on how a woman celebrates her birthday. Intermediate students were given a slightly shortened version.
- **Writing:** The task was to describe in three paragraphs what they liked and disliked about the German language.
- **Speaking:** Participants were expected to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of living in the town where the study took place, allowing students to express themselves at any level of language proficiency.
- **Reading** and **listening:** These tasks varied, depending on the students' level. Each task was intended to provide participants with topics so general and similar (on weekend activities, the ageing society, a city portrait of Wuppertal, Christmas, lifestyle), that they could be undertaken without specialist knowledge of a subject.

Consideration was given to the time required to finish all the tasks, to avoid stretching individuals' concentration over too long a period. However, tasks had to be complex enough to allow participants to think about each one. Participants were asked to summarize the German content into English to allow the researcher to understand the level of participants' comprehension of the extracts presented.

3.3 Analysis

TAPs recorded on audio cassettes by participants were transcribed by the researcher, providing the clearest possible transcripts for analysis. The following conventions were used:

- Punctuation was used only where pauses and direct lowering of intonation indicated a break.
- No paragraphing was used.
- The original German text was reproduced in italics to separate it visually from students' reflections and from the material they produced in L2.
- Spelling reflected how words were heard by the transcriber/researcher, even if this was not the correct spelling in English/German.
- Sentences were transcribed as expressed by participants. There was no amendment of syntax or completion of unfinished comments.

Quotations are accompanied by the speaker's pseudonym and the source specified by the task (reading, writing, speaking, listening), plus 'TAP'.

In the next phase of analysis, annotations were produced alongside the transcripts, using the following conventions:

- Identification of incidences of strategy use by underlining.
- Description of strategy use by describing key characteristics.
- Grouping of the strategies found by characteristics.
- Comparison with Graham's (1997) strategy inventory and classification system.
- Identification of differences in strategy use between the strategy inventory by Graham (1997) and the strategies found in the present study.

Once the process of transcribing and annotating all transcripts was complete, transcripts were re-visited and summarized to provide a picture of individual participants and of the general use of learning strategies. This open approach to coding was chosen as it could not be assumed that the same strategies would be used by the older participants as by the younger learners studied by Graham (1997). However, this approach identified additional strategies not listed by Graham. As strategies are applied differently by individuals, this discrepancy is not surprising. However, differences were not significant enough to indicate the necessity for a rethinking of Graham's (1997) classification system.

I acknowledge that counting incidences of strategy use does not necessarily have any bearing on their appropriateness at that time, nor does it provide evidence about the level of proficiency of their user. The classification and labelling of individual strategies depend very much on the individual researcher. As a consequence, each stage of the analysis process had its own uncertainties. However, this explorative approach aimed to provide first insights into strategy use by older language learners.

The first stage of analysis looked for any indicators of difficulties with the task. These were the basic units for analysis, "the smallest piece of information about

something that can stand by itself - that is, it must be interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 345).

During the second stage of analysis, when describing strategy use, the sometimes complex nature of the strategies applied meant a simple description was not always possible due to the complexity and the links involved in an individual incidence.

> So basically what I've been doing was <u>trying to catch the odd word </u>or phrase that I understand at the rate of which German is spoken. And then <u>building that together with my knowledge</u>. (Josephine, listening TAP; underlined are the incidences of strategy use, the units for analysis)

In this case, two strategies were combined, *selective attention* and *word elaboration*. That means that attention was paid to certain phrases instead of every single word and on this basis an understanding of the whole extract was created. These were treated separately, although they were combined in use. Some participants read the whole passage aloud. This counted as only one incidence of a strategy use: *reading aloud in L2*. Translation was necessary for the researcher to assess students' understanding of the reading and listening extracts. However, translation was used in different ways by the students and was therefore classified into different strategies. It was used as:

1. A thought in L1 which was then translated into L2

   e.g.: "<u>I think the prepositions are difficult</u>. I hope prepositions is the same, probably isn't. Prepositionen sind sehr schwer." (James, writing TAP)

2. A means for students to assure themselves that they had understood or constructed something correctly

   e.g.: "die Sprache is not so easy, die Sprache ist nicht so einfach zu verstehen, <u>not so easy to understand</u>" (Isabel, writing TAP)

3. A way of triggering further thinking if a word or phrase was unclear

   e.g.: "Mein Bruder das Gewohnheitstier. Breaking up the word Gewohnheitstier. Yeah, I'm still not sure what that means. <u>Flat sharer or something like that</u>." (Robert, reading TAP)

Similarly, Kern (1994: 44) concluded from his student TAPs that translation helped to maintain concentration and to retain information which was already understood while other problems were tackled. Further, Kern (1994: 44) added that translation supported the students' confidence: they were reassured that they had understood the text correctly when they put it into their L1.

At the third stage of analysis, the grouping of strategies relied at first on key words selected from the descriptions of strategies. For the example, in the following excerpt, the descriptive terms used were "repetition" (the action undertaken) "for grammar" (area of language identified as difficult) and "accuracy check" (reason for using repetition at this point).

> Der Preis des Häusers, <u>des Häusers?</u> ist sehr hoch. (Amy, speaking TAP)

One strategy had then to be identified which included these three aspects. In this example, repetition was used to monitor the correctness of the grammatical form applied. Thus, this aspect was identified as the main reason for the use of the strategy, which was initially "monitoring of grammatical form".

In the fourth stage of analysis, the strategies identified were compared with the strategy inventories of Graham (1997). This comparison allowed classification of the strategies identified in the present study into the following categories: metacognitive, cognitive, social/affective and communicative. Differences between strategy use by the older participants in this study and the younger students in Graham's (1997) study were identified at this stage.

As a research instrument, the application of TAPs in the present study raised a variety of issues which included:

- Absence of the researcher/facilitator:

  The absence of the researcher during the process of think-aloud reduced the immediate pressure on participants to produce material on the spot. By this, students were further prevented from constantly seeking confirmation or support from a present researcher. On the other hand, this absence prevented participants from clarifying any difficulties whilst undertaking the TAPs.

- Provision of instructions:

  The instructions proved not to be clear enough in some cases, although all the participants managed to produce protocols. Furthermore, some participants put themselves under pressure by wanting to perform very well. Even though it was emphasized that the tasks were not intended as tests, some participants experienced emotions as if they were sitting a test. Being asked to produce output in German without preparation highlighted the difficulties some participants experienced when speaking or writing German. One student decided to give up after feeling that she had failed the writing and speaking tasks.

- Inexperience of participants with the procedure involved/technical issues:

  The process of doing TAPs was new to all participants. In most cases the instructions were clearly understood; the difficulty lay in the practical application of the instructions to the multi-tasking involved (which included understanding instructions, understanding L2, working with the L2 provided, thinking about what one is doing and reporting about what one is thinking and doing simultaneously). Providing more than one example as a warm-up task might have given the participants a clearer idea of the procedure and what was expected of them. Another approach would have been to train participants on how to approach the think-aloud. However, either form of preparation might have led to a duplication of the versions that students had trained with rather than the production of genuine individualised TAPs.

- Tasks presented:

  As anticipated, the tasks provided enough flexibility to elicit individual students' ideas and performances and a range of language learning strategies. The background knowledge required and the text types involved proved general and approachable for all participants, at the same time allowing for some difficulties to be revealed. Difficulties ranged from identifying and understanding certain verb forms in the texts to uncertainties about the content.

- Requests to translate during the tasks:

  The translations required of participants for the reading and listening task clarified the extent to which they understood the extracts. However, the manner in which the participants complied with this request varied from very detailed translations to rather general summaries.

4. Discussion of the findings

No correlations could be identified between the level of participants and the intensity of strategy use, or the category of strategies applied, or the length of the think-aloud protocols produced. However, differences between learners may have been affected by:

- tasks set and the effects of reflection on the TAPs
- individual participants' preference for certain language skills
- links to personality types (analytical, outspoken, introvert, etc.)
- reasons for learning German (which did not necessarily require all four language skills included in the current study).

4.1 Learning strategies by language skill

The intensity and distribution of language learning strategies applied by individual participants depended very much on the skill worked on, as shown in table 2 below. (The figures presented in the tables are used to illustrate distributions and tendencies only.)

Table 2: Breakdown of strategies employed for the think-aloud protocols

Task / Strategy category	reading	writing	speaking	listening	Total:
Metacognitive	37	74	31	26	**168**
Cognitive	50	84	24	10	**168**
Social/affective	1	4	2	1	8
Communicative	0	0	0	0	0
Total:	**88**	**162**	57	37	344

The time factor may have been relevant, as participants could undertake reading and writing at their own pace, whereas they may have felt pressure to move on when speaking and consequently not have allowed themselves much time for thinking and conscious strategy use. Also, reflection on speaking tasks was undertaken after the speaking itself, due to the difficulty of articulating thoughts relating to content and reflection at the same time. This linear protocol may have resulted in the omission of some of the thinking processes involved.

4.1.1   Reading task

Reading mainly triggered the application of cognitive strategies (50 in total). Among these, some were used by the majority of the participants. These included *omission*, *inferencing* and *contextualising*. Other strategies used were *deducing* word meaning from the word stem, *deducing* meaning from previous passages in the extract or deciding to leave an unknown word aside and return to it later:

> Heutzutage is not a word I could construct myself but it is perfectly obvious what it means and I have met it before. (Josephine, reading TAP)
> And heutzutage, hmmmm, the rest of the day? Heute is today and. I don't know exactly. (Steve, reading TAP)

> I can manage without knowing what that means. (Jessica, reading TAP)

4.1.2   Writing task

Metacognitive and cognitive strategies dominated in all skills categories, most obviously in reading and writing — the latter showing more than twice as many uses of strategies as reading. This high occurrence may have been related to the nature of the skills. Writing involves activities such as planning, structuring, searching for alternative expressions and self-correction:

> I suppose the first thing I should do is think of some ideas and then put them into reasonable sentences, I hope. (Robert, writing TAP)

> Deutsch zu lernen. Komma muss ich da schreiben. (Parker, writing TAP)

Self-correction and *monitoring* of their work was a feature of all the writing protocols: metacognitive (74 incidences) and cognitive (84 incidences) strategy use were balanced against negligible incidences of social/affective and communicative strategies. This disbalance did not come as a surprise as the format of the study without the involvement of an interlocutor did not support an extensive use of communicative strategies. Most participants tried first to think of something to write in English and to structure this before trying to translate it into German with the vocabulary and structures known. *Translation* was a strategy used by all participants, except for the most advanced one who stated: "Ich übersetze nicht, ich schreibe nur auf Deutsch (…)." (Parker, writing TAP). Thinking in the target language is one of the characteristics of the good language learner (as listed by Naiman *et al.*, 1978). The same is true for first focusing on the content and then on the language structure (Graham, 1997).

4.1.3 Speaking task

For speaking, differences were evident between the most advanced participant and the others. Monitoring and expression was obviously concentrated on to achieve semantic fine-tuning in the foreign language while speaking:

> I was trying to find alternatives to schön for example but it just wouldn't come. (Parker, speaking TAP)

> And I tried to find words strong enough to describe the ugly landscape (…). (Parker, speaking TAP)

Intermediate-level participants mainly focused on finding any, preferably correct, vocabulary for expressing their thoughts in German:

> So I'm putting in English words between the German. (Tanja, speaking TAP)
> I wanted to say hills and I said Berg which, I think, might mean mountains, I don't know. (James, speaking TAP)

4.1.4 Listening task

Listening produced the lowest number of strategy uses (37) with a clear dominance of metacognitive strategies and no use of social/affective and communicative strategies. Again this came as no surprise due to the layout of the TAPs where participants did the tasks on their own. This point is also raised in the summary/conclusion section of this article.

Time was a key factor, as information was only accessible during the time of the recording. Only Tina, one of the intermediate students, decided to control this factor herself by stopping in between sentences when she listened to the recording for the second time. The variety of learning strategies was more limited than the range for other language skills. Where strategies were used for listening, they were often metacognitive. Participants explained how they usually approached listening, such as concentrating on key words, focusing on the general context at first and then on the details at the second listening. However, if insufficient key words or not the most important ones were understood, it was more difficult to apply any learning strategies whilst listening. Further, students identified general problems they faced when listening, such as hearing difficulties.

Learners felt anxious about understanding the overall content as well as details, especially as almost all the students, including the two near-native speakers, reported having difficulties in hearing the passages. Despite the good technical quality of the recording, listening to recorded voices as opposed to a face-to-face situation exacerbated some hearing problems, limiting the understanding of participants, especially those at an intermediate level. A tape does not allow for lip-reading which accompanies every natural conversation, even between native-speakers of the same language without hearing difficulties. Eysenck (2001: 246) recognised that "visual information from lip movements is used to make sense of speech sounds because the information conveyed by the speech sounds is often inadequate". Listening to a

recording required a lot of attention and put the students under pressure as they had to carry out a variety of activities at the same time.

The pitch of a voice is another major factor in comprehension. Most participants reported that the female voice was easier to understand, it was clearer to them and, coincidentally, the questions were shorter. The male voice of the interviewee was not clearly audible throughout. Hearing ability decreases as people grow older and it becomes more difficult to make out unfamiliar sounds. As Bob explained, he applies certain tricks to deal with this disadvantage:

> I'm not able to test the nuances of quickly spoken language. So I have to rely a little bit on very, very familiar phrases and clichés. (Bob, listening TAP)

Apart from hearing, remembering to mention what had been heard during the task was again a separate matter, as James described:

> Well, part of the problem with that is trying to remember as well as to understand it. I think I certainly understood more than I remembered to say. Though I certainly didn't understand it all. (James, listening TAP)

> Some of my difficulty is, I can't remember even if I understood what he was saying. Going through my mind was I thought to remember what it is he is talking about to say back in English even if I understand, English stopped some of my concentration. (Tanja, listening TAP)

4.2 Learning strategies by strategy category

4.2.1 Metacognitive and cognitive strategies

It can be hypothesized that the dominance of metacognitive and cognitive strategies was related to the layout of the TAPs, participants undertaking the protocols on their own without a partner to interact with. Further, it could be thought that as writing and reading were the language skills in which participants had been most intensively trained, most participants felt more confident with writing and reading than with listening and speaking. Only for Parker, the student with the highest level of proficiency in German, did speaking make no difference when compared to writing. The high occurrence of cognitive and metacognitive strategies can also be interpreted as supporting the idea of older adults learning more independently by relying more on their own thinking and problem-solving resources.

Graham (1997: 43) ascribed a more central role in learning to metacognitive strategies than, for example, communicative strategies. She identified strategies such as *planning* and *monitoring* as more important. Chamot & Küpper (1989: 17), in their study on effective and ineffective learners, emphasized that the number of strategies used by individuals was not the only criterion for effectiveness, because the adequate use of strategies in individual situations and the appropriate selection of these strategies both contributed to the effectiveness with which learners used strategies.

Among metacognitive strategies, *self-monitoring* in its various forms dominated. An item was spoken out loud, double-checked against another context, or corrected

once the right form was found. *Inferencing* was dominant among the cognitive strategies. All kinds of knowledge, in the widest sense of the term, were made use of in decoding meanings or producing an output in the target language: rules about prepositions and cases, word-stem families, known words in any other language (L1, L2, L3, etc.) or personal experiences related to travelling or family.

4.2.2 Social/affective and communicative strategies

The low use of social/affective and communicative strategies was related to the participants recording the TAPs on their own without partners with whom they could interact. Consequently, the low occurrence of such strategies can be directly linked to the data collection approach. The social/affective strategies applied were mainly for *self-assurance*, *self-encouragement*, *self-talk* or indirectly addressing "another person", the researcher.

> Besonders wenn, two nns. (Amy, writing TAP)

> I'll have a go. (Tina, writing TAP)

> And I find it very difficult to think of anything I can say in German. (James, writing TAP)

4.3 Summary

TAPs varied from individual to individual, as did the intensity of strategy use. This result seems to be in line with other studies, involving TAPs applied to younger age groups, where no significant trends could be identified due to the variety of the layout of the studies, age groups, preparation and aims of the studies. Of all the language skills studied, listening provoked the fewest incidences of strategy use and was also rated as difficult by the majority of the intermediate-level participants, mainly related to general hearing difficulties. As with speaking, the students with the least experience of the L2 (those at intermediate level) experienced more difficulties with listening than did the advanced ones. The current study confirmed that there was a difference in strategy use depending on the language skill used. For reading and writing, the majority of students applied a range of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. For speaking and listening, the overall range of strategies was more limited and the number of strategies applied was lower. Various reasons can be put forward for this dominance, including the time available to undertake the tasks, or the effects of participants having received more training in these tasks, or preferring them to the others.

All participants used more strategies for reading and writing, with a majority of metacognitive and cognitive strategies and few social/affective and communicative strategies. This was partly related to the difficulty of undertaking the TAPs retrospectively for the listening and speaking, and not having had a partner to interact with. Because of the low levels of strategy use by two-thirds of the participants, no trends and special features could be identified for these.

The inventory of strategies which could be identified for older language learners in the present study was similar to that found in Graham's (1997) study of young adult learners. Individual students appeared to prefer employing a certain set of strategies in different situations, even varying these strategies rather than using other strategies. However, this might also be task-related rather than presenting a typical feature of the older learners. This could be supported by Graham (1997) who states similar findings from her study. Oxford *et al.* (1996) also report a dominance of metacognitive and cognitive strategies among their young university students of French. It could be hypothesized that these two categories are more important for improving language learning or are the most obvious ones coming to mind (perhaps being less "personal" than the social/affective strategies). The analysis indicated that age did not affect strategy use in terms of individual strategies used, their proportion, or their employment in different contexts.

5 Conclusions

In general, as for younger participants, TAPs proved a useful research instrument with older language students for extracting information regarding language learning strategy use. However, it was important to address certain issues in order to use this research tool successfully with older participants, especially those with low levels of language proficiency. These issues depended on the language skill studied.

For the study of listening, the quality of the recording was of central importance to compensate for any decrease in the hearing ability of older participants. For the study of speaking, an interactive opportunity would have allowed more natural communication which might have eased verbal production and triggered more incidences of strategy use. For the study of reading and writing, no special considerations related to the age of the participants were identified, except for the obvious need to choose topics of interest. Further research has to investigate whether this is a general trend among older learners or an effect related to the data elicitation method. However, so far TAPs are the research tool which provides the most direct access to those inner processes involved when learning strategies are employed. For listening and speaking this method could be further explored and refined.

The requirement to produce output in the L2 without preparation should be considered carefully, as older participants may be more conscious of their own expectations and those imposed on them by the researcher, however subtly these are presented:

> I think to do a task like that you really ought to have a little bit of preparation. Everything has flown out of my mind, if they were ever in there. (Penelope, writing TAP)

The analysis entailed a relatively high degree of subjectivity and scope for variations in the interpretation. Use of TAPs as a research instrument was dependent on the individual researcher, the interpretation and the research question. It could be useful to

analyse the same data by two independent coders (inter-rater reliability) to contrast the differences between the inter-rater and the intra-rater analysis.

However, the analysis is not claimed to be fully conclusive due to the nature of learning strategies, which makes it difficult to identify, describe and classify them. On the other hand, the diversity of the data produced presented an advantage of this instrument. In that respect, the study could support a conclusion that for research on older learners TAPs present a good research tool. Their benefit was reflected in the richness of the direct insights into the thinking processes of the participants. A mixed method approach including questionnaire and interviews with learners of various levels of proficiency and of different target languages can be expected to further minimize the effects of applying one research instrument, and further expand on strategy use by older language learners.

Despite the methodological limitations imposed by the use of any one research instrument only, the TAPs showed older language learners who appeared to:

- be aware of how they can support their progress/learning
- know how to get around difficulties they encountered during the tasks
- be eager to continue learning and practising.

Older students undertaking language learning in later life are conscious about what they do when they learn another language, and have expectations about what is required to succeed and what they want to get out of it. However, following from the current study the set of learning strategies they use does not appear to be a distinguishing factor between these older language learners and younger ones. Supporting this specific learner group in their learning requires more research in revealing how the potential and knowledge of the older learners about language learning can be best made use of.

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Asymmetric patterns of English article omissions in L2A[*]

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Abstract

This paper reports English article production by three groups of L2 participants, i.e. 10 intermediate and 10 advanced L1 Thai, and 10 advanced L1 French learners. The data were elicited through a guided spontaneous task designed to compare article omissions in 'Article + N' vs. 'Article + Adj + N' contexts. Based on the Syntactic Misanalysis Hypothesis (Trenkic, 2007), the study predicted that L1 Thai learners of English would omit articles more often in adjectivally premodified than in non-premodified structures, whereas no such asymmetry was predicted to occur in L1 French speakers' production. L1 French learners are assumed to transfer the functional category determiner from their L1 into their L2 English, making their production syntactically motivated and so not dependent on the difficulty of the task. L1 Thai learners, on the other hand, are speculated not to have this syntactic category in their grammars, and to analyse and produce English articles as adjectives. Such article production is postulated to be lexically triggered.

The L1 Thai learners' article production would depend on a strategic decision to explicitly mark the (un)identifiability status of discourse referents, and such strategic production would be constrained by the available cognitive resources. The more complex the task, the higher the likelihood that the resources would be exceeded and the article dropped in production. All other things being equal, then, a higher article omission rate is expected in more complex 'Article + Adj + N' sequences than in the less complex 'Article + N' sequences. Based on the significance of difference between two proportions (z-scores): non-premodified and adjectivally premodified contexts, the results support the prediction. The implications of the results are considered for the debate on the causes of variability in L2 production of functional morphology.

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the issue of article omission in non-premodified and adjectivally premodified contexts by second language learners of English who are L1 speakers of Thai and French respectively. The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 spells out the background of the study: 2.1 introduces two conflicting explanations about L2 variable production in generative grammar; 2.2 discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each account, leading to a reason why this study needs to investigate the variable issue further; and 2.3 looks at recent research on L2 English article omissions and discusses gaps that need to be filled in. Section 3 outlines the hypotheses and predictions. Sections 4 and 5 present the methodology and results, respectively. Section 6 explores implications of the results. Finally, section 7 summarizes the main aspects of the paper.

2. Background of the study

Variability in L2 production of functional morphology by adult L2 learners (shortened in this paper to "L2ers") is well-documented in empirical research studies (e.g. Franceschina, 2001a; Hawkins, 2000, 2001; Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Herschensohn, 2001; Ionin & Wexler, 2002; Lardiere, 2000; Liszka, 2002; Prévost & White, 2000; Sorace, 1999; Trenkic 2000; White, 2003a, 2003b). A question is why post-childhood learners encounter persistent difficulties in producing some aspects of L2 functional morphology. Several explanations have been proposed, and some of them will be discussed in 2.1.

The most extensively studied L2 so far has been English. One aspect of English which is known to cause considerable problems to L2ers from some language backgrounds is the system of articles (e.g. Goad & White, 2004; Ionin & Wexler, 2003; Ionin, Ko & Wexler, 2004; Kuribara, 1999; Leung 2001, 2005; Robertson, 2000; Trenkic, 2000, 2002, 2007, in press; White, 2003a). This problem has certainly been documented with first language (L1) Thai learners of L2 English (e.g. Lekawatana, 1968; Oller & Redding, 1971; Pongpairoj, 2002, 2004; Srioutai, 2001; Ubol, 1988). The aim of this paper is to explore the causes of L2 English article omissions among L1 Thai learners of L2 English by comparing the omissions with those by L1 French/L2 English speakers.

2.1 Two explanations for L2ers' variable production of functional morphology

Within the framework of generative grammar, two broad perspectives on L2ers' variable production of functional elements can be identified. Section 2.1.1 introduces a view that assumes target-like syntactic representations, but problems in accessing them in production. Section 2.1.2 presents a view which attributes variability to non-target-like syntactic representations.

2.1.1 Explanation in terms of target-like syntactic representations

Perhaps the most intuitively appealing explanation is the one that involves non-target-like syntactic knowledge as the cause of non-target-like production. However, Lardiere (1998a, 1998b, 2000) assumes that inappropriate L2 behaviours do not by necessity mean that L2ers' grammar is impaired. It is logically possible that they are consequences of the learners' processing problems despite their fully specified syntax. These observations by Lardiere led many researchers to propose a processing problem explanation which assumes target-like syntactic representations (e.g. Epstein *et al.*, 1996; Haznedar & Schwartz, 1997; Ionin & Wexler, 2002; Lardiere, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Prévost & White, 1999, 2000; White, 2003a; White *et al.*, 2004). As L2A is postulated to be constrained by Universal Grammar (UG), non-existence of an L2 feature in the learners' L1s might not have any negative impact on L2 production. A hypothesis favouring target-like syntactic representations is the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH).

Another proposal on the processing problem assuming L2 syntactic representations is the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis (PTH) (e.g. Goad & White, 2004, 2005, 2006; Goad, White & Steele, 2003). Within UG, L2ers' syntax is target-like, but processing problems are posited to be due to representations at the phonological level. The PTH predicts that if prosodic structures representing L2 functional morphology are not available in the L1, variable production in the L2 will appear, and vice versa.

Studies advocating fully specified syntax seem to indicate strong arguments in that L2ers' variable production of functional morphemes is attributed to the processing problem. Although the learners show inappropriate syntax, their syntactic representations are intact rather than impaired. For example, Lardiere (1998a, 1998b) reported non-native grammars on inflection for past tense and third person agreement on thematic verbs, but sensitivity to associated functional categories; i.e. appropriate nominative case assignments and verb placement with respect to *not* and internal-clause adverbs. White (2003a) also found L2 variable production of English past tense morphemes and third person agreement on main verbs in her study. However, the fact that the subject made appropriate production of associated properties such as nominative case, as well as correct verb placement, is taken to suggest that tense and agreement in English were not underspecified in the subject's syntactic representations. Prévost & White (1999, 2000) reported that their L2 participants overused English nonfinite verb forms in [+finite] contexts, but their suppliance of finite verbs in [-finite] contexts was at depressed rates. The data was taken to suggest that variability is largely non-random.

2.1.2 Explanation in terms of non-target-like syntactic representations

The alternate view postulates that non-target-like syntactic representations cause L2ers not to be able to produce correct morphological forms in the L2. Within this proposal, there exist two strands: 'global' and 'local' impairments. The position of *global impairments* assumes crucial differences between first language acquisition (L1A) and L2A. Accessibility to UG is posited to exist only in L1A, whereas UG is not operative in

L2A (e.g. Bley-Vroman, 1989; Clahsen, 1988; Clahsen & Muysken, 1986). Proponents of the *local impairment* view postulate that access to UG is partially available in L2A by means of L1. Any features or functional categories not instantiated in the L1 will not be acquired by L2ers (see Smith & Tsimpli, 1995). This impairment or underspecification of feature values prevents correct production of surface forms in the L2 (e.g. Beck, 1997, 1998; Franceschina, 2001a, 2001b; Hawkins, 2000; Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Hawkins & Liszka, 2003; Liszka 2002; Smith & Tsimpli, 1995; Trenkic, 2007, in press). This hypothesis is usually referred as the Failed Functional Features Hypothesis (FFFH).

The syntax-deficit account appears to claim the strongest evidence, in that learners whose L1 lacks a functional property of the L2 usually perform worse than those whose L1 has identical syntactic features. For example, such differences between L2 behaviours can be found in poorer performance on English restricted relative clauses ([±wh]) by L1 Chinese than by L1 French learners (Hawkins & Chan, 1997); poorer performance on English past tense inflections ([±past]) by Chinese than by Japanese and German speakers (Hawkins & Liszka, 2003); and poorer performance by L1 speakers of English than by L1 Italian learners on Spanish gender agreement between determiners and adjectives (Franceschina, 2001a).

2.2 Strength and weakness of the two accounts

Studies advocating the processing problem explanation (i.e. assuming target-like syntax representation) seem to present strong arguments in that, while L2ers' production of certain functional elements might exhibit variability, appropriate production of associated syntactic categories is made, indicating the learners' underlying competence. Variability is also assumed to be non-random. However, appropriate morphological production might be accounted for within a non-target-like syntax view. While L2ers may not develop a fully specified syntax, they can still attribute some meanings to grammatical morphemes and develop metalinguistic rules for their use. Such production would not be random but principled, reflecting the meanings and 'rules' which learners operate under (Trenkic, 2007).

On the other hand, proponents of the non-target-like syntax representation appear to claim the strongest evidence, in that learners whose L1 lacks a functional property in the L2 usually perform worse than learners whose L1 has identical syntactic features. Put differently, failure in syntax-morphology mapping does not occur across the board. If L2 syntax is fully specified, L2ers from whatever L1 backgrounds should experience approximately the same level of mapping difficulties. Nevertheless, different levels of production by L2ers might equally corroborate the target-like syntax account. If the production mechanisms are primed for certain morphological use in L2ers' native language, and these mechanisms are shared for L1 and L2 production, it is expected that less variability will occur. In contrast, more variability will be predicted on the part of learners whose L1 does not possess L2 categories, even if their L2 grammatical competence includes these features. There is thus a possibility that variable production by learners whose L1s do not license L2 properties is due to processing reasons, i.e. performance errors and/or pressures, consistent with the correct syntax position.

Given the research so far, a problem is that the findings from the empirical data presented by each account can be interpreted in more than one way. In fact, Jiang (2004) claims that when L2 morphological production is at an 80% accuracy level, each position can account for the production equally well, and L2 data could therefore be interpreted by more than one explanation.

Summarising the position so far, neither claim can be taken at face value. As discussed in 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, L2 variability could be accounted for by either position. The debate is still on-going. As the problem of L2 variable production of functional morphology is still unresolved, this controversial issue will be investigated further in this study by focusing on variable production of L2 English articles by L1 Thai learners.

2.3 Studies on L2 English article omissions

This section discusses two recent studies of L2 English article omissions that led me to fill a gap in this area, i.e. Goad & White (2004) and Trenkic (2007). Both studies focus on article omissions in non-premodified (Art + N)[1] and adjectivally premodified NP contexts (Art + Adj + N).

2.3.1 *Goad & White (2004)*

Goad & White (2004) took a close look at the oral production of nominal morphology by SD, an end-state L1 speaker of Turkish (a language without the definite article) in White (2003a).[2] They reported that SD tended to omit more articles in 'Art + Adj + N' than in 'Art + N' contexts. SD's syntax was postulated to be intact (see White, 2003a). However, based on the PTH (Goad, White & Steele, 2003), Goad & White claimed that different phonological representations in Turkish and English were responsible for SD's deletions of the English articles (see Goad & White, 2004; Goad, White & Steele, 2003 for a comprehensive overview of the PTH). The PTH predicts non-native-like productions in two ways. The first prediction is an extreme case whereby deletion of functional material is 100%. The second case is that, if prosodic structures in the L1 are used to accommodate those required in the L2, variable production is expected to occur.

One of the results of SD's production is more article deletion in 'Art + Adj + N' (67% of *the* and 49% of *a(n)*) than in 'Art + N' contexts (i.e. 77% of *the* and 70% of *a(n)*). SD is assumed to be able to accommodate a non-target-like prosodic structure in Turkish to prosodify the English 'Art +N' structure, but such accommodation to represent the 'Art + Adj + N' context is not possible (e.g. iyi bir adám[3] good a man 'a good man' is prosodically appropriate in Turkish but not *bir iyi adám, a good man.

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[1] 'Art' stands for 'article'.

[2] The investigation was on both the verbal and nominal morphological production. However, only the latter type of production is focused on in this study.

[3] *Bir* is a quasi-indefinite article in Turkish.

See analyses of the prosodic structures of these nominal phrases in Goad & White, 2004).

Although the PTH was interpreted as evidence for SD's English article omissions, especially in adjectivally premodified NPs, there appeared some internal problems with the PTH account on Goad & White's own data. First, it was reported that SD's overall article suppliance was 67%; but he produced approximately 74.5% of *the* and 61.5% of *a(n).* So, the total percentage of article suppliance actually constituted incompatible suppliance rates of the two article types. Given a prosodic structure to represent English articles, it is not clear why SD's suppliance of the definite article was more accurate than the indefinite article. Goad & White (2004: 138) themselves mentioned that the production rates of *a(n)* and *the* should have been about the same, and they could not account for such a discrepancy in the data. Second, inconsistent article suppliance rates were also evidenced in 'Art + Adj + N' contexts. The data showed that *a(n)* was supplied much less frequently, only 49%, in contrast to 67% of *the*. With unavailability of a prosodic structure in Turkish to represent English articles in this structure, suppliance of the indefinite and the definite articles in these contexts should have been approximately the same. Moreover, although the prosodic structure of adjunction in Turkish could be used to accommodate English articles in 'Art + N', it cannot represent 'Art + Adj + N'. Goad & White assume that this non-existence of prosody in the L1 caused SD to omit more English articles in premodified contexts. The question is, if there are no prosodic representations available for adjectivally premodified structures, why were articles produced at all in such contexts? Put differently, why did not article deletions occur across the board in these NP environments? These problems led me to investigate further whether the PTH can account for asymmetries of English article omissions in these two NP contexts.

2.3.2 Trenkic (2007)

Trenkic (2007) also investigated L2 English article omission in non-premodified and adjectivally premodified NP contexts. The results were based on the data from Trenkic (2000). The subjects were adult L1 Serbian speakers of different proficiency levels. They were tested on two tasks: a Map Task[4] and a short-story written translation task (from Serbian into English). The results of the two tasks showed that, irrespective of the proficiency levels the learners were at, they had a tendency to omit articles significantly more often in 'Art + N' than in 'Art + Adj + N' contexts.

As the asymmetric pattern of article omissions was found in the learners' written data (translation), it was assumed that the PTH would not be able to account for it, as the PTH is restricted to prosody. Furthermore, as far as the oral production is concerned, Trenkic showed that the prosodic structure of 'Art + N' in English also existed in 'Det-like element + N' in Serbian. So, it is assumed that the same prosodic representations in English and Serbian cannot cause the L1 Serbian learners' variability in English article production.

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[4] A Map Task is a type of a referential communication task whereby exchanged information between two participants is partially shared.

Based on the Syntactic Misanalysis Hypothesis (SMH) (see Trenkic, 2007), languages without articles do not have a syntactic category determiner in their grammars. Determiner-like elements are argued to behave syntactically as adjectives (see Lyons, 1999). Due to the adjectival nature of determiner-like elements in such languages, L2ers from these languages are assumed to mistreat L2 determiners, including articles, as adjectives (see Kuribara, 1999; Trenkic 2007).[5] The L1 Serbian learners in the study are therefore posited to misanalyse English articles (functional elements) as adjectives (lexical material) and attribute to the articles referential meanings of definite/indefinite ('that can be/cannot be identified').

It is postulated that an alternative account under fully specified syntax, the MSIH, could not claim that asymmetric patterns of article omissions in non-premodified and adjectivally premodified sequences occur because L2ers have more difficulties with syntax-morphology mapping in premodified structures. Crucial evidence can be found in Grandfelt (2000). It was reported that the 'Art + Adj + N' pattern did not exert any negative influence on French article production by the Swedish-speaking learners of French in the study. Grandfelt assumes that, as the category determiner exists in both Swedish and French, the L1 Swedish learners were able to transfer this syntactic category from their L1 into the L2 production.

In sum, it is assumed that the account based on fully specified syntax, the PTH, could account for the asymmetric pattern of English article production in non-premodified and adjectivally premodified contexts in Goad & White (2004). However, as the same prosodic structure as the English article and noun exists in Serbian, Trenkic (2007) argues that the PTH should not cause the L1 Serbian speakers' English to have more article omissions in 'Art + Adj + N' than in 'Art + N' sequences. It is also assumed that the MSIH could not account for the asymmetries in the two NP contexts (see Grandfelt, 2000). This same patterning of article omissions is claimed to be equally well explained by the SMH.

Since both interpretations seem compatible with the findings on asymmetries in English article omissions in 'Art + N' and 'Art + Adj + N' contexts, further research is needed. The present study aims at testing which assumption can account for L2 English article omissions in the two NP environments. Goad & White (2004) and Trenkic (2007) worked with L2ers from languages without articles, i.e. Turkish and Serbian respectively.[6] The study will be extended with another L2 learner group from an articleless language, i.e. Thai, and compare this L2 learner group's article production with an L2 group from a language containing articles, i.e. French. To my knowledge, no study has actually explored whether asymmetry in article omissions in these two NP sequences is attested with learners from different language backgrounds (i.e. with and without the article system); this study aims to fill this gap.

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[5] See a similar analysis in Kuribara (1997). Results from the grammaticality judgment test showed that there was no sharp improvement in performance on English constructions containing determiners by the L1 Japanese learners of different proficiency levels. The findings were taken to suggest that, as the functional category D is assumed not to exist in Japanese and linguistic elements before nouns are analysed as prenominal modifiers like adjectives, the category D is not accessible to the learners.

[6] As discussed in 2.4.1, Turkish is a language without the definite article. and the quasi-indefinite article *bir* exists in the language.

3. Hypotheses and predictions

3.1 Hypotheses

The study set out to test two contrasting hypotheses on L2 English article omissions:

- H1 (the SMH): In article production of L2 speakers of English from articleless backgrounds, omissions are the result of syntactic misanalysis (L2 articles = nominal modifiers).
- H2 (the MSIH): Article omissions are the result of the difficulty in the mapping between syntax and morphology.

3.2 Predictions

Based on the hypotheses in 3.1, the predictions were as follows:

If H1:
    (a) L2ers from articleless L1 backgrounds (e.g. Thais) should make more omissions in 'Art + Adj + N' contexts than in 'Art + N' contexts.
    (b) L2ers from articleless L1 backgrounds (e.g. Thai) should show this asymmetry at the advanced level as well, even though their overall production may be more accurate.
    (c) L2ers from L1 backgrounds with articles (e.g. French) (who are not expected to analyse English articles as adjectives) should not make more omissions in 'Art + Adj + N' than in 'Art + N' contexts.

If H2:
    L2ers from both articleless L1 backgrounds (e.g. Thai) and L1 backgrounds with articles (e.g. French) should omit articles more in 'Art + Adj + N' contexts than in 'Art + N' contexts (even though the overall rate of omissions may be lower for L2ers from L1 backgrounds with articles).

4. Methodology, materials and procedure

The task employed was a guided spontaneous production task. The objective was to explore English article omissions in both 'Art + N' and 'Art + Adj + N' sequences by L2ers, in both spoken and written production.

4.1 Materials and procedures

Two sets of cartoon strip sequences were designed for article production in discourse. One cartoon set was used for eliciting spoken production, and the other for written

production. The cartoon serial events (four pictures each) were devised on the basis of contexts for numerous nominal productions on characters, things and places. All the pictures *were in colour*, and provided contexts to elicit data which would address the predictions of article productions in 'Art + N' and 'Art + Adj + N' contexts. The participants were instructed to describe the pictures, being as specific as possible; this was expected to elicit spontaneous production. They were also asked to describe the pictures from the beginning until the end at their natural speed. Certain objectives lay behind these instructions. First, through specific descriptions, there was a greater tendency for adjectivally premodified NPs to be produced. Second, the pressure of natural speed processing should discourage the L2ers from accessing their metalinguistic knowledge, and lead them to rely on their linguistic intuition (see Ellis, 2003: 137). The spoken and the written production tasks were counterbalanced across the participants so that better performance in one task could not have been attributed to learning.

The data sets from the spoken and the written tasks were transcribed. Each noun phrase was underlined. Certain noun phrases with articles were excluded from the analysis:

- NPs with determiners and quantifiers
- NPs in fixed expressions or the so-called 'set phrases', e.g. *in the morning* and *make a decision*
- NPs with specific rules of article use, e.g. *the* in the superlative form, and *the* with an ordinal number
- unique NPs, e.g. *the sun*

Two native speakers were asked to read each participant's oral and written production data and act as raters. The total number of NP tokens produced was added up, based on a) all nominal contexts where the use of articles was obligatory, and b) contexts in which the L2ers supplied articles, but should not have. The participants' article omission rates in each NP context were calculated from the omission number in a particular NP structure out of the total number of that NP structure produced. The data set comprised the results of article omissions in definite and indefinite NPs combined.

4.2 Participant groups

There were three participant groups in this experiment: one intermediate L1 Thai group, one advanced L1 Thai group and one advanced French group (10 participants each). The Thai groups were the experiment groups, and the French group acted as the control group. A native speaker control group was also included (5 participants). The participants' English proficiency levels were determined by the Oxford Placement Test (Allen, 2004).

Thai controls were used to assess any potential impact that any Thai expression of definiteness might have on L1 Thai learners' English article production related to the predictions in the study. Ten native speakers from the Thai participants were therefore randomly asked to produce spoken and written baseline data or 'task performance in

the L1'.[7] The data showed that most nominals occurred bare in the native speakers' production. There were only two instances of the English 'Art + N' structure where the Thai demonstrative for 'this' was used when the NPs were mentioned for the second time. It was also observed that there were no phonological aspects such as stress or word order to signify definiteness involved in the production.

4.3 Selection of the participants

The participants included undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of York in the UK. At the time of the experiment, the intermediate Thai participants' age range was 23.8 - 40.2 (mean = 28.9); the advanced L1 Thai learners' age range was 23.1 - 37.5 (mean = 28.3); the French participants' age range was 20.9 - 28.3 (mean = 23.9); and the native English controls' age range was 20.8 - 30.5 (mean = 24.7). All the L2 participants had studied English for at least 10 years, but almost all of them had not lived in an English-speaking country for more than 2 years (only one had done so for more than that: an intermediate Thai student, for 3.5 years). However, there were no outliers to bias statistics in the production data (see Fields, 2004).

5. Results

The results on English article omissions from the spoken production are shown in table 1 and figure 1 on the next page:

Table 1: article omission rates in non-modified and
pre-modified contexts, in the spoken production

Spoken production	Art + N		Art + Adj + N	
	%	ratio	%	ratio
Inter Thai (n = 10)	6.25	15/240	16.48	15/91
Adv Thai (n = 10)	3.06	7/229	7.98	13/163
Adv French (n = 10)	0.47	1/214	2.33	3/129
NS controls (n = 5)	0.00	0/55	0.00	0/107

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[7] Baseline data, according to Yule (1997: 31-2), refers to data in the target language in the study produced by native speakers of that target language (e.g. English, produced by native speakers of English, in this study) or data in the native language of L2ers produced by L2ers (e.g. Thai, produced by L1 Thai learners of L2 English, in this study).
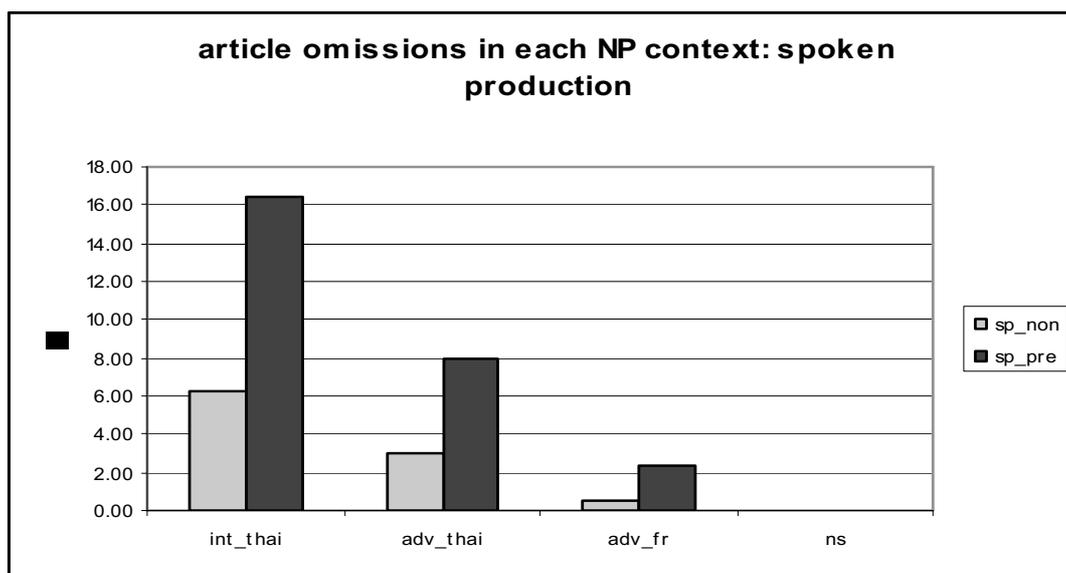
Figure 1: article omission rates in non-modified and
pre-modified contexts, in the spoken production

In the spoken production, the omission rates were higher in premodified than in non-premodified contexts in the two Thai groups and the French group. The intermediate Thai group omitted articles considerably more often in 'Art + Adj + N' contexts than in 'Art + N' structures: 16.48% vs. 6.25%. The same patterning of article omissions was evidenced in the advanced Thai group, although at lower rates, i.e. 3.06% in non-premodified and 7.98% in premodified sequences. Article omissions in both NP structures were also different in the advanced French group: 0.47% in the non-premodified and 2.33% in the premodified contexts. No article omissions were found in either context type in the native English control groups.

It was predicted that article production would be negatively influenced by prenominal adjectives. So, the independent variable was the prenominal modification in premodified contexts and the dependent variable was the proportion of article omissions. Since the number of 'Art + N' and 'Art + Adj + N' contexts produced by each L2 learner group was not the same, frequencies were calculated into proportions. To assess the impact of the independent variable on article production, the statistics used was the z-test for evaluating the significance of the difference between two proportions, article omissions across contexts. The usual formula or the z-basic was employed here (e.g. Butler, 1985: 92-5; Field, 2004: 72).[8]

The significance of difference between omission proportions in the two grammatical contexts: 'Art + N' and 'Art + Adj + N' for a non-directional, two-tailed test was as follows:

- the intermediate Thai group   Z = 2.895, p<0.01
- the advanced Thai group   Z = 2.181, p<0.05
- the advanced French group   Z = 1.553, p>0.05

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[8] Another formula is the z-corrected, which involves a small correction, and is normally a fraction smaller than the z-basic (see Woods *et al.*, 1986).

According to the group results, the difference ratios of omission rates in non-modified and premodified contexts were statistically significant in both Thai groups, but not in the French group. The difference in article omission rates between the non-premodified and the premodified constructions was significant at the 1% level in the weaker Thai group and at the 5% level in the advanced Thai group. In contrast, the result in the French group was non-significant even at the 5% level. Table 2 and figure 2 illustrate and sum up the proportions of English article omissions from the written production:

Table 2: article omission rates in non-modified and
pre-modified contexts, in the written production

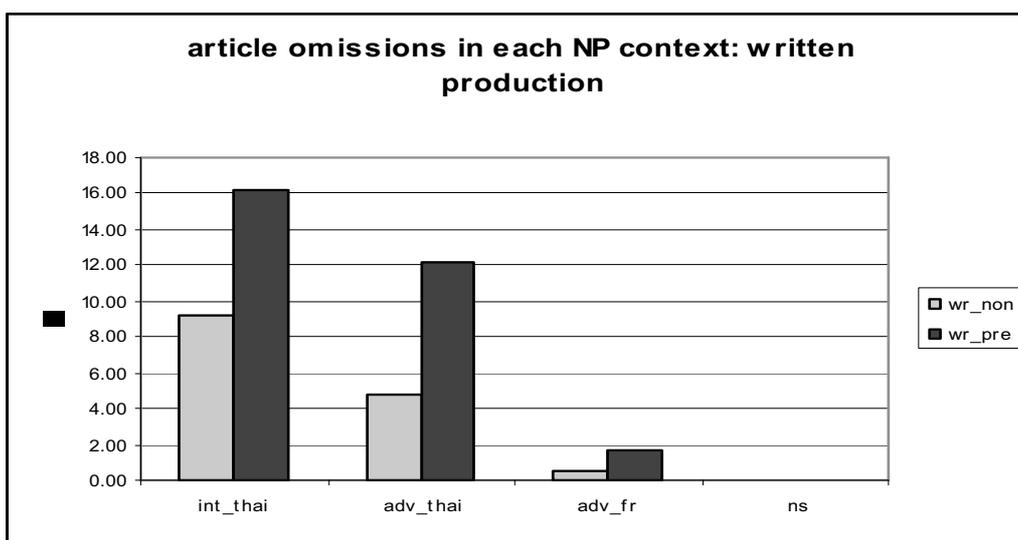| Written production	Art + N		Art + Adj + N	
	%	ratio	%	ratio
Inter Thai (n = 10)	9.15	15/164	16.19	34/210
Adv Thai (n = 10)	4.84	9/186	12.13	33/272
Adv French (n = 10)	0.58	1/173	1.71	5/292
NS controls (n = 5)	0.00	0/69	0.00	0/147

Figure 2: article omission rates in non-modified and
pre-modified contexts, in the written production

The data from the written task seemed to reflect those from the spoken production. The two Thai groups omitted more articles in 'Art + Adj + N' sequences than in 'Art + N' structures (16.19% vs. 9.15% in the intermediate group, and 12.13% vs. 4.84% in the advanced group). In the French group, article omission rates were 0.58% and 1.71% in non-modified and modified structures, respectively. As in the spoken task, the native English control group did not make any omissions in either NP context.

The significance of difference between two proportions in the two NP contexts for a non-directional, two-tailed test was as follows:

- the intermediate Thai group   Z = 2.003, p<.05
- the advanced Thai group   Z = 2.656, p<.01
- the advanced French group   Z = 1.048, p>.05

The ratio of omission rates in non-modified and premodified contexts were statistically significant in both Thai groups, but not in the French group. Article omission rates in 'Art + N' constructions were significantly different from those in the premodified sequences in the intermediate Thai group, $p<0.05$, and $p<0.01$ in the advanced Thai group. In contrast, the difference between article omissions in the two contexts were non-significant ($p>0.05$) in the French group.

6. Discussion and implications

The predictions of the SMH on L2 English article omissions in non-premodified and adjectivally premodified contexts seemed to be borne out by the patterning of omissions. The L2er groups of different L1 backgrounds exhibited behavioural differences in article omissions in 'Art + N' and 'Art + Adj + N' sequences. The L1 Thai groups (-article background) of both proficiency levels had a tendency to omit more articles in 'Art + Adj + N' than 'Art + N' structures. Despite improvement in article production in the advanced Thai group, a significant difference between the two types of omissions could be observed. However, there was no significant difference in article production in the two contexts by the L1 French group (+article background). The predictions of the MSIH were therefore contradicted. If the L2 problems had really been caused by syntax-morphology mapping problems, the L2ers from whatever L1 backgrounds should have *all* made more article omissions in more complex than in simpler NP contexts.

Circumstantial evidence was found from this experiment. Higher article omission rates in premodified than in non-premodified contexts were not restricted only to the spoken task. The results were along the same lines as Trenkic's (2007).[9] The results were taken to suggest that the PTH could not account for such asymmetries in written production. Therefore, L2 English article omissions cannot result from L2ers from articleless languages not being able to represent English articles prosodically.

Based on the SMH (Trenkic, 2007), since there is no functional category determiner in Thai (an articleless language), and as determiner-like elements in such a language behave like syntactic adjectives, the L1 Thai learners might erroneously treated English articles as adjectives. The learners' article production is therefore posited to be lexically-based, i.e. based on the meanings assigned to the articles. Articles are produced only when the learners see a perceived need to express the meaning of "(un)identifiability of a referent." The L2ers are postulated to rely on their general cognition. The learners' article production would depend on a strategic decision to mark the identifiability status of discourse referents explicitly, and such strategic production would be constrained by the available cognitive resources. Misanalysing English articles as prenominal modifiers, the L1 Thai speakers were assumed to place an article and an adjective in premodified contexts in different adjectival positions. There is usually a need to encode more elements of meanings in the more complex 'Art

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[9] Recall that Trenkic reported the L1 Serbian learners' asymmetric patterns of article omissions in the two NP structures in both writing and speaking.

+ Adj + N' than in the less complex 'Art + N' contexts. So, the more meaning elements there are to be encoded, the fewer cognitive resources are left to respond to the demands of the tasks. When the learners' cognitive resources (i.e. processing constraints) could not cope with the cognitive demands of the tasks, articles were omitted.

One might question why, compared to the articles, adjectives were not equally frequently omitted in the production (if the articles were misanalysed as adjectives). Following Trenkic (2007), in communication, the meaning of an adjective is usually contextually more salient than that of an article, so an adjective is usually paid more attention in production (e.g. Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995). Encoding an adjective, then, is typically a priority. The lexical meaning of an article will be encoded only when sufficient cognitive resources are left.

In contrast, since determiners exist in French, the L1 French learners are assumed to have this functional category in their grammars and therefore analyse English determiners, including articles, appropriately as determiners. English article production is then postulated to be motivated by syntax, and hence obligatory. As a result, no matter whether the NP contexts were simpler or more complex, they did not seem to negatively affect French L2ers' English article production.

7. Conclusion

Higher rates of article omissions in adjectivally premodified contexts as compared to those in non-premodified constructions were strongly evident among the L1 Thai learners, but not the L1 French group. The patterning of omissions persisted all the way through the advanced Thai level. The findings were in line with the SMH in that, given the absence of the category 'determiner' in Thai, and taking into account the adjectival nature of determiner-like elements in this language, English articles were posited to be misrepresented as adjectives. The L1 Thai speakers were assumed not to rely on syntax but rather on general cognition in article production. In contrast, article production by the L1 French/L2 English speakers was posited to be syntactically-triggered due to the existence of the category 'determiner' in French. The findings, therefore, did not support the MSIH, as it could not account for such an asymmetric pattern of L2 English article omissions by L2ers from articleless languages. Also, the PTH could not explain the variable production of articles in both speaking and writing.

It is hoped that the findings will contribute to the existing theoretical debate on causes of L2 variable production of functional morphology. Practically, understanding the underlying cause of the problem should hopefully inform the teaching of English articles to L2ers, and their learning, in a more effective way.

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Possible worlds in the theatre of the absurd

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Abstract

The present paper applies possible-worlds theory – as developed by literary theorists – to the analysis of absurdist drama, a genre that has to date been unexplored in these terms. I argue that this framework can prove very useful in the approach to absurdity. I discuss some selected extracts from Pinter's *Old Times*, Ionesco's *The Bald Prima Donna, Jacques or Obedience* and *Rhinoceros,* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot.* The analysis is based on Ryan's (1991) typology of accessibility relations as well as on her catalogue of types of alternative possible worlds that can be included within a fictional universe (Ryan, 1985). A discussion of the plays in terms of the first typology shows that some partial impossibilities can often be captured by accessibility relations other than logical compatibility, which is typically associated with absurdist drama. It is further examined whether it is the relaxation of these relations alone that is responsible for the created oddity. Additionally, in discussing the conflicts within the fictional universe it is argued that a further factor for the creation of absurdity lies in the fact that the mismatches fail to move the plot forward, contrary to what happens in other genres.

1. Introduction

The aim of the present paper is to examine whether possible-worlds theory can be relevant to the study of absurdist drama. In other words, I seek to extend the applicability of possible-worlds models to this genre by discussing selected extracts from Ionesco's *The Bald Prima Donna*, *Jacques or Obedience* and *Rhinoceros*, Pinter's *Old Times* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, in order to examine whether these models can contribute to a thorough interpretation of absurdity. Having Ryan's (1991: 32) claim that absurdist plays "may liberate their universe from the principle of noncontradiction" as a starting-point, I check whether there are any other accessibility relations, apart from that of logical compatibility, that are relaxed in these plays as well as the reasons for the creation of the subsequent oddity. Moreover, I examine the role that the inter-world clashes play in the development of the plot of these plays. The study is a comparative one and seeks to show whether there are any similarities and differences in the three playwrights" preferences for the ways of building up absurdity, as far as the projection of possible worlds is concerned. The corpus on which the analysis is based consists of twenty plays, nine from Ionesco, nine from Pinter and two from Beckett, all belonging to the playwrights" early periods.[1] Since my discussion is based on the written text of the plays, from this point onwards I will be referring to readers of the plays rather than theatre audiences. First, I will discuss the main characteristics of absurdist drama. Next, before turning to the analysis of specific examples, the possible-worlds framework as applied in logic and in fictionality will be briefly described.

2. The theatre of the absurd

Esslin (1960) introduced the term "Theatre of the Absurd" to describe the pioneering work of some playwrights who appeared in the early 1950s, such as Eugene Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet and Arthur Adamov, as well as of the younger generation of playwrights who were inspired by them, including Harold Pinter. With this term, Esslin does not suggest a proclaimed school or an organized movement. Rather, he proposes a common label for those post-war dramatists who express in their work the sense of loss and the futility of existence after the modern human has declined religious faith and is faced with the absurdity of his or her essence. As Ionesco (1989: 45) maintains, Esslin uses the term "absurd" to describe this genre because of the broad discussion around this notion at that time. That is, Esslin sees the work of these playwrights as giving articulation

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[1] The principal criterion for the selection of these plays, which mainly justifies the unequal number selected from each playwright, has been the presence of dialogue, since I decided to focus on prototypical plays that consist of interactions between characters. Moreover, the plays are all intended for stage performance. Sketches and very short texts (less than ten pages long) are excluded.

to Camus" philosophy as expressed in his philosophical essays entitled *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (*The Myth of Sisyphus*, 1942). Camus presents Sisyphus, the archetypal absurd hero[2], as a reflection of the absurdity that pervades the human condition, namely the alienation of humans from their universe and their condemnation to being pointlessly preoccupied with perpetual action while accomplishing nothing (Simpson, 1998: 35). He thus suggests that life is inherently without meaning. This existential perspective, at first developed in conventionally structured plays that followed logical reasoning, has then become the core of absurdist drama as a genre, which emerged after the horrors of World War II. The innovation of these texts lies in the unique way in which this topic is presented, through the abandonment of the conventions of realism, rather than in the topic itself:

> The Theatre of the Absurd has renounced arguing *about* the absurdity of the human condition; it merely *presents* it in being – that is, in terms of concrete stage images. (Esslin, 1980: 25)

The representatives of absurdist drama aim directly at startling their readers or audience, at unsettling them and shaking them out of their mechanical and trite existence. They protest against the art forms of conventional theatre, which can no longer be convincing in a meaningless and purposeless post-war world. Instead, the playwrights offer an anti-theatre, with plays that lack plot in the traditional sense, consistent characters or conventional use of language and that, consequently, first met with incomprehension and rejection on the part of the audience and the critics. On the other hand, there are differences in the playwrights" stylistic preferences for the creation of absurdity that are indicative of each playwright's different dramatic technique, which guarantees their uniqueness. In this paper I will scrutinize such differences in the fictional world of Ionesco, Pinter and Beckett's selected plays from the perspective of the possible-worlds framework.

3. Possible-worlds theory: From logic to fictionality

The notion of possible worlds can be traced back to the 17th century and Leibniz, who expressed the belief that our actual world was chosen as the best among an infinity of possible worlds that exist as thoughts in God's mind (1969: 333-4 and throughout). This notion has been broadly exploited in the field of philosophical logic in order to deal with some important logical issues to which the one-world model could not provide solutions. Taking the 'actual world' as the only frame of reference creates problems, for example, in the attribution of truth-values to propositions of the type (1) 'The Eiffel Tower is not in Paris', or (2) 'The Eiffel Tower is in Paris and the Eiffel Tower is not in Paris', which should

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[2] According to the Greek myth, Sisyphus was condemned by gods to the interminable act of rolling a boulder up a mountain, watching it fall down and rolling it up again.

thus be described as false. Therefore, logicians adopted a frame of reference where, apart from the "actual world", there is also an infinite number of possible worlds surrounding it that are defined as abstract and complete sets of states of affairs.

Within this system, the classification of a proposition as either true or false is extended, as the system also includes the modal operators of necessity and possibility. Both operators lie beyond the limits of the actual world. Possible truth applies to propositions that are true in at least one possible world, while possible falsity to propositions that are false in at least one possible world. On the other hand, necessary truth applies to propositions that are true in all possible worlds, and necessary falsity to propositions that are false in all possible worlds (Semino, 1997: 59). Seen under this light, proposition (1) is possibly false, because it is false in our actual world, although it may be true in an alternative world, while proposition (2) is necessarily false, since it contains a logical contradiction and thus cannot be true in any logically possible world.

Any attempt to interpret fictional worlds within the framework of traditional logical semantics has led to their treatment either as false or as neither-true-nor-false, since they were situated outside the "actual world" of the readers. A sentence of the type "Emma Bovary committed suicide', even though it accords with Flaubert's book, would have to be interpreted either as false, because it assumes the existence of a fictional character, i.e. a non-existent individual, or as neither-true-nor-false, because it refers to an imaginary entity with no referent in the actual world. Therefore, since the late 1970s literary theorists (Doležel, 1988, 1989; Eco, 1979; Pavel, 1986) have adapted and further extended the notion of possible worlds, and have developed a semantics of fictionality based on the idea that the semantic domain projected by the literary text is an alternative possible world (APW) that acts as actual the moment we are immersed in a fiction. Through this act of "recentering" (Ryan, 1991), which is an essential part of fiction-making, the actual world of the readers becomes only one of the many alternative possible worlds that revolve around the world that the narrator presents as actual. In this sense, the above proposition ('"Emma Bovary committed suicide"') is true in relation to the world of Flaubert's novel, whereas a proposition of the type "Emma Bovary did not commit suicide" is false, because it does not accord with the plot of the text.

Within the limits of logic, the term *possible* describes those sets of states of affairs that do not break the logical laws of non-contradiction (given a proposition x, it is not possible that both x and *not-x* are true in a given world) and of the excluded middle (given two contradictory propositions, x and *not-x*, only one must apply in a given world, while the "middle" option where neither x nor *not-x* is true is ruled out). In crossing over from logic to the field of literary studies, possible-worlds theory has undergone a drastic change so as to deal precisely with impossibility in fiction. Fictional worlds can thus be perceived as possible even when they are 'inconsistent', namely when they violate the laws of non-contradiction and of the excluded middle, whereas in logic such worlds would be considered impossible. It is this broadening of the theory that establishes its applicability to absurdist drama.

4. Possible-worlds theory and absurdist drama

The fictional worlds of absurdist plays are often inconsistent due to the logical impossibilities that they contain. Ionesco's *The Bald Prima Donna* constitutes an interesting example of an inconsistent world (Ionesco, 1958: 89; turns 27-8). Logical contradictions make their appearance quite early in the text, when the protagonist couple, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, begin to talk about someone called Bobby Watson, who is first discussed as dead. As soon as this has been established, Mrs. Smith asks an odd question:

> MRS. SMITH: And when are they thinking of getting married, the two of them?
> MR. SMITH: Next spring, at the latest.

Much to the readers' surprise, the two characters refer to Bobby Watson as if he were alive and about to get married, although both have just claimed to have attended his funeral and have talked about his widow. Interestingly, Mr. Smith replies to his wife's question without any objection to the fact that her claim comes in sheer contrast with what they had so far presented as the truth. The fact that a person is discussed as being both dead and alive constitutes a logical impossibility, which results in the projection of a world that includes contradictory states of affairs.

When the conversation revolves around the Watsons' children, logical impossibilities continue and further prevent readers from fully constructing and exploring the fictional world in their minds:

> MRS. SMITH: […] It's sad for her to have been widowed so young.
> MR. SMITH: Lucky they didn't have any children.
>
> MRS. SMITH: Oh! That would have been too much! Children! What on earth would she have done with them?
> MR. SMITH: She's still a young woman. She may quite well marry again. Anyway, mourning suits her extremely well.
> MRS. SMITH: But who will take care of the children? They've a girl and a boy, you know. How do they call them?
>
> (Ionesco, 1958; turns 31-5)

As it appears, the Smiths return to the scenario according to which Bobby Watson is dead. Not only that, but Mrs. Smith first agrees with her husband's statement that the Watsons are lucky not to have any children but then asserts their existence, as the phrase "you know" suggests. Again, the two contradictory versions are discussed as equally true and further establish the logically impossible world-view that the couple shares.

Such impossibilities can best be treated by notions and categories developed within possible-worlds theory. However, by and large, absurdist drama has not been exploited as a source of data within possible-worlds approaches to the study of fiction, although it has often been the focus of stylistic analyses. Even though the particular genre has been

referred to as an example of a textual universe that relaxes the principle of non-contradiction (Ryan, 1991: 32) and therefore the need for a closer look from this perspective has been recognized (cf. Semino, 1997: 227), there has been no extended discussion of absurdist drama in such terms. Post-modernist literature, on the other hand, which also often contains logical incompatibilities, seems to have monopolized the theorists' interest. It is characteristic, for example, that in his typology of impossible fictions, Ashline (1995) draws examples primarily from postmodernist literature. It is the aim of the present paper to compensate for this gap in research.

5. Ryan's typology of accessibility relations and the notion of authentication

Ryan (1991) suggests a typology of fictional worlds that are projected by texts that belong to different genres. She forms her typology with the aim to complement the deficits of previous approaches[3] and to provide a theory of fictional genres, since an interpretation of fiction within the limits of logically possible worlds cannot cover the wide range of fictional worlds because it excludes worlds that contain logical impossibilities. In her view, there is no such thing as an impossible fictional world and a world's actuality, possibility or impossibility is rather a matter of degree. In order to avoid talking about an "impossible possible world" in fiction, a wider range of accessibility relations is required. These accessibility relations exhibit the various ways in which the textual actual world (TAW) can be associated with the actual world (AW) of the readers:

> In decreasing order of stringency, the relevant types of accessibility relations from AW involved in the construction of TAW include the following:
>
> (A) *Identity of properties* (abbreviated A/properties): TAW is accessible from AW if the objects common to TAW and AW have the same properties.
>
> (B) *Identity of inventory* (B/same inventory): TAW is accessible from AW if TAW and AW are furnished by the same objects.
>
> (C) *Compatibility of inventory* (C/expanded inventory): TAW is accessible from AW if TAW's inventory includes all the members of AW, as well as some native members.
>
> (D) *Chronological compatibility* (D/chronology): TAW is accessible from AW if it takes no temporal relocation for a member of AW to contemplate the entire history of TAW. (This condition means that TAW is not older than AW, i.e. that its present is not posterior in absolute time to AW's present. We can contemplate facts of the past from the viewpoint of the present, but since the future holds no facts, only projections, it takes a relocation beyond the time of their occurrence to regard as facts events located in the future.)

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[3] As Semino (1997: 80-1) notices, the main deficit of typologies such as Doležel's or Maitre's is that they lack an accurate account of the way in which the readers perceive the distance between the fictional world and the actual world during text processing.

(E) *Physical compatibility* (E/natural laws): TAW is accessible from AW if they share natural laws.

(F) *Taxonomic compatibility* (F/taxonomy): TAW is accessible from AW if both worlds contain the same species, and the species are characterized by the same properties. Within F, it may be useful to distinguish a narrower version F' stipulating that TAW must contain not only the same inventory of natural species, but also the same types of manufactured objects as found in AW up to the present.

(G) *Logical compatibility* (G/logic): TAW is accessible from AW if both worlds respect the principles of noncontradiction and of excluded middle.

(H) *Analytical compatibility* (H/analytical): TAW is accessible from AW if they share analytical truths, i.e. if objects designated by the same words have the same essential properties.

(I) *Linguistic compatibility* (I/linguistic): TAW is accessible from AW if the language in which TAW is described can be understood in AW.

(Ryan, 1991: 32-3; author's italics)

As Ryan suggests, the world of absurdist texts results from the relaxation of logical compatibility, which leads to types of worlds that are described not as wholly impossible but only as logically impossible, because, for example, something has both happened and not happened. In the extracts from *The Bald Prima Donna* discussed earlier, for example, G/logic is violated, because Bobby Watson is discussed as both dead and alive. The absurdity that these contradictory claims create is reinforced by the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Smith appear to share this logically impossible world, since they accept it as completely normal. Moreover, these logical contradictions in the way the characters describe their world make it impossible for the readers to have any reliable access to that world. Consequently, authentication becomes extremely problematic, because virtually nothing can be ascertained about the TAW. With the term "authentication", Doležel (1989) refers to the degree of trustworthiness of a narrator or character's words. As he points out, "the construction of impossible worlds is part and parcel of a more general anomaly of fiction making, the misuse of authentication" (Doležel, 1998: 160). Absurdist plays that contain contradictory accounts are thus rendered logically impossible worlds and prevent the authentication of fictional existence, that is, they cannot be fictionally authentic.

In Ryan's view, the relaxation of accessibility relations that are on the top (A/properties, B/same inventory, C/expanded inventory) or in the middle (D/chronology, E/natural laws, F/taxonomy) of her list results in worlds that do not depart a great deal from the actual world of the readers. Lifting A/properties, for example, results in true fiction, whereas lifting E/natural laws results in fairy tales. However, the discussion of some extracts from Ionesco's *Jacques or Obedience* and *Rhinoceros* will show that absurdist drama can also be associated with the relaxation of these accessibility relations. A further issue that requires exploration is to what extent the relaxation of these relations is responsible for the subsequent absurdity, and whether it is equally exploited by the three playwrights as a technique for the creation of an odd textual world.

6. Other accessibility relations as sources of absurdity

6.1 Relaxing A/properties

Ionesco's *Jacques or Obedience* constitutes a parody of bourgeois society. A great part of the play's plot revolves around the selection of a proper bride for the protagonist, Jacques, after he has succumbed to the family creed ("I love potatoes in their jackets", page 128, turn 60).[4] Readers are then gradually faced with a textual world that relaxes the identity of properties, because it includes human beings with different properties from those in the readers' actual world.

When Roberta, the bride-to-be, first appears on stage, her face is covered by a white veil and her body is also hidden because of the bridal dress that she wears. Roberta's face is revealed in turn 173, after a long interaction in which the two families, the Jacques and the Roberts, recite her virtues, which turn out to be totally non-human: for example, the green pimples on a beige skin or the red breasts on a mauve ground (page 312, turn 129). The stage directions inform readers that Roberta has two noses and it is the first time that they are actually faced with one of her monstrous characteristics:

> JACQUELINE: Come on, then, the face of the bride!
> [ROBERT FATHER *pulls aside the white veil that hides* ROBERTA'S *face. She is all smiles and has two noses; a murmur of admiration from all except* JACQUES.]
> JACQUELINE: Oh! Lovely!
> ROBERT MOTHER: What do you think of her
> JACQUES FATHER: Ah, if I were twenty years younger
> JACQUES GRANDFATHER: And me … ah … er … and me!
>
> (Ionesco, 1958: 134; turns 173-6)

One main reason for the creation of absurdity is the fact that the relaxation of the identity of properties takes place in a textual world that otherwise looks entirely realistic, as the setting is reminiscent of a bourgeois interior and the characters are connected with recognizable family bonds. Additionally, and contrary to what readers are highly likely to expect, on seeing Roberta's appearance the other characters express their admiration for her. Desirability is associated with a monstrous appearance, as Jacques Father and Jacques Grandfather actually admit that if they were younger they would fall in love with her. Their attitude is thus a reversal of that expected in the real world, were one to face such a creature. In this sense, the two men's comments further build up the absurdity and potential funniness of the scene.

Jacques's silence may at first be regarded as a reaction to the overall abnormality and thus fool readers into assuming that he shares their assumptions about what is

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[4] The triviality of the issue at hand comes in sheer contrast with the verbal violence that Jacques suffers from his family as long as he refuses to submit.

considered normal regarding one's appearance. As it turns out, however, Jacques is not pleased with Roberta because he wants a woman with at least three noses (page 135, turn 195). The relaxation of A/properties is maintained, as Robert Father appears prepared for this demand and presents a daughter with three noses, although when he first introduced Roberta to Jacques he had claimed that she is their only daughter (turn 134):

ROBERT FATHER: […] We'd already foreseen this difficulty. We have a second only
                   child at your disposal. And she has her three noses all complete.

(Ionesco, 1958: 136; turn 201)

Of course, logical compatibility is also relaxed at this point, since the Roberts have two daughters, but, according to them, each is their only child. The two claims are contradictory and mutually refuted, since the notions "only" and "second" are incompatible. Yet the fact that the other characters accept this claim as rational does not allow Robert Father's verbal behaviour to be interpreted as a breaking of the maxim of quality (cf. Grice's cooperative principle).[5] Rather, the notion of "only" expands its actual meaning to serve the characters' purposes and to adjust to the reality of their world.

Even after Jacques is presented with the second potential wife, he keeps complaining that she is not ugly enough and asks for one that is much uglier: "No, she won't do. Not ugly enough! Why, she's quite passable. There are uglier ones. I want one much uglier" (page 137, turn 220). The seemingly realistic world of the play, then, turns out to be totally absurd, not only because it is inhabited by human beings with non-human characteristics, and thus relaxes the identity of properties, but also because the characters share the odd belief that the more monstrous one looks the more beautiful they are considered.

6.2 Relaxing E/natural laws

Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* is another play where the conventional, bourgeois settings, as presented to the readers in the initial stage directions and throughout, raise expectations of a realistic plot but then readers are confronted with the absurd situation where all human beings are gradually transformed into rhinoceroses except for the protagonist, Berenger. The play is thus interesting to analyse from a possible-worlds perspective as it violates physical compatibility.

For the purposes of this paper I will focus on some extracts that are taken from the second half of the play. By the end of the first scene of Act Two, many of the citizens have already transformed into pachyderms but Berenger deals with the situation with surprising calmness. He intends to visit his friend Jean and mend their friendship, which was unsettled after a quarrel they had in Act One. In the second scene of Act Two

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[5] Grice's maxim of quality suggests the following: "Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence." (1975: 46)

Berenger witnesses the metamorphosis of Jean, which takes place in front of his eyes. At first Jean does not accept that there is something wrong with him, but he then considers the changes in him as normal and gets angry with Berenger for pointing them out to him. For Berenger, however, this change is horrifying:

> BERENGER: But whatever's the matter with your skin?
> JEAN: Can't you leave my skin alone? I certainly wouldn't want to change it for yours.
> BERENGER: It's gone like leather.
> JEAN: That makes it more solid. It's weatherproof.
> BERENGER: You're getting greener and greener.
> JEAN: You've got colour mania today. You're seeing things, you've been drinking again.
>
> (Ionesco, 1960: 64; turns 1144-9)

Although Berenger is shocked, the whole process of transforming into a rhinoceros does not shake Jean's complacency. In fact, he uses a series of arguments to rationalize his situation and, as his words reveal, he thinks that being a rhinoceros is a much more preferable situation than being a human being. A few turns later Jean confesses his wish to become one of the pachyderms and accuses Berenger of prejudice for being against these transformations:

> BERENGER: I'm amazed to hear you say that, Jean, really! You must be out of your mind. You wouldn't like to be a rhinoceros yourself, now would you?
> JEAN: Why not? I'm not a victim of prejudice like you.
>
> (Ionesco, 1960: 68; turns 1220-1)
>
> […]
> JEAN: Keep your ears open. I said what's wrong with being a rhinoceros? I'm all for change.
>
> (Ionesco, 1960: 68; turn 1225)

Once again, it is not the relaxation of physical compatibility itself that creates absurdity but the way the characters deal with the situation of human beings turning into rhinoceroses. Jean has not only accepted this change but is actually looking forward to it, while Berenger, who has so far been calm and indifferent, is shocked for the first time, primarily because he now witnesses the transformation and it is his friend who has chosen to become a pachyderm.[6] His words as he narrates the transformation to his colleague Dudard in Act Three reveal that he is more surprised by his friend's choice to transform than by the fact itself:

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[6] When Berenger talks about transforming into a rhinoceros with Dudard in Act Three, he refers to it as "a nervous disease" (p. 76, turn 1318).

> BERENGER: […] he was such a warm-hearted person, always so human! Who'd have thought it of him! We'd known each other for…for donkey's years. He was the last person I'd have expected to change like that. I felt more sure of him than of myself! And then to do that to me!
>
> (Ionesco, 1960: 74; turn 1292)

In Dudard's case, the transformation takes place on a moral plane. Although he admits that he cannot find a satisfactory explanation for this phenomenon (page 74, turn 1299), he begins to rationalize the choice of becoming a rhinoceros by mentioning some privileges that these pachyderms have and that human beings lack, much as Jean had earlier done:

> DUDARD: Perhaps he felt an urge for some fresh air, the country, the wide-open spaces … perhaps he felt a need to relax. I'm not saying that's any excuse…
> BERENGER: I understand what you mean, at least I'm trying to. But you know – if someone accused me of being a bad sport, or hopelessly middle class, or completely out of touch with life, I'd still want to stay as I am.
> DUDARD: We'll all stay as we are, don't worry. So why get upset over a few cases of rhinoceritis. Perhaps it's just another disease.
> BERENGER: Exactly! And I'm frightened of catching it.
>
> (Ionesco, 1960: 75; turns 1301-4)

Referring to both Dudard and Jean, Hoy (1964: 253) suggests that this is the most insidious kind of rationalization, as it serves to cover humanity's retreat into animality. Once again, Berenger's attitude suggests that he does not perceive the situation in his town as absurd. In fact, he even considers the possibility of his catching the disease too, which is a further source of anxiety for him. Dudard accuses Berenger of not having any sense of humour and thus not being able to see the funny side of things (page 78, turn 1345; page 81, turn 1389) and suggests keeping an open mind when judging those who have decided to turn into rhinoceroses (page 83, turn 1417). The moral transformation of Dudard has already begun. His way of facing the people's transformation into rhinoceroses as normal, as a simple decision to change their skin, is indicative of his own gradual infection with what they describe as a spreading disease:

> BERENGER: And you consider all this natural?
> DUDARD: What could be more natural than a rhinoceros?
> BERENGER: Yes, but for a man to turn into a rhinoceros is abnormal beyond question.
> DUDARD: Well, of course, that's a matter of opinion…
>
> (Ionesco, 1960: 84; turns 1420-23)

As a response to Berenger's prediction that he is going to follow the rhinoceroses soon, Dudard pleads objectivity and a tendency always to look at the positive side of things. In a totally non-realistic play, his claim that he is trying to be realistic (page 83, turn 1417) sounds ridiculous. After Daisy appears on stage, Dudard continues to support those who choose to become pachyderms, and when he sees them streaming out and crowding the

streets he too runs out and joins them. At the end of the play Berenger is the only citizen left to insist that it is normal to be human and abnormal to be a rhinoceros. Yet he never rejects the whole situation as something impossible to happen. He therefore shares the odd belief that all characters in the play hold, namely that such transformations can in fact happen. Much as in *Jacques*, it is not the relaxation of an accessibility relation as such, in this case physical compatibility, that is responsible for the created absurdity but primarily the fact that it takes place in a seemingly realistic world as well as the way it is dealt with by the characters.

Rhinoceros has often been discussed with relation to Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, in which the protagonist wakes up one morning and finds out that he has turned into a giant bug, while the rest of the humanity remains normal (Esslin, 1980: 183; Lane, 1994: 118). In her discussion of the accessibility relations that she proposes, Ryan mentions Kafka's novel as a textual world that lifts E/natural laws while preserving F/taxonomy, and describes it as "realistic fantasy" (1991: 37). Styan (1968: 250), on the other hand, highlights the correspondence between the nightmarish worlds of Kafka and Beckett or Pinter. Besides, when Gregor, the protagonist of *Metamorphosis*, becomes aware of his condition, he is not at all in a state of panic given the bizarre circumstances, as readers might expect. An interesting issue then arising is why *Rhinoceros* is not also described as realistic fantasy, but is considered absurdist. In my view, the world of Kafka is also absurd to an extent. In this novel, however, the other characters never accept Gregor's transformation. On the contrary, his family talks about him with hatred and they want "it" – Gregor as a bug – to be removed. In other words, they consider this odd situation possible but unacceptable and unbearable. In *Rhinoceros*, on the other hand, the characters are not surprised either by the presence of rhinoceroses or by the fact that these animals are in fact their transformed co-citizens. Even when they claim to be afraid because of the sudden appearance of the pachyderms, the trivial conversations in which they become engaged suggest the exact opposite. The examples discussed above are further indicative of this incompatibility between situation and attitude in a seemingly realistic world, and justify the characterization of the fictional world as absurd.

7.   The internal structure of fictional worlds

So far, possible-worlds theory has been applied to absurdist plays in order to account for the relationship between their fictional world and the actual world of the readers, and how this can be linked to the creation of absurdity. However, the particular framework can also shed light on the internal structure of fictional worlds; in this respect, in the remainder of this paper I seek to examine to which extent the internal conflicts in the plays under analysis can be associated with the potential absurdist effects that these texts have on the readers.

Most fictional worlds can be described as universes, namely systems of worlds, where one world functions as actual and is surrounded by a variety of possible worlds that function as non-actualized alternatives of this actual world (Pavel, 1986: 64; Ryan, 1985: 719; 1991: 109). These APWs correspond to the private worlds of the characters. The commonest types of private worlds are Knowledge Worlds (K-Worlds), Obligation Worlds (O-Worlds), Wish Worlds (W-Worlds) and Fantasy Worlds (F-Worlds), represented respectively by the characters' beliefs, obligations, wishes and fantasies, dreams or hallucinations. A perfect correspondence between the actual world and the private worlds of the characters creates a situation of equilibrium in the narrative universe. In order for a plot to begin, a situation of conflict must be created within the narrative universe. The nature of the conflict may vary, but in any case it contributes to the creation of a "successful" plot that guarantees the "tellability" of the narrative universe. With regard to absurdist plays, whose main characteristic is the lack of plot, there arises the question whether these conflicts, either between the characters' private worlds and the TAW or between different private worlds, do in fact lead to the undertaking of action on the part of the characters; and whether this action or inaction is associated with the absurdist nature of the TAW.

8. The role of internal conflicts in the creation of absurdity

8.1 Internal conflicts between the actual domain and the characters' private worlds

Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* describes a perpetual act of waiting. Vladimir and Estragon are waiting for Godot, a man whom they do not know but whom they have imbued with the attributes of a hero or a Christ-Saviour. The play's two acts have a repetitive structure, as they describe two different days – during which, however, similar activities, events and convers-ations take place. Throughout the play, the characters repeat the following exchange:

> ESTRAGON: […] [*He turns to* VLADIMIR.] Let's go.
> VLADIMIR: We can't.
> ESTRAGON: Why not?
> VLADIMIR: We're waiting for Godot.
> ESTRAGON: [*Despairingly*.] Ah! [*Pause*.] […]
>
> (Beckett, 1986: 15; turns 91-5)

The two tramps must fulfil an Obligation World, according to which they have to remain in the same place and wait for Godot, who will come and save them from their purposeless and meaningless life. This world, however, comes in conflict with their desire to leave, which reflects their joint Wish World. Each time the two tramps reach a dead end out of desperation, Estragon suggests to Vladimir that they leave, but the thought of

Godot prevents them from actually departing. Moreover, this shared private world does not accord with the actual world of the play, in which Godot never arrives, nor is he likely to do so at some point after the end of the play. At the end of both acts, Godot's emissary, a little boy, enters the stage to inform the tramps that his master will not come that evening, but he will definitely make it the following day:

VLADIMIR:	[...] [*Pause.*] Speak.
BOY:	[*In a rush*.] Mr. Godot told me to tell you he won't come this evening but surely tomorrow.
[*Silence*.]	
VLADIMIR:	Is that all?
BOY:	Yes, sir.
[*Silence*.]	

(Beckett, 1986: 49; turns 772-5)

[...]	
VLADIMIR:	You have a message from Mr. Godot.
BOY:	Yes, sir.
VLADIMIR:	He won't come this evening.
BOY:	No, sir.
VLADIMIR:	But he'll come tomorrow.
BOY:	Yes, sir.
VLADIMIR:	Without fail.
BOY:	Yes, sir.
[*Silence*.]	

(Beckett, 1986: 85; turns 1648-62)

Both times the tramps' Wish World is frustrated, but the second time Vladimir's disappointment becomes more apparent due to his anticipation of the Boy's lines. Although, quite surprisingly, the Boy fails to remember Vladimir, he recognizes the Boy as soon as the latter enters the stage and can therefore predict the reason for his visit. This further builds up the repetitive character of the play and suggests that the tramps' private World is recurrently frustrated. After this second interaction with the Boy, Vladimir admits to himself that they are waiting in vain. This realization, nevertheless, cannot endure for long, but is rather another glimmer of the truth that they are refusing to face, namely that their life is sterile, purposeless and thus absurd. Thus, the play closes with another rejection on Vladimir's part of Estragon's suggestion to leave, using again as an excuse that they are waiting for Godot. As we come to realize, nothing changes throughout the play, nor do we expect anything to change in the future. The tramps' Wish World will remain in conflict with the actual domain even after the end of the play, but it seems beyond the characters' power to do anything but wait. In other words, the conflict within the fictional universe fails to make the characters undertake an action that will move the plot forward. This odd status of the expectation for Godot to come, the Wish World that is never realized, accounts to a great extent for the created absurdity.

8.2 Internal conflicts between the private worlds of different characters

A different kind of heterogeneity is the one that results from a conflict between the private worlds that different characters possess. I have chosen to discuss Pinter's *Old Times*, because the whole of this play revolves around the different versions of the same events that two characters, Deeley and Anna, offer in order to gain power over Kate, who is Deeley's wife and Anna's old friend and perhaps lover. This play is very interesting in possible-worlds terms in the sense that the boundaries between the real and the unreal seem to have collapsed completely, and as a consequence the contradictory versions of the past are all accepted as true.

The extracts I have chosen to quote here show the contradictory Knowledge Worlds that Deeley and Anna hold with regard to whom Kate saw a film with about twenty years ago, when they were all young and lived in London:

DEELEY: What happened to me was this. I popped into a fleapit to see Odd Man Out. […] And there was only one other person in the cinema, one other person in the whole of the whole cinema, and there she is. And there she was, very dim, very still, placed more or less I would say at the dead centre of the auditorium. I was off centre and have remained so. […] So it was Robert Newton who brought us together and it is only Robert Newton who can tear us apart.

Pause

ANNA: F.J. McCormick was good too.

(Pinter, 1971: 30; turns 185-6)

[…]

ANNA: […] For example, I remember one Sunday she said to me, looking up from the paper, come quick, quick, come with me quickly, and we seized our handbags and went, on a bus, to some totally obscure, some totally unfamiliar district and, almost alone, saw a wonderful film called Odd Man Out.

Silence

DEELEY: Yes, I do quite a bit of travelling in my job.

(Pinter, 1971: 38; turns 232-3)

As it becomes apparent, a seemingly innocent topic, namely a memory from over twenty years ago, turns out to be a battleground for rivalry between the two competitors. It is interesting that neither openly questions the veracity of the other's story, although they both present their own as the true one. It appears, however, that Anna's story has a stronger impact on Deeley than the other way round. In my view, this is revealed by the fact that after Deeley's turn there is a pause before Anna speaks, whereas after Anna's turn there follows a silence. Tannen suggests that a silence "represents climaxes of emotion in interaction, the point at which the most damaging information has just been introduced into the dialogue, directly or indirectly" (1990: 263).

Based on this claim, one could argue in favour of a more realistic interpretation and say, for example, that Deeley reacts as if he is embarrassed to realize that he is proven

wrong. In my view, however, the "damaging information" is introduced indirectly, and this interpretation of the extract accords with the sense of hidden conflict and the struggle for domination over Kate between Deeley and Anna. In other words, it is not the revelation of the "truth" that disturbs Deeley, but Anna's insistent effort to recreate her intimate friendship with Kate and to exclude him. This is further supported by the way conversation continues in both cases. After the pause, Anna takes the turn and, based on a rather unimportant detail of the story regarding the protagonist of the film, disagrees with Deeley and expresses her preference for another actor. Thus, with this indifferent remark she diminishes Deeley's assertion. After the silence following Anna's silence, however, Deeley leaps to a new topic about travelling around the world on business, and his reaction could be seen as an attempt to "polish" his hurt self-image (Homan, 1993: 169), after Anna's brief reminiscence, which annihilates his own earlier claim.

9. Concluding remarks

In the present paper I have shown that possible-worlds theory is a powerful instrument in the study of absurdity. The discussion has been two-fold, focusing both on the cases where accessibility relations are relaxed, and on cases of conflicts within the narrative universe. As far as the first issue is concerned, it has been shown that apart from G/logic, absurdist plays also relax accessibility relations that are prototypically associated with fictional worlds that are not very distant from the actual world. As has been claimed throughout the discussion of these examples, it is not the relaxation as such that is responsible for the creation of absurdist effects, but rather the contribution of certain factors. First of all, the lifting of the relations takes place in seemingly realistic settings.

This is where the main difference between absurdist drama and fairy tales or science fiction lies. Although the world of fairy tales results primarily from the lifting of physical laws and taxonomic compatibility, as it includes witches, talking animals or magical transformations, readers are aware that this world is different from their own and they can thus construct it in their mind without considering it absurd. With absurdist plays, on the other hand, readers are faced with a world that is similar to theirs, but all their expectations for a realistic plot are then disrupted. This disruption is further reinforced by the characters' unexpected reaction to the impossibilities. Their attitude in no way accords with the way one would react in the real world, as characters do not appear to hold the same assumptions as the readers about the laws that govern their world. As a consequence, any attempts on the readers' part to construct a coherent text world are frustrated. Following Eco (1990: 76), such fictional worlds can only be "mentioned" but cannot be constructed.

Similarly, science fiction worlds relax, among others, F/taxonomy by including different manufactured objects or different forms of life than the actual world (cf. Semino,

1997: 82); yet, readers are again aware that they are faced with a world that is different from their own, and can therefore construct it in their minds.

The discussion about the conflicts within the fictional world has not been exhaustive either. However, it has demonstrated that another crucial factor for the creation of absurdity is the fact that these inter-world conflicts do not lead to the undertaking of action that will move the plot forward. Both plays discussed in these terms are characteristic examples of static drama with no external action. Thus, the failure of this mismatch to lead to action confirms one of the main characteristics of absurdist drama, namely the lack of plot in the traditional sense that is characteristic of conventional plays (cf. Esslin, 1978, 1980).

A comparison of the three playwrights has led to some interesting conclusions regarding the application of possible-worlds theory. First of all, Ionesco exploits the technique of creating absurdity through the projection of possible worlds that deviate from the actual world much more frequently than Pinter or Beckett. In fact, cases of absurdity associated with the relaxation of accessibility relations other than G/logic are found primarily in Ionesco's plays. This suggests that possible-worlds theory can shed light on the "language of images" (Lane, 1994: 12) that Ionesco exploits, primarily in his early plays, in order to reveal the strangeness of the world, since he considers theatre, as it was developing in his times, an inadequate medium of expression. As far as the analysis of Pinter and Beckett's plays is concerned, possible-worlds theory can prove useful particularly as regards the discussion of the internal conflicts of the projected worlds. The relationship between the various worlds in the textual universe never changes and, consequently, these conflicts fail to move the plot forward, which inevitably results in the creation of absurdity.

By conducting the present analysis I do not wish to claim either that these are the only extracts that can be discussed in possible-worlds terms or that this framework is the only appropriate tool for shedding light on the absurdity created in these cases. Schema theory, for example, can also be useful, and the discussion of the extracts has often revolved around the disruption of the expectations that the text world created for the readers. Besides, the logical contradictions included in the plays can raise questions regarding the applicability of Grice's maxim of quality. Nor is it necessary to choose only one theoretical tool, as a combined approach is highly likely to lead to a more thorough interpretation of absurdity. The aim of the present paper has been to compensate for the deficits in the work that has been done so far as regards the possible worlds projected by absurdist plays, and their role in the creation of oddity. At the same time, there have been some interesting findings as far as the dramatic technique of Ionesco, Pinter and Beckett is concerned. This is only a first step in the application of possible-worlds theory to this genre but is indicative of the important role that this theoretical tool can play in the stylistics of absurdist drama.

Although only five plays have been discussed in the light of possible-worlds theory in the present paper, the framework is applicable to many – although not all – of

the plays that are included in the corpus. In Ionesco's *Amédée*, for example, E/physical laws is relaxed, as mushrooms grow in the protagonist couple's living room, whereas a corpse is lying in their bedroom and is getting older and bigger. Ionesco's *The Future is in Eggs* relaxes A/properties, as Roberta gives birth to eggs, which her husband then has to hatch. The projection of logically impossible worlds is very common. In Ionesco's *The Chairs*, the Old Couple both has and does not have a son, whereas in the interrogation scene of Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, Stanley is accused of being both a bachelor and a widower, of having murdered his wife and of having never got married. As regards the role of internal conflicts of fictional worlds, in Pinter's *Betrayal* the characters hold conflicting Knowledge Worlds and by the time the play finishes the conflict remains unresolved.

What all this suggests is that the findings are not valid only as regards the specific plays, but can be extended to a range of texts that belong to the absurdist genre. The fact that absurdity cannot always be seen in this light is little surprising, given that the playwrights have a whole 'arsenal' of stylistic mechanisms for the creation of absurdist effects in their plays.

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'I suggest that we need more research'
Personal reference in linguistics journal articles[*]

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Abstract

The field of English for Academic Purposes (henceforth EAP) "seeks to provide insights into the structures and meanings of academic texts, into the demands placed by academic contexts on communicative behaviours, and into the pedagogic practices by which these behaviours can be developed" (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002: 3). This study, situated within the fields of pragmatics and EAP, investigates the use of personal reference in the academic discipline of Linguistics.

The corpus used in this study consists of 15 linguistics journal articles, including both research and review articles. In this paper I will focus on one feature, namely personal reference. First person singular and first person plural pronouns were coded manually according to their semantic reference and the pragmatic functions they perform.

The main question that I will attempt to address is: What are the semantic referents and the pragmatic functions performed by personal reference in the journal articles examined for this study? A close qualitative study of the pragmatic functions of first person singular pronoun, and *inclusive* or *exclusive we* reveals how writers express their stance and the ways in which they negotiate their relationship with their material and their audience. The findings suggest that the semantic references of first person plural are often ambiguous and that expert writers are surprisingly inconsistent in their use of personal reference. Thus, particular attention will be given to the discussion of the functions of ambiguous references, shifts between first person singular and first person plural inclusive and exclusive references, and, finally, the concept of multifunctionality (Halliday & Hasan 1989, Hyland 2005) - issues relatively neglected in the literature.

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[*] The findings presented in this paper are part of a larger cross-cultural study of Greek-speaking and English-speaking expert linguists' writing. However, this paper only discusses the analysis of English-speaking writers' corpus.

1. Introduction

The role of English as a lingua franca for the dissemination of research in science, industry and technology has had, as Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) suggest, "an enormous impact on the educational experiences of vast numbers of students around the world" (ibid.: xiii). For these students, fluency in the norms of academic discourse, which are dominant in the English-speaking world, determines to a great extent the level of their performance. Indeed, competence in EAP is a prerequisite not only for students, but also for academics who want to have their work published in international journals, in order to become fully-fledged members of the academic community. As a result of this, the need for more EAP pre- and in-sessional courses based on specialised teaching has increased.

Although there have been considerable changes in the materials and the methods used in EAP courses (see Jordan, 2002), there is demand for more research based on real empirical data, which explores the practices of students or expert writers. The view that academic writing is purely objective, impersonal and informational, which is often reflected in EAP materials, has been criticised by a number of researchers (e.g. Bazerman, 1988; Fløttum *et al.*, 2006; Fortanet, 2004; Harwood, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Hyland, 2001; Myers, 1989, 1990; Swales, 1990; Vassileva, 1998, 2001). Recent research based on empirical evidence has proved that the research article (henceforth RA) does not only fulfil what Brown & Yule (1983) refer to as the transactional function[1]. By now, the view of academic writing as embodying interaction among writers, readers and the academic community as a whole has been established (Hyland, 2001, 2005).

This paper is hoping to contribute to this body of research by examining interpersonal aspects in experts' research articles in the discipline of Linguistics. The linguistic feature under examination for this study is personal reference.[2] The scope of this paper is twofold: on the one hand it seeks to present results regarding the semantic reference and the pragmatic functions of personal references in the corpus under examination,[3] and on the other, to explore 3 problematic issues regarding the use of personal reference in academic writing, namely:

- Ambiguous semantic references of *we*.
- The concept of multifunctionality
- Shifts between first person singular and first person plural inclusive and exclusive references.

[1] According to Brown & Yule (1983: 1) the transactional function can be described as the function in which language serves the purpose of content expression, whereas the interactional function deals with the expression of social relations and personal attitudes.

[2] The term *personal reference* has been chosen, as the particular functional category is realised linguistically in various ways in different languages. For example, in Greek, personal reference is mainly realised in the verb inflection (for more details see Vladimirou, forthcoming). The term *personal pronouns* has been used with reference to the English corpus. However, as in this paper I am only presenting data from the English corpus, the terms *personal reference* and *personal pronouns* will be used interchangeably.

[3] Unless otherwise specified, whenever I refer to 'corpus' I mean the English corpus used for the present paper, not the total corpus used for the wider cross-cultural study.

2. Personal reference in academic discourse: Previous studies

Personal pronouns have been acknowledged as one of the main means used by writers in order to express their stance, to communicate with their readers and to establish their relations with the academic community of which they are, or they aspire to be, members. Previous studies on personal reference in academic writing have focused on the semantic referents and pragmatic functions of *I* and *we*.

The departure point for this line of research has been Round's (1987) influential study of personal reference use in spoken academic discourse. Exploring the pragmatic functions of personal pronouns and identifying the semantic referents of first person plural have been the two main foci of research in the literature so far. Several functional taxonomies have been proposed as a basis for the categorisation of mainly the first person singular and first person plural pronouns (Fortanet, 2004; Harwood, 2005a; Harwood 2005b; Harwood 2005c; Hyland, 2002; Kuo, 1999; Rounds, 1987; Tang & John, 1999; Vassileva, 1998).

2.1 Semantic references of *we*

Regarding the semantic references of *we*, most researchers have distinguished between two main categories; inclusive and exclusive *we*. Exclusive *we* may be defined as the writer's use of first person plural to refer to himself/ herself, and inclusive *we* as collectively referring to the writer, the readers and the academic community as a whole. Fortanet (2004) and Kuo (1999) have created the most detailed taxonomies that capture the various references of the first person plural.

Biber *et al.* (1999: 329) suggest that the "meaning of the first person plural is often vague". Similarly, Wales (1996: 163) points out that the interpretation of the discourse referents of *we*, which are seemingly limitless, depends upon "the particular context of use and the inferences to be drawn on the basis of the mutual knowledge of the speaker and interpreter". It seems that the issue of ambiguity in the semantic mapping of personal reference has been largely neglected in the literature, and it is not reflected in the taxonomies that have been proposed so far, apart from Kuo's (1999) taxonomy. Although both Fortanet (2004) and Kuo (1999) touch upon this problematic issue, they do not discuss it further. Harwood (2005c: 345) is the only researcher who takes this issue further by drawing attention to the fact that the fuzzy distinction between the inclusive and exclusive references of pronouns can be strategic.

2.2 Pragmatic functions of personal reference

Most taxonomies proposed for the pragmatic functions of personal reference revolve around the core issue of authorial presence and the relationship of the author with her/his readers and the academic community (e.g. Harwood, 2005c; Hyland, 2002a; Tang & John, 1999). Other studies focus only on one type of pragmatic function, which they explore in detail (see for example Harwood (2005a) for a discussion on the methodological *I*, and Hyland (2001) for an analysis of self-promotion). Tang & John's

(1999) study, which is based on students' use of pronouns, focuses on the degree of authorial presence in their writings. The discourse functions that they identify range from the least face-threatening *I as representative* to the most powerful *I as originator*, which is used by students very rarely. Hyland (2002a), based on a students' and an experts' corpus, identified similar categories such as: *stating a purpose*, *explaining a procedure*, *stating results/claims*, *expressing self-benefits*, *elaborating an argument*, which he then used for the categorisation of pronouns and the quantitative analysis of his results. Harwood (2005c) elaborates on the functions previously proposed in the literature by adding functions which capture the subtle effects that an author can create, such as: *describing or critiquing disciplinary practices, further research and state-of-the-art-concerns*, as well as the use of shifts between inclusive and exclusive pronouns, an issue which I am going to explore in detail in this paper.

Although previous studies on personal reference in academic writing have identified and examined in detail the referential possibilities and the wide range of pragmatic functions that personal pronouns perform, there are still certain issues that need to be explored further. This paper is hoping to contribute to the body of literature by looking at issues which have been relatively neglected: ambiguity, multifunctionality and shifts among different types of pronouns. The next section discusses the methodology used in the present study.

3. Methodology

3.1 The text corpus

The corpus used for the present study comprises 15 articles by native English-speaking writers (approximately 130,700 words; see Appendix). I acknowledge that the term 'native' is highly problematic. The 'nativeness' of the writers was not always something that could be easily tracked down. Therefore, the writers' affiliation and background was used as a guide. However, as Martín Martín (2004) mentions, even if the writers were not originally from an English-speaking background, the fact that their work had been accepted for publication in international journals means that they conform to the rhetorical traditions of the English-speaking academic community. Table 1 below outlines the criteria used for the selection of papers.[4]

Table 1: Criteria for the selection of papers

Criteria	Dataset
Language	English
Context of production	International context
Genre	JA (research and review articles)
Number of papers	15
Discipline	Linguistics
Year of publication	1990-2004
Authorship	Single-authored. English-speaking (native)

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[4] For a detailed discussion of the criteria used for the selection of papers see Vladimirou (forthcoming).

The articles selected are both review and research articles, published between 1997 and 2004 in leading international journals, and they all belong to the discipline of Linguistics. Following Becher's (2001) taxonomy of disciplines, linguistics has been chosen as a field that stands between pure science and humanities. The choice of linguistics articles was also motivated by the fact that relatively little attention has been given to the analysis of writing in the social sciences, as opposed to scientific writing, which has been studied in detail (e.g. Hyland, 1998; Koutsantoni, 2004; Lindeberg, 2004; Myers, 1989; Salager-Meyer, 1994; Varttala, 1999). Every effort was made to make the sample representative of different sub-fields within linguistics. Therefore, the data were drawn from a number of leading journals in the field: *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Applied Linguistics*, *Discourse and Society*, *Journal of Linguistics*, *Lingua*, *Language and Education*, *Linguistic Inquiry*, *Language and Communication*. The articles were studied in their entirety. No co-authored texts were included in the corpus, as one of the main foci of this study is the detailed examination of *editorial we* (see section 4.2).

3.2 Procedures

The study is part of a larger corpus-based cross-cultural study of personal reference, which used both quantitative and qualitative methods. However, this paper employs qualitative methods, namely, close contextual analysis.The term 'contextual' will be defined and discussed in detail in the following section. In Stage 1 of the analysis I coded the results according to their semantic referents and in Stage 2 I examined them according to their pragmatic functions.

4. Co-text, context, text: Criteria for the codification of personal reference

The present section deals with the criteria employed for the classification of my results into the categories which are discussed in sections 4.1 and 4.2. Context, which is a highly elusive notion (e.g. Duranti & Goodwin, 1992), was the most salient factor during the process of this coding. As Levinson (1983) has observed, the phenomenon of deixis and the notion of context are inextricably related: "The single most obvious way in which the relationship between language and context is reflected in the structures of languages themselves, is through the phenomenon of deixis" (Levinson 1983: 54).

Duranti & Goodwin (1992) use the term 'focal event' to identify the phenomenon being contextualised, and they envisage context much the same way as Goffman (1974) does; as a frame that surrounds this event and provides resources for its appropriate interpretation. The above view of context is particularly relevant to this study. In our case, however, pronominal reference is the focal point and the context surrounding it is not a homogeneous entity, but it comprises a number of different layers. Therefore, rather than engaging in a vain effort to define 'context', it seems more feasible for this study to break it down to more manageable and possibly easily definable components. Context (for the purposes of this study) may be viewed as a

multidimensional phenomenon, consisting of different levels, hierarchically organised, rather than as a concrete, strictly defined one-dimensional phenomenon.

The categorisation process starts from the first level, the immediate co-text. Whenever one level of context does not suffice for the interpretation of a pronominal reference and its classification, I move on to the next levels (the wider co-text, the context of situation and the context of culture[5]) which might provide more hints. Finally, cases where even the cultural context was not helpful enough for the categorisation of the data were classified as ambiguous. The different levels of context do not function separately one from the other; they interact, they may overlap, and they may certainly function simultaneously. The analyst will often have to take into consideration several or even all of the levels of context in order to arrive at a particular interpretation, which in our case would be related to the semantic reference of a deictic expression. At this point, I also need to note that by no means am I implying that this methodology necessarily reflects how people process context. This methodology may only be employed as a useful tool for the interpretation of a particular occurrence of pronominal reference.

4.1 Coding of first person singular pronoun[6]

The referents of *I* were not a contentious issue, as they were obviously referring to the writer himself/herself. According to Fasulo & Zuccermaglio (2002: 1122) "the first person singular pronoun, '*I*' is in principle the least ambiguous among pronouns from a grammatical point of view: indeed it refers only to one person (unlike *we*, whose members could be vague, and include or not include listeners) and does not risk misidentification".

After a preliminary analysis of a sample from my data, I created the following categories for first person singular pronominal reference:

- *I as researcher*
- *I indefinite*
- *I biographical*
- *I in acknowledgements*

4.1.1 *I as researcher*

This can be defined as the expression of the author's role in the text as the person undertaking the study reported in the journal article, involving different degrees of agency. This is the most overt expression of the researcher's identity and it may include the expression of his/her claims, and the description of his/her arguments, as in (1):

(1)   **My** own position is that **I** would like to see more reference to fathers as central (SUN 268).

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[5] For more details regarding the levels of context see Vladimirou (forthcoming).
[6] For a detailed discussion of the analytical framework devised for this study, see Vladimirou (forthcoming).

This is the most common category of first person singular pronoun usage found in my data. This type of authorial *I* is by no means a homogeneous entity, as it encapsulates all possible degrees of authorial presence. It ranges from the writer's display of a strong authorial identity to cases where the writer simply guides the reader through the course of his/her work and, therefore, it also has the function of signposting. *I as a researcher* roughly corresponds to three of Tang & John's (1999) categories: *I as guide, I as architect* and *I as opinion-holder* and *originator*.

4.1.2 *I indefinite*

This use of *I* can be defined as a generic reference to people. This category corresponds to Tang and John's (1999) *I as representative*. Although according to Tang & John (1999) this type of reference is usually realised by use of the plural *we*, I had examples in my data in which the first singular referred to people in general and could be substituted by *one*. The following example (2) illustrates how the *indefinite I* was used in my data:

(2)   Just as **I** have purchased several different coloured sweaters from which **I** chose one to wear each day (quite randomly, **I** believe, although, this requires systematic study!) (EL 470).[7]

4.1.3 *I biographical*

This category is defined as the expression of a writer's role as a person, not as a researcher. It seems that in the previously proposed typologies of pronouns in academic writing (e.g. Tang & John 1999) the expression of identity of the author not as a researcher or member of the academic community, but as a person, has been ignored. Although the genre under examination determines that, in the majority of cases, the pronoun *I* will express the identity of the writer as a researcher, in my data we do find instances of what I have termed *biographical I*, which refers to the author as a person. Example (3) below is illustrative of this category:

(3)   **I became a mother** some 5 years ago, and hence found myself in a good position to conduct a small-scale study of what parentcraft literature has to say to, and about, fathers and mothers (SUN 251).

4.1.4 *I acknowledgements*

Although the expression of gratitude from the writer is, or rather has become, part of the *I as a researcher* identity, it seems that *I in acknowledgements* bears a somehow unique status, standing between *I as a researcher* and *personal I*. This is actually the expression of the personal, social as well as the scholarly self of the writer. This category, I think, deserves to be treated separately, as it constitutes one of the strongest expressions of the interpersonal function in academic writing, which is the focus of this study. As Hyland (2003: 244) suggests, "acknowledgements are much more than a simple

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[7] Contextual note: this is an example that the writer provides, in order to illustrate his point.

catalogue of indebtedness. They offer insights into the persona of the writer, the patterns of engagement that define collaboration and interdependence among scholars, and the practices of expectation and etiquette that are involved". The instances of *I* belonging to the present category occurred at the beginning, or sometimes at the end of journal articles, often as a separate note. They were unambiguous and therefore easily recognised and codified and they usually took the following form:

(4)   **I would like to the take the opportunity to express my sincere appreciation** to Martin Hewings, Karen Hodder, Dan Malt and Peter Skehan for their support and valuable comments. **I would also like to thank** the anonymous reviewers for their constructive suggestions (LIT 258).

4.2 Coding of first person plural pronoun

The vagueness associated with first person plural reference has been pointed out before in the literature (e.g. Biber *et al.* 1999; Mühlausler & Harre 1990). As Mühlausler & Harre (1990: 169) point out, "simplistic statements such as that *we* stands for a group of people including the speaker (Leech & Svartvik 1978: 57) are not borne out in all instances". This vagueness has led these authors to state that it is usually left to the addressee to infer who is included in the reference (Biber *et al.*, 1999). Following Fortanet (2004), Inigo-Mora (2004) and Kuo (1999), I have coded *we* according to its semantic referents. The two main categories that were identified are the following:

- '*we*'-inclusive
- '*we*'- exclusive

These categories were further divided in the following sub-categories:

4.2.1 *Exclusive we: We for I*

This type of pronominal reference may be defined as the writer's exclusive use of first person plural in order to refer to himself/ herself:

(5)   Here, and throughout, **we** use 'grammar' in the traditional technical sense which includes morphology (the structure of words) and syntax (the uses of words as and in sentences) but NOT phonology (HOC 151).

The choice of verb in example 5 determines that it is primarily, if not exclusively, the author who assumes responsibility for the actions described in the text, for the claims being made, or the ideas that are being put forward. The instances of *we* classified under *we for I* vary in terms of the author's exclusive involvement. This reminds us that although most of the first person pronoun instances classified as *we for I* were rather clear cut, the categories of this taxonomy are relational. If it was doubtful whether the involvement of the writer exclusively or the writer and the reader was prioritised the particular instance was classified as ambiguous (see section 5).

4.2.2 Exclusive we: Writer and other people

This type of exclusive *we* includes the writer and another group of people (who may belong to the academic community), however it excludes the readers and the academic community as a whole.

(6)   A vital clue to the answer is to be found in the classroom. When, seven decades ago, **I started** learning Latin (**my** first foreign language). **I was taught** to PARSE and CONSTRUE. (…)

Also, in some cases only parsing - that is, identification - was necessary: if **we recognized** the whole phrase de bello Gallico from earlier exposure, **we didn't have to dismember it** and deal separately with its constituents. Be that as it may, when everything in a sentence had been parsed and all had been construed, **we knew** what the sentence meant. (The meaning might itself be turgid or incomprehensible, but that is quite another matter.) Why did **our** Latin teacher **make us** parse and construe?

Because that is how **we understand**. In the elementary classroom **we perform** these operations slowly, laboriously, and with the assistance - or hindrance! - of a complicated technical terminology.

(HOC 164)

The immediate co-text of these instances of personal reference were usually not adequate for me to determine how they could be classified. Usually, the wider co-text (at the level of the paragraph) and/or the individual text had to be taken into consideration as cues. In the following examples, contextual cues (marked in bold) make it obvious that the author is referring to himself and a specific group of people, excluding the audience. Interestingly, in example 6, the first 5 instances of first person plural are classified as *we-writer and others*, whereas the rest as *generic/indefinite we*, as they refer to people in general.

4.2.3 Inclusive we: We-writer and audience

We-writer and audience may be defined as the type of reference which includes the writer of the journal article under examination and the immediate readership of the text:

(7)   Transcriptions of recorded oral narratives exhibit these discourse marker functions and related ones for both *well* and *but,* as **we will see** below (NOR 850).

This category of personal reference was found to collocate almost exclusively with verbs of perception (see, observe) and was usually associated with the function of signposting. Once more, the co-text and, in particular, the following verb were indicators of the category in which an example belongs. However, the basic criterion used for this coding was whether the action in which the writer and the readers were

urged to engage in (to observe something for example) referred to a point made in the text or to more general issues outside of the particular journal article.

4.2.4 Inclusive we: We-academic community

This category is defined as the first person plural reference which includes the writer and the linguistics community as a whole:

(8)   These entail an analytic engagement, during both learning and use, without which **we** would have no more than a list of alterable phrases heard, memorise and reproduced. **We** must, in short, look for both analyticity and formulaicity (WRA 483).

As opposed to the examples cited above, the occurrences of *we* in excerpt 8 refer to the academic community as a whole, which in our case would be the disciplinary community of linguists, as the data under examination are linguistics articles. Here, the writer discusses issues which are potentially of interest to the wider disciplinary community, especially to the researchers and academics involved in second language learning and teaching, for example, the way attrition works or the way we analyse data from L2 speakers. In this case, we see that, when multiple audiences are involved, pinning down the tenor of academic prose proves to be a complex issue.

4.2.5 We-indefinite

This category will be defined as a generic first person plural reference which includes people in general:

(9)   When **we** hear someone say something in a language **we** know, how do **we** know what is said? What is the nature of the collusion between what in **our** heads and what is heard by virtue of which **we** can understand? (HOC: 163-4).

In the above example, the immediate co-text reveals that *we* does not refer to the academic community, but to people in general. The writer could well have used 'one' or 'people' instead of *we*. This type of generalised reference foregrounds neither the writer nor the reader (Hewings & Coffin 2007: 7), as it was the case with the categories previously identified.

The previous section dealt with the presentation of the analytical framework and illustrative results for each of the categories devised. The following sections will examine in detail interesting complexities that have arisen in the process of analyzing the various instances of pronominal reference in my data; namely ambiguity, multifunctionality and shifts between different pronouns.

5. Semantic references of *we*: The issue of ambiguity

The distinction between ambiguity and vagueness has been confusing in the literature (e.g. Myers, 1996). This view is also shared by Channell (1994), who sees ambiguity as a case of two or more competing distinct meanings, and vagueness as a case in which no meaning can be clearly identified. It is clear from the above that the problematic semantic references of *we* appearing in my data need to be tackled as ambiguity issues. Here our main concern is not the lack of identifiable semantic referents, but the existence of too many, and the fact that none of the levels of context described above assist us in choosing one possible referent. Difficulty in identifying the exact referent of first person pronouns may create problems for the analyst when categorising the use of *we*, but at the same time *we* can function as a useful rhetorical tool for the writer. Harwood (2005c) makes a clear case about the relation between strategic ambiguity and the first person plural pronoun: "The reason the exclusive/ inclusive ambivalence can be politically advantageous for the writer is that they can move between exclusive and inclusive uses, sometimes even in the same sentence to achieve a number of effects" (Harwood 2005c: 345-6). According to Harwood (2005c), writers can potentially exploit the exclusive/ inclusive ambiguity in order to achieve their rhetorical purposes. Let us look at the following examples in order to get a clearer picture of how this might work:

> (10)   A successful statement of relevance can hardly contrast on any higher level of meaning with the preceding discourse, though **we might well expect** contrasts and/or cancellations on lower levels. Thus, one might say that *but* marks a contrast between the detail level in the foregoing turn to the general level of the final turn. But even in this formulation **we perceive** an orientation to the function of *but* in relation to the organization of the ongoing narrative (NOR 862).

In (10), several references are at work simultaneously, resulting in semantic ambiguity. The first questions that one may ask when dealing with this example are 'Who expects contrasts?' and 'Who perceives an orientation?'. The immediate as well as the wider co-text cannot resolve the ambiguity, as both writer and reader can potentially 'expect contrasts or cancellations' at lower levels and both can 'perceive an orientation to the function of *but*'. The point of view expressed in the text is obviously that of the author; thus, one could claim that this is a clear instance of *we for I*. This interpretation proves to be oversimplified if we examine the wider context, at the level of the individual text. The examples below seem to prove that the writer does use the first person singular elsewhere in the research article, therefore, the question regarding the semantic reference of the particular instance of *we* remains open. A closer look at the following examples offers some hints. We notice that the writer mainly prefers *I* where the function of the pronoun is to organise the discourse:

> (11)   **In this section, I will first illustrate** some typical 'core' cases of but in its connective and contrastive uses, in order to set the stage for **my** description of its specifically narrative functions (NOR 857).

(12)   **In this section, I will present examples** of *well* in spoken narratives which go beyond the descriptions of *well* as a lexical item or DM or the non-narrative types described so far. For present purposes, **we can assume** that storytellers and their audiences orient themselves to a narrative framework like that proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1972), according to which a narrative consists of six principal parts (…) (NOR 853).

To emphasise his contribution to the field:

(13)   **My own recent work** (Norrick 1998a,b) shows that oral storytellers strategically deploy disfluencies, repetition and formulaicity to mark specific narrative elements and transitions (NOR 850).

To present his claim:

(14)   **I hope to show** that *well* and *but* fulfil particular functions in oral narrative which follow neither from the lexical senses of these two words nor from their usual discourse marker functions. Instead, the functions of both *well* and *but* in oral narrative reflect expectations about the structures and conventions of storytelling (NOR 849).

Interestingly, in (10) the writer is in the process of developing his argument; thus, the main function of the pronominal reference is to put forward his point as clearly as possible and to convince the reader. It is primarily the writer who expects contrasts and perceives an orientation, but by using *we* he takes the readers along. The effect is to make the readers feel that they actively participate in the argument, and ultimately to convince them of the validity of the claims presented. Thus, "the writer is using inclusive pronouns to make the reader feel involved" (Harwood 2005c: 346). At this point, I need to emphasise that I am not suggesting that the writer has used the ambiguous *we* intentionally. This issue needs further research and is beyond the scope of this paper. What I am interested in is not the writer's intentions, but the potential effect that the text will have on the reader, and how the insights gained from these observations can inform EAP teaching materials.

6.   Multifunctionality and pronominal reference

Moving on from the level of semantic reference to the level of pragmatic functions, in this section I will deal with the concept of multifunctionality in personal reference. The concept of multifunctionality is drawn from Halliday & Hasan's (1989: 23) original proposal:

> Every sentence in a text is multifunctional; but not in such a way that you can point to one particular constituent or segment and say this segment has just this function. The meanings are woven together in a very dense fabric in such a way that, to understand them, we do not look separately at its different parts; rather we look at the whole thing simultaneously from a number of different angles, each perspective contributing towards the total interpretation. This is the essential nature of a functional approach.

As was mentioned in Section 2.2, in previous studies, various taxonomies of the pragmatic functions of personal reference have been devised. Some of them have examined this issue in quantitative terms, by placing particular instances of pronouns under rigid functional categories. (Harwood 2005b, Hyland 2002a). A preliminary analysis of my data revealed that the quantification of personal references according to their pragmatic functions proved a highly problematic task. Although most of the times a particular pragmatic reference fulfilled one (primary) function, I found instances where personal references seemed to perform more than one function at the same time. Harwood (2005c: 363) is, to the best of my knowledge, the only researcher who brings up the issue of multifunctionality in relation to pronominal reference. Let me illustrate this point by examining the following example from my corpus:

(15) I am regarding the grammar and vocabulary in these texts as systems of choices from which writers can select. I am also assuming that these choices have non-equivalent meanings (…)In doing so **I hope to show** that these 11 texts, through their language, realise a range of gendered discourses, in the Foucauldian sense of discourses as 'different ways of structuring knowledge and social practice' (Fairclough, 1992: 3) (SUN 254).

The author here is making the claim that the 11 texts she is examining 'through their language realise a range of gendered discourses'. The use of hedging (*hope*) suggests that the author here is a cautious claim maker, seeking to achieve solidarity with the readers and the disciplinary community, and leaves space for alternative interpretations by projecting a more modest self-image. On the other hand, the mere choice of the first person singular pronoun instead of *we*, gives a glimpse of the self-promotional tenor of the text, as it highlights the contribution of the author. If we look at the co-text in which the pronominal reference I am examining appears, we observe that it constitutes the final part of an argument. The author first makes clarifications by defining the use of the terms 'grammar' and 'vocabulary' for the purposes of her study, and finally, based on these, she is making her claim. Thus, the pronominal reference here also seems to function as the final part in the elaboration of the author's argument. Hyland (2002a) and Harwood (2005b) distinguish between the two functions 'stating results and claims' and elaborating an argument', but in this case the distinction between the two is not clear-cut. Finally, the author here seems to act as a discourse guide for the readers. She organises the discourse for them by announcing what is going to follow and what the outcome of her analysis is going to be. In effect, she also states her purpose, which is a function also identified by Harwood (2005b: 252). Finally, she makes a claim, expresses her stance and constructs her relationship with the readers and the academic community.

I hope I have demonstrated how a particular instance of pronominal reference can perform more than one function. It is possible that not all the readers will agree with all the potential interpretations proposed above, which are highly context-sensitive anyway. However, the acknowledgement of multifunctional pronominal references can have important methodological implications for studies which are looking at personal pronouns in academic discourse. The classification of pronominal

references under one category according to the function they perform cannot be considered unproblematic. Although, such classifications may be considered useful as a starting point, there are examples which cannot be placed under one functional category, although very often one function seems to be prioritised. In effect, quantitative functional analyses based on this type of categorisation, such as the one that Harwood (2005b) undertakes, may prove to be problematic. A possible solution to this problem would be either the creation of a separate category which would include multifunctional pronominal references, or the treatment of these types of functional analyses in qualitative terms. Finally, if a quantitative analysis is judged to be necessary, one needs to acknowledge that several categories often overlap, and to categorise the various pronominal references according to their primary functions.

7. Shifts

Having looked at the potential functions of ambiguous pronominal references, in this section I will explore the functions of shifts between inclusive and exclusive pronouns. Harwood (2005: 366) reports that, in his study of 21 EAP textbooks, all but one provide misleading or no information regarding the use of pronouns in academic writing. Most of them advise students to avoid the use of personal pronouns, or to restrict their use to "suggest a rare and exceptional emphasis" (Watson 1987: 68). Corpus-based studies (e.g. Harwood 2005c), on the other hand, have proved that pronouns are not only extensively used in experts' writing, but that very often writers alternate between the use of exclusive and inclusive references in the same text. My findings support this, as in all the research articles analysed for the present study [individual] authors used both first person plural and first person singular inclusive and exclusive references. Indeed, expert writers in my corpus are not consistent in their use of pronouns. These shifts in the use of pronouns have, I am suggesting, a number of rhetorical effects. Let me illustrate my point with example (16).

(16) (…) constraints to do with the linguistic environment are examined. **My study showed** that learners are more likely to delete copula when it is preceded by a subject containing a noun than when the subject is a pronoun. There is, in fact, plenty of evidence to show that interlanguages, like fully formed natural languages, are rule governed, although the rules do not always correspond to the rules found in the target language (see Tarone 1988 for a review).

However, the discovery that interlanguage variability is systematic does not eliminate the possibility that it may also be in parts, non-systematic. Labov (1971), in his discussion of the notion of 'system' in pidgins and creoles, argues that 'important and significant linguistic behaviour can be non-systematic' (p. 449). Labov asserts that 'it would be meaningless to say that linguistic relations are systematic if there were not also forms of communication that were unsystematic' (p. 451). He suggests that pidgins, which, as we know have many of the characteristics of early interlanguage, may be so unsystematic as to cast doubt on their 'full

linguistic status' (p. 454). He points out, quite rightly, that the amount of systematicity in a linguistic system must be determined empirically. As **we shall shortly see**, this requires the use of rigorous quantitative analyses.

Again, **we find** that some L2 researchers have recognized that learner-language is non-systematic (see below). However, other researchers have been reluctant to acknowledge this. Preston (1996), for example, comments 'I am suspicious that language variation which is influenced by nothing at all is a chimera' (p. 25). Schachter (1986) argues that learners need to keep linguistic forms apart in order to use them for specific purposes and that this precludes extensive free variation in learner-language. In effect, Schachter dismisses non-systematic variation because she finds it of no theoretical interest in accounting for how L2 learners construct their interlanguages. In one respect, Schachter is surely right; non-systematic variability is only of interest if it can be shown to be important for α theory of L2 acquisition. In earlier articles (Ellis 1985, 1989) this is precisely what **I attempted to do**; to develop a theory in which free variation plays α constitutive role.

Developments in both the methodology for studying variability in learner language (for example, the use of VARBRUL to carry out multivariate analyses of factors influencing language use - see Young and Bayley 1996) and in theories of L2 acquisition (for example, Ellis's (1996) arguments in support of sequence learning as a subsequent basis for grammar learning) make it opportune to revisit the issue of free variation in SLA. To this end, wish to consider three interrelated questions:

Does free variation in L2 learner-language exist?
If it does exist, is it of any general theoretical interest in SLA?
Assuming that it is of theoretical interest, what role does free variation play in interlanguage development?
First, though, **I will consider** what is meant by the term free variation.

(EL 462)

At the beginning, the writer chooses to use a self-promotional *I* ('**My study** showed…'), to refer to his own study, a choice which is obvious for English-speaking writers, but not writers working within different academic traditions, who could have preferred to use the editorial *we* (cf. Fløttum *et al.*, 2006; Vassileva, 1998; Vladimirou, forthcoming) Next, he appeals to the common knowledge that the academic community shares (**as we know).** Later on, he moves on to an inclusive *we*, which has been coded as *we-writer and reader* (see section 4.2.2 for more details):

(17)   …as *we* **shall shortly see**, this requires the use of rigorous quantitative analyses…

This type of inclusive *we* collocates with a verb of perception (see), makes a strictly textual reference and, thus, addresses the immediate readership of the journal article. This *we* occurs in the process of the writer elaborating his argument, which, as Harwood (2005c: 357) suggests, could be considered as self-serving rather than as an indicator of positive politeness. Similarly, the writer shifts to a more ambiguous pronominal reference, which could be interpreted as referring to the writer, the writer

and the reader, or the writer and the academic community, and which serves a similar rhetorical purpose:

> (18)   … again **we find** that some L2 researchers have recognised that learner-language is non-systematic …

The writer now shifts to first person singular again:

> (19)   … this is precisely what **I attempted to do**; to develop a theory in which free variation plays a constitutive role, …

This highlights his contribution on the one hand and is interestingly hedged on the other (attempted). Finally, the writer shifts to two uses of *I* which performs the function of organising the discourse:

> (20)   To this end, **I wish to consider** three interrelated questions' and 'first though **I will consider**.

The focus of this section was on the shifts among different types of personal pronouns and not their functions. I hope I have demonstrated how writers shift among first person singular and first person plural inclusive and exclusive personal pronouns in order to achieve their purposes, whether these are rhetorical or manipulative.

8.   Concluding remarks

In this paper, I have argued that ambiguous semantic references of *we* need to be implemented in future functional taxonomies of personal pronouns in academic writing. Also, on pragmatic functional grounds, I have argued that personal pronouns are more effectively discussed through a qualitative analysis, and that the concept of multifunctionality proves particularly useful, as we very often see pragmatic functions overlapping. As expert writers appear be inconsistent in their use of personal reference, I am suggesting that shifts can be potentially used strategically by writers. One of the potential practical outputs of this study relates to the design of courses and materials that address the needs of advanced EAP students or professional writers. EAP courses can concentrate more on teaching the different ways writers may use to communicate with their audience and to construct their own identity (for example with interpersonal metadiscourse). This will contribute to the achievement of the writers' ultimate purpose, which is convincing the audience of the validity of their claims.

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