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Edited by

Grace Bota

Helen Hargreaves

Chia-chun Lai

Rong Rong

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The World English Model revised:

Definite article use in ICE-GB and ICE-HK

Steve Disney

University College Plymouth Marjon

Abstract

This paper presents a cross-genre study of patterns of definite article uses in sections of ICE-GB and ICE H-K. The data analysis focuses on the timed student essay (TSE) components of each and finds differences in use types in ICE-HK/TSE than in ICE-GB/TSE based on the Quirk et al (1985) criteria. As the function of student essays is to display knowledge and, given that the conventions of different environments affect an individual's language choices, patterns of usage could be seen as a reflection of cultural demands. I conclude that there is a difference in knowledge display strategies between HK students' writing and British students' writing. The former prefers to overtly display knowledge, whereas the latter use a more indirect display strategy. I relate this research to Kachru's (1986, 1985: 12) concentric 'inner and outer circles' model and Yanu's (2001: 124) revised model, which accounts for register. I present a representation of the WE model that combines both models.

Introduction

English is the language of choice for many people whose first languages are not mutually intelligible, reflecting the dominance in world trade and power of first the British colonial system and now the Americans. Estimates of the number users in the world range from 340 million (Crystal 1995: 109) upwards, but this largely depends on how much English one needs to use in order to qualify. While most of the English of any given user in the world is intelligible to any other, there are many differences noted both between individual users and groups of users. As a result, there are countless descriptive and theoretical studies and projects on the use of English across different registers, genres, times and peoples from many different approaches. One of these is the ICE project, a collection of 1 million word corpora from different 'Englishes' using a balanced source set of naturally occurring data. The project was originally conceived by Sidney Greenbaum at University College London with the principle aim of providing 'the resources for comparative studies of the English used in countries where it is either a majority first language [...] or an official additional language' (Greenbaum 1996: 3). It is in this spirit that the present study is conducted, focussing on some differences between data in ICE-GB (Great Britain) and ICE-HK (Hong Kong). This paper begins by outlining some of the issues involved in the comparative study of the use of English in the world, with particular reference to Hong Kong. It goes on to describe a quantitative study of definite article usage in the selected sections of the corpora, and concludes with a suggested revision of previously proposed models of the nature of World Englishes.

English in the World

The spread of English and its status outside native speaker (NS) countries is the subject of much debate, i.e. whether it is a "variety", a "dialect" or "learner English". Widdowson, claiming to be provocative in order to widen debate, says English is a 'stabilized and standardized code leased out on a global scale, and controlled by the inventors, not entirely unlike the franchise for Pizza Hut' (1997: 140). The situation in 1980s post-colonial India led Kachru (1985: 12, 1986) to propose the concentric "inner and outer circles" model (fig. 1) of respectively old, new "contact" varieties, and a further circle outside these for EFL English.
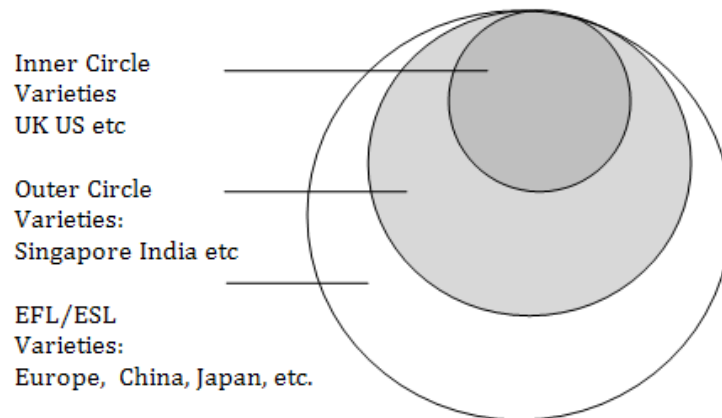
Fig. 1 Kachru's Circles of English

Because register is unaccounted for and the borders between the circles are more graduated than this, Kachru's model is somewhat limited, but the status debate itself remains valid, because the exported language adapts to local needs, influenced by local social and psychological variety (Widdowson, 1997: 137). Indeed, variation is reflected even in the individual, and speakers may feel the language they use is "theirs", e.g. EFL learners and NSs alike may apologise for "*my* bad English". It is unsurprising, then, that countries where English has official or semi-official status claim the English used there is not a dialect of some external "standard English" (SE), but is an independent "variety". Native variety status can be determined when it exhibits its own accent, history, literature, idiomaticity and localised, standard-setting grammars (Butler, 1997, cited in Bolton, 2000: 277). This issue is inevitably coloured by politics and, echoing the old "dialect debate", Halliday (2003: 406) reminds us that 'as linguists we have always insisted that a standard language was just another dialect, but one that happened to be wearing a fancy uniform'.

A mutually intelligible global language would seem to need to recognise some "standard" version, if only to avoid misunderstanding, but this is also politically charged. Yanu (2001: 129), promoting the Quirkian notion of a designed 'Nuclear English', says that if possible 'English for global use should be dissociated from the norm of any English-speaking society'. More usefully, Crystal (2001: 57) argues that a 'linguistically healthy world' will recognise both a standard variety and local varieties, and '[a] philosophy of diversity, recognizing the importance of hybridization, does not exclude the notion of a standard'. One unofficial standard he notes is "World Standard Printed English" (WSPE) with a spoken standard to evolve, perhaps internet prompted. Crystal (2001: 57) reports that he has reluctantly capitulated to using the term 'Englishes' because, 'if a community wishes its way of speaking to be a "language", and if they have the political power to support their decision, who would be able to stop them doing so?' Widdowson sums up the debate saying that,

[a] dialect presupposes a language it is a dialect of. A code which declares independence is no longer a dialect but a language in its own right. People in Durham or Norfolk are not likely to declare independence. People in Ghana and Nigeria are. They may well wish to appropriate the language and make it their own. […] They are not dialects, they are something else. Something less continuous and dependent (Widdowson, 1997: 141-3).

Crucially, he says it is not 'the English language' that was exported to India, Hong Kong and Nigeria and spread through the world, but certain registers for certain purposes for certain people, those of power, commerce and science, rather like Norman French in Britain. These autonomous registers '…guarantee specialist communication within global expert communities. And this [...] is what most people are learning English *for*. It is not to indulge in social chat with native speakers' (Widdowson, 1997: 144). Yanu (2001: 124) revised Kachru's WE model to account for register, and to remove the value judgments inherent in the inner/outer circle distinction.
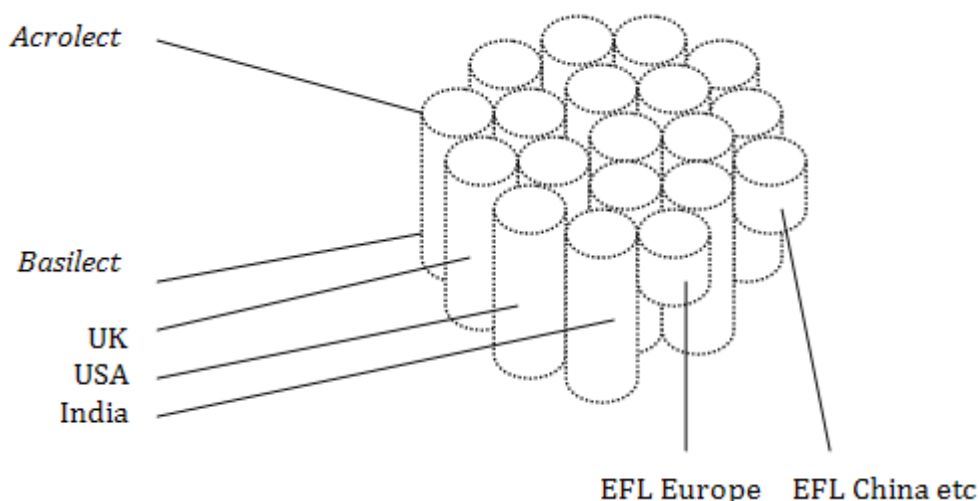
Fig 2 Yanu's (2001) Revised WE model

He used cylinders to denote each variety, with the acrolect at the top stretching to the basilect at the bottom to distinguish use with dotted lines to represent indistinct borders due to similarities. However, this model claims that EFL varieties do not extend into the basilect, which is disputable, as learners do indeed indulge in social chat, even if this is not the purpose of their study of the language. On the other hand, it could be claimed that the language they use in conversation is commonly more similar to that they use in the acrolect, thus making them sound more formal than they intend in conversation. I return to this issue briefly in the conclusion.

A new English variety arises when local needs result in expansion from acrolect registers into mesolect and perhaps basilect. This accounts for their core similarities and also for observed differences, i.e. acrolects exhibit fewer dissimilarities across varieties than basilects. In multi-lingual countries such as India and some African nations, English may be a social 'bridging language' other than just for trade, government and medicine and because the issues involve national identity it is difficult to accept anything other than Crystal's (2001) view, and accept the term 'Englishes'. Elsewhere, the spread through registers has differing effects, from supplanting indigenous languages almost entirely (e.g. Australia), to producing a Creole (e.g. Jamaica). However, in Europe and Cantonese speaking Hong-Kong for example, people may be unlikely to use English outside the acrolect register domain (Bolt and Bolton, 1996: 201) and variety status is more problematic to establish. Here, an EFL/ESL distinction may be more appropriate, based on the language's sociological status and is 'a question of assigning [linguistic features] to particular sociocultural contexts of language use' (Benson, 2000: 379). This view clearly supports Widdowson's register analysis. It is the study of such variation that is a prime motivation of the ICE project.

This paper focuses on ICE-GB and ICE-HK. There is a key difference in the status of English in these countries; while in the UK, English is almost entirely an "inner circle" natively acquired language, in Hong Kong, English is an almost entirely taught and learnt variety (Bolt and Bolton, 1996: 199). However, British English is the target variety there and HK English in fact represents the most target-like English that Cantonese EFL learners in mainland China, are likely to achieve. Indeed, Yow (2001: 193 cited in Bolton, 2002) reports that it is an overt target of the Guangdong Education Commission, who wish to 'equip Guangdong students […] with the same command of English as their counterparts in Hong Kong and other Southeast Asia countries'. It is therefore essential to study the language produced by their HK student counterparts, insights from which may be of use to others.

World Englishes (2000/3) was entirely devoted to 'English in Hong Kong', and although the discussion on its status was inconclusive, 'Hong Kong English' was widely referred to as though it were an established language variety. Due to Hong Kong's colonial status, English has been an official language of Government, Education and law since 1841, and is dominant in business. However, Bolt and Bolton, writing even before the political handover to China, report that 97% of the HK population are Cantonese speakers (1996: 197), and fewer than 7% self report using English 'well or very well' (1996: 200). In reality, while remaining a language of instruction, government and law, it is no longer *the* language used thus and it is Chinese Government policy to increase use of Chinese, thus reclaiming the acrolect discourse domain. Bolt and Bolton feel that English is going to struggle to remain a medium of instruction, while English broadcasters are being supplanted by Chinese and foreign channels, and circulation of English language newspapers is falling rapidly (Yeun-Ying' 2000).

The International Corpus of English (ICE) project

Corpus Linguistics as a research methodology aims to provide examples of real usage events as the basis for demonstrating the variety and patterning in any language. Thus it is 'usage-based' in Langacker's (1987 & 2008) terminology. Corpora have been collected that includes large collections, primarily used for lexical research, such as the COBUILD and BNC projects, and smaller, one million word, grammatically parsed corpora such as ICE[1] that this study uses. Each ICE corpus consists of samples of educated native speaker (NS) data, with multi-genre samples of conversation, monologues, and written sources including academic, letters and fiction, across many of the global varieties. There is a subproject, ICE-ICLE, collecting data from EFL/ESL environments, but the Hong Kong[2] data (ICE-HK) is not included under ICE-ICLE, despite the debate on the status of English there.

For ICE-HK, samples were collected from native Cantonese speakers who fulfilled criteria such as not having been educated in NS countries, although some were not HK natives. 95% of contributors fitted the profile, but because public English is dominated by NSs, there were problems reaching targets and unless there is a NS of English present, two HK Cantonese speakers will speak Cantonese. Bolt and Bolton (1996) feel their work may coincide with a 'high-water mark' in English use in Hong Kong. They also report difficulties tagging and parsing texts, as up to 40% of the data was 'non-standard', including code-switching, Cantonese interjections and idiom (Bolton, 1996: 211). These difficulties continue, so this study is based on an unparsed text version, and regrettably little analysis can be made at the phrase level on the corpus as a whole.[3]

Background

This study examines the usage of *the* in ICE-GB and ICE-HK, with an emphasis on how a speaker signals to a hearer the location of referents in their discourse domain. In the ICE-GB corpus, *the* is the most common word, and its "indefinite" counterpart *a/an* (henceforth *a*) is among the top ten. They are frequent in English largely because single common countable NP heads are extremely frequent and Modern English has a "rule" that 'a singular count noun can not be used without a determiner' (Hudson, 1992: 219).

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[1] ICE-GB is hosted at the Survey of English Usage in the English Department at University College London, UK

[2] The ICE-HK project was funded in part by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council (RGC), Grant no. HKU 7174/00H

[3] Concapp and Wordsmith Tools were used for handling text data, and ICECUP was used for the parsed ICE-GB corpus.

At a purely descriptive level, one can broadly say that in the absence of another determiner, an article acts as a default, depending on certain pragmatically based selectional criteria. More precisely, there is an argument that *a(n)* is merely a filler, used when *the* is disallowed for some reason, i.e. it signals only a lack of what ever it is that *the* is used to signal. This is why this study considers only constructions with *the* and not *a*. There is much discussion and disagreement about the grammatical status of articles in terms of category membership, (e.g., Biber et al, 1999; Huddleston, 1984; Quirk *et al.*, 1985). For some, they are adjectives (Gleason, 1965), for other pronouns (Jespersen 1933), for others they are determiners (Abney, 1987) and still others claim they are separate category (c.f. Spinillo 2005 who classifies them with *every*).[4] These are based on the assumption that word classes are definable in terms of their properties and syntactic behaviour. However, from a modern Cognitive Linguistic and (Radical) Construction Grammar perspective such a debate is quite meaningless, due mostly to the fact that syntactic relations are denied (Croft, 2001). Croft shows how in fact it is impossible to categorise language specific word classes in this or any other way. In line with this approach, the key to understanding Article usage, like all other so-called 'function' words in English lies in the constructions and Usage Events in which they are used, not in the notion of 'article' as some sort of discrete or even universal grammatical category. The approach would in addition argue that there is no 'grammar rule' with respect to the use of the article and that in a particular usage event what an article signals is grounded in that particular shared discourse space (see also Goldberg, 1995; Croft, 2001; Langacker, 2008).

The debate remains, however, that articles are used to signal *something* between speaker and hearer, and use is highly conventionalised. In quite loose, but established, category terms *a* contrasts with both the English plural *-s*, i.e. [± singular] and with *the*, e.g. [± indefinite]. This has the effect of restricting its occurrence to cases that are both +singular and +indefinite. Both of these concepts are shown to be cross-linguistically salient categories and form distinct areas of universal conceptual space (Croft, 2002; Haspelmath, 2003; Croft and Poole 2004)

The distinction in English between *a* and *the* cannot, however, be expressed in any simple fashion, although there are many attempts. The main theorists also make this point, e.g. Lyons wishes to classify *a* and *the* together for intuitive reasons, but says that the real distinction is 'difficult to pin down' (1999: 106). Some descriptive analyses are based on

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[4] However, the system is complicated by a posited "zero" article Ø the main role of which appears to be to lend weight to the obligatory determiner hypothesis. Much disagreement and inconsistency exists on this in the literature with some commentators saying "the zero article is used" (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 274), while others refer to "bare" plurals (Lyons, 1999: 190). Biber et al (1999: 260) report that "it is customary to recognise a zero article", but add (1999: 261) "arguably some of these cases should be analysed as involving neutralisation of article distinctions, rather than cases of zero article". The "zero article" is excluded from this study as it may be better considered an absence of an article, rather than a presence of a nothing. Also, it is difficult to search a corpus for that which is not there, and equally difficult to argue that once found, such a nothing has semantic content or pragmatic function. Lack of *a* or *the* referred to with Ø below does not imply "existence of a zero article".

'definiteness', 'specificity' or 'uniqueness', or combinations thereof, while other approaches relate syntactic patterns to semantic distinctions within a specific theoretical framework. Halliday and Hasan describe *the* in its anaphoric cohesive role, and state 'the definite article has no content' (1976: 71). Christopherson (1939: 71) says 'It is found that *the* has the marking of *familiarity*, while *a* is a mark of *unity'*. This definition is more debateable considering the example *Beware of the dog*, which has *the* used with an unfamiliar dog. Some notion of shared discourse space seems essential, an argument that adds further weight to the view that 'grammaticality' is not contained entirely within the syntax of a language (Hawkins, 1978: 91), a point that is fundamental to the Construction Grammar approaches cited above and indeed to the approach of Hawkins (1978) who is the most cited work on the topic of definiteness in English, and the starting point for many other commentators, e.g. Lyons (1999). In arguing against semantic approaches based purely on the concept of definiteness and indefiniteness, Hawkins (1978: 89) says, articles 'cannot be explained or even discovered in abstraction from pragmatics'. In answer to claims that they give a value based on relative 'uniqueness', he says this is '… just a single manifestation of a more general regularity: inclusiveness within pragmatically defined parameters' (Hawkins, 1978: 17). The reason 'inclusiveness' had been missed and 'uniqueness' relied on is, he claims, the mistaken assumption 'that uniqueness is an absolute rather than a relative notion […] independent of any pragmatic considerations' (Hawkins, 1978: 161) i.e. a given referent may not necessarily be unique in the real world, but still be unique within interlocutors' shared knowledge and/or discourse space.[5]

The fact that there are many conventionalised uses is inevitable given their ubiquity and longevity. Hawkins concludes that 'uniqueness' is also not a part of the meaning of *the*, but 'results from a fusion of the meaning of the definite article with singularity or oneness' (Hawkins, 1978: 158). For him, the articles are pragmatically motivated. He says they provide an instruction to the hearer to locate an entity in the shared discourse or the universe, or to introduce such an entity to the discourse, a clear pragmatic particle. Hawkins argues that even truth / false logic may fail because an assertion cannot be judged either true or false if it fails at another level. For example, the assertion *A Prime Minister of England is bald* can be neither true nor false as it is *pragmatically* unacceptable i.e. it does not exclude the possibility of there being more than one Prime Minister. Hawkins (1978: 89) concludes that

> …logical meanings cannot be successfully discovered without constant reference to the full range of usage possibilities. One cannot ask the NS to corroborate the existence and uniqueness claims made by definite descriptions. These are abstract and problematic notions in themselves. What does it mean for something to exist? What are the parameters relative to which objects are unique? (Hawkins, 1978: 89)

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[5] Hawkins further claims that one reason the articles have no core semantics (1978: 13) is because neither appeared in the Germanic source languages, *a* being an enclitic of numeral *one*, and *the* being derived from the demonstratives. In line with standard grammaticalisation theory (e.g. Bybee, 2003) the result of these (independent) developments are more abstract and more schematic than their source forms.

Hawkins offers the categories for definiteness summarised in table 1 and which are also used by Lyons.

Label	No.	Description	Example
Generic Use		All generic reference, inc gerunds	
Anaphoric	1	Second mention etc	a bucket: the bucket a lathe: the machine
Situational:	2	a) Visible Situation	Pass me the bucket
		b) Immediate Situation	Beware of the Dog.
	3	**Larger Situation:** a) Shared specific knowledge	I'm going to the match.
		b) Shared general knowledge: The situation is the trigger.	At a match: Who is the referee?
Associative Anaphoric	4	Pragmatic Set of possibilities: Previous NP is trigger	a: I'm going to the big game. b: Ah, who is the referee?
Unfamiliar with explanatory modifiers	5	The 2nd part defines the definite ref. a) Establishing Relative Clauses b) Associative clauses c) NP Complements d) Nominal Modifiers	The woman who he met was rude. The start of the game was delayed. London is buzzing with the rumour that the PM lied. I don't like the colour red.
Unexplanatory	6	Logical use.	The same train as always. The first man on the moon.

Table 1 Hawkins' (1978) model

The philosophical tenor of the Hawkins model is mirrored by Quirk *et al.* (1985), Biber *et al.* (1999) and Huddleston and Pullum (2001). For example, the last talk of 'existential presuppositions' (1985: 369), while Quirk *et al.* describe a definite/indefinite paradigm. They also quite neatly manage to include 'uniqueness', and 'shared knowledge', in the highly quotable

> The definite article *the* is used to mark the phrase it introduces as definite, i.e. as "referring to something which can be identified uniquely in the contextual or general knowledge shared by speaker and hearer (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 265).

However, the large number of footnotes reflects the complexity of the discussion, e.g.

> In practice, since a speaker cannot always be sure of the hearer's state of knowledge, use of *the* involves a certain amount of guesswork. In fact, in some cases the assumption of shared knowledge is a palpable fiction (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 266).

While the Hawkins model is very complete, the conflated framework found in Quirk et al is very similar and is preferred herein. Although because it is just a descriptive list of uses, not a theory of use, it is somewhat lacking in explanatory power. It is, on the other hand, better able to cope with the sort of usage categorisation I present below. Table 2 summarises the Quirk et al framework. The equivalent categories of the Hawkins analysis are added in the final column for comparison.

a. immediate situation	*The roses* are very beautiful. (said in a garden)	**2**
b. general knowledge	the Prime Minister, the sun	**3/ii**
c. direct anaphoric ref.	John bought a TV and a video recorder, but he returned *the video recorder*.	**1**
d. indirect anaphoric ref.	John bought a bicycle, but when he rode it one of *the wheels* came off.	**4**
e. cataphoric ref.	*The girls* sitting over there are my cousins.	**5**
f. sporadic reference	My sister goes to *the theatre* every month. What's in *the paper* today?	**3/i**
g. "logical" use	This is *the only copy*. When is *the next bus?*	**6**
h. generic meaning	No-one knows precisely when *the wheel* was invented.	**gen**

Table 2 Definite Article uses distinguished by Quirk et al (1985: 265, 282–7)

The definite article in ICE-GB and ICE-HK

This section presents a quantified analysis of use of the article *the* within the timed student essays sections of the ICE-GB and ICE-HK corpora. The analysis below uses the Quirk criteria, but retains the Hawkins 1-6 numbering for ease of cross- reference.

In brief, across the whole ICE-GB corpus *the* accounts for 5.48% of all words, a repeat rate (rr) of 1 in 18.25 words, while in the ICE-HK corpus it is 5.08% (rr=19.68). This is basically in line with Sand (2004: 290), who writes 'a quantifiable "underuse" of the definite article for varieties whose substrate does not contain definite articles cannot be substantiated'. He claims that there is a 'varied and text-type specific distribution of definite articles' (Sand, 2004: 290). The overall use difference found here is not great, but it is "quantifiable".

I focus here on uses of *the* in one comparable subcorpora, timed student essays (TSE). This particular sub-corpus has been chosen because, as Biber et al (1999:160) say, cognitive and time pressures in exams mean there is limited opportunity for writers to revise and re-write, i.e. student essays have a more 'on-line' characterisation. One result of this is that it may be a closer representation of users' linguistic knowledge than language produced, and subsequently extensively analysed and revised by the writer, in other written mediums.[6] This selection is of practical interest too, because if differences were found between the two sources, writers of such essays from Hong Kong or other Cantonese or even other Chinese speaking regions may find the results useful, should they wish their writing to more closely match the standard British English expected of the writers of the ICE-GB data.

The data in each of the TSE sources were manually classified according to type of use in line with table 2 above based on Quirk et al (1985). Some error rate in classification must be acknowledged, although this is low enough to have had a negligible effect on the results. There was an emphasis on consistency in the classifications, but some problems did arise, mainly connected with topic and unclassifiable instances. Firstly, the fact that in ICE-HK/TSE the word *starch* is the 16th most common word shows that the data sourcing was not as varied as would be hoped and closer topic matching between the sources would have been helpful. Secondly, some examples of poetry were supplied with an examination paper, encouraging the writer to use quotations in their essay, e.g. (1)[7], and some answers required examples, e.g. (2).

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[6] Conversation data could of course fulfil the same role, but presents its own problems in analysis, especially in the ICE-HK corpus where it is disjointed and exhibits frequent use of Cantonese. It is therefore not entirely clear how comparable the data sources are and at least with student essays, one may be sure of a controlled and comparable environment.

[7] All ICE references are taken from W1A sources and are here prefixed either GB for ICE-GB references and HK for ICE-HK references. In the interests of clarity and parsimony, some irrelevant parts of some source text units are omitted and replaced by "…" . The instance of *the*, or a phrase, under consideration in each case is in added italics.

(1) … the words "jewel of *the* just" promote the then Christian ideal that only those who have led good lives will attain their place in glory…   GB 18:136:3

(2) a) Error in this stage result from mis-selection of affix info, for example:
                                                                    HK 11:132:

   b) "I put *the* steaks into *the* freezer"   HK 11:133:1

Other topics required titles of places with *the*, e.g. *The USA*, books, music etc. and titles of theories etc. Cases such as these were removed from the examined data as they are not instances of the writers' own use.

        The ICE-HK/TSE data also presented some unique problems where examples were either not readily comprehensible or were clear cases of error e.g. (3).

(3) *The* improve *the* gel strength modification of starch chain can be use.
                                                                    HK 19:36:1

In all, 303 instances were discounted from the ICE-HK/TSE data and 101 from ICE-GB/TSE and after removal table 3 shows that there is a 13% higher incidence rate of *the* in ICE-HK/TSE than in ICE-GB/TSE, accounting for nearly 1% more of the total number of words in the sub-corpus.

	Total words	Total THE	repeat rate	% of all words
ICE-GB/TSE	21262	1367	**15.55**	**6.43%**
ICE-HK/TSE	24498	1809	**13.54**	**7.38%**

Table 3 Revised figures for the use in TSE data

It has not been possible to analyse NP rates in ICE-HK/TSE, although a cursory examination suggests NPs there tend to be shorter and more frequent than in ICE-GB/TSE. If this were true, a higher overall use of articles would be expected because articles are a function of NPs. However, because in the ICE written data one text unit basically corresponds to one sentence, the number of text units in the two sources is comparable. Table 4 shows that ICE-HK/TSE has 82 *the* tokens per 100 text units while ICE-GB/TSE has 83. Because rates are

nearly identical per unit, no overall difference can be claimed, in contrast to Sand (2004: 290) above.[8]

	Text units	words per unit	#the per 100 units
ICE-GB/TSE	1136	18.7	**83**
ICE-HK/TSE	1497	16.3	**82**

Table 4. *The* use by text unit

The overall distribution by type of use is shown in table 5, and reveals some clear differences between sources.

Type of *the*	**ICE-GB**	**% of *the***	**ICE-HK**	**% of *the***
Generic	72	**5.27%**	169	**9.34%**
1. Anaphoric	217	**15.87%**	424	**23.44%**
2. Immediate Sit.	67	**4.90%**	63	**3.48%**
3. Gen. Knowledge	201	**14.70%**	96	**5.31%**
4. Associative	184	**13.46%**	333	**18.41%**
5. Cataphoric	514	**37.60%**	586	**32.39%**
6. Logical Use	112	**8.19%**	138	**7.63%**

Table 5 Percentage use of the by type in timed student essays

Overall, type 5, cataphoric reference, (i.e. **the** *x of y*) is the most used, at about a third of all use in both sources while type 2, immediate situation, is the least used in both sources. This is in line with Biber (1999: 266).[9]

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[8] However, one claim that can be made is that the ICE-HK/TSE samples are clearly shorter than the ICE-GB/TSE, perhaps suggesting they are less complex.

[9] It should be noted that Biber et al (1999) classified up to 5% of their data as "uncertain", an option that is understandable with the amount of data they examined. For a small study like the current one, this was not really a problem but the effects that borderline cases may have on the results is noted as it arises.

However, beyond this, usage by type varies quite starkly, with each source showing marked preferences. To anticipate the explication below, the ICE-HK/TSE data shows a preference for anaphoric reference, while ICE-GB/TSE appeals more to general knowledge. The analysis below focuses mainly on this particular finding.

Anaphoric reference

Taken together, direct and indirect anaphoric reference account for 42%[10] of all *the* use in ICE-HK/TSE and 29.5% in ICE-GB/TSE a . This means rates are 30% higher in HK/TSE, which is a significant difference (z-score = 7.43 p<0.01) and one which suggests a fundamental difference in the approach to the presentation of information between the sources. It seems that in the ICE-HK/TSE sample, entities are expressly introduced and subsequently referred back to anaphorically to a far greater degree than in the ICE-GB/TSE sample.

Type 1 Direct anaphoric reference

In the rates for Type 1 there is 33% more use in ICE-HK/TSE at 23.5% of all *the* use than in ICE-GB/TSE at 16% (z score = 5.4 p<0.01). The higher rates of lexical anaphora in the HK sample may be a further reflection of a high NP rate; the more NPs there are, the more often a given NP is likely to have to be referred to. Examples (4-5) show prototypical anaphoric uses, with the NPs co-indexed by lower case 'i'.

(4) Moreover if *a paw$_i$* was tapped just before it was due to be lifted *the paw$_i$* would then be reflexively lifted an increased amount…   GB 16:60:2

(5) Syntactically speaking, the nature of say, *a verb*, will allow us to draw inference   about what will be coming in that single sentence.   HK 20:87:1
   For instance, whether *the verb* is a transitive, intransitive or a ditransitive one will help us infer what comes next.   HK 20:88:1

The difference in rates may be partly accounted for by the high rate of lexical repetition evident in the ICE-HK/TSE texts, where in an equivalent situation, an ICE-GB/TSE writer may prefer to refer by pronoun. A good set of parallel examples of this are provided in (6a-b) and (7a-b) below, but lexical repetition cannot account for all the difference.

(6) a) *The starch* can be converted into sweetener .   HK 19:67:1

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[10] Numbers are rounded up to the nearest 0.5 for clarity.

b) *The starch* remain part of corn plant can be used for alcohol production while the residue can be use as animal feed.   HK 19:68:1

(7) a) *Folding* occurs in the upper crust (lithosphere) as the rock structure needs to be preserved.   GB 20:114:5

b) However *it* may extend into the lower crust as in the case of deep seated isoclinal folds etc.   GB020:115:5

Type 4 Associative anaphoric reference

This type of use is described by Hawkins (1978: 123) as being 'the most frequent use that is made of *the*' and as 'the most fascinating'. These data show that for TSE such use is not the most common with rates of 13.5% in ICE-GB/TSE and 18.5 in ICE-HK/TSE as a %? of total use of *the* (z score = 3.88 p<0.01). It remains to be seen if type 4 rates have a linear relationship with type 1 rates, but the ratio of use is very similar at approximately 5:4, (79% in ICE-HK/TSE and 81% in ICE-GB/TSE), with type 1 the more common in both.

As a central example (8) shows *the display* as indirectly anaphoric to the situation *museum*. Example (9) is particularly complex, where the reference to *the stage* is indirectly anaphoric to the situation *musical drama* and *the violin* to *the violinist*, which is in turn also indirectly anaphoric to the situation *musical drama*.

(8) At the Museum of Mankind I find the repetition of description as tiring and as   the fabricated coldness of *the Arctic display*.   GB 12:42:1

(9) … when *the violinist* finishes his playing the king grab *the violin* and smashed into pieces and as a result he became mad and howling off *the stage*.
      HK 14:58:1

In (10) the reference to *the males* is indirectly anaphoric to the mention of *a group of people in society* earlier in the text unit.

(10)   But I wonder if this is the true reality or that such a family ideology is a distortion of the true picture, aiming at the rested interests of a group of people in society, in this context, *the males*   HK 12:19:1

There were some problematic cases connected with the classification of type 4 uses, because there is a cline with type 3, larger situation/general knowledge use. This is discussed below, but it should be noted that as consistency of analysis was considered the prime concern,

where a specific antecedent was not readily identifiable, a given instance was classified as type 3.

Type 2 Immediate situation

Use of this type is low in both sources at 5% in ICE-GB/TSE and 3.5% in ICE-HK/TSE (z score = 1.97 p< 0.05), but analysis did reveal some differences. Firstly, there are vastly more text internal references using *the* + N within the ICE-HK/TSE texts (#37) than the ICE-GB/TSE (#6):

(11)   *The above examples* show clearly that the failure of agrarian reform is certainly   a major factor in explaining environmental degradation…   GB 13: 70:2

(12)   From *the example*, we can see that speech error can help linguists to conjecture speech production model.   HK 11:68:1

Secondly, the overall rates may be very similar, but most type 2 references in ICE-GB/TSE were produced by one writer, when writing about a poem that was supplied with the question paper. The first direct reference to the poem was in (13), and the next was as shown in (14), the following text unit.

(13)   I think that this poem justifies his point.   GB 18: 119:3

(14)   The poem essentially about the poet's longing to escape his present   existence.
                                            GB 18: 120:3

Both of these are considered to be pointing directly to the supplied poem, and not that (14) is anaphoric to (13). If it were anaphoric, one *particular* previous instance would need to be identified as the antecedent, which proved not possible, as they are merely co-referential to all other previous mentions of, e.g. *the poem*.

Type 3 larger situation / general knowledge use

The rate difference between sources is 15% ICE-GB/TSE and 5.5% in ICE-HK/TSE, so type 3 use is almost three times higher in ICE-GB/TSE (z score = 8.64 p<0.01). Central examples are given in (15) and (16).

(15)   For example, when a doctor comes across a suspected child abuse case, he may need to inform *the* police or *the* social welfare department (…)

                                                                            HK 12:51:1

(16)   Such colonisation programmes are carried out in Amazonia but pose   severe threats to *the* environment.   GB 13: 68:2

Type 3: Problematic Cases

Most type 3 uses of *the* were unproblematic, being prototypical like these, but it was classifying this type that gave the most difficulty overall. For classification purposes, if no specific antecedent was readily identifiable within the student's actual answer paper to act as a trigger, the reference was classed as type 3, general knowledge.

The main problem is that in student essays the audience for the writer is a specialist in the subject being discussed and it is impossible for the analyser, a linguist, to know what information is or is not +hearer known [+HK] for the expert reader in, for example, the manufacture of bread (ICE-HK/TSE) or rock formations (ICE-GB/TSE), two major topics found in the data. The classification issue concerns whether to count another NP as an antecedent and classify the case in question as type 4, associative anaphoric, or classify the reference as type 3, general knowledge.

The problem arises in varying degrees of uncertainty, e.g. in (17) a possible antecedent for *the corn plant* is *corn grain* mentioned in this and the previous text unit, although one can assume that everyone knows of the existence of corn plants.

(17)   Corn grain is very important because all *the* corn plant can be use without waste.   HK 19:65:1

In contrast, in (18) the writer assumes that the reader already knows what *the classical form* consists of, but this knowledge may not be a part of the average person's general knowledge.

(18)   The form of the 20th centuries British opera is mainly the form of *the* classical form.

                                                                HK 14:111:1

Similarly, in (19) the writer makes an assumption that gastropods exist in the rocks being discussed and that they can be analysed in a certain way for a particular purpose, information missing from this linguist's real world knowledge, but not, the writer assumes, the examiner's. These types of inference are typical of type 3 uses.

(19)   Similarly *the* gastropods can be used to help dating and correlation in the lower
        Paleozoic.   GB 20: 95:3

Further examples show how complex some presuppositions are, and that interlocutors build a 'shared discourse universe' based on assumptions of [+HK]. In (20) there is a presupposition of the existence of 'victimhood', as an integral part of the concept of inequality. Such use relies on a presupposition of the reader holding [+HK] of a whole political philosophy, not merely a particular entity[11].

(20)   This kind of 'false consciousness' has indeed generated gender inequality in
        which women are *the* victims.   HK 12:37:1

Similarly, in (21) a whole body of economic theory is assumed [+HK] in the reader, in order for the writer to blithely refer to a *recession* that is both *current* and *worldwide*.

(21)   Finally, *the* current world recession makes rapid progress for LDC's   even more
        unlikely.   GB 13: 34:1

There is then a cline between what is anaphoric and what is general knowledge with some borderline cases. Borderline cases are problematic for the statistical analysis and may weaken any claims. However here, because this categorisation issue occurred to a greater degree in the ICE-HK/TSE data, if in fact some instances currently classified as analysed here as type 3 were analysed as type 4 instead, the results would in fact *increase* the trend differences between sources, i.e. in ICE-HK/TSE there would be even more type 4 and less type 3 uses. As it is, the differences are still significant, as reported above.

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[11] On the other hand, this may be a case of error by insertion and may have been meant to have a reading like "in which women are victims". It is not possible to ask the writer for clarification so the usage as it appears has been analysed and no assumption of error is made in ambiguous cases.

Another issue concerning categorising between types 1 to 4, and possibly unique to student exam or term papers[12], is co-reference in an answer to a specific entity mentioned in the question. This is even more of a problem here because the exam questions and material are not supplied in the corpus. For example, if *the poet* in (22) co-refers to an entity in the question paper, e.g. if the paper asks 'How does the poet feel about *x* ?', it could be argued that the reference is type 2.

(22)   It helps to clarify *the poet*'s ambiguous comments beforehand by giving an actual example of what he means.   GB 18: 33:1

On the other hand, *the poet* in (22) could be anaphoric (type 1) to the question, or general knowledge (type 3) to the topic of *poetry* and merely co-referential to the question. It could also be indirectly anaphoric (type 4) to a mention of *the poem*. Therein lies the true problem facing the analyst: a lack of the compete context. Here, in such cases, the writer's first mention of *the poet* is classified as type 4, as it is more consistent to argue [+HK] exists within the shared knowledge of a discourse universe (such as 'poetry') as introduced by the question, and is anaphoric to this. This contrast with the idea in type 3 where the writer relies on some notion of shared general knowledge that has no antecedent in the current discourse. Because this type of reference occurs more in ICE-GB/TSE than the ICE-HK/TSE, again, were they in fact to be classified as type 3 and not type 4, this would also increase the usage differences between the sources.

Type 5 cataphoric reference

The final major usage type is cataphoric reference, (23-24) where a noun's reference is completed by some form of post-modification. This is in fact the most common type of *the* use, accounting for 38% of *the* use in ICE-GB/TSE and 33.5% in ICE-HK/TSE (z score = 3.11 p< 0.02).

(23)   Thus *the duration* of post traumatic amnesia is related to *the severity* of the injury.
           GB 16: 73:3

(24)   *The output* of each stage becomes *the input* of the following one.
           HK 20:110:1

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[12] Although Newspaper/magazine headlines may also cause this problem in an analysis.

The 5% difference in type 5 usage between sources is accounted for almost entirely by the lower use in ICE-HK/TSE of the string *of + the*. This lends some support to the point raised above that NP structure in the HK data may be less complex than that of the GB samples.

Erroneous use of the in ICE-HK/TSE

One would expect there to be many errors in what is essentially an ESL variety, if not an EFL variety. There were two basic error types in ICE-HK/TSE, neither of which occurred in ICE-GB/TSE. These were errors by insertion, and errors by omission, although clearly this relies exclusively on researcher judgement. The error rate was 9.1% so there is a potential for misjudgements to have an effect on the overall results reported here. However, the erroneous cases were for mostly quite clearly a misuse. The most common was insertion of *the* but this is of no further interest in this paper.

Discussion

There are some other context contingent conclusions that are given above, but reservations are acknowledged about corpus design, data volume and the fact that although prototypes are abundant, borders between classifications are fuzzy. However, the most significant differences found were between the rates for both types of anaphoric reference, where combined use was 30% higher in HK/TSE (p<0.01), and reference to general knowledge [+HK], which is three times higher in ICE-GB/TSE (p<0.01). Clearly, the validity of any explanations offered relies on the accuracy of the analysis and on the choices of exactly what comparisons to make. To this end, other referential similarities should not be ignored. There are two points to be raised here.

First is the conflation of [+HK] references (uses 3+4) as they are distinguished from other uses by being reliant on the assumption by the speaker of knowledge held by the hearer, even though the former is anaphoric and the latter is not considered to be so. When uses 3 and 4 are combined, ICE-GB/TSE 28.5% of the use and ICE-HK/TSE for 24%, suggesting ICE-GB/TSE writers rely more on assumptions of [+HK], but perhaps not to the extent that the figures for situational use alone would suggest and in fact gives a significance of only p<0.05.

Second is a conflation on the basis of [± deictic] (i.e. uses 1, 2 and 4) shown in figure 1. The rates for [+ deictic] are in ICE-HK/TSE at 45.5% and ICE-GB/TSE at 34.5% suggesting ICE-HK/TSE writers use more direct reference and less inference.
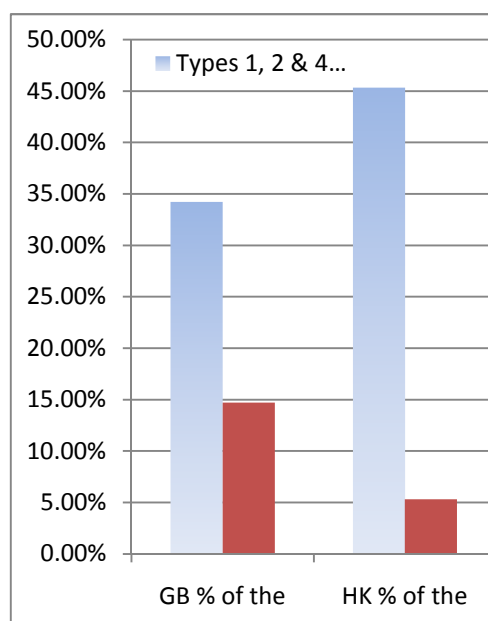
Figure 1. Conflated uses 1,2 &4 compared to use 3

So GB writers rely significantly more on assumptions of hearer knowledge and HK writers more on the explicit introduction of referents and following anaphoric reference to them. Because articles can be argued to be pragmatic particles, then an explanation must be found at the relationship level, i.e. the relationship between student writer and their interlocutors, the marker/lecturer. Clearly, one issue that affects linguistic features is the reason for producing a text. The purpose of student essays is very different from that of other genres, being primarily to display knowledge, rather than impart information. Further, the requirements and conventions of the particular institution will affect the language choices of the individual being assessed and any apparent patterns of usage could be seen as a reflection of such demands. There are different ways in which such knowledge display may be achieved, e.g. explicitly or assumed.

There are clearly many linguistic features in which such a pattern may be reflected e.g. Huebner's [-SR +HK] 'equivalence' use. Example (25) from ICE-HK/TSE shows a common way of explicitly stating knowledge for display purposes.

(25)	The Conceptualize is divided into 2 group.	HK 11:78:1
	The first is message generation.	HK-011:79:1
	It plans the message.	HK 11:80:1

This pattern affects type frequencies of *the* in the following way. If a reference is overt, a singular first mention of a noun may be with an indefinite article. Subsequent mentions with *the* will clearly count as 'direct anaphoric'. However, if knowledge of a referent is *assumed* by the writer, the first mention may be a type 3 use of *the* and there may be no need for a

subsequent mention, thus lowering anaphora rates. Half way between these types is type 4 use, which is partly anaphoric and partly assumed knowledge.

This would suggest as a tentative explanation that there is what appears to be a systematic culture-specific knowledge display strategy in operation. That is, there is a preference among HK students to overtly display knowledge, whereas the British use a more indirect display strategy. It is not a claim of this paper that the British writers did not use such direct display strategies, merely that the Hong Kong writers use them significantly more and *vice versa* with indirect display strategies. Regrettably, a more detailed examination is not possible here, but would make a useful future research project and possibly be of great use to the growing numbers of students studying in UK universities from China and other Pacific Rim countries who also have no articles and may well pattern similarly.

Conclusion

This paper has described and compared use of *the* in ICE-GB/TSE and ICE-HK/TSE according to the Quirk et al (1985) and Hawkins (1978) paradigms, and has found many similarities in distribution and some significant differences. There are also, I believe, implications for the World English models outlined in section 2 where I expressed reservations of both models, and crucially that the revised Yanu model excludes conversation in EFL environments. It also not does not show the range of differences and similarities possible in varieties, e.g. at the acrolect level a proficient EFL learner may be close to WSPE, yet still very far from SE in a typical basilect register such as conversation or social letter writing. The fact that there are differences is nothing new, and indeed was the main motivation for the inception of the ICE project. As Kachru and Nelson (2001: 12) say 'that there are differences does not automatically imply that someone is wrong'. However, in representing the state of things graphically, one needs to prioritise and choose between e.g. usefulness and ideology. The strength of the Kachru model is the clear notion of central and non-central types relating to standards, while Yanu's model is more socially 'equalist'. The combination approach offered in fig. 5 allows a variety to exhibit variation and yet be more central at the same time.
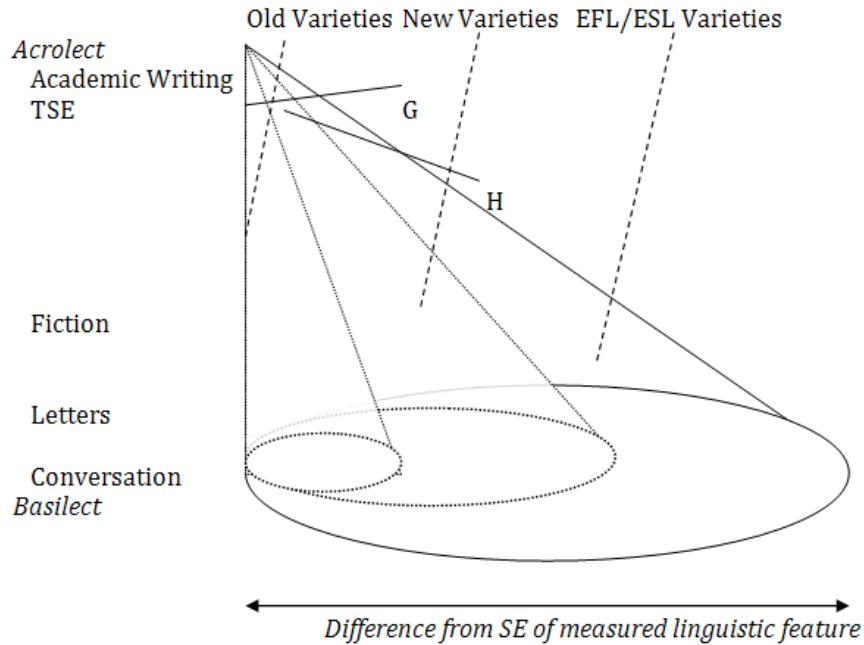
Fig 6.1 Revised Model of World English Varieties

Clearly, any model has its limitations, and the boundaries between varieties must be considered fuzzy; however, the advantage of this hybrid is that it embodies the distinctions and similarities between, on the one hand variety types, and on the other register types. This model assumes a SE and the possibility of 'social chat'. In theory, there is no reason why even an EFL learner may not approach NS-like performance, the left of the model, depending on variables like age and exposure. Unlike the other models, any language, or pragmatic based use, produced by any user of English can be placed precisely on this model and compared to any other, depending on the linguistic feature(s) being assessed, and the domain in which it occurs. Inappropriate register in a domain, e.g. too formal a tone in casual conversation, can be represented for an individual or variety by raising the relative register up the lectal scale on the left. For illustration purposes only, G marks ICE-GB/TSE and H that of ICE-HK/TSE when considering major uses of *the* as described above.

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The LIPS Corpus (Lexicon of Spoken Italian by Foreigners) and the acquisition of vocabulary by learners of Italian as L2

Francesca Gallina

University for Foreigners of Siena, Italy

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present corpus-based research on the acquisition of the vocabulary of Italian as L2. The goal of the research was to study the lexical uses of non-native speakers and the processes of lexical acquisition underlying these uses. The informants of the corpus were non-native speakers learning Italian both within Italy and outside of it in order to compare the development of lexical competence in different learning contexts. The main results show how lexical competence develops above all quantitatively at the beginning and intermediate levels, as well as how it develops qualitatively at the more advanced levels in particular. Different learning inputs greatly affect the development of lexical competence: learners acquiring Italian in Italy have a deeper knowledge of the Italian lexicon compared to learners learning Italian outside of Italy.

Introduction

I present here corpus-based research on the acquisition of the vocabulary of Italian as a second language carried out at the Centro di Eccellenza della ricerca – *Osservatorio Linguistico permanente dell'italiano diffuso fra stranieri e delle lingue immigrate in Italia* of the University for Foreigners of Siena.

This research has two main goals: on the one hand, to study the lexical uses of learners of Italian as a second language and the lexical choices they make; on the other, to study the processes of lexical acquisition and development underlying these uses.

The learning of vocabulary depends on a lot of factors – linguistic, extralinguistic and individual. It is a creative, incremental, dynamic and continuous process. So, in order to study the acquisition of vocabulary we need to keep in mind many aspects: implicit and explicit vocabulary learning (Ellis N. 1994; Ellis R. 1995, 1995), the structure of the mental lexicon (Schreuder & Weltens 1993; Singleton 1999; Wolter 2001), the difference between active and passive vocabulary (Laufer 1998; Laufer & Paribakht 1998; Meara 1990, Melka 1997; Mondria & Wiersma 2004; Nation 2001; Palmberg 1989), the multidimensional model of lexical competence development (Haastrupt & Henriksen 2000; Henriksen 1999; Meara 1996, 1999; Read 2004; Schmitt & McCarthy 1997).

I assumed that learning input is a crucial factor in determining which words and how many enter into the second language vocabulary, especially at the beginner levels. I therefore compared the lexical competence of learners exposed to different learning inputs. I also assumed, following Meara (1996), that the size dimension of lexical competence grows faster mainly at the beginning and intermediate levels. I thus compared the lexical competence of learners at different levels. Observing the lexical uses and their underlying acquisition/learning processes, I tried to hypothesize some general development lines for lexical competence and to study the role of input in different learning contexts.

The LIPS (Lexicon of Spoken Italian by Foreigners) corpus

The research is based on a learner corpus of spoken data, the LIPS (Lexicon of Spoken Italian by Foreigners), drawn from the proficiency tests of the Certification of Italian as a Foreign Language (CILS) of the University for Foreigners of Siena, which is one of the proficiency centres for Italian as a foreign language[13]. Ball (2001, 2002), Barker (2004), and Read (2005) created corpora drawn from the proficiency tests of EFL using IELTS and ESOL tests to collect the corpora for their research.

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[13] On the objectives, contents and results of the LIPS corpus see also Bagna, *et al.* (2003), Carloni & Vedovelli (2005), Vedovelli (2006), Barni & Gallina (2008, 2009). On the CILS certification see Vedovelli (2005).

The LIPS corpus consists of 1500 exams of around 500 candidates who took the tests between 1993 and 2006. The candidates of the corpus are non-native speakers learning Italian both within Italy and outside of it. The corpus consists of around 700,000 tokens and around 100 hours of spoken data. It is at present one of the biggest corpora of Italian as spoken by non-native speakers. The large dimension of the corpus makes it more reliable, as I can choose only those exams that are more similar to the spontaneous spoken language for mine research. For this research, I selected only 127 exams from 32 examinees from the LIPS: 40 exams from 10 examinees who took all the exams in Italy; 72 exams from 19 examinees who took all the exams outside of Italy; 11 exams from 3 examinees who took the exams both in and outside of Italy. This corpus consists of 62 499 tokens, 7075 types and 4646 lemmas. The results I had from the analysis of this sub-corpus are very similar to the results I obtained on the whole LIPS corpus and so they can indicate some general tendencies of development of lexical competence.

The candidates of the corpus have been exposed to very different types of learning inputs and different learning and acquisition processes. I selected only those candidates that took at least 3 proficiency tests of different levels (from A1 to C2 in CEF (2001) terms), in order to study lexical progression along the acquisition continuum at different stages. I thus include in the corpus examinees with 3 or 4 exams. I decided to pick out only successful exams to represent the proficiency level in order to be sure that the examinees' levels are comparable. I selected tests taken in different sessions in order to have a wide range of texts, so that in the corpus I could refer to different domains, different contexts and different communicative situations even if they are all examination contexts. In the corpus there are a lot of different topics (around 300) not only at different levels, but also in different examination sessions. The topics are more linked to daily life at the beginner levels (A1-B2), and are more formal and professional at the advanced levels (C1-C2). I therefore have a wide range of lexical fields and this makes the corpus very rich and, above all, more reliable.

The corpus is very rich also because the texts present different speech genres. There are two oral texts in every CILS proficiency exam, one dialogue with the examiner and one monologue. This permits me to evaluate the learner's ability to move in the linguistic space of spoken Italian. We need to keep in mind we are dealing with an exam context, which means the speakers do not have the same role, since one is the examinee and the other is the examiner. However, in order to make the conversation as spontaneous as possible, the examiner is given the task of simulating natural communicative contexts. What I found throughout the analysis of the corpus is that the communication between the examiner and the examinee was not always easy to define in terms of the dichotomy dialogue vs monologue. Sometimes one text was not fully a dialogue or a monologue, and there are a lot of mixed texts which stand on a continuum, the limits of which are dialogue on one side and monologue on the other. In this way, texts even in an examination context are quite similar to spontaneous interactions in natural contexts.

The spoken data were recorded on a CD-ROM or an audiotape, transcribed and annotated with part-of-speech and lemma information using open source software. Every exam of the corpus is then recorded in a database with some additional information in order to select the exams for different kinds of research: the examination date (it permits an examinee's interlanguage competence development to be followed); the examination centre (it gives some information on the L1 of the examinee, and so gives the possibility of carrying out contrastive analysis between examinees of different mother tongues); the proficiency level (it describes the proficiency level and is on a six-level scale from A1 to C2); the total

number of exams of the same examinee (it allows me to compare examinees that have the same number of exams so as to explore individual differences in the learning processes); the speech genre (it specifies whether the exams consist of a dialogue, a monologue or a mixed text); the examination topic (it gives some general information on the topics of the two texts of every exam).

Transcription and lemmatization of the corpus

In the first phase of the research I transcribed the whole corpus. As the main aim of the research was a lexical analysis, I chose an orthographical transcription, without any other annotation, because it would have been difficult later on to use the software for lexical research if the transcription had been more complex. Both the production of the examiner and of the examinee was transcribed to permit a reconstruction of the interactive dynamics. I decided to respect as far as possible the original spoken text during the transcription, hence I did not standardize the examinee's speech even when there were a lot of phonetic, syntactic, morphologic and lexical phenomena which were not standard Italian. I encountered several difficulties in transcribing interlanguage data on the one hand and L1 and other L2 words on the other, so I was sometimes unable to transcribe sequences of more than one word.

In the second phase of the research I carried out the lemmatization of the corpus. I lemmatized the examinee's turns only. First of all I used an open source software, Schmid's TreeTagger (1994, 1995), a probabilistic part-of-speech tagger, which proved to have various advantages in the experimental phase of the corpus. It produces fewer errors with non-native speakers' production than other software I used in the experimental phase, even though the TreeTagger's training corpus is not a learner corpus. It gives back the lemmatized text in columns: the original text is in the first column, the part of speech in the second and the lemma in the third column (figure 1).

sono nata	VER:ppros	nascere
eh	INT	eh
nel	PRE:det	nel
in	PRE	in
Millenovecinquantasei	NOM	Millenovecinquantasei
vivo	VER:pres	vivo
a	PRE	a
nella	PRE:det	nel
periferia	NOM	periferia
di	PRE	di
Parigi	NGR	Parigi
sono	VER:pres	essere
professoressa	NOM	professore
di	PRE	di
francese	NOM	francese
in	PRE	in
un	DET:indef	un
liceo	NOM	liceo
a	PRE	a
Parigi	NGR	Parigi

Figure 1 Example of lemmatization

The vertical distribution of the text has the advantage of letting you always have the entire text in front of you, so it is possible to analyse a token and its lemma in their real context. Finally, TreeTagger is more suitable for the successive analysis – e.g. extracting a frequency list – that I intended to do. After the automatic lemmatization I did a manual correction on the whole corpus, because of the many errors made by TreeTagger. This correction was absolutely necessary to disambiguate the usual errors a tagger makes during the lemmatization of a text, of which there are even more when the text is produced by a non-native speaker.

The main problems of the automatic lemmatization that absolutely required manual correction concern:

- the disambiguation of homographs that can have the same part of speech or the same lemma (e.g. *parti = VERB partire/ NOUN parte*; *Argentina* = ADJ *argentino*);

- the tagging of foreign words and interlanguage expressions (e.g. *io ando = io vado*);

- the attribution of the grammatical categories to words such as pronouns, conjunctions and adverbs;

- the tagging of false starts, broken words, words with orthographical errors that were transcribed exactly as they were in the original speech.

A lot of difficulties derive from the fact that the software could not interpret a text that is syntactically or morphologically anomalous for a program that has a training corpus of native-speakers' production, but that can be understood by a native speaker. Furthermore, I have a corpus of oral text, and taggers are not usually trained on oral texts, but rather on written texts, so it is very hard for software to tag speech production correctly because of the characteristics peculiar to oral texts. Besides the tagset of TreeTagger, I also used some other tags to annotate the corpus, as I wanted to point out some typical characteristics of mine corpus. As the use of multi-word lexical units is considered very native-like for non-native speakers, I used a special tag for them, because I were interested in analysing the ability to use this kind of word by non-native speakers. I annotated the foreign words from L1 and other L2 with a special tag (ESO) to highlight the presence of words that do not belong to Italian. I also used a special tag for interlanguage data (INTL) to mark the creative production of non-native speakers, whose interlanguage competence is not standard Italian, but something between their L1 and the target language in the learning process.

Analysis of lexical richness

After lemmatization I extracted frequency and usage lists that can be compared to the frequency lists of Italian used by native speakers and especially with the *Italian Frequent Lexicon* (LIF) (Bertolini *et al.*, 1971), and the *Italian Spoken Lexicon* (LIP) (De Mauro *et al.*, 1993), the former being a frequency list of written Italian by native speakers and the latter being a frequency list of spoken Italian by native speakers.

I used some intrinsic and extrinsic measures of lexical richness (Meara & Bell, 2001) to study the lexical variety, the lexical sophistication, and the lexical density of the corpus, in order to compare (a) learners with different proficiency levels on the one hand and (b) learners with different learning inputs on the other.

I then compared the sub-corpus of the LIPS with the *Vocabolario di Base* (VDB) (De Mauro, 1980). The VDB represents the Italian core vocabulary, consisting of around 7000

words, and was generated from the most frequently used words of the LIF corpus. I used the VDB to see how many of the most frequently used words non-native speakers use when they speak Italian, as well as to have an idea of what kind of words they use compared to the most frequent lexical uses of native speakers (also with reference to the different proficiency levels).

Results

Quantitative analysis

First of all I measured how many words there are in the different levels of the corpus and how many tokens/types and lemmas. Figure 2 below shows how many tokens and speakers there are in each level of the corpus.

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Tokens	415	1486	12627	14703	14244	19024
Speakers	1	4	31	31	29	31

Figure 2 Tokens and speakers in each level

The average number of tokens that learners at different proficiency levels produce grows from level A1 to level C2, supporting the hypothesis that size dimension is one of the key dimensions of development of lexical competence, especially at the beginning levels, and even if this is also partly due to the exam format, observing the number of words in the same amount of time we can see that beginner learners produce fewer tokens than advanced learners (see figure 3 below).

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Tokens	415	371.5	407.32	474.32	491.27	604.96

Figure 3 Average number of tokens in different proficiency levels

At the beginning levels the acquisition of the lexicon is more quantitative (number of words learned) than qualitative (knowledge of different characteristics, uses and meanings of words), and after a certain level the process is not only a question of the quantity of words a speaker knows, but also of the quality and depth of lexical knowledge (that is, a better knowledge of the characteristics of a word, the ability to use it in a context and to relate it to other words), and of automaticity (the ability to use and access the vocabulary (Meara, 1996, Schmitt & Mc Carthy, 1997: 104)).

It may be observed in figure 4 below that the average number of tokens every non-native speaker produces speaking in Italian is higher in learners learning Italian in Italy or both within Italy and outside of it.

	Out of Italy	Italy	Mixed
Tokens	474.4	490.52	563.66

Figure 4 Tokens in learners with different learning contexts

Learners learning Italian only outside of Italy produce fewer tokens than the others. This means that learners who learn Italian in context or with frequent possibilities of contact with the language and native speakers are able to use more tokens than other learners, regardless of the nature of these words. These results support the hypothesis on the role of the learning input in the development of lexical competence and in determining the ability of producing words for learners learning an L2 in different learning contexts.

These kinds of analysis do not enable to understand the complexity of the process of lexical development, and it is therefore necessary to apply other kinds of analysis aimed at measuring the lexical richness, looking at the nature and not only at the quantity of words learners know and use.

The frequency list

From the whole corpus I extracted a frequency list and a usage list, which takes into consideration not only the frequency of words, but also how much words are scattered in a corpus. The most frequently used words are function words like conjunctions and prepositions, and then content words. They are all part of the Italian core vocabulary (VDB). In the first 100 most frequently used words of the usage list there are: 9 adjectives, 16 adverbs, 11 conjunctions, 3 articles, 2 adverbial phrases, 4 interjections, 16 nouns, 11 prepositions, 10 pronouns and 18 verbs. Foreign words, interferences and interlanguage expressions have a very low use in the frequency list, as do multi-word lexical units. There are also a lot of typical spoken phenomena among the most frequent words of the list, such as interjections, just as there are in the frequency lists of native speakers.

Lexical variety: Types/Tokens Ratio and Guiraud's Index

To assess the lexical variety I applied the Types/Tokens Ratio (TTR) and Guiraud's Index[14]. These kinds of measurement are very sensitive to the length of the texts they are applied to and are not easy to apply to non-native speakers' texts (Broeder *et al.*, 1993, Granger & Wynne, 1999, Laufer & Nation, 1995, Vermeer, 2000, 2004). This notwithstanding, they are still the most used measures of lexical richness, and this is one of the reasons I decided to apply them to mine corpus, and moreover I can achieve a more general view of the development of lexical competence from these kinds of measurement, which provide quantitative data alongside qualitative data, such as those obtained from extrinsic measures of lexical richness that compare non-native speakers' vocabulary to the vocabulary used by native speakers.

Data on TTR and Guiraud's index (figures 5 and 6 below) confirm the difficulties of applying these measurements to long texts and to non-native speaker texts. They show that lexical variety is larger at the beginner levels, but this is due more to the different lengths of the texts than to a supposed broader variety of beginner learners' lexical competence. The growth of the lexical variety increases progressively but it is not constant; it is more intense especially at the beginning and intermediate levels and less intense at the advanced levels. This suggests that at the advanced levels measurements based only on the relationship between types and tokens are not suitable for describing the competence of advanced learners, but that Ialso need qualitative analysis.

Level	**A1**	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**
TTR	0.43	0.36	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.15

Figure 5 Type/Token Ratio in different proficiency levels

Level	**A1**	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**
Guiraud's index	8.88	13.95	20.18	20.63	20.69	21.46

Figure 6 Guiraud's index in different proficiency levels

The lexical variety (see figures 7 and 8 below) is larger in learners learning Italian in Italy than in learners learning Italian outside of Italy: contact with native speakers is a fundamental aspect of the development of lexical competence, confirming the relevance of input in the learning process.

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[14] TTR (V/N) and Guiraud's index (V/√N) are measures of lexical richness, in which 'types' (V) are the number of different words, and 'tokens' (N) the total number of words of a text. This kinds of measures are based on the assumption that more proficient learners have a larger vocabulary knowledge that allows them to avoid repetition by using a more varied vocabulary.

	Outside of Italy	Italy	Mixed
TTR	0.12	0.16	0.19

Figure 7 Type/Token Ratio in learners with different learning contexts

	Outside of Italy	Italy	Mixed
Guiraud's index	23.31	23.0	18.18

Figure 8 Guiraud's index in learners with different learning contexts

Learners learning Italian in Italy show a bigger lexical variety, especially as far as the TTR ratio is concerned, than learners who are not directly exposed to the learning input of native speakers in the Italian context. The Guiraud's index results are slightly different, but in mine opinion this is more linked to the sensitivity of this kind of analysis to the length of texts and other characteristics of texts than to other factors.

Lexical density

To analyse the lexical density, namely a high percentage of lexical or content words as compared to grammatical or function words, I counted the content and the function words, and then analysed the distribution of the grammatical categories in every level and in every group according to the learning context.

In the corpus there is 60.2% of content words and 39.8% of function words. What I found looking at the different levels and at the different learning input is that, as with lexical variety, lexical density is larger in learners learning Italian in Italy (see figure 9 below), and it increases progressively especially at the beginner and intermediate levels and less at the more advanced levels (see figure 10 below).

	Outside of Italy	Italy	Mixed
Content words	59.58%	61.42%	58.50%
Function words	40.21%	38.19%	41.15%

Figure 9 Content/function words in learners with different learning contexts

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Content words	57.92%	58.86%	60.17%	61.85%	60.56%	58.34%
Function words	41.81%	40.98%	39.56%	37.97%	38.98%	41.48%

Figure 10 Content/function words in learners with different proficiency levels

Texts produced by learners learning Italian in Italy are lexically denser than those by learners not exposed to spontaneous learning inputs. Content words progressively increase from level A1 to B2, and then decrease in levels C1 and C2. The drop in content words at these levels may perhaps mean that beyond a certain level of proficiency learners can not only use content words they have been learning, but can also use function words in a profitable way to connect content words they already know. This supports the hypothesis on the relevance of the qualitative dimension of lexical competence at the more advanced levels, whereas the size dimension is not completely adequate to distinguish beginner and intermediate learners from proficient learners. To expand lexical competence it is not enough to increase the number of words a learner knows, but it is also necessary to be able to use them in their appropriate context, to know their various aspects, to connect them through function words enhancing the fluency of the text in a way that resembles native speakers' use, and to access them quickly. This is a further confirmation that the size dimension of lexical competence development is more important at the beginner levels, while depth of knowledge and accessibility are more important at the advanced levels.

The most widespread category of lemmas in the corpus is that of nouns (36.17%), followed by adjectives (16.32), verbs (13.55%), interlanguage expressions (7.48%), proper nouns (5.23%), adverbs (4.67%), multi-word lexical units (4.65%), geographical nouns (3.67%), foreign words (2.55%), numbers (1.41%), pronouns (1.28%), interjections (1.12%), conjunctions (1.06%), prepositions (0.80%) and articles (0.04%). An important result is that the category of interlanguage expressions is very relevant, because it is the specific mark of the LIPS corpus and demonstrates the relevance of this kind of annotation in a learner corpus. If I then consider the relation between tokens and grammatical categories, the main result is that verbs and nouns are the most widespread categories, highlighting the relevance of these conceptual categories in the learning process.

In figure 11 below, we can see how the distribution of the grammatical categories in every proficiency level does not change much, even though there are some relevant differences: adverbs increase at the advanced levels, multi-word lexical units and pronouns increase from level A2 onwards, verbs from level B1, interlanguage expressions progressively decrease after level B2, as do interjections after level B1. Function words enter and become stable in lexical competence quite early at beginner levels, content words progressively increase at the more advanced levels.

	A1	%	A2	%	B1	%	B2	%	C1	%	C2	%
Adjectives	45	10.84	124	8.34	1101	8.72	1278	8.69	1217	8.54	1619	8.51
Adverbs	26	6.27	133	8.95	1386	10.98	1775	12.07	1737	12.19	2144	11.27
Conjunctions	46	11.08	143	9.62	1344	10.64	1308	8.90	1326	9.31	1994	10.48
Articles	31	7.47	134	9.02	1109	8.78	1345	9.15	1202	8.44	1756	9.23
Foreign words	1	0.24	5	0.34	44	0.35	71	0.48	49	0.34	106	0.56
Interjections	24	5.78	102	6.86	583	4.62	631	4.29	693	4.87	724	3.81
Interlanguage expressions	4	0.96	16	1.08	157	1.24	133	0.90	121	0.85	123	0.65
Multi-word lexical units	2	0.48	25	1.68	202	1.60	231	1.57	258	1.81	310	1.63
Geographical nouns	21	5.06	29	1.95	229	1.81	311	2.12	112	0.79	137	0.72
Nouns	67	16.14	227	15.28	1867	14.79	2283	15.53	2133	14.97	2957	15.54
Proper nouns	1	0.24	16	0.94	117	0.93	84	0.57	54	0.38	61	0.32
Numbers	1	0.24	13	0.87	31	0.25	25	0.17	60	0.42	30	0.16
Prepositions	66	15.90	156	10.50	1232	9.76	1509	10.26	1424	10.00	2175	11.43
Pronouns	18	4.34	113	7.60	938	7.43	1043	7.09	1183	8.31	1487	7.82
Verbs	62	14.94	252	16.96	2287	18.11	2676	18.20	2675	18.78	3401	17.88

Figure 11 Grammatical categories in different proficiency levels

Figure 12 below shows the results of the groups based on the learning context. They are quite similar, even if there are some differences between learners exposed to spontaneous context and learners who have never been directly in contact with an Italian context.

	Outside of Italy	%	Italy	%	Mixed	%
Adjectives	2906	8.44	1798	9.16	680	8.04
Adverbs	3908	11.35	2403	12.25	890	10.53
Conjunctions	3446	10.01	1843	9.39	872	10.32
Articles	3198	9.29	1600	8.15	779	9.22
Foreign words	206	0.60	47	0.24	23	0.27
Interjections	1622	4.71	504	2.57	631	7.46
Interlanguage expressions	410	1.19	106	0.54	38	0.45
Multi-word lexical units	582	1.69	306	1.56	140	1.66
Geographical nouns	465	1.35	248	1.26	126	1.49
Nouns	5205	15.12	3089	15.74	1240	14.67
Proper nouns	175	0.51	113	0.58	43	0.51
Numbers	63	0.18	71	0.36	26	0.31
Prepositions	3627	10.54	2054	10.47	881	10.42
Pronouns	2521	7.32	1647	8.39	614	7.26
Verbs	6091	17.69	3792	19.33	1470	17.39

Figure 12 Grammatical categories in different learning contexts

In the "Outside of Italy" group there are more foreign words and interlanguage expressions than in the other groups, as its competence tends to deviate from standard Italian more than the competence of learners exposed to a more spontaneous input. Learners learning Italian in Italy have more opportunities to be exposed to native speakers' input, to assimilate this input and to make their competence come closer to the standard Italian of native speakers. Interjections are not very common in the group "Italy", and are more used in the other groups. This is maybe due to the different fluency that characterizes the spoken language of learners with different learning processes. Learners who do not live in contact with the natural context normally use more interjections to compensate for a lack of fluency and as a lexical strategy for filling lexical gaps.

Learners start to learn function words at the beginner levels, because this kind of word is very frequent in the learning input, especially in the spoken language. Learning input plays a crucial role in the lexical development and determines the sequence of acquisition of content and function words. Furthermore, as the function words are part of a closed class of

words, their acquisition can become stable quite early in the learning process, while content words can always increase not only in second-language learning, but also in first-language learning.

Extrinsic measures of lexical richness: comparison with native speakers' vocabulary

Extrinsic measures of lexical richness have the advantage of taking into consideration not only the quantity of words a speaker uses, but also their quality, their frequency in native speakers' use and in input, and therefore their relevance for learners. They are based on the assumption that learners first learn the words most frequently used by native speakers and hence use these words more frequently. Beginner learners mostly use high frequency word, while advanced learners can use not only high frequency words, but also low frequency words. For Italian language there are no extrinsic measures of lexical richness as there are for English (Laufer 1995, 1998; Laufer & Nation 1995; Meara & Bell 2001), so I used the frequency list of native speakers and the Italian core vocabulary to compare first of all the lexical coverage of learners of Italian as L2.

I compared the lexical coverage of the first 2000 words of the frequency lists of mine corpus, of the entire LIPS corpus, of LIP (the native speakers' spoken frequency list), and of LIF (the native speakers' frequency list) (see figure 13).

Words	*Corpus*	**LIPS**	**LIP**	**LIF**
1-500	84.13%	82.24%	80.40%	78.07%
501-1000	90.09%	88.51%	85.99%	84.54%
1001-1500	92.50%	91.45%	89.07%	88.21%
1501-2000	95.30%	93.17%	91.07%	90.69%

Figure 13 Lexical coverage

The lexical coverage of the sub-corpus and of LIPS is smaller than the lexical coverage of both LIF and LIP, so the non-native lexicon is poorer than the native lexicon. Non-native speakers use the same number of tokens to produce more speech than the native speakers. If I consider the first 50 words of the frequency lists, it is very significant that the lexical coverage is almost the same for native and non-native speakers. High frequency words are the most used words both by native and non-native speakers, demonstrating the role of input, represented by native speakers' lexical uses, for the learning process.

I then compared the 100 most frequent words of mine corpus and of LIPS with LIP, examining above all the presence of grammatical categories in the three frequency lists (see figure 14 below).

	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Pronoun	Adverb	Conjunction	Preposition
Corpus	15	18	9	10	16	11	11
LIPS	12	17	10	12	16	10	11
LIP	6	23	7	16	19	16	8

Figure 14 Grammatical categories of the 100 most frequent words of the frequency lists

As the above figure shows, the main difference is the one between nouns and verbs. It is very meaningful that in the corpus and in the LIPS we have more nouns and fewer verbs, because this probably due to the fact that non-native speakers learn first nouns and then verbs, as in the L1 learning process[15]. Nouns are more linked to reality than verbs, which are more used in advanced learners' competence. In the other categories we have some differences, probably due to the acquisition sequences, but they are not so broad. These data confirm the role of learning input in the learning process of an L2, as the input of native speakers is a crucial factor in the developing of lexical competence for non-native speakers. The tops of the frequency lists of corpus, LIPS and LIP are very similar, presenting a lot of common aspects: the presence of high frequency nouns and verbs with a very general meaning, which are part of the Italian core vocabulary, many words and expressions typical of the spoken language such as interjections and other words like *sì* (yes), *no* (no), *allora* (then), *adesso* (now) and *bene* (well).

I lastly compared the corpus with VDB, the Italian core vocabulary. I compared it with VDB for each proficiency level and for each group of learners with different learning inputs. At level A1 67.5% of words belong to VDB, at level A2 65.2%, at level B1 58.77%, at level B2 58.16%, at level C1 60% and at level C2 60.78%. Core vocabulary decreases from the beginner levels to the intermediate levels and increases slightly at advanced levels. Learners learning

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[15] On the relationship between L2 vocabulary learning and grammatical categories see Nation (1990: 48), Broeder *et al*. (1993), Bogaards (1994: 152), N. Ellis (1994: 251), Singleton (1999: 140) and Bettoni (2001: 72) for Italian as L2. Also in the L1 vocabulary learning many studies claim that children first learn nouns, followed by verbs and adjectives. On Italian as L1 see Caselli & Casadio (2002) and Laudanna & Voghera (2002). See also Aitchison (1994) on the distribution of the grammatical categories in the mental lexicon and de Groot (1993) on the effects of different kinds of words on the organisation of the mental lexicon.

Italian outside of Italy use 54.04% of core vocabulary words, learners learning Italian in Italy 58.8% and learners learning Italian in both contexts 64.63%. Learners more directly exposed to the input of the Italian context use more words from VDB, acquiring lexical uses more similar to those of native speakers and to the Italian core vocabulary. Compared with the other groups, learners from the group 'outside of Italy' use fewer words from VDB, not because they use many low frequency words, but because in their spoken production there are a lot of interlanguage expressions, foreign words, nouns referring to objects and places depending on the individual lexical learning process that cannot be compared to VDB.

VDB is divided in three sections based on the different frequency of words: fundamental lexicon (FO), high use lexicon (HUL) and high availability lexicon (HAL). I analysed the VDB words of the corpus to see the distribution of the three sections. 60.95% of corpus words belong to the fundamental lexicon, 28.97% are high use lexicon and 10.07% are high availability lexicon.

Figure 15 below shows the results of the comparison for each group of learners based on the learning context.

	Outside of Italy	**Italy**	**Mixed**
FL	66.88%	70.4%	76.62%
HUL	24.64%	22.99%	17.62%
HAL	8.46%	6.6%	5.75%

Figure 15 Core vocabulary in learners with different learning contexts

The mixed group is the one with the bigger difficulties in using the less frequent words from VDB. The 'Italy' and the 'outside of Italy' groups use lots of less frequent words from VDB, which is to say that in the learning process less frequent words are also very relevant for learners, who are induced to learn them in every learning context. Figure 16 presents the results for the group based on the proficiency level.

	A1	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**
FL	88.46%	86.6%	73.31%	71.64%	72.48%	73.43%
HUL	6.73%	9.97%	18.5%	21.32%	21.07%	21.43%
HAL	4.81%	3.44%	8.19%	7.04%	6.45%	5.15%

Figure 16 Core vocabulary at different proficiency levels

At beginner levels, namely A1 and A2, learners use more words of the fundamental lexicon than at other levels. At level B1 learners use a lot of high availability words and at level C2 they use many high use words. The distribution of the three divisions is quite irregular among the levels. This irregularity forces me to make only some generalizations about the development of lexical competence, observing the increasing presence of words of every section from the beginner levels to more advanced levels, confirming thus the relevance of VDB words in the vocabulary learning of Italian as L2.

Conclusions

The development of lexical competence both in natural and formal contexts is highly influenced by many factors, among which learning input is a fundamental one. In acquisition processes the size dimension develops more than in formal learning contexts, perhaps because the access to a broader input, such as the input of a natural context, fosters an increase in the quantity of words learners know. The size dimension develops especially at the B2-C1 levels, and then becomes less relevant in making the difference between learners with different proficiency levels. What particularly differentiate more advanced from less advanced learners are depth of knowledge and accessibility.

Different learning inputs also determine different degrees of lexical richness. Different learning inputs greatly affect the development of lexical competence: learners acquiring Italian in Italy have a deeper knowledge of the Italian lexicon than learners learning Italian outside of Italy[16]. Looking at learners with different proficiency levels, there is an increase of lexical richness in the vocabulary of non-native speakers along the learning continuum, even though there is a decrease after a certain level due to the fact that to describe the advanced lexical competence it is also necessary to consider the depth of knowledge, lexical organization and the access to the lexicon.

The lexical uses of non-native speakers reflect the lexical habits and the lexical tendencies of native speakers. The vocabulary of non-native speakers is quite close to the lexicon of native speakers, especially when observing the most frequently used words. The most frequently used words in the native input are the words learned earlier, at the beginner levels.

The complexity and variability of learners' vocabulary are a mirror of the complexity and variability of the native uses of Italian, and of the impact of every single learning context and process. The great variability of spoken Italian generates phenomena of variation and irregularity in the interlanguage varieties and every single learning context can determine individual lexical development processes.

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[16] On the effects of the learning context on lexical development see Collentine (2004), who states that natural contexts affetct in positive way the lexical development compared to formal learning contexts, and for Italian L2 see also Bernini (2003) and Spreafico (2005).

As far as the practical applications of mine corpus and of LIPS are concerned, the first is the realization of *DIS - Italian Dictionary of Uses for Foreigners*, at present at the planning stage, a monolingual dictionary aimed at serving both teachers of Italian as a second language and non-native learners. LIPS could also validate the CILS examination, helping with the selection of the texts and the exams for the proficiency evaluation. Finally, it could be a good starting point for the development of syllabuses and curricula, as well as for the production of didactic materials.

In the near future I want to study the sub-corpus and the LIPS, concentrating on the following aspects. The perspective of the research is to compare the acquisition models for Italian as a second language with the dimension of vocabulary, which has been little studied so far insofar as Italian as L2 is concerned. This is due to the fact that Italian research has concentrated more on morphological and syntactical aspects of learning Italian as a second language.

I would then like to compare both the corpus and LIPS with the receptive vocabulary texts of the CILS examinations of the same learners to see what differences there are between these two aspects of lexical competence. Finally, I would like to compare the oral exams with the written proficiency exams of the same examinees to see what differences there are between the oral and written productions of the same learners. The corpus LIPS is also available on the web-site www.parlaritaliano.it

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When doing is saying: a constructional account of fare ('to do') as a verbum dicendi in Italian

Caterina Guardamagna

Lancaster University

Abstract

The asymmetry between the transitive behaviour of *fare* ('to do') as a verb of production and its intransitive behaviour as a verb of saying has been regarded as an anomaly in some accounts of Italian (e.g. Mortara Garavelli 1995, Giani 2002). In addition, another asymmetry in transitivity has been pointed out between reportative *fare* and *dire* ('to say') as the former is not able to take clausal objective clauses, i.e. to enter the indirect speech construction. These asymmetries were left unexplained or at best motivated by a change in the valency of *fare* related to its polysemy or to the information structure of the sentence. Drawing mainly on data from spoken and written Italian, a new hypothesis is presented, based on a Construction Grammar approach to reported speech. Finally, bridging contexts favouring the use of *fare* as a verb of saying are considered and related to cross-linguistic data from European languages.

Introduction

If asked about the meaning of *fare* 'to do' in sentences like (1), most speakers of Italian would not hesitate in putting forward the reformulation in (2):

(1) Un egocentrico incontra un amico e gli fa: "Ciao, come sto?"

An egocentric meets a friend and tells (lit. does) him: "Hi, how am I?"

(2) Un egocentrico incontra un amico e gli dice: "Ciao, come sto?

An egocentric meets a friend and tells him: "Hi, how am I?"

In doing so, they would clearly establish a relationship of equivalence between the verbs *dire* 'to say' and *fare* 'to do' in a given context. The native speaker consulted[17] about the uses of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* also showed awareness of its distribution across registers and genres (see tables 1 and 2). The presence of *fare* as an introducer of reported speech in narrative texts, where it does not show its elsewhere typical interpretation as a colloquialism, were usually overlooked by the informants.

Subcorpus	Fa	Fece	Feci	Faccio
Press	0	1	0	0
Narrative prose	5	19	8	2
Academic prose	0	1	1	0
Administrative/legal prose	0	0	0	0
Miscellanea	1	1	0	0
Ephemera	1	0	0	0
Total forms of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* in *Coris*, sorted per form	7	22	9	2
Total forms of *fare* as *verbum dicendi* in *Coris*		40		

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[17] The native speakers intuitions mentioned in section 1 derive partially from introspection and partially from conversations I regularly had with family, acquaintances, friends, lecturers and professors over the Academic Year 2007-2008, while writing my MA dissertation at the University of Pavia (Italy).

Table 1. Distribution of some forms of *fare* 'to do' as *verbum dicendi* in *Coris*[18], divided by sub-corpora

Note: *faccio* 'I do/am doing'; *fa* 's/he does/is doing'; *feci* 'I did'; *fece* 's/he did'.

	Faccio	Fa	Facevo	Faceva	Feci	Fece	Ho fatto	Ha fatto	Total
Short stories	1	3	0	0	19	24	2	0	**49**
Blog	6	3	1	0	0	1	0	2	**13**
Forum	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**4**
Jokes	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Non classif.[19]		2				4	1		**7**
Total *fare = dire*	10	11	1	0	19	29	3	3	**76**
Sample[20]	3000	3000	3100	2200	1300	3000	2100	2200	19900

Table 2 Distribution of some forms of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* in *itWac*, sorted by genre

Note: *faccio* 'I do/am doing'; *fa* 's/he does/is doing'; *facevo* 'I was doing'; *faceva* 's/he was doing';

feci 'I did'; *fece* 's/he did'; *ho fatto* 'I did'; *ha fatto* 's/he did'.

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[18] *Coris* allows to retrieve up to a maximum of 300 hits per query. Independent queries were carried out for every sub-corpus. This means that, for instance, in the case of *fa* '(s)he/it does/says', 1800 strings of characters corresponding to the query *fa* were manually examined and sorted. Table 1 presents data highlighting the distribution of some forms of fare as a *verbum dicendi* across *sub-corpora*, which roughly correspond to genres.

[19] Some links were not active.

[20] Sampling was necessary given the dimension of the *itWac* corpus (about 2 billion words). The sample examined was checked for representativeness and then analysed manually.

The distribution of *fare* as a verb of saying in spoken Italian, investigated through the *C-Oral Rom* corpus showed its almost exclusive use in the 'family-private' register, confirming native speaker intuitions. The native speakers consulted were also aware of the fact that *fare* as a verb of saying tends to occur in constructions where the recipient of the message is also profiled. *C-Oral Rom* was consulted on this point (table 3), and showed that native speakers have a good intuition of some relevant phenomena related to the collocational patterns of *fare* as a verb of saying and were likely to produce observations on them in a fairly spontaneous way.

Form of the verb *fare* 'to do'	*Fare* as a *verbum dicendi* followed by pronominal pronouns (dative) indicating the recipient of the reported message	
	Raw frequency	%
Fa	18/24	75
Fanno	1 / 2	50
Fece	4/8	50
Face(v)a	3/6	50
Faccio	0/1	0
Feci	1/1	100
Facevo	1/1	100
Facevan(o)	0/1	0
Ho fatto	0/1	0
Ha fatto	1/1	100
Fai/fa'	2/2	100
Fare / fa'	0/1	100
Totale	**31/49**[21]	**63.3**

Table 3 Forms of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* in C-Oral Rom

Native speakers of Italian, when (more or less covertly) elicited information about the behaviour of reportative *fare* spontaneously provided information of the type expressed above. They sometimes quoted characteristics of the behaviour of *fare* in order to highlight its similarities and differences with *dire*. However, they never pointed to some differences

[21] This number (49) represents the total occurrences of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* in the whole *C-Oral Rom* corpus (306,638 tokens).

pertaining the grammatical behaviour of the two verbs, which are mentioned in the literature (see, for example, Mortara Garavelli 1995, Giani 2002). These 'asymmetries' are presented in the following sections and discussed throughout this paper.

Intransitivity of 'fare' as a verbum dicendi

It has been noted in the literature that *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* shows intransitive behaviour (3), whereas *fare* as a production verb can be followed by an NP direct object (4).

(3)   * La mamma fa una parola.

         Mummy says a word.

(4)   La mamma fa una torta.

         Mummy bakes a cake.

In relation to this, *fare* shows a different behaviour from *dire*, which can be followed by a direct NP object (5).

(5)   La mamma dice una parola.

         Mummy says a word.

(6)   * La mamma fa una parola

         Mummy says a word.

The variable behaviour of *fare*, behaving as a transitive verb where it is a production verb and as an intransitive verb when functioning as a *verbum dicendi*, is connected to a change in valency related to its polysemy.

Restriction of 'fare' to the direct discourse construction

The second asymmetry which has been noted between *fare* and *dire* is that, while both can appear in the so-called direct speech (D.S.) construction as exemplified in (7) and (8), only the latter can appear in both the so-called indirect speech (I.S.) and the D.S. constructions, as shown in (9) and (10).

(7)   La mamma dice: "Oggi c'è il sole!"

             Mummy says: "Today it's sunny!"

(8)   La mamma fa: "Oggi c'è il sole!"

             Mummy says: "Today it's sunny!"

(9)   La mamma dice che oggi c'è il sole.

             Mummy says that today it's sunny.

(10)   * La mamma fa che oggi c'è   il sole.

             Intended meaning: Mummy says that today it's sunny.

The I.S. construction is usually described as made up by two clauses: the main clause, centred around an event of saying, and an objective complement clause relying on a parallel between the clausal object and the NP object (Tekavčić, 1972: 600-1; Dardano & Trifone, 1985: 296; Serianni *et al.*, 1997: 439). The restrictions on *fare*, compatible only with a D.S. construction, are then understood as deriving from its status of intransitive verb (see section 1.1) when having a similar meaning to *dire*.

Reported speech constructions and subordination: the traditional view

Traditional criteria for defining subordination and complementation (as discussed in Cristofaro, 2003: Chap. 2) are dependency and embedding.

The application of the dependency test to the reported speech constructions shows that clauses making up the D.S. construction show a greater degree of independence (11) if compared to those in the I.S. construction (12). Considering examples (11) and (12), (11b) can in fact 'stand on its own', whereas the same cannot be said of (12b).

(11)   La mamma dice/fa: "Oggi c'è il sole."

             a.   La mamma dice/fa.

b.   Oggi c'è il sole.

(12)   La mamma dice che oggi c'è il sole.

a.   La mamma dice.

b.   * Che oggi c'è il sole.

According to the dependency test, the I.S. construction would be an example of subordination, whereas the D.S. construction would not. However, according to this view, it is not clear what kind of relationship links the two juxtaposed clauses which make up the D.S. construction[22].

The second traditional criterion for subordination consists of clausal embedding: 'the subordinate clause is embedded into the main one as a constituent of it, and the two are linked by a part-whole relationship' (Cristofaro, 2003: 15). Applying the tests for object status in (13) and (14) to (11) and (12), it can be seen that both can be considered subordinate clauses.

(13)   a.   La mamma dice: "Oggi c'è il sole!"

b.   "Oggi c'è il sole!" è detto dalla mamma.

"Today it's sunny!" is said by mum.

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[22] A reviewer points out that an account of such relations can be found in Lehmann (1988). Lehmann's account of subordination (see Lehmann 1988: 182 for a definition) builds on the idea that it is a prototypical concept (ib.: 182), resulting from the clustering of values along six continua. By applying Lehmann's model to the Italian D.S. construction, it appears that it expresses a relationship of subordination between the main clause – containing the V of saying – and the subordinate clause – the reported speech proper. Such a relation, however, is one of the sociative type, and not one of dependency (embedding). Evidence for this can be found by considering the position variability of the two clauses, intonational factors, maintenance of features typical of full-fledged sentences, interlacing (the two clauses are disjoint) and lack of explicit clause linking.
Viewing the D.S. as expressing a type of subordination relation is of course possible since Lehmann (1988) considers the existence of three main types of clause linkage (parataxis, hypotaxis and subordinate-sociative relation). This position shares some similarities with the three-way distinction between coordination, subordination and cosubordination in Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997). In contrast to such three-terms models, theories considering a two-way distinction between coordination and subordination (embedding) face more difficulties in capturing the syntactic relation between the two clauses in D.S. constructions.
The fact that no examples in Lehmann's study relate to D.S. suggests that perhaps it is not regarded as a canonical type of subordination. This impression parallels the one given by standard grammars of Italian, which usually lump the description of the D.S. and I.S. into a section on reported speech and place it in an appendix to the syntax section. In doing so, they explicitly classify the I.S. construction as a case of subordination (embedding), while they do not qualify the kind of syntactic relation holding for the D.S. construction (Dardano & Trifone 1985: 312 ff.; Serianni et al. 1997: 430-440).

c.   "Oggi c'è   il sole"   lo
dice   la mamma.

Today there is   the sun   it.object   says   the mum

"Today it'sunny!". Mummy says it.

(14)   a.   La mamma dice che oggi c'è il sole.

            b.   Che oggi c'è il sole è detto dalla mamma.

            That today is sunny is said by mum.

            c.   Che   oggi   c'è   il sole lo
dice   la mamma.

            That   today there is   the sun   it.object
says   the mum

            That today is sunny is said by mum.

That the embedding and the dependency tests lead to contradictory results raises issues related to the reliability of these tests. None of these tests, however, seems to help solve the issue of the suspect 'split intransitivity' of reportative *fare*. The syntactic relations between the clauses which make up the D.S. construction with *dire* and *fare* still reveal a fundamental difference. In fact, as example (15) shows, object status cannot be proved for the reported utterance, in contrast to (14).

(15)   a. La mamma fa: "Oggi c'è il sole."

            b. * "Oggi c'è il sole" è fatto dalla mamma.

            c. * "Oggi c'è il sole" lo fa la mamma.

Alternative views to morphosyntactic criteria of subordination

As anticipated in section 2, traditional subordination criteria are considered to be not entirely reliable, as they often lead to contradictory results. Furthermore, the approach outlined in section 2 has been criticised for being 'syntactocentric' or 'verbocentric' (Goldberg, 1995) and for not being able to account for cross-linguistic variation (Cristofaro, 2003: 17 ff.). Sections 3.1 and 3.2 focus on the first of these two criticisms, showing how a different view of subordination can contribute to a better understanding of the behaviour of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi*.

Subordination as a cognitive-functional mechanism

Cristofaro (2003) critiques the traditional 'syntactocentric' notion of subordination in favour of a cognitive-functional view of the phenomenon, supported by typological data. Subordination is defined as:

> a situation whereby a cognitive asymmetry is established between two linked SoAs [states of affairs: CG], such that the profile of one of the two, henceforth the main SoA) overrides that of the other (henceforth the dependent SoA). This is equivalent to say that the dependent SoA is (pragmatically) non-asserted, while the main one is (pragmatically) asserted (Cristofaro 2003:33).

Complementation, in its turn, is understood as a particular type of subordination relation, whereby two SoAs are linked in such a way that 'one of them (the main one) entails that another (the dependent one) is referred to' (Cristofaro, 2003: 95).

The treatment of reported speech constructions according to Cristofaro (2003) sees a distinction between those languages which have only the D.S. construction (case 1) and those which have both the D.S. and the I.S. constructions (case 2). In case 1, the clause describing the event of saying is understood to be the main clause and the clause containing the reported utterance is interpreted as a complement clause. In contrast to the situation in case 1, the D.S. construction is excluded from a study on subordination in case 2. In fact, Cristofaro (2003: 47), basing herself on Haiman (1985: 222-28), states that in case 2 'direct report… is used to mention the sounds uttered by somebody, regardless of their semantic content'. In other words, under such a view[23], the D.S. construction 'just involves a single SoA (somebody's saying something) and in principle is not relevant to subordination' (Cristofaro, 2003: 47). If a language has both the D.S. and the I.S. construction, then only the latter is a case of subordination (what the former would then represent is not made explicit in Cristofaro's account).

With these reflections about subordination in mind, it is possible to go back to the situation described for *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* in sections 1.1 and 1.2.

If one adopts the position described above, no 'problematic' behaviour for *fare* can be detected. In fact, given that Italian has both a D.S. and an I.S. construction (case 2) and *fare*

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[23] Such a position, not making a distinction between reported speech with and without propositional content, e.g. between onomatopoeias and interjections on the one hand and clauses on the other, is debatable.

enters only the D.S. construction, asking what kind of grammatical relation links *fare* to the reported utterance would simply not make sense.

At this point it could be useful to take a step back and focus on the definition of subordination mentioned above (Cristofaro, 2003: 33) with particular attention to the notion of 'pragmatic assertivity' (Cristofaro, 2003: 32). Starting from a definition of illocutionary force as the 'property whereby a sentence can represent a speech act' (Cristofaro, 2003: 32), the argument for subordination goes like this: 'if some part of the sentence lacks illocutionary force, it cannot represent a speech act, therefore it is not asserted and has no autonomous profile' (Cristofaro, 2003: 32), thus it can be considered subordinated to the part of the sentence which is asserted. As a means for testing the illocutionary force of a clause, a 'question-tag test' is proposed. Examples (16) and (17), which reproduce examples (5.38) and (5.39) in Cristofaro (2003: 108), show how question tags can be used to test the illocutionary force of different parts of the sentence:

(16)　　a.　　He said [that she will be late], didn't he?

　　　　b.　　＊ He said that she will be late, won't she?

(17)　　a.　　He said: "She will be late", didn't he?

　　　　b.　　＊ He said: "She will be late", won't she?

On the one hand, the very fact that this test is tried out on examples of D.S. in a case 2 language (English) for which D.S. is said not to be relevant to subordination, is interesting. In addition, the pragmatic assertivity test does not show any difference in behaviour between the two reported speech constructions and reveals that, despite the fact that the juxtaposed clause in D.S. can have the form of a statement, a question, a directive or an exclamation, their form does not signal the maintenance of illocutionary force belonging to the original speech.

These observations would lead to conclude that if the D.S. constructions had not been ruled out on an *a priori* principle, they would simply be a good example of subordination, understood on a cognitive basis. More precisely, the reported clause in both reported speech constructions would be complements to the main clause centred around the process of saying. This is exactly the view taken here. In this perspective, however, the 'asymmetry' in the behaviour of *fare*, participating in D.S. constructions but not in I.S. constructions, still remains unexplained.

A Construction Grammar approach to reported speech

Construction Grammar (CxG) (Goldberg 1995, 2006) represents a radical alternative to a 'verbocentric' conception of sentence structure. The basic tenet of CxG is that 'all levels of

grammatical analysis involve constructions: learned pairings of form with semantic or discourse function' (Goldberg, 2006: 5). In order to posit a distinct construction in the language, it must be ascertained that its properties are not completely predictable from knowledge of other constructions already present in the grammar. Constructions are organised in hierarchical networks showing an increase in schematicity as one goes up the hierarchy. It can be said that constructions are organised in a network when 'the semantic and/or pragmatic function of different patterns are related' (Verhagen, 2005: 111). Finally, 'constructions can combine freely to form actual expressions as long as they are not in conflict[24]' (Goldberg, 2006: 10).

According to the what has been said above, two related constructions can be posited in the grammar of Italian, the D.S. and the I.S.. Both of them can be said to be instantiations of a more general pattern of complementation constructions. The generalised scheme for complementation constructions (see Verhagen 2005: 135 for an application to Dutch) can be instantiated by various classes of complement-taking verbs (see Noonan 1995 and Cristofaro 2003: 99 for a classification), among which also verbs of saying. The reported speech constructions are also related to other constructions which, although similar, cannot be considered instantiations of complementation constructions, because the reported utterance has no propositional content (18).

(18)   a.   La mamma dice: "No, no!"

              Mum says: "No, no!"

         b.   "Buona fortuna!" – fa la vecchietta

              "Good luck" – says (lit. does) the elderly woman.

Given these premises, it is possible to go back to the puzzle related to the behaviour of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* outlined in sections 1.1 and 1.2.

A Construction Grammar approach to the behaviour of reportative *fare* in Italian

A D.S. construction is posited for Italian (19):

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[24] A reviewer points out that in some accounts conflicting constructions can be combined through conceptual (and constructional) blending.

(19)   La mamma   dice   al bambino: "Oggi c'è il sole!"

        The mum   says   to the child
today there is the sun

        Mum   says   to the child:
"Today it's sunny!"

Sem.	sayer	SAY	recipient	
	sayee (propositional)			
Syn.	Subj.NP	Vsaying	Dative.NP/PP	S

The 'conceptual base' (Langacker, 2008: 66-70) of reported speech is evoked by the construction as a whole, which can be activated even if some of its elements are not profiled. This is the case of forms like (20), particularly frequent in narrative written texts.

(20)   La mamma al bambino: "Oggi c'è il sole!"

    The mum to the child: "Today it's sunny!"

Not only cases like (20) contrast sharply with a verbocentric conception of grammar, but also cases like (21)-(24), where the underlined verbs, which resist a classification as verbs of saying, are understood as *verba dicendi*. In order to get such an interpretation it is not necessary to posit any phonologically empty element (Goldberg, 2006: 10), like the gerund of a verb of saying (cf. Mortara Garavelli, 1995: 43).

(21)   - Non so nulla io! – <u>Sbuffò</u> il Costa

    (*LIZ*, Pirandello, L., *I vecchi e i giovani*, 2, 3.13)

      - I don't know anything! – grumbled (lit. puffed) Costa.

(23)   Quaiotto <u>scattò</u>: "Domando la parola!"

    (*LIZ*, Fogazzaro, A., *Piccolo mondo moderno*, 3, 2.7)

      Quaiotto went off: "Permission to talk!"

(24)   Una sera <u>scoppiò</u>: - Devo dirti che ho fatto testamento.

         (*LIZ*, Svevo, I., *La coscienza di Zeno*, 4.22)

                    One night he flared up: - I must tell you that I signed a will.

Turning now to the 'puzzle' related to the behaviour of *fare*, it can be shown that a CxG approach provides an adequate explanation for the phenomenon[25].

   Following this approach, it is in fact sufficient to state that *fare* is a verb able to fill the SAY slot of the construction. In order for this to happen, it is not necessary to postulate that *fare* is polysemous, having two meanings 'to say' and 'to do/make'. The semantics of 'saying' can only be retrieved when *fare* is in the reported speech construction, i.e. is inherited from the construction itself. This means that *fare* does not inherit the semantics of saying in other constructions, leading to unacceptable results like (3). Other cases in which *fare* contrasts with other constructions are illustrated in (25)-(27) for the imperative, the passive and the impersonal constructions.

(25)   * Fa': "Oggi c'è il sole".

             Say: "Tomorrow it's sunny."

(26)   * "Oggi c'è il sole!" è fatto dalla mamma.

             * "Today it's sunny!" is done by mum."

(27)   * Si fa che domani ci sarà il sole.

             * It is done / people do that tomorrow it will be sunny.

The constructional approach adopted here has allowed to explain the '(in)transitivity puzzle' identified for *fare* without making reference to the notion of change of valency, which is based on the idea that the syntactic structure of a sentence is entirely dependent on the sub-categorisation patterns of the verb.

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[25] It must be noted that Serianni et al.'s (1997: 438-440) description of D.S. constructions with Vs other than Vs of saying or with an empty verbal slot is compatible with the view presented here. In fact, in the former case, the Vs of saying is said to be 'represented' by a different V, such as *inghiottire* 'gulp', and in the latter case the V of saying is said to be implied or understood.

A CxG approach also explains the fact that *fare* appears only in D.S. constructions. As noted above (section 3), it is possible to posit two related constructions in the grammar of Italian, the D.S. construction (28) and the I.S. construction (29).

(28)   La mamma   dice   una parola   al bambino

	The mum	says	a word
	to the child		

Sem.	sayer	SAY	sayee (propositional)
	recipient		
Syn.	Subj.NP	Vsaying	NP
	Dative.NP/PP.		

(29)   La mamma   dice   al bambino   che   oggi c'è il sole

	The mum	says	to the child	that
	today it's sunny			

Sem.	sayer	SAY	recipient	
	sayee(proposit.)			
Syn.	Subj.NP	Vsaying	Dative.NP /PP	COMP
S				

The difference between (28) and (29) is twofold. At the syntactic level the presence of the complementiser is the most salient feature. At the semantic level, the two constructions encode a difference in the construal of the situation described.

In order to understand this, it is useful to recall that the base of a speech report situation involves the following participants and events:

(a)   the original speaker, the original recipient and the original message, whose Ground (Langacker, 2008: 75) coincides with actual location in space and time of the original speech situation;

(b)　　　the　final speaker, the final recipient and the final message, which is grounded in the final speech spatio-temporal co-ordinates.

In the case of the D.S. construction the vantage point is placed on the original speaker, whereas in the I.S. construction it is on the final speaker, thus (sometimes) causing a deictic shift. Information about the perspective on the reported event is coded in the semantic component of the two reported speech constructions.

Going back to the incompatibility of *fare* with I.S. constructions, it is sufficient to recall that the two reported speech constructions are members of a network of constructions and that there is no requirement for a verb entering one of these to enter also some or all the other constructions in the network.

Example (30) shows that this is the case for *esclamare* 'to exclaim' which does not seem compatible with the I.S. construction:

(30)　a.　　　"Mi dica la santa verità" – esclamò il bibliotecario.

　　　　　　　(*LIZ*, Fogazzaro, A., *Piccolo mondo moderno*, 4.1)

　　　　　　　"Tell me the honest truth" – the librarian exclaimed.

　　　b.　　　* Il bibliotecario esclamò di dirgli la santa verità.

　　　　　　　The librarian exclaimed to tell him the honest truth.

Yet the approach proposed in CxG is not a static one. In fact, it cannot be excluded that over time a verb which was not - at some stage of the evolution of the language - tolerated in a construction starts being accepted in it. This seems to have been the case for *fare*, which was described as a verb incapable of entering in the I.S. construction up until 2002 (Giani, 2002) but which recent data seem to show as followed by the complementiser *che* 'that'. A query run on the whole *itWac* corpus[26] retrieved six examples of *fare* in an I.S. construction. Three of the six examples are presented here as (31):

(31)　a.　　　Io rido… lui mi fa che sono un po' strana, n[o]n mi capisce…

　　　　　　　I laugh… he tells (lit. does) me that I am a bit strange, he doesn't understand me...

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[26] About two billion words. The corpus consists of written language gathered from the web.

b.   Lui separato in casa, io sola. […] Mi fa che la lascerà.

He is separated [though living] at home [with his ex].

He tells (lit. does) me that he will leave her.

c.   … gli faccio che mi interessava…

… I tell (lit. do) him that I was interested...

The results from *itWac* show that the use of *fare* in the I.S. construction is still quite infrequent, and a search in *C-Oral Rom* and *Coris* did not return any hits. A hypothesis can be put forward about the possibility of such a construction to be confined to a specific genre (blog, forum), or spreading from it, but at the moment there is no evidence for such claims.

A CxG approach to the '(in)transitivity puzzle' of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* has dissolved the idea that *fare* displays a sort of anomalous or irregular syntactic behaviour. As already noted at the beginning of this section, it is sufficient to invoke the mechanism of semantic inheritance.

The only requirement for a linguistic item to enter a construction is (semantic-pragmatic) compatibility. It is possible to identify some factors which might have favoured the employment of *fare* in reported speech constructions. It is to these that section 5 now turns.

Factors favouring the use of *fare* in reported speech constructions

It is difficult to understand whether the presence of *fare* in reported speech constructions represents an innovation in the history of Italian. Even if the analysis of the *LIZ* corpus of literary Italian shows a single (ambiguous) example of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* dating 1478[27], signs of its regular diffusion can only be seen since the XIX century[28]. However, it cannot be excluded that reportative *fare* was not attested before that time because of its colloquial nature. As already mentioned in section 1, the informal connotation of reportative *fare* is

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[27] The expression *Albanese, Messere!* 'Albanian, Sir!' used in Pulci, L., *Morgante*, III (octaves 47-8 and XXV octave 12) is introduced by *fare* in the former case and *rispondere* 'reply' in the latter. This context can be regarded as ambiguous between saying and doing since uttering the expression *Albanese, Messere!* is equivalent to 'pretending not to understand', therefore to performing the action of feigning ignorance (Brambilla Ageno 1994).

[28] The GRADIT dictionary dates back reportative *fare* to Ippolito Nievo (1831-1861).

absent from novels, where it seems to represent an unmarked alternative to *dire* in introducing direct speech.

Not being able to prove that reportative *fare* represents an innovation in the history of Italian does not, however, represent a limit to the understanding of why it appears in reported speech constructions. The idea that *fare* as a verb of saying is an innovation seems to be somehow connected to its interpretation as a more expressive/emphatic form in comparison to *dire*. Yet expressiveness is not a necessary motivation for language change.

As pointed out by Croft (2007), 'variation is pervasive in verbalisation' is and it is not surprising that a light verb like *fare* is able to enter a number of constructions, among which the reported speech constructions. As mentioned above (sections 3.2 and 4), the only requirement is that the two constructions involved are not in conflict.

A number of situations, however, can be identified as favouring (though certainly not determining) the employment of *fare* as a verb of saying in reported speech constructions. It is possible to think about these situations as bridging contexts (Evans & Wilkins 2000; Heine 2002). The bridging context phase is understood as a stage which precedes polysemy, as table 4 shows.

		Bridging context masks the distinction between an individual's being at Stage 2 and Stage 3 allowing speakers to co-exist over periods while at different stages		
		STAGE 2	**STAGE 3**	
	STAGE 1	*f* has the meaning p, and a common implicature *q*	*f* has two meanings *p* and *q*	**STAGE 4**
	f has a meaning *p*			*f* has the meaning *q*
Form	F	F	F	F
Meaning	'p'	'p' (<'q')	'p', 'q'	'q'

Table 4 Bridging contexts and semantic change. From Enfield (2003: 29)

In contrast to what is pointed out in table 4, it seems that implicature plays a minor role for the phenomenon described in this paper. A major role is, on the other hand, played by metonymy (Barcelona 2000; Dirven & Pörings 2003; Haser 2005; Hopper & Traugott 2003; Otal Campo et al. 2005; Panther & Radden 199; Panther & Thornburd 2003; Stefanowitsch & Gries 2007). Metonymy is understood here as 'conceptual metonymy' or 'conceptual association', i.e. as a process in which 'one conceptual entity… provides access to another conceptual entity… within the same domain' (Kövecses & Radden, 1998: 38) or as a projection of a conceptual domain onto a neighbouring one.

The assumption here is that there are contexts in which a given form (*fare*) can be associated both with a conceptual domain (DO) and another contiguous domain (SAY). The two domains are understood as adjacent because they are linked by a relationship of hyperonymy-hyponymy: 'saying' is in fact also a way of 'doing' something.

Bridging contexts are thus understood as those situations in which 'speech participants do not detect any problem of different assignments of meaning to the form because both speaker and addressee interpretation of the utterance in context are functionally equivalent' (Evans & Wilkins, 2000: 550).

At least two are the bridging contexts which can be detected for *fare* as a verb of saying: (a) its use as introducer of non-propositional content such as onomatopoeias, interjections and discourse markers and (b) its role in describing the co-deployment of gestures and reported speech. The latter case can be illustrated through examples (32)-(34):

(33)   'No' – fece più col gesto che con la voce Lydia.

               (*LIZ*, Pirandello, L., *In silenzio*,   77)

               Lit. 'No' – said/made Lydia more with the gesture than with the voice.

(35)   Lui? Come fa sempre, mi sorrise e, con la mano mi fece: "vai, vai pure."

          (*LIZ*, Pirandello, L., *Una giornata*, Una sfida, 36)

          Lit. Him? As he always does, he smiled and, with the hand did/said: "go, you can go."

(36)   "Ham!" Disse, o piuttosto fece Fermo scotendo la testa, e ricominciò a pensare.

          (*LIZ*, Manzoni, A., *Fermo e Lucia*, 3, 8.31)

          Lit. "Ham!" Said or rather did Fermo shaking his head, and he started thinking again.

These examples show that a certain communicative situation can be conceptualised both as an event of saying and an event of doing, especially when gestures and verbal expressions are co-deployed.

This aspect will not be explored in detail here, while attention will be paid to the use of *fare* and *dire* as introducers of onomatopoeias, interjections and discourse markers.

'Fare' and 'dire' as introducers of onomatopoeias, interjections and discourse markers

As examples (35)-(37) demonstrate, *fare* can introduce reported utterances whose content is non-propositional (onomatopoeias, interjections and discourse markers):

(35)   batte i piedi e fa /tun tun tun/ (*C-Oral Rom*, ifamcv 12)

        Stamps one's feet and goes (lit. does/makes) tun tun tun.

(36)   "Uff!" fece Ciro. (*itWac*)

        "Uff!" – went (lit. did/made) Ciro.

(37)   "E allora…" fece il fanciullino. (*itWac*)

        "And so…" went (lit. did/made) the child.

A hypothesis can be formulated in relation to *fare*, *dire* and onomatopoeias, primary interjections and discourse markers. In fact, intuitively it is plausible to think that onomatopoeias and primary interjections could be conceived of as something which is done instead of something which is said. On the other hand, it can be hypothesised that discourse markers and secondary interjections could be conceptualised mainly as something that is said. If this was the case, then the data should show a preference for *fare* to introduce primary interjections and onomatopoeias and for *dire* to introduce discourse markers.

In order to test this hypothesis, two corpora have been consulted: *LIZ* for primary interjections (e.g. *ah*!, *eh*!, *oh*!) and *C-Oral Rom* for onomatopoeias.

Primary interjections in LIZ

A sub-corpus of *LIZ* restricted to novels and short-stories written in the XX century (about 2 billion words) was selected for the study of *fare* and *dire* as introducers of primary interjections. Interjections are quite frequent in dialogues where they indicate and qualify the emotional involvement of the character who is speaking. Comparatively, they are more frequent in fiction than in naturally occurring reported discourse, where the reproduction of such elements is often left out.

In order to select which interjections to examine, a frequency list for spoken Italian (*C-Oral Rom*) was consulted and the primary interjections *ah*!, *eh*! and *oh*!, coming in the top positions (first, third and fifth respectively) were chosen. The three interjections were selected after discarding *mh* (second position), a filler typical of spontaneous speech, and *vabbè* (fourth position), which is a secondary interjection (< *va bene* 'alright' – lit. 'it's going well'). A sample was extracted out of the total occurrences of the three selected interjections. Then, only the cases in which the interjections appear in the direct discourse constructions were considered (table 5). Attention was finally concentrated only on the most frequent verbal introducers (*dire*, *esclamare* 'to exclaim'- classified as a hyponym of *dire* - and *fare*) of the selected types of reported utterances.

Interjection	Total Interjections	Sample	Interjections in D.S. constructions
Ah!	1719	344	72
Oh!	1345	270	64
Eh!	857	172	38
Total	3921	786	174

Table 5 Primary interjections in *LIZ*

As a second step, the reported utterances were classified according to the fact that they consisted only of (1) an isolated primary interjection (e.g. 'she said: Oh!'), (2) a primary interjection, a discourse marker or a secondary interjection (e.g. 'he said: Oh! Hallo!') or (3) of a primary interjection followed by a proposition (e.g. 'she said: Oh, he has just arrived!').

Type of utterance quoted	Verb	*Ah*	*Oh*	*Eh*	Total
(1) Primary interjection alone	*Esclamare*	0	0	0	0
	Dire	5	0	25	30
	Fare	20	5	10	35
(2) Interjection + secondary interjection, discourse marker or other non-propositional content	*Esclamare*	40	40	10	90
	Dire	20	40	20	80
	Fare	15	15	10	40
(3) Interjection + sentence (propositional content)	*Esclamare*	35	45	5	85
	Dire	35	45	10	90
	Fare	15	20	15	50

Table 6 Correlation between type of reported utterance and introductory verb

Data from *LIZ*: XX century prose sub-corpus

As table 6 shows, in those cases in which the content of an utterance is just a primary interjection, *fare* and *dire* appear to introduce the reported utterance almost with the same frequency (*dire* = 46.15%, *fare* = 53.84%).

On the other hand, in those cases where the content of an utterance is a secondary interjection (e.g. *mamma mia!*) or a discourse marker (e.g. *grazie!*), the frequency of *dire* (38%) is double as that of *fare* (19%). Secondary interjections and discourse markers are unmistakably lexical, whereas the same cannot be said of primary interjections. Despite their being conventional pairing of form and meaning (pragmatic function) their status as lexemes – or even words - is disputed (see for example (Serianni 1989: 369) who considers them 'at the margin' of the lexicon). It must be brought in mind that a primary interjection is often realised quite differently from its transcription, and is then less rigidly codified. For instance, a sigh could be transcribed as "*uhm!*" and this is the (conventionalised) form found in literary texts.

However, leaving the territory of literary texts and moving on to that of naturally occurring conversations, it seems to be plausible that the types of vocalisations commonly referred to as interjections are not conceptualised differently from other sound emissions (e.g. screams and even burps) which can hardly be conceived of as 'speaking'.

The small corpus exploration discussed so far seems to disprove the hypothesis put forward at the beginning of section 6. In fact, no complementary distribution is identified, such that *fare* would collocate with reported interjections alone and *dire* with situations in which the reported utterance is unmistakably lexical. In the situation described as (3), where the reported utterance has propositional content, *dire* (40%) outnumbers *fare* (22%), keeping proportions stable with the case of interjections/discourse markers. It can be hypothesised

then that *dire* is more plausible when the reported utterance consists of clearly lexical content. Yet the domain of sound emission, codified by *fare* - but not by *dire* - is still available.

All these observations can be regarded as a clue suggesting that the domain of interjections represents a bridging context for *fare* as a reportative verb.

Onomatopoeias in C-Oral Rom

An analysis carried out on the whole *C-Oral Rom* corpus (about 300,000 words of spoken Italian) allowed retrieving six occurrences of onomatopoeias (38):

(38)   a.   batte i piedi e fa / tun tun tun /

                (*C-Oral Rom*, ifamcv12)

                Stamps one's feet and goes (lit. does) tun tun tun.

        b.   Cappuccetto Rosso / arriva / e fa / toc toc //

                (*C-Oral Rom*, ifamn25)

                Little Red Riding Hood arrives and goes (lit. does) toc toc.

        c.   Lì c'era / un imbocchino / che faceva vuum / vuum

                (*C-Oral Rom*, ifamcv 15)

                There there was a mouthpiece which went (lit. did) voom voom.

        d.   Qui / c'aveva 'un so / e girava // faceva / dum / dum //

                (*C-Oral Rom*, ifamcv11)

                Here it had a dunno what and it was spinning and it was going (lit. doing)
dum   dum.

        e.   <oppure fa> / mh / mh //

                (*C-Oral Rom*, inatte03)

                Or he goes (lit. does) mh mh.

f.   No // devi fa + < tu tu >

(*C-Oral Rom*, ifamcv24)

No you must go (lit. do) tu tu.

g.   Oppure fa semplicemente degli oh / uh //

(*C-Oral Rom*, inatte03)

Or he is simply like (lit. does) oh uh.

It can easily be noted that none of the examples found represents a case of reported speech. However, some interesting observations can be made regarding *fare* + onomatopoeias as a bridging context. The choice of *fare* instead of *dire* in (38a-e) can be connected to the fact that the sound reproduced by the speaker was not originally produced via the speech organ. In these cases, the substitution of *fare* with *dire* leads to results which show a change in meaning, as can be seen by comparing example (38b) and (39):

(39)   Cappuccetto Rosso arriva e dice: "toc toc."

        Little Red Riding Hood arrives and says: "toc toc."

Example (38g) reproduces a pre-linguistic production by a small child. It is interesting as it shows a case which can be conceptualised as generic sound emission (requiring *fare* in Italian) or related to animal screams (*il gatto fa miao* 'the cat goes maow') rather than to human speaking.

        Example (38f) represents a similar situation: an instruction is given by a carer to a child about how to reproduce the sound of a locomotive, i.e. a mechanical sound. Even *dire* would sound acceptable in such a context (40):

(40)   No, devi dire: "tu tu".

        No, you must say: tu tu."

The analysis of the few examples in *C-Oral Rom* thus leads to the identification of a second bridging context. Situations like reported interjections and onomatopoeias which can be conceptualised both as belonging to the domain of saying or of doing are particularly interesting from a cognitive point of view. Their existence as an overlap area between the

cognitive domains SAY and DO is reinforced by the cross-linguistic evidence shown in section 7 for onomatopoeias.

'To do' as a *verbum dicendi* beyond Italian

No complete and thorough surveys on the languages of the world have been carried out focussing on the employment of lexical items connected to the domain of doing to express the event of saying. In this panorama, the studies by Schultze-Berndt (2008) on generalised action verbs in nine typologically different languages and that by Cohen *et al.* (2002) on the grammaticalisation of 'to say' and 'to do' in Eastern African languages are valuable. These readings stimulated a small pilot research conducted on ten European languages mainly through a questionnaire sent to native speakers[29]. The questionnaire was centred on a translation task from English or Italian and aimed at eliciting five points:

1) the possibility of a verb of doing to express the activity of saying in reported speech;

2) the existence of other verbs able to fill the SAY slot in a reported speech construction;

3) the existence of other reported speech constructions without a verb as an introducer;

4) the choice of verb in introducing animal screams;

5) the choice of verb in introducing mechanical sounds.

The data elicited through questionnaires were then integrated by the consultation of *C-Oral Rom* for French, Spanish and Portuguese and by occasional conversations with speakers of seven following languages (Albanian, Bulgarian, German, Hungarian, Polish, Russian and Ukrainian) who contributed to the first point above. The results of this pilot study are presented in table 7.

Language	1) DO as SAY	4) animal screams	5) mechanical sounds
Albanian	NO	–	–
Bulgarian	SCREAM/SHOUT/CRY	DO	DO
Catalan	DO	DO	DO
Croatian	COME	GO / CRY	GO / DO
English	GO / BE LIKE / ALL	GO	GO
Finnish	BE	Verbs derived from nouns specific to the sound in question. A mechanism similar to the English 'the dog barks' or 'the clock is ticking'.	
French	DO	DO	DO
German	SO (no verb)	DO	DO
Greek	DO	DO	DO
Hungarian	NO	–	–
Norwegian	DO	SAY	SOUND
Polish	NO	–	–
Portuguese	GO + SAY / CATCH + SAY	DO	DO
Romanian	?? DO	DO	DO
Russian	NO	–	–
Spanish	GO + SAY	DO	DO
Ukrainian	NO	–	–

Table 7 DO and SAY in the languages of Europe (a first exploratory survey)

Note: - = No available information

This small survey led to identify that the use of 'to do' as a verb of saying is shared by Italian with at least other four languages in Europe (Catalan, French, Greek, Norwegian) plus, although in extremely limited contexts, Romanian. The very same pattern of Italian, using 'to do' to introduce both reported sentences and animal/mechanical onomatopoeias is shared with Catalan, French, Greek and Romanian[30].

The distribution of the languages employing 'to do' as a verb of saying in D.S. construction seems to exclude both genetic and areal phenomena. Yet a genetic/areal phenomenon cannot be excluded in principle if one considers the Catalan, French and Italian dialectal continuum. Considering *Sprachbund* phenomena, the data from Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Romanian and Croatian do not show a uniform behaviour.

If the data collected so far do not seem to suggest a strong hypothesis of areal/genetic diffusion of the use of 'to be' as a *verbum dicendi* in D.S. constructions, at least they allow to uncover some patterns of expressions of the SAY domain in reported speech. English, Croatian, Portuguese and Spanish, for instance, employ a verb of movement ('come' or 'go'); English and Finnish use the verb 'to be', in the case of English followed by a 'quotative particle' (Lampert & Lampert forth.). The case of English 'like' shows similarities with German 'so' (Golato 2000) and with the use of *così* 'like this, thus' in Old Italian reported in (41):

(41)   ... gli disse così: "Ser Ciappelletto, come tu sai…"

        (*LIZ*, Boccaccio, G., *Decameron*, 1, 1)

            ... he told him like this: "Sir Ciappelletto, as you know…"

The development of adverbs like Italian *così* into quotative particles or complementisers introducing reported utterances is a well-known grammaticalisation pattern across the world. On the other hand it can be observed that no cases of grammaticalisation of 'to do' into quotative markers have been registered whereas this is a quite common path for verbs of saying (Aikhenvald, 2004).

To conclude, the small survey carried out on (some) European languages seems lend some support to the idea that 'at a certain level of abstraction the three notions of "be", "say" and "do" are identical' (Cohen *et al.*, 2002: 247) and that the three domains are located in a 'semantic continuum' (Cohen *et al.*, 2002: 248). A third domain, that of motion verbs, can be added to this continuum. Possibly relying on the idea that a message goes out of the speaker's mouth (sound emission) and comes towards the hearer (sound vibrations), the domain of motion is also available for metonymic shifts enabling it to express a communication event.

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[30] In Romanian, the use of fare as a *verbum dicendi* is even more marked in terms of register than it is in the other languages, and it is thus considered absolutely marginal.

Conclusion

Cross-linguistic evidence presented in section 7 and compared to the data in Schultze-Berndt (2008) and Cohen et al. (2002) showed that the use of *fare* 'to do' as a *verbum dicendi* is not a rare feature exhibited by Italian. Cognitive motivations for the employment of an action/production verb to express an event of saying were presented in section 6. Relying on the cognitive mechanism of metonymy and identifying some bridging contexts for the mapping of the domain of doing onto that of saying, it was possible to understand how *fare*, a verb of action/production, could enter reported speech constructions. A CxG approach to reported speech then allowed to take a fresh look at some aspects of the syntactic behaviour of *fare* (sections 3 and 4) which were considered problematic in the literature (section 1), and to reach the conclusions that there is no anomaly to be accounted for.

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Initial findings from a pilot Italian study of foreign language teachers' stated language assessment knowledge-base and needs

Elizabeth M.C. Guerin

Lancaster University

Abstract

This paper reports results from a survey of 100 foreign language teaching professionals in relation to their (i) knowledge of, and (ii) perceived needs for language assessment literacy. Respondents were asked to rate their knowledge of classroom-focused foreign language testing and assessment as regards language testing and assessment purposes, as well as language testing and assessment concepts and content. The survey results indicate a range in the knowledge of the concepts and content associated with language testing and assessment. Respondents also perceive definite needs for professional development in the area of language testing and assessment. The results of this study are useful (i) as a "snapshot" of current language assessment literacy within the foreign language teaching community in Italy, and (ii) as evidence that a need for education in the area of language assessment literacy exists.

Introduction

In 2008, an on-line survey was carried out in Italy into language assessment literacy (henceforth, LAL) in general and foreign language classroom assessment in particular. The aim of the study was to get an insight into foreign language teacher knowledge of assessment literacy, as well as their perceived needs for professional development in the area of LAL. This paper reports the initial findings in relation to (i) the knowledge-base of a sample of 100 foreign language teachers (FLTers), and (ii) the perceived needs of the respondents in relation to the need for education in the area of language assessment literacy.

Language Assessment Literacy

Professional educational associations and members of measurement, teaching, and teacher preparation and certification communities started working together in the late 1980s to develop standards for teacher competence in student assessment. Since then, interest in the area of educational assessment has been growing. The Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students, a document drawn up by collaborating professional and educational groups defines assessment as a process to obtain information so as to 'make educational decisions about students ... give feedback ... judge instructional effectiveness ... and to inform policy' (AFT, NCME, & NEA, 1990: 30). The same document describes the educators' professional role and responsibilities in relation to classroom activities and argues that 'teachers need competence in student assessment and sufficient time and resources to complete them in a professional manner. Five areas of teacher assessment competencies – where assessment competences are defined as "the knowledge and skills critical to a teacher's role as educator" – are identified within the above-mentioned document.

The term 'assessment literacy' emerges from the field of Educational Measurement (e.g., Stiggins, 1991). Popham (2003: v) directly associates the explosion of interest in testing and assessment with the issue of accountability whereby policymakers and other stakeholders identify learner test performance as the 'ultimate yardstick by which we measure a school's effectiveness'. He defines assessment literacy as 'the basic knowledge and skills that an individual needs in order to: avoid misusing educational tests and make accurate interpretations regarding students' test scores'.

Research in the field of language testing and assessment identifies at least two distinct strands. The first strand relates to language competence in the context of the language of schooling, while the second strand deals with the testing and assessment

of foreign language competence. However, given increased mobility and globalization, the clear distinction between the two above-mentioned strands is becoming blurred since, in many education contexts, there are growing numbers of first-generation or immigrant learners whose mother-tongue is not the language which is used in their schooling. Educational research has highlighted this issue and drawn attention to competence in the language of schooling as being a key-factor in poor educational achievement.

In the field of foreign language testing and assessment, where a foreign language is interpreted as a separate discipline, the concept of LAL is relatively recent (see for example, Boyles, 2005) even though, in the US, as in Europe and further afield, interesting initiatives seem to be underway.

In a European context, the initial ENLTA European Survey of Language Testing and Assessment Needs carried out in 2004 aimed at determining the need for language testing and assessment (henceforth, LTA) literacy initiatives throughout Europe (Hasselgreen, Carlsen & Helness, 2004; Hasselgreen et al., 2005; Huhta and Hirvelä, 2005). The European Association of Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA) which was set up in 2004, has used the results of the ENLTA survey to develop assessment literacy through its workshops, conferences, online resources, and special interest groups (SIGs). Edelenbos (2005) compiled a useful final report on foreign language assessment cultures in EU countries but, unfortunately, information on the Italian context is lacking. Erickson and Gustafsson (2005) reported interesting insights into students and teachers' views on language testing and assessment. In 2008, EALTA drew specific attention to the concept of LAL through its 5th EALTA Conference held in Athens (G) on the theme of 'Assessment Literacy in Europe and Beyond: Realities and Prospects'. As a result, some EALTA members have begun to research the above-mentioned themes in their own contexts in more detail (Vogt, Guerin, Sahinkarakas, Tsagari, D., Pavlou, & Afiri, 2008, Tsagari, 2009).

Against this background of growing interest, the remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 3 presents the pilot study undertaken in Italy. In Section 4, the methodological approach adopted is illustrated. Section 5 presents the findings of the survey, while the final part (Section 6) discusses the results and limitations of this pilot study.

Contextualisation

The focus of LAL in this study is on foreign language testing and assessment literacy and perceived needs of FLTers in Italy. This pilot study addressed FLTers

throughout the different levels of the educational system in order to obtain a "snapshot" of the Italian context in general. The primary purpose of this exploratory study was to get an insight into the LAL knowledge-base of foreign language teachers in Italy. A secondary interest was to understand whether or not foreign language teachers were positively disposed towards improving their LAL knowledge-base through professional development initiatives.

Methodology

Instrumentation

The instrument used for the purposes of data collection was a questionnaire composed of four sections with an overall total of 47 items. As can be seen in Appendix A, the first section contained 11 general information-type questions (i.e., gender, country/region, subject/s taught, qualification/s, work institution, role, experience, age of students, and knowledge of assessment), while each of the other three multi-item sections dealt, respectively, with classroom-focused testing and assessment literacy, the purposes of LTA, and LTA content and concepts. These three sections of the questionnaire contained 12, 8, and 16 items respectively (see Appendix A).

The semi-structured Likert-type questionnaire aimed at obtaining an overview of the LAL knowledge-base of foreign language teachers working in Italy. In many respects its purpose echoed in part that of the above-mentioned ENLTA (2004) in so far as it wanted to identify whether or not there was a need among language professionals for training in the area of assessment. However, it differed from the former study in that it specifically targeted foreign language teachers and aimed to identify both their LAL knowledge-base, and their perceived LAL needs. In this respect, the present survey had more in common with the Language Testing and Assessment Literacy (LTAL) Survey undertaken in 2008 in six European countries including central and south-eastern areas. The initial findings of this survey were presented as a poster and reported at the 5th EALTA conference (Vogt, Guerin et al., 2008); further in-depth analyses of the findings are forthcoming.

The present LAL survey was developed in the following manner. Both the ENLTA and the LTAL questionnaires were used in drawing up and refining the final items so as to reflect the purposes of the study. To this end, the questionnaires from two previous related studies (i.e., ENLTA and LTAL) constituted the basis for the development of the present survey. The initial ENLTA questionnaire was shortened and limited to the sections which related to the following stakeholders: foreign language teachers, and foreign language teacher trainers. The LTAL questionnaire

was refined through the addition of a further three specific questions in the general section in part I of the questionnaire. These questions were added in order to gain a clearer picture of the population being investigated by the LAL questionnaire (Appendix A). The specific additional questions related to age-range of respondents, professional experience, and age-range of learners, so as to obtain more detailed information about the target population, and relate it to the local, regional and national contexts. Thus, the present LAL survey investigated specified aspects of items which had only been dealt with in general in the LTAL survey.

Methods

A pilot pen-and-pencil questionnaire was developed and shared with colleagues in Florence (I), Heidelberg (D), and Lancaster (UK) for feedback. Slight modifications were made based on the feedback received. The pen-and-pencil questionnaire was then trialled by administering it to a small sample group of 30 respondents made up of teachers and trainee-teachers from my own professional context. Following trialling of the questionnaire, I analyzed the responses in order to understand if the items had been clear in their intent or whether they had been open to misinterpretation. When I thought there was some evidence of misinterpretation, I returned to the trial-group to understand the cause of the misinterpretation. Following discussion with the trial-group, I re-formulated the item and then checked its interpretation again with the trial-group.

What emerged from the analysis and subsequent discussion with the pilot-group revealed that certain aspects which had been considered as implicit in the context of the questionnaire i.e., that the topic of investigation was specifically foreign language assessment literacy, was instead interpreted by questionnaire-respondents in the broader context of assessment literacy in general. Hence, this required that, at the risk of appearing redundant, the concept of foreign language assessment literacy needed to be made explicit so as to avoid making the responses irrelevant or null and void for the purposes of the study. This meant returning to the questionnaire and specifying the foreign language aspect within each section and its related statements.

As stated in section 4.1 above, other modifications were made. In the initial general information section, some changes were also made. *In toto*, a further three questions were added to the original LTAL set of eight. Firstly, respondents were asked to specify the region they worked in. The reason this information was requested was so as to obtain a clear picture of the distribution of the respondents across the country. This was important to understand the population sample that was being reached and to contribute to the overall quality of the data being

gathered. Secondly, respondents were asked to provide information on their professional teaching experience in terms of years teaching. Here too, the objective was to understand the spread of responses and see whether responses were heavily weighed in terms of any specific group's teaching experience. Changes here included the addition of a question asking respondents to specify gender, as well as the addition of ten-year and five-year interval boxes to be ticked within questions related to teachers' age-range, and teachers' professional experience respectively. The items related to qualifications, institution type, and institutional role were re-phrased by offering choice lists which also included the option "other" and which provided space for respondents to specify their answer. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate the language testing and assessment course attended, the institution where it was held, the duration, and the texts used. This input was requested so as to enrich the quality of the information being gathered, and thus contribute to the qualitative aspect of the data being reported.

Procedures

During the period January-April 2008, the questionnaire survey was available online. The reason I decided to use an online version of the survey was so as to achieve a better overall picture of the LAL situation throughout Italy. This choice was also taken in order to maximize the response-rate given the relatively short time available for data collection.

A dedicated web space hosted the questionnaire and recorded access and time as well as date of access to the questionnaire. To ensure as far as possible from a technological perspective the reliability and validity of the responses of a given respondent, access to the online survey was set so that one and only one respondent could complete the questionnaire from a specific IP address. In brief, this meant that once the questionnaire had been accessed from a given computer its IP address was recorded. Any further attempt to access the survey from that IP address returned a message informing the would-be respondent that (s)he had already completed the survey. As I was later to discover, this aspect was to have both positive and negative consequences with regard to the access of the survey.

Information about the availability of the online questionnaire was provided for would-be respondents in the following ways:

- an e-mail containing information about the purposes of the survey and the direct link to it, was sent to a language teacher mailing-list which I had previously compiled from the list of participants at the dissemination

conference on the CEFTrain Project (Guerin, 2005) held in Florence (I) in 2004;

- in collaboration with one of the national language teachers' associations, i.e., Lingua e Nuova Didattica – LEND, a link to the survey was placed on the LEND Homepage making it directly accessible from there.
- in-service language teachers who were also students attending an English Language Methodology workshop at the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Florence for pre-service language teachers were directly informed about the survey and invited to participate.

The amount of time estimated to complete the questionnaire was c.10 minutes.

Findings

The primary purpose of this exploratory study was to get an insight into foreign language teachers' assessment literacy knowledge-base in the context of Italy.

A secondary interest was to understand whether or not foreign language teachers were interested in improving their LAL knowledge-base through professional development initiatives.

Data Analysis

The information provided by the 100 respondents to the online survey was first downloaded and then coded into SPSS version 15. In order to avoid errors in the coding and transcription processes, the resultant data was then double-checked by me and then cross-checked with the help of another person before proceeding to the data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate percentages, frequencies, means, averages, and distribution (e.g., see Table 1 above) for categorical and continuous (e.g., age) variables, and to screen the overall data set. Cronbach's α was calculated to check intra and inter section reliability for a total of 36 items and was above .9 which, according to Pallant (2007: 98) would seem to suggest 'very good internal consistency reliability for the scale'. The results for the Summary Item Statistics can be found in Appendix B. To explore both the direction (positive or negative) and the strength of the relationship between two continuous variables the Pearson correlation was used (see Appendix C).

The data analysis will examine each of the four sections contained in the questionnaire separately in Section 5.3. The following section presents information related to the survey respondents.

Respondents

The sample of the population investigated can be described as a combination of "typical sampling" and "convenience sampling" in so far as those targeted were foreign language teachers who were contacted through institutions and language teacher associations, as well as via e-mail. A total of 100 respondents working in Italy completed the survey online. Of these, 91% were female and 9% male. Respondents were distributed throughout the country with the majority based in north-central Italy. The age of respondents ranged between 20-60+ years; 75% were aged between 41-60 years. Of the overall sample studied, 99% were foreign language teachers with the vast majority teaching English (78%) followed by French (6%), German and Italian (respectively 4%), other languages (5%), language teaching methodology (2%), and ICT with language (1%). A total of 97% held a qualification which was a degree (82%), a diploma (6%), or other (9%). The results show that by far the role most occupied by respondents within their respective institutions was that of teacher (87%), followed by substitute teacher (10%), head of department (2%), and one respondent who worked in an advisory capacity to a public body. A total of 70% of respondents were employed in either secondary (59%) or primary (11%) level education, while the remainder worked in Higher Education (24%), kindergarten (1%), and other (5%) levels such as adult education and in private language schools. Based on the afore-mentioned distribution of teachers in the education system, not surprisingly, a glance at the average age of the learners the respondents taught shows that 70% of their learners fell into the 11-20 age range with 47% aged 16-20 years and 23% aged 11-15 years. The remainder of the learner population showed 15% aged between 5-10 years, and the remaining overall 15% aged between 21-50 years. As to the LAL knowledge-base of foreign language teachers (FLTer) investigated through item number 10, the majority of respondents (61%) answered that they had either pre- or in-service training in the areas of language testing assessment/practice as can be seen in Table 1. In the following section (Section 6 Limitations and Future Research) I will return to this item in greater detail.

The data obtained in the general information section was especially helpful in confirming that the target group had been reached, and in identifying the overall distribution of the respondents.

In the following section, I consider the findings from Section 1 of the questionnaire.

Q11 pre/in-service test/assess theory/practice

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Vali	Yes	61	61.0	61.0	61.0
d	No	39	39.0	39.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: FLTer stated LAL knowledge-base

Questionnaire Section 1: Classroom-focused testing & assessment

Section 1 of the questionnaire was devoted to classroom-focused testing and assessment and investigated testing and assessment (T&A) training received (questions 1.1.1 – 1.1.6) and perceived T&A training needs (questions 1.2.1 – 1.2.6). Respondents were asked about the T&A training received and their perceived needs in relation to the following:

1. Preparing classroom tests
2. Using ready-made tests
3. Giving student feedback
4. Using self/peer assessment
5. Using informal, continuous, non-test type assessment
6. Using ELP (or similar).

The following Table 2 presents the overall data results related to this section of the questionnaire.

Section 1: T&A area investigated: **Classroom-focused T&A**	Overall stated T&A training received	Overall expressed T&A training need
Preparing classroom tests	21%	79%
Using ready-made tests	42%	58%
Giving student feedback	24%	76%
Using self/peer assessment	17%	83%
Using informal, continuous, non-test type assessment	23%	77%
Using ELP (or similar).	31%	69%

Table 2: T&A - Overall stated and needed training in specific areas

This table illustrates the deep-felt need for training in these areas expressed by respondents, and corroborates the results of previous studies undertaken in the T&A area through the ENLTA (2004) and LTAL (2008) surveys. Furthermore, it highlights the expressed needs within a small but, none the less, a representative sample in a specific national context.

The following section presents the overall findings relation to the part of the questionnaire related to the purposes of testing.

Questionnaire Section 2: Purposes of Testing

Section 2 of the questionnaire was devoted to the purposes of T&A and investigated T&A training received (questions 2.1.1 – 2.1.4) and perceived T&A training needs (questions 2.2.1 – 2.2.4). Respondents were asked about the T&A training received and their perceived needs in relation to the following:

1. Giving grades
2. Identifying learning/teaching needs
3. Student programme placement
4. Awarding certificates.

In Table 3, the overall percentages related to these section areas of the questionnaire are presented.

Section 2: T&A area investigated: **Purposes of T&A**	Overall stated T&A training received	Overall expressed T&A training need
Giving grades	25%	75%
Identifying learning/teaching needs	27%	73%
Student programme placement	28%	72%
Awarding certificates	26%	74%

Table 3: T&A - Overall stated and expressed training needs

Table 3 highlights the fact that an overall minimum of 72% of respondents (max. 75% and average of 73.5%) expresses the need for T&A training in all areas investigated in this section of the questionnaire. Again, the results of previous studies undertaken in the T&A area through the ENLTA (2004) and LTAL (2008) surveys are corroborated. As with the results from Section 1, Section 2 also illustrates the expressed needs within a small but representative sample in a specific national context.

I now turn to the section in the questionnaire which dealt with language testing and assessment content and concepts.

Questionnaire Section 3: Content and Concepts

The final part of the questionnaire, Section 3, was devoted to T&A content and concepts. This section investigated T&A training received (questions 3.1.1 – 3.1.8) and perceived T&A training needs (questions 3.2.1 – 3.2.8). Respondents were asked about the T&A training received and their perceived needs in relation to the following:

1. T&A of receptive skills
2. T&A of productive skills
3. T&A of micro-linguistic aspects
4. T&A of integrated language skills
5. T&A of aspects related to culture

6. Establishing T&A reliability
7. Establishing T&A validity
8. Using statistics to study T&A quality

The following Table 4 presents the overall data results related to this section of the questionnaire.

Section 3: T&A area investigated: **T&A content and concepts**	Overall stated T&A training received	Overall expressed T&A training need
T&A receptive skills	28%	72%
T&A productive skills	25%	75%
T&A microlinguistic aspects	27%	73%
T&A integrated language skills	19%	81%
T&A aspects of culture	15%	85%
Establishing T&A reliability	13%	87%
Establishing T&A validity	11%	89%
Using statistics to study T&A quality	9%	91%

Table 4: T&A - Overall stated and needed training in specific areas

This table illustrates the overall percentage range of the expressed need for training in the areas investigated as expressed by the respondents. As can be noted in table 4, the need percentages range from a minimum of 72% for T&A training in the areas of receptive i.e., listening and reading, skills to a maximum of a massive 91% in the area of using statistics to study T&A quality. The overall average of respondents who expressed a T&A training need for Section 3 was 81.63%. These results corroborate those of the previous ENLTA (2004) and LTAL (2008) surveys studies undertaken in the T&A area. Furthermore, they highlight the expressed needs within a small but representative sample in a specific national context.

Drawing on the information obtained in the three multi-item sections of the questionnaire, the overall percentage of T&A needs expressed by respondents per each of the three T&A sections is presented in Table 5 below. What emerges from the inter-section comparison is the definite and very strong average overall need for T&A training which ranges from c. 74% in the first two sections of the questionnaire to a very high c. 82% as regards the third section. What respondents seem to be expressing is a very clear and very strong T&A training need.

T&A area investigated:	Average overall stated T&A training received	Average overall expressed T&A training need
Section 1: Classroom-focused T&A	26.3%	73.7%
Section 2: Purposes of T&A	26%	73.5%
Section 3: T&A content and concepts	18.4%	81.6%

Table 5: T&A - Overall stated and expressed training needs

In the final part of this paper, Section 6, the limitations of the survey are presented.

Limitations and Future Research

The present LAL survey investigated specified aspects of items which had only been dealt with in general in the both the ENLTA and LTAL surveys. Modifications made included specifying aspects of items in sections 1-3 as reported in the relevant sections above.

The initial findings from this pilot survey, notwithstanding the limited number of 100 respondents, seems to identify a strongly perceived need throughout the different educational levels in which foreign language teaching professionals operate, for the inclusion of at least some element of formal education and training in LAL.

The data obtained in the general information section was especially helpful in confirming the fact that the survey did reach the target group and identified the overall distribution throughout the educational system of the respondents. However, it also highlighted the fact that more research is needed to obtain more data for the rest of Italy.

The use of an online survey had both positive and negative aspects. The positive aspect (Section 3.4.2) contributed to the validity and reliability of the data collected. What emerged as a negative aspect of the online questionnaire was the difficulty many teachers reported due to the acceptance of only one IP address by the system. This meant that teachers who did not have access to (i) their own personal computer either at school or at home, and (ii) the Internet, found it difficult to participate in the survey. Moreover, many schools only had one computer available in the school and that had to be shared by all.

On reflection, item number 11 in this survey, which asked respondents about their education and/or training in relation to testing and assessment (theory and practice) during their pre-service and in-service training was not clear as formulated. The question was not clear because it asked (i) two questions in one, and (ii) it addressed two different groups. From one perspective, the question could be perceived as redundant because of course teachers have either theoretical or practical knowledge of testing and assessment in their pre- in-service training because they are assessed as learners and, as teachers they continuously test when

they teach. The inappropriate formulation of this item may account for the surprisingly high-percentage of respondents answering in the affirmative.

An unexpected finding was that would-be respondents reported having "difficulty/ies" with the English testing terminology used in the survey. This finding highlighted a limitation of the study as well as the need to develop an Italian version of the survey for any further investigation of teacher language assessment literacy.

The lessons learned from this pilot study will be applied in further research into LAL on a broader scale in Italy.

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Appendix A: Language Assessment Literacy Questionnaire

A European on-line survey conducted by the European Association of Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA) has identified a need for training in language testing and assessment with teachers and teacher trainers.

In order to specifically determine the training needs of teachers and teacher trainers in Italy, the questionnaire used by EALTA has been adapted. The information obtained from the adapted questionnaire will help identify if there is a need in Italy for pre-service and in-service foreign language teacher education in language assessment literacy.

Therefore I would like to ask you to fill in the questionnaire and submit it. Your personal data will be not be made available to others and will be anonymous within the study.

Thanking you in advance for your time and co-operation ☺

I. General information

Are you Male Yes ☐   or   Female Yes ☐

Are you aged:

20 – 30	Yes ☐
30 – 40	Yes ☐
40 – 50	Yes ☐
50 – 60	Yes ☐
60 +	Yes ☐

Number of years teaching:

≤ 5	Yes ☐
5 - 10	Yes ☐
10 – 15	Yes ☐
15 – 20	Yes ☐
20 – 25	Yes ☐
25 – 30	Yes ☐
30 +	Yes ☐

1. Do you work in Italy?
   Yes ☐   No ☐

Where do you work in Italy?

Region: _____   City: _____

Where do you work outside Italy?

Country: _____   Region: _____   City: _____

2. Which subject(s) do you teach?

_____

_____

3. Which subjects have you studied?

_____

_____

4. Which is your highest qualification?

    ☐   Degree   (please specify):

         _____

    ☐   Diploma (please specify):

         _____

    ☐   Other (please specify):

         _____

5. Type of school you teach at:

    _____

6. Average age of pupils:

    _____

7. Your functions at school:

    ☐   Teacher

    ☐   Head of department at school

☐   Mentor

☐   Advisory function for authorities (local government, ministry etc.)

☐   _____

8. During your pre-service or in-service teacher training, did you learn/study anything about testing and assessment (theory and practice)?

☐   Yes (please specify:)
        _____

☐   Type of Course :
        _____

☐   Name of Institution :
        _____

☐   Textbook/s used:
        _____

☐   No

If you are interested in the results of the survey please submit your e-mail address:

II. Questions for teachers

1. *Classroom-focused testing and assessment*
1.1.   **Please specify if you were trained in the following domains**.

	Not at all	a little (1-2 days)	more advanced
a) Preparing classoom tests	☐	☐	☐
b) using ready-made tests from textbook packages	☐	☐	☐
c) Giving feedback to students based on information from tests / assessment	☐	☐	☐
d) Using self/ peer assessment	☐	☐	☐

e) Using informal, continuous, non-test

type assessment	☐	☐	☐
f) Using the European Language Portfolio, an adaptation of it or some other portfolio	☐	☐	☐

1.2. Please specify if you need training in the following domains.

	None	Yes, basic Training	Advanced Training	
a) Preparing classroom tests		☐	☐	☐
b) Using ready-made tests from textbook packages or from other sources	☐	☐	☐	
c) Giving feedback to students based on information from tests / assessment		☐	☐	☐
d) Using self / peer assessment	☐	☐	☐	
e) Using informal, continuous, non-test type of assessment	☐	☐	☐	
f) Using the European Language Portfolio, an adaptation of it or some other portfolio	☐	☐	☐	

2. *Purposes of testing*

2.1. Please specify if you were trained in the following domains.

	Not at all	a little (1-2 days)	more advanced	
a) To give grades	☐	☐	☐	
b) To find out what needs to be taught/ learned	☐	☐	☐	
c) To place students onto courses, programmes, etc.	☐	☐	☐
d) To award final certificates (from school / programme; local, regional or national level	☐	☐	☐	

2.2. Please specify if you need training in the following domains

	None	Yes, basic Training	Yes, advanced

a) To give grades ☐ ☐ ☐

b) To find out what needs to be taught/learned ☐ ☐ ☐

c) To place students onto courses, programmes, etc. ☐ ☐ ☐

d) To award final certificates (from school/programme; local, regional
or national level ☐ ☐ ☐

3. Content and concepts
3.1. Please specify if you were trained in the following domains.

	Not at all	a little (1-2 days)	more adv.
1. Testing / Assessing			
a) receptive skills (reading/listening)	☐	☐	☐
b) productive skills (speaking/writing)	☐	☐	☐
c) microlinguistic aspects (Grammar/vocab.)	☐	☐	☐
d) integrated language skills	☐	☐	☐
e) aspects of culture	☐	☐	☐
2. Establishing reliability of tests / assessm.	☐	☐	☐
3. Establishing validity of tests / assessm.	☐	☐	☐
4. Using statistics to study the quality of tests / assessment	☐	☐	☐

3.2. Please specify if you need training in the following domains

	None	Yes, basic Training	Yes, Advanced
1. Testing / Assessing			
a) receptive skills (reading / listening)	☐	☐	☐
b) productive skills (speaking/writing)	☐	☐	☐
f) microlinguistic aspects (Grammar/vocab.)	☐	☐	☐

c) integrated language skills   ☐   ☐   ☐

d) aspects of culture   ☐   ☐   ☐

2. Establishing reliability of tests / assessm.   ☐   ☐   ☐

3. Establishing validity of tests / assessm. ☐   ☐   ☐

4. Using statistics to study the quality of
tests / assessment   ☐   ☐   ☐

Appendix B: Summary Item Statistics

Reliability Statistics for 36 items

TOTAL 36 ITEMS

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.919	.920	36

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	2.049	1.490	2.490	1.000	1.671	.073	36
Item Variances	.582	.434	.749	.315	1.726	.009	36
Inter-Item Covariances	.140	-.164	.655	.818	-4.000	.024	36
Inter-Item Correlations	.243	-.295	.954	1.249	-3.235	.069	36

Appendix C: Pearson Correlations:

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

		Q11 pre/in-service test/assess theory/practice	Q1.2.1 specify need training in: train 4 preparing classroom tests	Q1.2.2 train 4 using ready-made tests from textbook, packages or other sources	Q1.2.3 train 4 give student test/assessment feedback	Q1.2.4 train 4 use self/peer assessment	Q1.2.5 train 4 use informal, continuous, non-test type assessment	Q1.2.6 train 4 use ELPortfolio, adaptation of it, or some other portfolio
Q11 pre/in-service test/assess theory/practice	Pearson Correlation	1	-.086	-.012	-.056	.211(*)	-.102	-.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.396	.908	.581	.035	.313	.902
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Q1.2.1 specify need training in: train 4 preparing classroom tests	Pearson Correlation	-.086	1	.552(**)	.486(**)	.434(**)	.338(**)	.594(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.396		.000	.000	.000	.001	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Q1.2.2 train 4 using ready-made tests from	Pearson Correlation	-.012	.552(**)	1	.576(**)	.435(**)	.496(**)	.482(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.908	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000

textbook, packages or other sources	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Q1.2.3 train 4 give student test/assessment feedback	Pearson Correlation	-.056	.486(**)	.576(**)	1	.668(**)	.533(**)	.477(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.581	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Q1.2.4 train 4 use self/peer assessment	Pearson Correlation	-.211(*)	.434(**)	.435(**)	.668(**)	1	.680(**)	.465(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Q1.2.5 train 4 use informal, continuous, non-test type assessment	Pearson Correlation	-.102	.338(**)	.496(**)	.533(**)	.680(**)	1	.448(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.313	.001	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Q1.2.6 train 4 use ELPortfolio, ana adaptation of it, or some other portfolio	Pearson Correlation	-.012	.594(**)	.482(**)	.477(**)	.465(**)	.448(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.902	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

"Catch-Up Competitiveness" in Asia:

On the recontextualisation of economic imaginaries

Ralph Guth

Lancaster University

Abstract

In 2003 the Asian Development Bank published another of its annual series, the *Asian Development Outlook*. This "outlook" is designed to give an overview of the performance and struggles of Asian economies and a forecast for its short-term future. Additionally, each year it covers a specific topic and delivers analyses and policy suggestions concerning the respective economic topic. The full title of this section was *Competitiveness in Developing Asia. Taking Advantage of Globalization, Technology, and Competition*. The most important reason why this paper can be regarded as significant is its distinctive conceptualisation of "catch-up competitiveness". What is so striking about this new term is that it merges two different yet equally disseminated and highly recognised (economic) discourses: "catch-up development" and "competitiveness". This paper critically explores the newly coined concept, tries to follow the distinctive roots it is made out of, and seeks to analyse the simplifications and mystifications on which it rests. I want to offer a different understanding of this particular developmental concept through de-mystification, de-naturalisation and *Ideologiekritik* (critique of [inherent/implicit] ideology) following an overall approach to discourse informed by Critical Discourse Analysis theorists.

Introduction

In 2003 the Asian Development Bank published another of its annual series, the *Asian Development Outlook*. This "outlook" is designed to give an overview of the performance and struggles of Asian economies and a forecast for its short-term future. Additionally, each year it covers a specific topic and delivers analyses and policy suggestions concerning the respective economic topic. The full title of this section of the 2003 Asian Development Outlook (henceforth ADO) was *Competitiveness in Developing Asia. Taking Advantage of Globalization, Technology, and Competition*. There are many reasons why this paper by the Asian Development Bank (henceforth ADB) can be regarded as significant, reasons that I will elaborate below. The most important is its distinctive account of "competitiveness", "catch-up competitiveness", which is framed throughout the ADO. What is so striking about this new term is that it merges two different yet equally disseminated and highly recognised (economic) discourses: "catch-up development" and "competitiveness".

This paper critically explores the newly coined concept of catch-up competitiveness, tries to follow the distinctive roots it is made out of, and seeks to analyse the simplifications and mystifications on which it rests. I want to offer a different understanding of this particular developmental concept through de-mystification, de-naturalisation and *Ideologiekritik* (critique of [inherent/implicit] ideology) following an overall approach to discourse informed by Critical Discourse Analysis theorists. The underlying hypotheses of the paper can be summarised as such: (1) catch-up competitiveness is a recontextualised economic imaginary which is made out of two specific discourses with distinct semantic histories (catch-up & competitiveness); (2) this new imaginary is based on particular simplifications,

mystifications, and vagueness. The first section of the paper will now reflect on the broader methodology and establish and explain the abstract terms of the hypotheses (and indeed of the whole paper).

Methodological Reflexions: Critical Discourse Analysis, Economic Imaginaries and Recontextualisation

The following presentation moves from abstract methodological considerations via the discussion of abstract-simple concepts to the issue of how these are to be understood in respect to the hypotheses stated above. Naturally this section cannot and, indeed, does not aim, to give either a complete and thorough discussion of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as such or a complete account of my own epistemological starting point. This would simply lead too far astray from the actual research focus. Instead it will eclectically touch on theoretical issues and concepts vital for and used in this particular analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis and Semiosis

In recent years CDA has become an often-referred to methodology in countless studies from various disciplines. This is not surprising given the increased interest in, and attention drawn to 'discourse' in the wake of the cultural turn(s). But there is more to it: CDA is outspokenly transdisciplinary, problem-oriented, and has many different roots. It could be called an "open source" approach. CDA has never been a single, unified approach and (hopefully) never will be. Rather it can be seen as an umbrella approach with some shared concepts about the socially efficacious nature of discourse and the responsibility of critical social enquiry (Fairclough, 2007, 2009; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 2006; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Obviously the two

most central terms here are 'discourse' and 'critical'. But they are far from being easily conceptualized.

'Discourse' is defined in many ways both across and outside academia. It has become a fuzzy concept used by many and with variegated definitions. It could easily be argued that "discourse" has become a floating signifier. The same can be said even for analysts within CDA, with notions ranging from 'discourse as written and oral texts' to 'discourse as the meaning-making element of social process' (Wodak and Meyer, 2009; Fairclough, 2009). What can be said for CDA as a whole is its emphasis of context and its understanding of 'discourse' as a 'social practice'. No matter how 'discourse' is understood in detail it is always contextualized, thus refers to an extra-discursive world to which 'discourse' is dialectically related (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997): 'discourse' is 'socially *constitutive* as well as socially shaped' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258, original italics). Fairclough further distinguishes 'discourse' from 'genre' and 'style'. In this, discourse is the semiotic way of the representation and/or construal of social practices as well as of particular aspects of the material world; genre is the semiotic way of social (inter-) action; style is the semiotic way of 'being' or the semiotic aspect of identity (Fairclough et al., 2004; Fairclough, 2009). Semiosis is understood as the intersubjective production of meaning (Fairclough et al., 2004), i.e. meaning-making. The term comprises both linguistic and extra-linguistic systems, i.e. 'signs' in their broadest sense and construes meaning-making as a social (performative) process. Thus discourse in Fairclough's (and other's) understanding is part of semiosis and is therefore in its character always semiotic but it does not exhaust the latter. While discourse is understood as a specific representation of social or material aspects of the world, semiosis refers to the overall process of 'making sense' of the world. Additionally this 'making sense' or 'meaning-making' is not understood as an individualistic cognitive event but rather as a socially negotiated process, which is to say that 'meaning-making' is a social process.

This distinction proves to be fruitful in at least three respects. First, it defines 'discourse' more narrowly and at the same time retains a concept for broad semiotic processes. Second, it differentiates between several semiotic moments in the overall process of meaning-making (i.e.: discourse as construal of the material world, genre as modes of interacting, style as identity construction). Third, by doing so it offers a broader yet focused approach to these differing semiotic aspects. Accordingly, expressions like 'discursive construction' or 'discursive aspects of' have a distinct meaning and are not used arbitrarily following an inflationary use of the term 'discourse'. This distinction draws heavily from the work of Norman Fairclough in the context of 'his' dialectical-relational approach (*inter alia* Fairclough, 2009). It is also presented in a conjoint work with Bob Jessop and Andrew Sayer which focuses on semiosis in critical realist terms (Fairclough et al., 2004). In his latest works Fairclough has distanced himself from the use of 'to represent' in favour of 'to construe' (Fairclough, 2009) because it seemingly emphasises the process of 'grasping' the world from one perspective. I would suggest to use both terms equally as 'to construe' does not refer directly to the constructed character of 'things' as it can be understood as a personal, subjective interpretation of the world. Thus the view on how construal is produced might be obstructed. Paradoxically, Sayer pointed to this in his distinction of critical and uncritical cultural turns, saying uncritical turns would only analyse 'construal' (Ray and Sayer, 1999). How this understanding of discourse (and semiosis) impacts and informs the analysis will become more apparent shortly below.

Imaginaries

Another distinction in respect to discourse and semiosis is the term 'imaginary'. If discourses are understood as *representations* of aspects of the world (e.g. 'the economy' or 'politics') imaginaries are construed as *explanations* which aim at management, governance, and/or forecasting of these aspects. The important difference is that discourses do not necessarily explain what is represented, Nor do

discourses offer particular strategies of governance. Imaginaries on the other hand rely on a discursive representation to explain reality and offer specific management strategies for that (aspect of) reality. An imaginary is a closed knowledge system: it offers one particular discursive representation of a problem (e.g. 'the economy'), one explanation for it and a coherent set of strategies for solution. Both discourse and semiosis as mentioned above are concerned with representation and meaning-making respectively, but do not deal with what follows from it, i.e. specific strategies for agency. Following a dialectic-relational account of semiosis (Fairclough, 2009; Fairclough et al., 2004; Jessop, 2004), these imaginaries obviously are not completely arbitrary but correspond significantly, yet partially, with real material processes, i.e. 'the world'. Hence imaginaries must be reasonably adequate to be effective. Accordingly, they are discursively constituted and materially reproduced (Jessop, 2004). An economic imaginary for example, claims an objective understanding of the highly complex chaotic sum of all existing economic processes and offers coherent sets of activities based upon its understanding. The necessary narrowness of these imaginaries' accounts of the chaotic sum of unstructured economic activities limits in turn their efficacy of governance or management and even forecasting. Thus growing constraints and contradictions make stable economic imaginaries highly improbable. This points to the necessity of other related semiotic and extra-semiotic practices in order to respond flexibly and reflexively to disruptions and crises, and secure a (more or less) smooth reproduction of social orders (Jessop, 2004). This means that the explanations and strategies put forward by imaginaries are socially negotiated and discursively articulated rather than arbitrary (strategic) interpretations of specific individuals.

To sum up the main differences between semiosis, discourse, and imaginary: the first is understood as the overall social meaning-making process or the *intersubjective production of meaning*; the second is understood in terms of representations of aspects of reality and is only one part of semiosis (others include styles and genres); the third establishes meaning through explanation and offers

specific strategies for agency coherent with its own discursive representations. If a particular imaginary becomes *hegemonic* or widely accepted as a (or rather: the) legitimate and 'common sense' explanation it is the (intermediate) product of semiosis.

The critical impetus of CDA derives from different sources such as the Frankfurt School, Jürgen Habermas and Critical Theory, literary criticism, Marxist tradition(s), and so forth. They all share an understanding of critique as making visible the 'interconnectedness of things' (Fairclough, 1995). This visibility and critical knowledge of the social world aims at a self-reflexion of human beings, enabling them to emancipate from whatever form of domination (Wodak, 2006; Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Thus CDA has an outspoken emancipatory agenda. Semiosis can comprise 'mystification' or naturalisation of social processes thus undermining any criticism, e.g. the construction of neo-liberal globalization as a 'natural step' in human progress or as an inevitable reaction to economic growth. These mechanisms have to be addressed to meet an emancipatory research agenda. It is only through 'demystification' or 'denaturalization' of semiosis, i.e. showing its constructed character, that the contingency of social and material objects, structures, and processes can be fully depicted.

Recontextualisation

A process of meaning making includes the recontextualisation of discourses, i.e. a change of their ('original') context(s). Sites of recontextualisation are manifold and can include a spatial change, Such as from one region or country to another, a shift in scale, as well as a transfer from one social field to another. In the course of this process the discourse has to be 'translated', re-negotiated, re-articulated, and so forth in order to 'fit' in the new context. This has ambivalent aspects though: on the one hand the new discourse is being appropriated in its new context; on the other hand it is a colonisation of a context by an 'external' discourse (cf. Fairclough, 2009: 165). Thus it is not surprising that these recontextualisations are highly contested as these

new, external discourses can be incorporated into certain strategies pursued by specific social agents (both groups and individual) (Fairclough, 2009: 165). If recontextualisations are always also struggles for a concrete hegemonic (re-)articulation of a given discourse, then close attention must be drawn to both the agents around a given discourse as well as the genre and argumentational rationality of their 'discursive output'. One particularly important instance in this process of hegemonic struggle is the linking of several discourses to form a 'discursive chain' (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2009). If two or more discourses are 'used' to legitimate the respective other in its inherent logic(s) or narrativity then these discourses form a chain and become mutually reinforcing. This does not describe a mere addition of discourses. These chains lead to changing relations between discourses and/or different articulations of discourses (Fairclough, 2005; Jessop, 2004). A broad discursive chain does not necessarily have to become hegemonic but a hegemonic discourse (or imaginary) needs a broad network of discursive chains to be stabilized across sites and scales.

Reviewing the above stated hypotheses now with more elaborated abstract terms, it should be possible to (a) get a clearer understanding of the hypotheses and (b) define a way to work with them:

(1) *'Catch-up competitiveness' is a recontextualised economic imaginary which is made out of two particular discourses with distinct semantic histories ('catch-up' & 'competitiveness').* The aim will be to analyse how the text by the Asian Development Bank establishes 'catch-up competitiveness' as an explanatory category and offers concrete policy advice based upon its understanding. Thus the aim is to show that it is indeed an economic imaginary as defined above and is based on the particular text. Additionally, it is important to trace the 'discursive roots' of the new imaginary through making visible the discursive (and also quite material) chains this imaginary draws from. This can be achieved by reviewing other sources that deploy the same terms and follow up the references the Asian Development Bank text makes itself.

(2) *This new imaginary is based on particular simplifications, mystifications, and vagueness.* Every form of representation makes use of some form of 'discursive simplification' (Jessop, 2002) in order to narrate the complex and chaotic reality in a more or less coherent way. Imaginaries are therefore based on these simplifications as is every other form of semiosis. Simplification is (just like the overall semiosis) not an individualistic cognitive event but a socially negotiated process. The question therefore is how is something simplified? What is left out of the picture? What becomes the centre of attention? These simplifications are closely connected to myths. Myths are understood as implicit, underlying assumptions, or 'what goes without saying'. Certain arguments are taken for granted and removed from critique and discussion because they are made only implicitly. Thus myths help to make abbreviated, simplified explanations. Here the question is what is implicit and how does this affect the overall argument? As mentioned earlier, an emancipatory research agenda has to de-mystify these naturalised explanations in order to show the contingency and constructed character of social and material objects, structures, and processes. In my analysis I seek to deconstruct some of the simplifications and particularly one underlying myth in the text: a crude modernist understanding of development. This is done by careful reading of the text and offering both an external and text-immanent critique and *Ideologiekritik*.

The Asian Development Bank in context

If processes of recontextualisation are indeed contested re-articulations of discourses or imaginaries shaped by various covert (and overt) interests, and if the Asian Development Outlook of 2003 (ADO) by the Asian Development Bank is one instance of such a process, then closer attention must be drawn to both the Agent as well as the genre and argumentational rationality of the text. It is thus a question of the contextual setting.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) as a regional equivalent of the World Bank gives away loans and offers technical support. But most importantly it is what could be called a *knowledge bank* (Plehwe, 2007), with connections to various other actors and think tanks, and single academics such as Sanjaya Lall (ADB, 2003; Lall, 1998). Its position as both a think tank and a lender makes the ADB a nodal point of discursive and material practices, as its discursive outputs, for example, may well influence its lending policy. This leads to particular (developmental) projects being financed and realised while others are not. The materiality of semiosis can hence be understood quite literally here: some things get built because of a specific understanding (or meaning) of the world. A recontextualised concept of competitiveness put forward by the ADB is thus highly significant for a vast amount of actual development agencies and processes in the whole region of Asia. The amount of countries reached by and included in the analyses of the ADB is significant. It includes countries in all of Asia, from Kazakhstan to Micronesia, from Mongolia to Papua New Guinea. As mentioned in the introduction, the annually published Asian Development Outlook (ADO) offers country-specific overviews of economic performance and forecasts for the coming year. Additionally it covers different topics each year which offer analyses of the overall economic development of the region and gives policy advice and strategies for decision makers from various fields (government officials, NGOs, advisors, and so forth).

Policy papers as a genre are always vague when it comes to clear strategies how certain goals could or should be achieved. Likewise, policy papers refer to concepts and terms they seldom define clearly. Both these 'vaguenesses' are important for this particular genre. Policy papers are never directed at one specific audience and in the given case its potential audience even stretches over more than one continent and governments representing more than one third of the world's population. As Norman Fairclough has pointed out in his analysis of EU policy papers on poverty and its recontextualisation in Romania, the original paper must be vague (or "open") enough to be recontextualised in the 27 EU-countries (Fairclough,

2007). Thus very different actual accounts of 'poverty' can be found in the EU, all referring to the same policy paper. One of the main aims of a policy paper is the weaving together of discursive threads offering new terms and concepts to be adopted and appropriated (hence recontextualised once more) on a regional or national level. This understanding of the genre is vital in order to fully grasp its structuration.

On Competitiveness

The ADO makes clear references to "competitiveness" as a pre-existing discourse right in its first paragraph, which is also designed as a third-level headline:

> 'During the last decade, competitiveness has been brought into the discussion of the search for the panacea for growth almost as if it represented a pillar of economic development, similar to trade and openness or savings. However, competitiveness is not a panacea for development for Asia's developing countries' (ADB, 2003: 205).

While the first section of this quote clearly establishes competitiveness as an important and influential discourse, the last sentence also lays the basis for its appropriation for an Asian context. At this point it seems advisable to examine this discourse on competitiveness in more detail. Competitiveness has long been an important aspect of economic discourses and theories, however with changing notions of *what* it actually is or how it can be achieved (or even *why* it should be achieved in the first place). For the sake of brevity, I cannot give an account of the varying economic discourses and imaginaries concerned with competitiveness throughout the decades and indeed centuries (Jessop, 2002: 119f; 2008; Lodge &

Vogel, 1987; Reinert, 1994). Instead I want to focus on more recent developments which can be said to have been sparked by political-economic changes in the early 1980s. This might also roughly be the timeline the ADO refers to in the quote above. During this time the USA (and the UK) were confronted with low growth and high inflation while the highly successful export-oriented economies in Japan and East Asia (at this time mostly South Korea and Taiwan) gained strength (Krugman, 1994). The Reagan Administration set up the '*Commission on Industrial Competitiveness*' (1983) and the '*Council on Competitiveness*' (1988) respectively to place national competitiveness at the 'centre of national policy discourses and public consciousness' (Sum, 2009). Since then the rise of competitiveness as a major policy paradigm was accompanied and indeed informed and underpinned by newly emerging economic discourses and business studies on competition, which in turn also produced new management and consultancy knowledge. Gradually 'competitiveness' became a prime concern (and target) of transnational organisations, nation-states, regions, cities, and so forth.

This is reflected by a variety of Institutions and respective publications on competitiveness on various scales: the World Economic Forum and the Institute for Management Development both publish global competitiveness rankings ('Global Competitiveness Index' by the former, 'World Competitiveness Scoreboard' by the latter); the Competitiveness Institute is a knowledge databank and a networking website for different actors on a global level; the EU's 'Lisbon Strategy for Competitiveness' of 2000; the Asia Competitiveness Institute in Singapore is a similar knowledge agent claiming to cover the whole Southeast-Asian (or ASEAN) region; the OECD's International Conference on City Competitiveness in 2005; et cetera. It becomes clear that the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) of 2003 by the Asian Development Bank is but one specific instance embedded in a wider discourse which is to be found on scales and sites which are manifold and variegated.

Competitiveness in the Asian Development Outlook

The specific understanding of competitiveness in the ADO can be defined through what Bob Jessop called the Schumpeterian Competition State (2002). Such a state 'prioritizes the pursuit of strategies intended to create, restructure or reinforce [...] the competitive advantages of its territory, population, built environment, social institutions and economic agents' (Jessop, 2002: 96). The most important aspect in this Schumpetarian understanding of competition is the construction of a *knowledge-based economy* or an economy based on innovative knowledge-workers. According to Schumpeter, competitiveness mostly depends on building preconditions for engaging in 'permanent innovation' by both individual and collective actors (i.e. workers and firms). Thus Jessop notes: 'Schumpeterian competitiveness depends on dynamic efficiency in allocating resources to promote *innovations* that will alter the pace and direction of economic growth and enable the economy to compete more effectively' (Jessop, 2002: 122, original italics). The ADO not only directly refers to Schumpeter's idea of 'creative destruction' through constant innovation directly in its second chapter (ADB, 2003: 208), it early on establishes knowledge as 'society's most important resource' (Jessop, 2002: 207) and indeed technological innovation as one of three 'drivers for change' (Jessop, 2002: 205). It is worth noting the vagueness in this construction of 'drivers for change'. A triad of points or terms can be a powerful rhetorical strategy to weave together different arguments or reinforce a statement. In the ADO there are two important triads put forth which are also being linked to each other. Hence I would call them an argumentational 'double triad'. The ADO states on its first page on competitiveness:

> 'During the last decade, there has been considerable interest indentifying the factors that can improve competitiveness, which is thought by many to be an important piece of the growth and development puzzle, perhaps the latest elixir in the quest for growth. Behind this quest is a complex

interaction among a number of factors – or the "drivers of change" – which are globalization, technology, and competition.' (ADB, 2003: 205)

The first striking feature is that in this quote and throughout the text, 'growth' is being used interchangeably with 'development', while the notion of 'drivers of change' describes again growth and/or development. Thus growth equals development equals change. And there are three drivers to bring about this growth-development-change-triad, namely globalization, technology, and competition. Terms such as 'development' or 'globalization' are highly contested when it comes to defining *what* these terms actually mean and what complex processes these (can or cannot) describe. Yet here they are just being put forward without further discussion or definition. Hence what form growth-development-change can take is fully up to the pre-existing construal of the audience. The same can be said for 'globalization'. 'Technology' in this respect must be understood as 'technological innovation' (ADB, 2003: 208) and is hence based on a Schumpeterian understanding of competitiveness. The strong emphasis which is placed on innovation (and as a consequence education) is further fortified through special boxes in the text structure that offer so-called success stories such as 'The information and communications technology industry in India' (ADB, 2003: 210), or 'Outsourcing and White-collar globalization: a boon to Asia's developing countries' (ADB, 2003: 212). The text also clearly offers threats such as a box titled 'low skills, vicious circles, and traps' (ADB, 2003: 251) or quite strong formulations as 'forcing firms to be creative' (ADB, 2003: 208).

All of this has of course also repercussion on the way labour is perceived: 'the modern workplace requires employees who are inherently "trainable" and can learn rapidly' (ADB, 2003: 255). Jessop points to similar developments in connection to a Schumpeterian notion of competitiveness and the state: 'States also promote the commoditization of knowledge and the integration of knowledge and intellectual labour into production. This is reflected in the increased emphasis on the training of knowledge workers and lifelong learning' (Jessop, 2002: 131), and the emphasis put

on educational reform justified and legitimised in terms of competitiveness (cf. Fairclough and Wodak, 2008: 113; Jessop, 2008). Thus it is also not surprising that several strategies of the ADO to enhance innovation include state policies related to education and deregulation of curricula to be more job-oriented (cf. ADB, 2003: 255). The need for market-friendly and job-oriented educational institutions is established through the overall economic imaginary, the concrete strategies remain as vague as typical for policy papers: 'In many countries, this will require some deregulation and decentralization of curriculum policy' (ADB, 2003: 255).

"Catch-up", Developmentalism and Catch-up Competitiveness

As mentioned in the introduction, the ADO presents its own account of competitiveness, namely 'catch-up competitiveness'. A short overview of the discourse on the latter term has already been presented. I now turn to a discussion of 'catch-up' discourses and finally to the newly coined concept itself. It would go far beyond the limits of this paper to present an in-depth semantic history of the term 'catch-up' in the Asian context, yet some aspects have to be mentioned. 'Catch-up' is an inherently developmental term as it can only be understood in terms of catching up with 'the West', 'the global North', or 'the developed World'. But more important is its specific regional context. The first country to develop a 'catch-up' strategy in Asia was Japan as early as the late 19th century in the Meiji era (Suehiro 2008). But it fully developed in the late 1970s and gained recognition especially in East Asia. The main feature of catch-up developmentalism in political-economic terms is its understanding of development as a government-led process which involves central planning and strong involvement by technocrats (often educated abroad), an intimate relation between governments and big business, regulations on trade, export-oriented industrialisation, and adoption of 'western' technology and know-

how to boost technological development and innovation 'at home' (Jessop & Sum, 2006: 152ff; Suehiro 2008).

In the (East-)Asian context, a strong state and the predominant understanding of 'development by all means' led to terms such as 'developmental regime' in Neo-Weberian accounts of the Asian growth (Amsden, 1989; 2001; Chang, 2006; Wade, 1990); 'developmental dictatorship' (Suehiro 2008); 'technological capabilities' (Lall, 1988); or 'exportism' in regulation approach literature (Jessop & Sum 2006) respectively. This regime was based on a specific understanding or imaginary not only of what 'development' actually is but, as some more critical scholars have pointed out, that development is a goal to be achieved in the first place (Tucker, 1999). The economic success of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan in the 1970s and 1980s, which all followed a catch-up strategy of development, led to a dissemination of its discourse as it was adopted by other countries of the region trying to imitate their more successful neighbours. It is hard to imagine a discourse on the 'Asian Miracle' and the 'Asian Tigers' of the 1990s without the underlying notion of 'catch-up' (Suehiro 2008, Jessop & Sum, 2006: 161). Export-oriented catch-up strategies became a strong and legitimate model for development in East Asia, which contested the liberal idea represented by international actors such as the World Bank or the IMF, who sought to limit the state's interference (Burkett & Hart-Landsberg, 2003). The ongoing economic struggles of the Japanese economy during the 1990s and the 1997 Asian Crisis led to a general decline of this legitimacy of the catch-up discourse, and indeed one of the prime objectives by the IMF, who stepped in after the crisis, was to break the influence of the state (cf. Pasuk & Baker 2002). The Asian Development Outlook reinforces this discourse again with statements such as:

> 'To *catch-up*, rather than merely keep up with (at a certain distance behind) the leaders, this combined capability must be sufficient to *assimilate and improve on technologies* created in the leading nations over sustained periods of time. The absorption of foreign technology is essential to create

internationally tradable products that are *competitive* in terms of cost and quality' (ADB, 2003: 257, my italics).

Here the notion of exportist 'catch-up' is clearly being tied to an understanding of Schumpeterian 'competitiveness through technological innovation' (cf. italics). This brings together the two discursive threads elaborated above. In the ADO this has a semantic bearing: the former term has a specific Asian background but was in decline; the latter derives from a 'western' context, hugely successful and on its way towards a 'hegemonic knowledge brand' (Sum, 2009). The merging of these terms is mutually reinforcing and underpins competitiveness in this new Asian context. In the next section closer attention will be given to catch-up competitiveness understood as an economic imaginary. Following the given definition of this concept the focus will be on the offered explanations, strategies and advice of this particular imaginary.

The Asian Development Bank outlines clearly what catch-up competitiveness is: 'behind-the-frontier innovation' which depends on 'entrepreneurship and educational provision, as well as market-friendly institutions and sound macro-economic management' (ADB, 2003: 257). It is important to note how this imaginary also *explains* the economic reality. The most important aspect to be explained in this context is the economic success of certain countries of the region, such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, or Singapore. The development and economic success of these countries is constructed in a stage model which leads from manufacture and assembly to the research and development of electronics which are regarded as a 'leading industrial sector for promoting high-technology industrial development' (ADB, 2003: 258). This model is visualised in the Southeast Asian case and again puts Singapore forward a kind of 'success story':

Table 3.16 Technological Stages in Southeast Asia's Electronics Industry					
Decade	Singapore	Malaysia	Thailand	Indonesia	Viet Nam
1960s	Assembly				
1970s	Process Engineering	Assembly	Assembly		
1980s	Product Development	Process Engineering	Assembly	Assembly	Assembly
1990s	Research & Development	Product Development	Process Engineering	Process Engineering	Assembly

Source: Hobday (2002).

Table 1 (Retrieved from ADB, 2003: 259)

The table suggests that Singapore developed a new economic strategy every decade with Malaysia, its geographical neighbour, following the same path with a ten-year delay, and so forth. The reason why Singapore can be regarded as the success story or 'blue print' here (apart from its obvious economic success) is the emphasis that is put to innovation, a category for success well established in the text. The simple explanation seems to be: international competitiveness through innovation leads to development ('catch-up') as proven by some countries of the region. The policy advice which follows from this representation of economic realities is again inherently vague and is little more than the call for educational reform, appropriate infrastructure, and market-friendly legislation to open up the national market to international trade, etc. (cf. ADB 2003: 257ff), i.e. to foster innovation in order to catch-up and gain international competitiveness.

Underlying Developmental Myth and Neo-Modernist Simplifications

As mentioned in the introduction, there is an underlying myth in this text, something that 'goes without saying'. Such a myth means that the ultimate base of an argument is removed from scrutiny as it is neither argued for nor against – it is implicitly stated as a fact. Given the overall structure of the text by the ADB I would

argue for the existence of a 'developmental myth'. It is an implicit presupposition that economic development (or 'catch-up' in this respect) is something which has to be achieved. The text never argues *why* it is important for Asian countries to economically 'catch-up'. Vincent Tucker argues rightly that the 'myth of development' necessarily has to be a powerful one because the massive and fundamental changes a population has to live through in such a process can only be legitimised by a potent hegemonic imaginary. The societies of the respective countries can thus be mobilised and carry the weight 'development' can have (Tucker, 1999).

A very important part of the 'developmental myth' is its (neo-)modernist notion of a journey towards a clearly defined goal (which is general 'development') along a pre-given path (the path and history of the 'West', the 'global North', or the 'developed world'). Therefore it is not surprising that metaphors that play with notions of 'journey', 'frontier', or 'race' can be found throughout the text, e.g. 'Failure to compete in these markets usually means falling behind in the technological race' (ADB, 2003: 257). Table 1 above also shows an interesting visualisation of this modernist understanding of 'development-in-stages'. The power of this table lies in its visualisation of development and its simplification of this process. It seems as if the success of Singapore can easily be repeated. The 'success story' of Singapore is closely related to another rhetoric based on a modernist notion of development, namely the analogy to the history of 'more developed countries':

> 'Today's combination of the new industrial revolution and globalization is similar to that of the late nineteenth century when, for example, the United States (US) emerged as a major economic power; or earlier when the United Kingdom emerged as a colonial and manufacturing power. It can also be compared with the 1960s and 1970s, when Japan emerged as a leading industrial power, and the 1980s, which saw the fast development of the Republic of Korea (Korea)' (ADB, 2003: 206).

There are several problems with this modernist understanding of development. The main point of critique is its neglect of (global) structural disadvantages. The quote above for example implies that every country can become just like the USA or the UK by applying certain policies. Whether history repeats itself or not can be left to philosophy, but that one country cannot repeat the history of another country seems out of question. Yet the difficulties global power structures mean to a country at the global periphery are rendered invisible. Instead the development process becomes reduced and simplified to be 'technological-determinist in the most vulgar sense' (Burkett & Hart-Landsberg, 2003: 156). Through an articulation of competitiveness in these terms disadvantages are blurred and the image emerges that every country is equally capable of competing and innovating on a global scale.

This technological-determinist understanding *inter alia* produces the evaluation of human development solely in terms of its contribution to the overall catch-up process. In the ADO and its policy advice this is reflected in the strong emphasis which is put on educational reform. These reforms are not argued for in terms of general human development or under a humanist belief but only in terms of producing valuable human resources, employability, and economic utility (cf. Chapter on 'Education and Skills' in the ADO; ADB, 2003: 246ff). As mentioned above, this of course means a restructuration of the educational sector and the change of curricula along the lines of economic logics and arguments. The inherent, basic simplification here is misleading. The strategy for developing countries (in Asia) seems to be that 'proper' education and the production of employees who are 'inherently "trainable" and can learn rapidly' (ADB, 2003: 255) (and other policy strategies) will increase firms' innovation, which will enhance their competitiveness, which will ultimately lead to development. The problem is that the Asian Development Bank presupposes a 'new [international] division of labour' (ADB, 2003: 208) which offers equal opportunities for the 'participating' countries. This construal of the international division of (knowledge-) labour ignores certain power

relation which shift the value produced in the production cycle to particular centres. As with every division of labour the question here is where does the value added chain end and who profits from this. Bob Jessop notes:

> 'This tension generates systematic asymmetries of interest within the information economy depending on the actors' differing position in the production, circulation and consumption of knowledge. The IPR regime [*note: Intellectual Property Rights*] is currently of overwhelming benefit, of course, to the US economy' (Jessop, 2002: 111).

While knowledge-workers (in Asia) might add value to this 'knowledge value chain', real profit is made elsewhere. This also follows from an understanding of development in catch-up theories as a purely national process (Burkett & Hart-Landsberg, 2003) and the ignorance of international power relations.

Lastly it is important to stress that these 'blind spots', or what is ignored and/or what goes without saying, are part of the discursive simplification inherent to economic imaginaries as discussed at the beginning of this paper. These shortcomings (e.g. the ignorance of country-specific modes of development; ignorance of global power structures; ignorance of unequal division of labour; ignorance of labour issues and human development, etc.) are vital in order to make the economic imaginary inherently stable and enable it to reproduce its specific understanding of 'the economy', thus to produce a certain meaning. The brief critique presented here can point to the fact that some issues are much more complex or flag up issues which have been left out all together. This should show that structures and processes of 'the real existing economie(s)' are far more chaotic and complex to represent it the way the Asian Development Bank does. 'Catch-up competitiveness' and the advice derived thereof only makes sense (i.e. have *meaning*) if these and other (pressing) issues are ignored or overly simplified. Yet it is important to notice *what* is left out or over-simplified. Here it is mainly human

development, global power relations and structural exploitation which are largely ignored, naturalised and/or mystified.

Conclusion

It was the overall aim of this paper to explore the concept of economic imaginaries and its recontextualisation both in abstract terms and in one concrete instance. It was argued that imaginaries are specific systems in which representations of the world (i.e. discourses) are linked to particular explanations and a coherent set of strategies for governance, management and forecasting. This process is not possible without discursive simplifications of the complex realities of the world. It is also not a single cognitive event of atomistic individuals but rather a social (i.e. intersubjective) process of negotiation, articulation, and overall meaning-making. In economic terms, such an imaginary simplifies the chaotic sum of economic processes and structures to produce a single coherent explanation and offer appropriate management strategies.

It was the prime working hypothesis of this paper that the text on 'catch-up competitiveness' by the Asian Development Bank can be regarded as one point in the recontextualisation of different discourses to produce a distinctively Asian developmental economic imaginary. 'Catch-up competitiveness' was shown to be such an imaginary as it offers an explanation for the economic success of some of the countries in the region in the last decades and concludes with several strategies and policy advice for the near future. As typical for the genre of policy papers which aim at a broad international audience, these strategies remain on a rather vague level and only offer terms, concepts and legitimising arguments for further recontextualisations (and indeed actions) on ever smaller spatial levels (regional, national, local), yet under the established inherent logic of the economic imaginary.

The analysis tried to show some of the concrete and at points obvious discursive simplifications in the argument of the text and assumed a specific underlying assumption of development in neo-modernist terms. The neo-modernist understanding means that processes of development are constructed as following an almost pre-given path with guiding principles derived from observation of other countries' history. This construction however ignores country-specific modes of development and assumes that countries can somehow repeat the historical experience of more 'developed' countries. It was argued that this assumption ignores global power relations, structures of exploitation and the unequal international division of labour.

As an analytical category 'imaginary' proved to be a fruitful contribution to the more specific term 'discourse' and the overall term 'semiosis'. Especially the emphasis put on strategies and advice for agency can serve as an important addition to a critical discourse analysis. A careful analysis cannot ignore the actual 'outcome' of texts in form of policy advice or strategies. In particular it cannot ignore the simplifications and mystifications this advice is based on. Strategies and advice developed in texts are so important because ultimately they are on the (discursive) threshold to agency. As was shown in the case of the Asian Development Bank, a particular construal informs and shapes actually existing development projects and hence has a proper material impact. An analysis has to critically point out such processes of simplification (text-immanent critique) and offer a critique of what these simplified strategies leave out and possibly why (*Ideologiekritik*).

But this is just the starting point for a broader research project. Further research has to show how such an imaginary actually *does* something (i.e. how it informs other discourses on other scales, country-specific legislation, development plans and strategies deployed by particular agencies, etc.).

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Investigating the sensitivity of the measures of fluency, accuracy, complexity and idea units with a narrative task

Chihiro Inoue

Lancaster University

Abstract

This study investigates the sensitivity of commonly used performance measures with spoken narrative performance by Japanese learners and native speakers of English. Five English native speakers and 24 Japanese learners at six different levels of the Standard Speaking Test [SST] were required to look at a sequence of pictures and then produce a narrative story in the past tense. The performance measures in this paper include measures of fluency, accuracy, syntactic complexity, lexical complexity, and 'idea units' that quantify how detailed the narrated story is. The 'sensitivity' of the measures in this study is defined as being able to highly correlate with the different levels of proficiency, and to discriminate among them. Statistical tests of Spearman's rho, Kruskal-Wallis, and *post hoc* LSD reveal that the only measure that fully satisfies the two conditions is the speech rate, a temporal fluency measure.

Introduction

In the field of task-based research, it is a common practice to use various performance measures to quantify the aspects of spoken language (e.g. accuracy, fluency, complexity) so that comparisons among different performance can be made. This is often done by using narrative tasks with picture sequences. Despite of the popularity of performance measures, few studies have so far justified their use with the support from empirical evidence. This casts doubt on the validity of not only the measures but also of the research findings. This study therefore applies various performance measures to narrative performance by Japanese learners and native speakers of English so as to find out which of the commonly used measures are actually 'sensitive,' i.e. correlate highly with the levels of speakers as well as discriminate among them.

In this paper, various performance measures of spoken language are reviewed and discussed. The data source is discussed in detail, the research questions and the procedures are described. The results are presented and discussed and suggestions are provided for future research.

Performance measures

Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity

The current mainstream of task-based research deals with the effects on learner spoken performance of changing the conditions of task administration. This is based on the frameworks proposed by Skehan (1996, 1998) and Robinson (1995, 2001), both of whom attempt to explain language processing. Such studies include: manipulating the planning time, whether having the sequences in front or not, whether missing some pictures in a sequence or not, to name a few (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Mehnert, 1998; Norris, Brown, Hudson, & Bonk, 2002; Ortega, 1999; Robinson, 1995; Skehan, 1996, 1998; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Wigglesworth, 1997). The most common measures used to capture the differences in the quality of performance under the different conditions are those of fluency, accuracy and complexity.

Fluency

As Lennon (1990: 403) suggests, fluency measures can be classified into two aspects: *temporal measures* which deal with the speed of delivery, and *hesitation markers* that represent disfluency phenomena such as repetition and false starts. A number of researchers have attempted to identify appropriate measures of fluency. Kormos and Dénes (2004) offer the

most recent credible results with the largest number of participants and the use of computer technology to identify length of pauses, leading to an empirical justification for using certain measures over the others. They conducted, by means of various measures of fluency, a validation study in which they correlated human ratings of how fluent the speech was with quantified results. Among the temporal measures that were validated in their study, the speech rate and the mean length of runs correlated the most with fluency ratings (Kormos and Dénes, 2004: 148). So, in the current study it is decided to include these two temporal measures to see if they correlate highly with the levels of the speakers and also discriminate among them.

The study by Kormos and Dénes (2004) proves that none of the hesitation markers are in accordance with the human ratings of fluency. However, their data did not involve native speaker performance and they did not investigate whether hesitation markers discriminated among different levels of speakers. So, in the current study, hesitation markers as fluency measures are included for the purposes of a more thorough analysis.

Complexity

Complexity is 'the extent to which learners produce elaborated language' (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005: 139), and is often concerned with syntactic and lexical aspects of narrative performance. Measures for syntactic complexity in previous studies include: the number of subordinate clauses per clause (Wigglesworth, 1997); the number of words per T-unit (Bygate, 2001; Daller, van Hout, & Treffers-Daller, 2003); the number of clauses per C-unit (Skehan and Foster, 1999; Foster and Skehan, 1996; Robinson, 2001) and the number of subordinate clauses per T-unit (Mehnert, 1998). The number of words per unit and the amount of subordination appear to be the two syntactic complexity measures that are most commonly used, and therefore will be examined in this study.

Some researchers use T-units as the unit for analysis, however, Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) recommend using C-units or AS-units because they can take sub-clausal units into account. In addition, Foster, Tonkyn, and Wigglesworth (2000) argue that AS-units are more reliable than C-units. This is because AS-units can clearly distinguish among false starts, repetitions, and self-corrections (pp.362-363). Therefore, in this study AS-units are employed where units are necessary in the measures (the number of words per AS-unit and the average number of subordinate clauses per AS-unit).

For lexical complexity, the following measures have been employed in previous studies: type-token ratio (Robinson, 2001); mean segmental type-token ratio (Yuan & Ellis, 2003); D value (Kormos and Dénes, 2004); Guiraud index (Daller, et al., 2003). The use of type-token ratio [TTR] has been criticised for being greatly affected by the text length (Jarvis, 2002). After testing several measures of lexical complexity against curve-fitting statistical models, Jarvis (2002) justifies the use of D value over TTR, mean segmental TTR, and Guiraud index. So, D value will be used in this study.

D value and other lexical indices mentioned above mainly deal with the 'variety' sense of lexical complexity, and it does not suggest anything concerning how difficult or sophisticated the words are. For this aspect, three measures involving different word lists

are selected: (1) Lexical Frequency Profile [LFP] (Laufer & Nation, 1995), (2) JACET8000 (JACET, 2003), and (3) the word lists from English textbooks that are used in junior and senior high schools (aged 12-18) in Japan. These measures aim to calculate the percentage of the words produced that belongs to the lists.

LFP and JACET8000 contain frequency-based word lists. LFP utilises General Service List (i.e. the list of the most frequent 1000 word families and the second 1000) plus Academic Word List (550 words that are frequent in academic texts across subjects). JACET8000 is a collection of eight lists of 1000 words derived from corpus-based research on English newspapers, textbooks, examinations and exam preparation books available in Japan. These two measures show the proportion of the English words that are frequently used in the learner's performance. The third measure using lists from Japanese high school English textbooks contains 600 words from the junior high list and an additional 1000 words from the senior high list. This measure shows the proportion of the words used at Japanese junior or high school levels. While LFP is chosen for its widespread use which enables comparisons with other studies involving non-Japanese learners, JACET8000 and the Japanese high school English textbooks vocabulary lists are expected to appropriately reflect the lexical use of Japanese learners.

Accuracy

Accuracy refers to how well the target language is produced according to its rule system (Skehan, 1996:23). The measures include: the percentage of error-free clauses (Skehan and Foster, 1999; Foster and Skehan 1996; Yuan and Ellis, 2003); the percentage of error-free C-units (Robinson, 2001; 2007b); the number of errors per T-unit (Bygate, 2001); Errors per 100 words (Mehnert, 1998); and the percentage of correct use of target features (Wigglesworth, 1997; Crookes, 1989; Skehan and Foster, 1997). In contrast to Kormos and Dénes (2004), none of the above research included a validation study. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) suggest that target-like verbal morphology is suitable for syntactic accuracy for focused tasks that are intended to elicit certain grammatical features. This is also the case for the SST narrative tasks (i.e. past tense) which are used in this study (explained later). Target-like verbal morphology is a *specific* measure for accuracy.

For *general* measures, the percentage of error-free clauses appears to be frequently selected. However, Bygate (2001) suggests that calculating the number of errors per unit might be more sensitive because it does not obscure the actual occurrences of errors, as is the case with counting error-free units. On the other hand, Mehnert (1998: 86) argues that the amount of errors per 100 words may be suitable for relatively lower proficiency speakers since it does not deal with the definition of clauses and units which is often problematic. As there is no way of knowing which of these measures will be sensitive, it is decided to include all four measures in this study.

Task-specific measure: Idea units

As the focus of this study is on narrative tasks, the organisation of performance should be structured as a narrative. Luoma (2004: 144) describes the requirements for narrative structures as follows: setting the scene; identifying the characters and referring to them consistently; identifying the main events; telling them in a coherent sequence. Luoma's description corresponds with Labov (1972: 360) who defined a minimal requirement for a narrative as 'a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered'. For Labov (1972: 363-370), a 'fully-formed narrative' will have the following features: *abstract* (summary of the whole story at the beginning), *orientation* (setting the time, place, characters and situation), *complicating action* (telling all the events in the story), *evaluation* ('indicating the point of the narrative'), *result or resolution* (telling what happened in the end), and *coda* (ending or concluding the narrative).

Appel (1984) employs a more detailed segmentation of events in analysing spoken narrative performance based on a picture sequence. To be more specific, Appel (1984: 188-194) investigates the amount of events or 'idea units' in the story that are covered in the learner's narration. She then compares between the first and second performances by the same learner. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005: 154) argue that this measure is best suited for use when the performance is based on pre-determined content (e.g. by a picture sequence). The definition of an idea unit is 'a message segment consisting of a topic and comment that is separated from contiguous units syntactically and/or intonationally' (Ellis and Barkhuizen: 154). It is also possible to separate 'main idea units', which are the essential ideas to complete the story, from 'minor idea units' that are not essential but enrich the story (Ellis and Barkhuizen: 154). As this measure for representing narrative structure fits the purpose and data of this study, it is therefore applied here. The idea units of the narrative task used in this study are summarised in Table 3.

Table 1 (see next page) summarises the types of measures that have been discussed and examined so far:

Aspect	Measures	Definition
Fluency (Temporal)	Mean length of runs	Average no. of syllables produced in utterances between pauses of 0.25 seconds and above
	Speech rate	Total no. of syllables produced in a given speech sample divided by the amount of total time required to produce the speech sample (including pause time) expressed in seconds
Fluency (Hesitation)	No. of repetitions	No. of immediate and verbatim repetition f a word or a phrase
	No. of false starts	No. of utterances that are abandoned before completion
	No. of reformulations	No. of phrases or clauses that are repeated with some modification either to syntax, morphology, or word order
	No. or replacements	No. of lexical items that are substituted for another
Syntactic Complexity	No. of words per AS-unit	Average no. of words per AS-unit
	No. of subordinate clauses per AS-unit	Average no. of subordinate clauses per AS-unit
Lexical Complexity	D value	(calculated by CLAN program on CHILDES website at http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/)
	LFP 1, 2, 3	% of words listed in the Lexical Frequency Profile Vocabulary List 1, 2, and 3
	JACET 8000 Vocabulary List Lv. 1-8	% of words listed in the JACET Vocabulary List 1 to 8; these lists are based on British National Corpus as well as the frequent vocabulary found in English textbooks, newspapers, tests, magazines available in Japan.
	Vocabulary Lists for Junior and Senior High School Textbooks in Japan	% or words listed in the two lists for all the words appear in the textbooks that are used in junior high schools and senior high schools in Japan

Accuracy	Percentage of error-free clauses	% of clauses which do not contain any error to the total number of clauses	Table 1 Measures Used in This
	No. of errors per AS-unit	No. of errors divided by the total number of AS-units	
	Errors per 100 words	No. of errors divided by the total number of words produced divided by 100	
	Percentage of target-like use of past tense	% of verbs in the past tense in the obligatory contexts (i.e. where past tense verbs are required)	
Narrative Structure	No. of idea units encoded	The total numbers of the "main ideas" that are necessary to complete the story and "minor ideas" that enrich the story	

Data

A sensitive measure needs to differentiate between the quality of performance and the aspect that it is supposed to represent. For example, a fluency measure should discriminate the speakers with good fluency from less fluent ones. Also, in general, a speaker's fluency is likely to increase as their proficiency develops, thus the fluency measure may correlate with the learner's proficiency level. Therefore, the measures that are discussed in the previous section should be applied to narrative performance in conjunction with information about the speaking proficiency level. The following section describes the data used in this study that matches this requirement.

Japanese learner data

The Standard Speaking Test

The narrative performance and the task used in this study are derived from a speaking test administered in Japan, the Standard Speaking Test (henceforth, SST). The SST takes the form of a 15-minute structured conversation between an interviewer and a candidate, and includes a single picture description task, a role-play task, and a narrative task. The interview is recorded and rated by two independent raters who listen for certain rating

criteria and decide on an overall single level of 1 (Novice Low) to 9 (Advanced)[31]. The raters consider how well the candidate is able to handle or demonstrate control over the following 5 criteria: *global tasks or functions* (asking and answering simple questions, narrating, describing in major time frames); *contexts* (from highly predictable common daily settings to more complex social situations); *content areas or topics* (from personal topics related to the immediate environment to a wide range of general interest topics); *accuracy* (in terms of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, sociolinguistic appropriateness, and discourse management); and *text type* (i.e. from words and sentences to complex sentences, paragraphs, and extended discourse) (ACTFL-ALC Press, 2000). In deciding an overall SST level, comprehension and interaction with the interviewer are also taken into account.

The number of candidates taking the SST in Japan is relatively small[32], even though it is the data source for the currently largest spoken corpus published in 2004 from Japanese learners of English. This may be because its interviews were recorded on tapes (for rating), making it easy for the ALC Press, the SST administrator, to easily obtain candidates' permission in order to use their data for research purposes (Izumi, Uchimoto, & Isahara, 2004). The corpus was developed in Japan by the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology [NICT] in cooperation with the ALC Press for purposes of research in natural language processing, second language acquisition, and language education (Izumi, et al., 2004). It was named the NICT JLE Corpus (NICT Japanese Learner English Corpus) with about 1.3 million words from the transcripts of 1,281 SST interviews. The Japanese learners' performance on a SST narrative task used in this study is derived from this corpus.

The narrative performance

The NICT JLE Corpus does not contain recordings, however, as this study attempts to examine aspects of fluency, not only the transcripts but also the corresponding recordings were obtained and analysed.

Firstly, 24 transcripts ranging from SST levels 4 to 9[33] were identified in the NICT JLE Corpus. They were selected because the candidates reported the TOEIC scores, a useful external measure of their English proficiency. Descriptive statistics of the number of transcripts at each SST level and their TOEIC scores are shown in Table 2 below. A request to obtain the corresponding recordings was sent to the ALC Press, which was accepted on the condition that the results should be reported back when certain results are obtained. The performance on the narrative task was taken out for analysis from the rest of the interview, in both the transcripts and the corresponding recordings.

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[31] Judging from the level descriptors by ACTFL-ALC Press (2000), it is assumed that SST Levels 1 to 9 approximately correspond to Below A1 to B2/C1 levels in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

[32] The grand total number of the candidates who took the SST from its inception (Jan. 1997) is about 30,000 (ALC Press, 2007).

[33] Judging from the level descriptors by ACTFL-ALC Press (2000), it is assumed that SST Levels 4 to 9 approximately correspond to CEFR Level A2 to B2/C1.

SST Lv.	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
4	4	661.3	149.8	450	795
5	5	726.0	110.8	580	860
6	4	816.3	60.2	735	880
7	5	848.0	117.0	640	920
8	4	837.5	55.6	800	920
9	2	962.5	10.6	955	970

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the TOEIC Scores of Japanese learner data

English native speaker data

Although the NICT JLE Corpus contains a small 'native corpus' in which several English native speakers performed the SST tasks, there was insufficient native performance of the narrative task for this study. Therefore, 5 native speakers of English studying at Lancaster University participated in this study: 2 linguists and 3 non-linguists (one of whom was a former English teacher). They were met one by one in a quiet room, asked to look at the task and then narrate a story. There were no temporal limitations for the preparation or the story-telling. Their narration and responses were recorded and transcribed for the purposes of analyses.

Task

The narrative task in this study consists of a sequence of 6 pictures 'with a conflict' (ACTFL-ALC Press, 2000: 26) and is given to the SST candidates at an estimated Intermediate or Advanced level in order to elicit a narrative in past tense. The topic is an argument between two people following a car accident.

The narrative performance was prompted by the SST interviewer presenting the picture sequence and asking the test taker / candidate to narrate a story based on it in the past tense, starting with 'One day last week' (ACTFL-ALC Press, 2000: 25). After some planning time, usually less than 30 seconds[34], the candidate was asked to narrate. Since the task was still in use in the SST, neither the actual picture sequence nor the transcripts could be presented. However, the idea units identified in this study are summarised in Table 3 to give an idea of the task and the content of the narration. The idea units are identified from

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[34] ACTFL-ALC Press (2000: 19) states that each SST task stage should take 2-3 minutes in total, including explaining, presenting, planning, performing, and answering follow-up questions.

the native speaker performance collected in the study as recommended by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005).

1	A guy was driving a car
2	Which … [car's description (e.g. *he recently bought*)]
3	He wanted to go to … [stating purpose]
4	He was in a hurry … [his state]
5	Another guy was riding a scooter
6	He was talking on the cell phone with a girl
7	He was not concentrating on the road
8	At a corner, they hit each other
9	Rider's cell phone was broken
10	It hit the wing mirror of the car
11	The car was okay
12	They got off their vehicles
13	They got angry
14	Rider complained about the broken scooter (tail light)
15	Rider complained about the broken cell phone
16	Rider requested compensation
17	Driver insisted that it was the rider's fault
18	Because the rider wasn't careful enough
19	The police was called
20	Because they could not resolve the argument
21	Driver explained what happened and insisted the rider was talking on the phone
22	Rider also insisted / gave up
23	Policeman took notes
24	Policeman understood / took the side of the driver

25	Policeman went back to report
26	They were asked to go to the police station
27	Driver drove off or left
28	Rider called the repairman
29	Rider's scooter was taken away by a truck
30	The repair cost would be dealt with by … [whoever]

Note. Shaded cells indicate the main idea units. The others are the minor idea units.

Table 3 Idea Units of the Narrative Task

Research Questions

Following the rationale presented at the beginning of Section 3, two research questions (RQs) are set in this study:

1. For SST levels 4-9 and native speaker level, which measures correlate highly with the levels, and discriminate among them?

2. If the measures do not correlate highly or discriminate among the levels, how can this be explained?

Procedures

The 24 transcripts from Japanese learners with TOEIC scores were extracted from the NICT JLE Corpus, checked for precision with recordings and modified where necessary. Five native speaker recordings were also transcribed. Then, two versions of the transcripts were produced. One was the full transcripts without non-words such as fillers (e.g. *erm*) and uncompleted single words that would not be recognised by the programs for lexical complexity measures. This version was used for fluency and lexical measures. The other version was removed of non-words and also was segmented into AS-units, which were without repetitions, fillers, and self-corrections, for measures of accuracy and narrative

features. The measures were identified manually by the author, except for the lexical complexity measures which were calculated by existing programs.

For RQ1, all measures were correlated (Spearman's rho) with the SST levels (4-9) with the native speakers (treated as 'level 10' to enable statistical analyses). Also, to examine which measures discriminate among the SST levels, the Kruskal-Wallis Test and later a *post hoc* least significant difference [LSD] test were run.

For RQ2, the measures that did not correlate highly or discriminate among the levels were considered. The patterns were examined as to how the measures varied across the levels.

Results and Discussions

Descriptive statistics

Table 4 below summarises the descriptive statistics of the measures across the levels.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of the Measures across Different Levels

Category	Measure	SST lv. 4 M	SST lv. 4 SD	SST lv. 5 M	SST lv. 5 SD	SST lv. 6 M	SST lv. 6 SD	SST lv. 7 M	SST lv. 7 SD	SST lv. 8 M	SST lv. 8 SD	SST lv. 9 M	SST lv. 9 SD	Native speakers M	Native speakers SD
	Total no. of words	161.00	101.94	193.00	56.86	197.50	96.18	222.40	70.37	202.00	70.77	179.50	92.63	220.40	145.34
Fluency (Temporal)	Mean length of runs	3.25	0.21	3.40	0.36	3.82	0.60	5.47	0.43	7.15	1.73	10.30	1.57	15.65	12.23
	Speech rate	1.04	0.16	1.23	0.23	1.70	0.44	1.99	0.14	2.22	0.46	2.22	0.36	2.72	0.35
Fluency (Hesitation)	No. of repetitions	2.12	1.64	1.94	1.18	1.90	1.74	1.37	1.05	3.04	4.30	1.37	0.79	1.91	2.09
	No. of false starts	0.18	0.36	0.27	0.34	0.20	0.24	0.69	1.06	0.00	0.00	0.72	1.02	0.52	0.39
	No. of reformulations	1.13	0.35	1.59	0.64	0.59	0.51	1.28	0.34	2.98	1.70	0.96	1.36	0.51	0.57
	No. or replacements	0.04	0.09	0.23	0.22	0.16	0.33	0.24	0.33	0.60	0.80	0.48	0.68	0.00	0.00
Syntactic Complexity	AS-unit length	8.87	0.61	9.72	2.55	10.10	0.76	10.44	1.13	12.01	2.11	12.55	4.55	10.22	1.89
	Subordinate clauses per AS-unit	0.10	0.05	0.28	0.11	0.34	0.12	0.38	0.18	0.44	0.25	0.35	0.26	0.24	0.08
	D-value	32.80	12.07	34.72	10.61	29.24	8.73	36.54	14.56	41.15	12.12	30.40	8.33	45.59	27.96
	LFP 1	76.85	4.25	78.45	2.15	83.59	2.91	80.84	2.52	81.56	1.91	78.39	7.51	78.87	3.95
	LFP 2	12.39	2.29	12.81	2.42	9.93	3.25	11.32	1.56	9.32	2.01	12.58	3.96	10.56	1.61
	LFP 3	1.00	1.19	1.70	1.58	0.53	1.07	1.21	0.31	2.00	1.59	1.93	2.72	1.47	1.66
	Out of LFP	9.77	4.56	7.03	0.88	5.96	3.04	6.63	1.69	7.13	1.88	7.11	0.83	9.10	2.26
	JACET8000 Lv.1	76.65	5.40	76.41	3.02	78.18	4.88	79.63	2.88	78.70	1.61	80.96	0.80	74.67	5.29
	JACET8000 Lv.2	10.52	4.08	10.28	2.32	9.07	2.38	9.79	2.82	7.85	0.81	5.22	1.84	7.98	2.49
	JACET8000 Lv.3	3.54	2.86	3.58	2.17	2.37	2.02	2.78	1.39	3.83	1.64	2.61	0.92	1.99	1.27
Lexical Complexity	JACET8000 Lv.4	0.81	0.94	0.93	0.90	1.57	0.61	0.37	0.51	0.00	0.00	2.50	2.00	2.01	1.19
	JACET8000 Lv.5	2.49	0.60	2.48	0.84	2.84	1.57	1.93	0.91	2.97	0.32	2.50	2.00	3.37	1.36
	JACET8000 Lv.6	1.94	1.60	1.25	1.20	0.85	1.13	0.90	0.56	1.59	1.19	2.61	0.92	2.17	1.30
	JACET8000 Lv.7	1.20	1.02	0.97	0.96	0.25	0.51	0.78	1.12	0.73	0.84	0.98	1.39	1.11	0.93
	JACET8000 Lv.8	0.00	0.00	0.86	0.85	0.55	0.64	0.69	0.67	1.23	1.62	1.09	1.54	0.12	0.27
	Out of JACET List	0.79	1.59	1.83	2.08	3.47	1.68	2.03	1.33	2.03	0.84	0.98	1.39	3.07	1.42
	Junior High Textbooks Vocabulary	65.75	6.58	70.16	3.86	72.25	5.17	67.78	4.73	72.18	4.77	68.45	2.47	71.86	6.54
	Senior High Textbooks Vocabulary	81.63	5.73	87.42	4.30	86.38	1.35	85.58	3.71	88.13	4.95	85.80	0.99	87.46	3.92
Accuracy	% of error-free clauses	53.33	25.39	67.34	11.71	76.13	4.47	80.16	9.73	67.43	6.55	94.70	1.35	100.00	0.00
	Errors per AS-unit	0.54	0.31	0.46	0.17	0.42	0.11	0.33	0.13	0.57	0.13	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Errors per 100 words	5.43	3.26	4.02	1.65	3.43	1.07	2.82	1.02	4.06	0.81	0.64	0.33	0.00	0.00
	% of target-like use of past tense	69.98	25.51	78.15	22.02	88.50	11.32	95.44	5.01	78.32	13.46	96.43	5.05	100.00	0.00
Narrative Structure	No. of main idea units	4.75	0.96	5.20	0.45	5.00	0.82	4.40	1.14	5.25	0.96	5.00	0.00	6.00	0.00
	No. of minor idea units	5.00	2.00	6.60	2.88	5.00	2.00	8.80	3.03	5.00	0.82	6.00	1.41	7.80	4.55

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Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of the Measure across Different Levels

'Sensitive' measures that correlated highly with and discriminated among the levels

Table 5 (see next page) summarises the results from Spearman's rho tests, the Kruskal-Wallis tests, and *post hoc* LSD tests. With *post hoc* LSD tests, the levels that showed a significant difference in their respective means are listed.

For RQ1, the 'sensitive' measures, with high correlation with and discrimination among the levels, will have one or two asterisks in the columns for Spearman's and Kruskal-Wallis tests (which means that the values were statistically significant), and have pairs of levels listed in the last column for LSD (i.e. the pairs of levels that were discriminated between) in Table 5 that given previously. The measures that satisfied these two conditions were: temporal fluency measures (i.e. the mean length of runs and the speech rate) and accuracy measures (i.e. the percentage of error-free clauses, errors per AS-unit, errors per 100 words, and the percentage of target-like use of past tense). Both of the temporal fluency measures showed very high correlation (r=.894 and .913), and the accuracy measures had moderately high correlation ($|r|$=.528 to .660).

However, when the LSD columns were closely examined, it became clear that most of these measures were only able to discriminate between a limited number of levels. Mean length of runs, one of the temporal fluency measures, only discriminated between SST levels and the native speakers. It could not differentiate among Japanese learners of English. The same applied to the percentage of target-like use of past tense, which discriminated among even less levels (SST levels 4, 5, 7 and the native speakers). If they can discriminate only between distant levels, such as the lower-level learners and the native speakers, these measures may only capture poorly the differences in learner performance.

The other three accuracy measures discriminated more pairs of levels; each had 10 pairs listed out of 20 possible pairs. Still, they seldom succeeded in differentiating adjacent learner levels (i.e. SST levels 4-5, 5-6, 6-7, etc.), especially at lower levels.

Compared to the rest of the measures discussed above, the speech rate, the other fluency measure, more often discriminated between levels that were closer to each other. Together with its high correlation (r=.894), the speech rate may be considered as the 'most sensitive' measure in this study.

Aspect	Measures	Spearman's		Kruskal-Wallis		*post hoc* LSD
		r	p	χ^2(6, 29)	p	Discriminated between[3]
Fluency (Temporal)	Mean length of runs	.913**	.000	24.35*	.000	4-NS, 5-NS, 6-NS, 7-NS, 8-NS
	Speech rate	.894**	.000	22.67*	.001	4-6, 4-7, 4-8, 4-9, 4-NS, 5-6, 5-7, 5-8, 5-9, 5-NS, 6-8, 6-NS, 7-NS, 8-NS
Fluency (Hesitation)	No. of repetitions	-.129	.504	0.83	.991	
	No. of false starts	.191	.321	6.33	.387	
	No. of reformulations	-.154	.425	13.97*	.030	4-8, 5-8, 5-NS, 6-8, 7-8, 8-9, 8-NS
	No. or replacements	-.052	.788	5.32	.503	
Syntactic Complexity	AS-unit length	.464*	.011	8.96	.176	
	Subordinate clauses per AS-unit	.264	.166	12.68*	.048	4-6, 4-7, 4-8
Lexical Complexity	D-value	.156	.418	2.63	.853	
	LFP 1	.105	.588	9.518	.588	
	LFP 2	-.271	.154	7.153	.154	
	LFP 3	.122	.528	3.043	.528	
	Out of LFP	.086	.656	7.630	.656	
	JACET8000 List Lv.1	.015	.938	5.64	.464	
	JACET8000 List Lv.2	-.384*	.040	8.31	.216	
	JACET8000 List Lv.3	-.216	.260	4.72	.580	
	JACET8000 List Lv.4	.202	.293	13.89*	.031	4-9, 5-9, 6-8, 7-9, 7-NS, 8-NS
	JACET8000 List Lv.5	.235	.220	5.33	.502	
	JACET8000 List Lv.6	.222	.247	6.98	.322	
	JACET8000 List Lv.7	.007	.969	3.29	.771	
	JACET8000 List Lv.8	.038	.843	6.28	.392	
	Out of JACET List	.244	.203	7.24	.299	
	Junior High Textbooks Vocabulary	.184	.340	4.85	.564	
	Senior High Textbooks Vocabulary	.245	.201	4.50	.609	
Accuracy	% of error-free clauses	.660**	.000	19.78**	.003	4-6, 4-7, 4-9, 4-NS, 5-9, 5-NS, 6-NS, 7-NS, 8-9, 8-NS
	Errors per AS-unit	-.553**	.002	17.75**	.007	4-9, 4-NS, 5-9, 5-NS, 6-9, 6-NS, 7-8, 7-NS, 8-9, 8-NS
	Errors per 100 words	-.638**	.000	17.72**	.007	4-7, 4-9, 4-NS, 5-9, 5-NS, 6-9, 6-NS, 7-NS, 8-9, 8-NS
	% of target-like use of past tense	.528**	.003	14.40*	.025	4-7, 4-NS, 5-NS
Narrative Structure	No. of main idea units	.368*	.049	9.91	.129	
	No. of minor idea units	.155	.422	6.04	.419	

Note. *Correlation is significant at 0.05 level.

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

[3]Numbers indicate the SST levels. NS=native speakers.

Table 5 Results of Correlation and Discrimination with the Levels and Measures

It is clear now that most of the measures that more or less satisfied the two conditions of 'sensitivity' actually failed to demonstrate good discriminating power, the patterns that they display across the levels should be examined according to RQ2: why did they not discriminate well?

The patterns shown are based on the methods that were introduced in Table 4 for each measure. Firstly, Figure 1 displays the patterns of the temporal fluency measures.
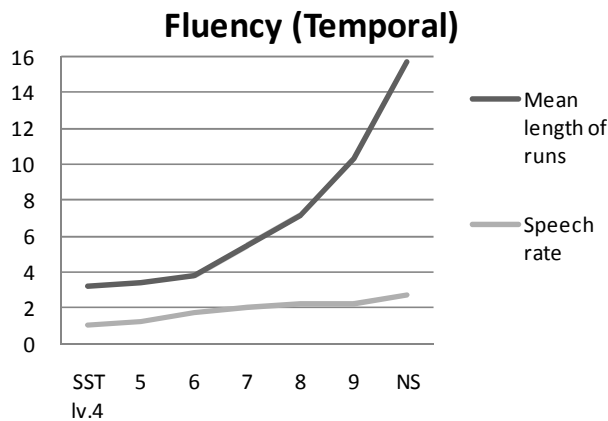

Fluency (Temporal)

Figure 1 Patterns of Temporal Fluency Measure

While the speech rate increased steadily from SST level 4 to the native speaker [NS] level, the mean length of runs showed a drastic increase between SST level 9 and NS. It is probable that this caused the relatively small differences among other levels to be non-significant. This may suggest that, even if a measure correlates very highly, it does not necessarily guarantee its 'sensitivity' of distinguishing the different levels of performance by the learners.

Accuracy measures had moderately high correlation, but they did not discriminate among SST levels, either. Figures 2(a) and 2(b) present the patterns.

(a)   (b)

Accuracy (No. of errors)
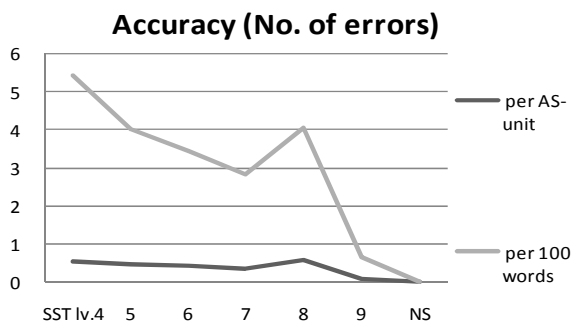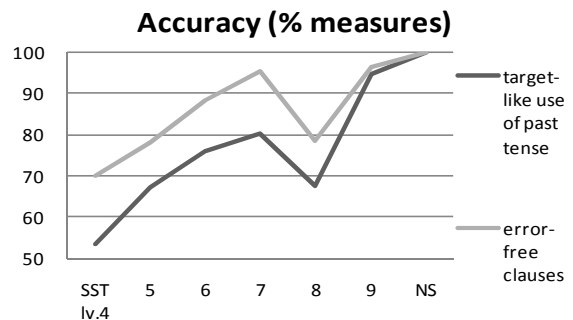
Accuracy (% measures)

Figures 2(a), 2(b) Patterns of Accuracy Measures

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The patterns were largely consistent across all four measures. There was a steady decrease in errors from SST level 4 to 7, however, at level 8, there was an increase in errors. This is surprising, as one might assume that the higher the candidate's level is the less errors they will make in their performance. One explanation is that, judging from the larger means in syntactic complexity measures at SST level 8 in Table 4, the SST level 8 candidates might have attempted to use more complex structures than the lower level ones but failed to use them accurately. It is possible that up to SST level 7, candidates may tend to avoid trying new structures or items and prefer speaking with the ones that they are familiar with and confident in using. To explore this hypothesis, we need to scrutinise the structures and error types with a larger sample size.

The rest of the measures

The rest of the measures were not proven 'sensitive' according to the operationalisation in this study. Some measures satisfied only one of the two conditions for being 'sensitive', and others did not satisfy either. The patterns are examined as to why they could not satisfy the conditions in the section.

Fluency Measures (Hesitation Phenomena)

The fluency measures concerned with hesitation phenomena met neither of the conditions, except for the number of reformulations which discriminated between some levels. Figure 3 demonstrates the patterns below.
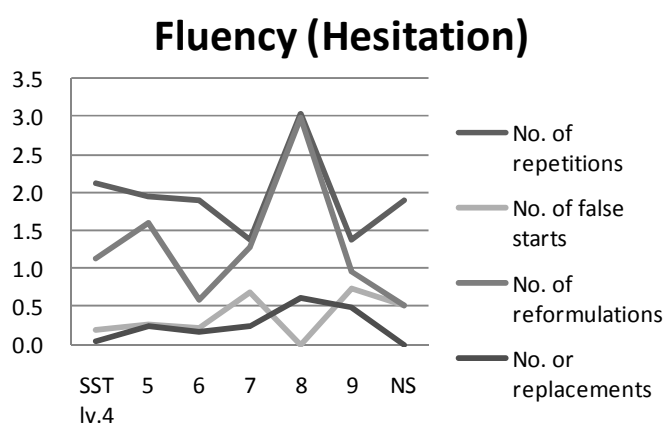

Figure 3 Patterns of Fluency Measures (Hesitation Phenomena)

The second line from the top in the graph shows the number of reformulation. The line peaked at SST level 8, and the LSD test showed that there were statistically significant differences between level 8 and others: 4-8, 5-8, 6-8, 7-8, 8-9, and 8-NS. The largest amount of hesitation at this level might be related to the low accuracy as presented in the previous section.

Reformulations did not correlate with the levels because there was not a linear pattern of increase or decrease as the levels went up. Similarly, non-linear patterns were observed with the other three measures. What is more, the NS apparently produced more repetitions than Japanese learners at SST levels 7 and 9. Taking these observations into account, the fluency measures of hesitation phenomena do not appear to be very credible in representing the proficiency levels.

Syntactic complexity

As for syntactic complexity, AS-unit length correlated significantly ($r=.464$) and the subordinate clauses per AS-unit discriminated between some non-adjacent levels (i.e. 4-6, 4-7, 4-8). Figures 4(a) and 4(b) present the patterns.

(a)   (b)
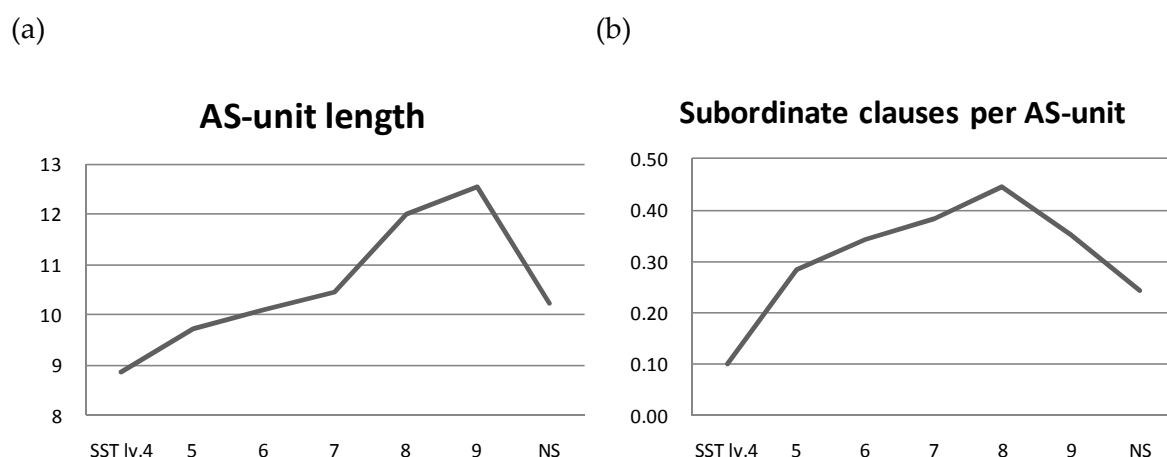
Figures 4(a), 4(b) Patterns of Syntactic Complexity Measures

AS-unit length displayed a steady increase among Japanese learners, but not with the NS. Subordinate clauses per AS-unit showed a very similar pattern, except that it starts to decline at SST level 9.

It is quite interesting that the NS performed lower than the candidates of higher proficiency (i.e. SST levels 7-9) according to this measure. One possible explanation for this is the differences in the conditions that the task was given. Compared to the SST candidates who were under pressure to prove their language proficiency within limited time, the NS performed the task with no limits in planning time or time for presentation. This suggests

that the conditions of task administration should be controlled for all candidates in future research.

Alternatively, the less complex performance by the NS could be attributed to the task requiring narration, which might not encourage individuals to use complex language. Given this possibility, a review of previous literature may be warranted. Seeking to identify what makes a good narrative, other than the features (i.e. idea units) used in this study clearly deserves attention in future research.

Another explanation for this phenomenon might be that, contrary to our intuitive expectations, NS do not usually produce syntactically more complex speech than high level candidates whether they are given the task in the same situation or not. NS may be more prone to being 'economical' with language, with little intention to produce complex speech in most situations. This issue deserves further investigation, as it would be a significant finding for the fields of language testing and task-based research.

Lexical complexity

Although Jarvis (2002) justifies using D value as the best lexical complexity measure, it did not satisfy either of the conditions for being 'sensitive', and showed no consistent pattern (see Figure 5).
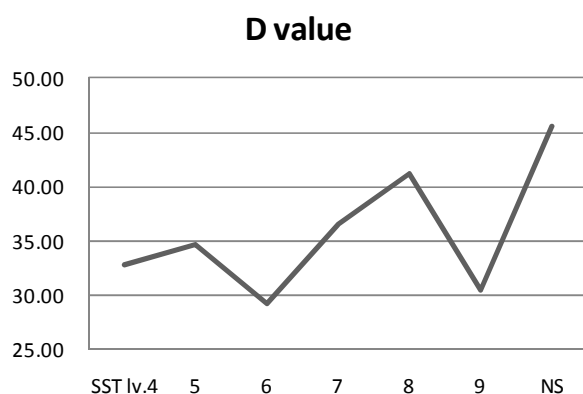

Figure 5 Pattern of D value

Two reasons might explain this result. Firstly, D value is meant for measuring lexical variety. Thus, it may not be suitable for applying to spoken performance on a narrative task because the content is largely pre-determined and the vocabulary range cannot be expected to vary as much as with tasks with more freedom to produce a wider variety of content. Secondly, the time limit of the interview could have influenced some SST candidates. Since the narrative task is given at the last stage of an SST, there can be different degrees of urging by the interviewer depending on how much time is left. If, for example, the SST level 6 and 9 candidates (who scored low on D value) had to finish telling the story quickly, then they might not have been able to demonstrate fully the vocabulary range that they possessed. The

NS, who told a story to the author with unlimited time, might have been able to demonstrate more fully their vocabulary range. This issue needs to be examined with new sets of data, obtained under the same conditions and with no time limit for narration.

The frequency or 'difficulty'-based measures of lexical complexity presented rather flat patterns across the levels as shown in Figures 6(a) to (d).

(a)

LFP

(b)

Japanese textbooks vocabulary list

(c)

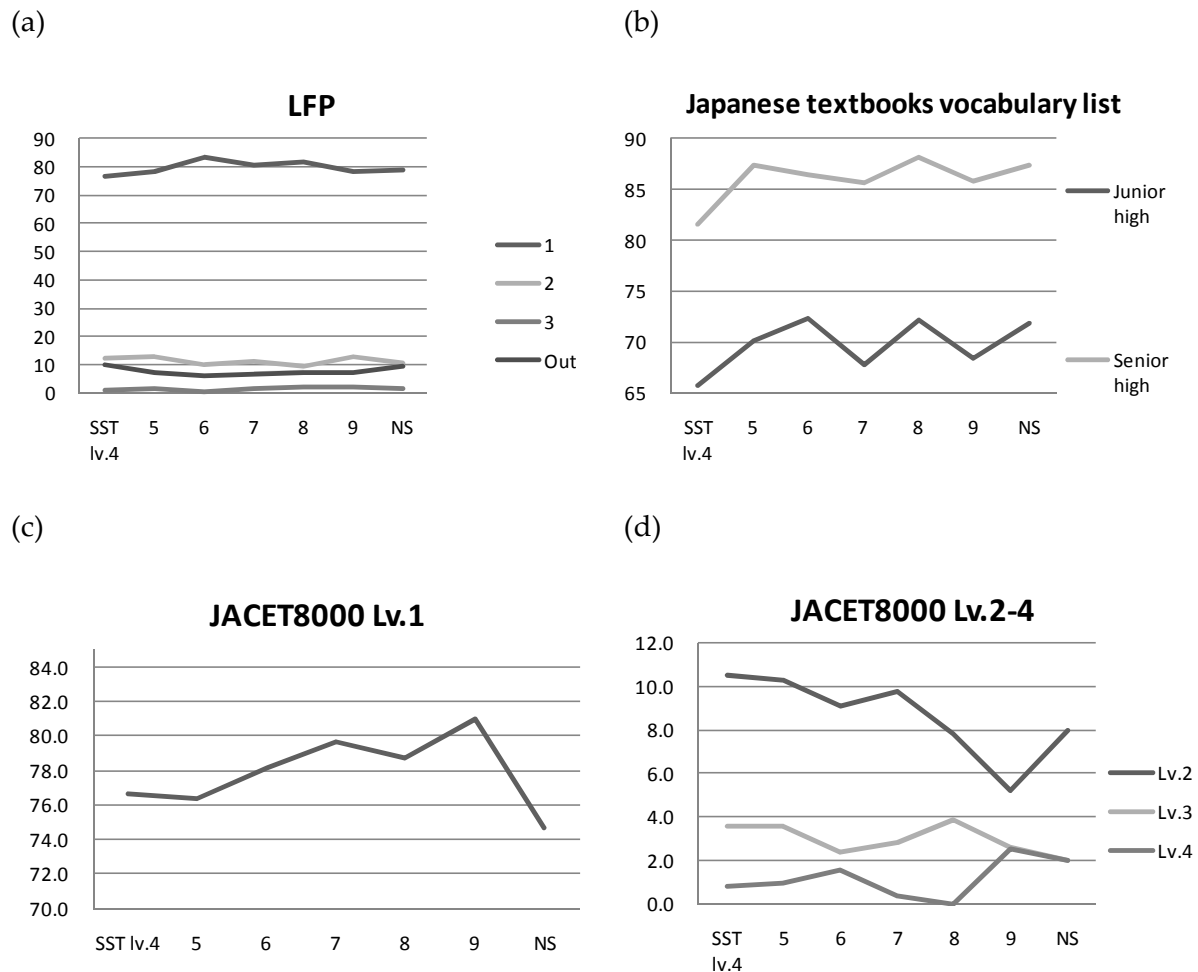**JACET8000 Lv.1**

(d)

JACET8000 Lv.2-4

Figure 6(a), 6(b), 6(c), 6(d) Patterns of Lexical Complexity (Vocabulary Lists)

The figures suggest that the Japanese learners and the NS used more or less similar levels of vocabulary according to LFP and Japanese English textbooks vocabulary for junior and senior high schools. This is in line with the discussion made earlier on D value; since the content is pre-specified, the vocabulary range is decided by the task to some extent, thus leading to the use of similar vocabulary across the different levels.

However, JACET8000 drew somewhat different patterns. Its Lv.2 list had a moderate, negative significant correlation, and its Lv.4 list discriminated between some levels. In order

to find out why these phenomena were related to a particular level of vocabulary, it was decided to examine the lists of actual words observed with their frequency.

By scrutinising JACET8000 lists, it was shown that lower level SST candidates used the word *policeman* more frequently than higher level candidates who more often used the term *police* or *police officer*. This is an unexpected result because *policeman* is classified as Lv.2, and therefore regarded of lower frequency whereas *police* and *officer* are classified as Lv.1. Therefore, according to JACET8000 lists, lower level candidates succeeded in using 'less frequent' words, where higher level candidates used 'more frequent' words, leading to a negative correlation. It calls for caution that results can be hugely influenced by such slight differences in the words used.

In regard to the JACET8000 Lv.4 list, all the words in the narrative performance that belong to the Lv.4 list were identified at each level (i.e. SST and NS). Table 6 shows the words and the number of their occurrences in the transcripts at each level.

SST Lv.4	Occ.	Lv.5	Occ.	Lv.6	Occ.	Lv.7	Occ.	Lv.8	Occ.	Lv.9	Occ.	NS	Occ.
due	1	clash	1	coming	1	negotiate	1			accuse	2	clash	1
running	1	coming	2	insurance	4	used	1			gay	1	coming	5
waiting	1	fixed	1	let's	1					illegal	1	compensation	1
				spite	2							insurance	1
												let's	1
												resolve	1
												ridiculous	2
												smash	2
Note. Occ.=no. of occurrences.													

Table 6 JACET8000 Lv.4 Words Used at Each Level

Table 5 above presented earlier indicates that the JACET8000 Lv.4 list discriminated between SST levels 4-9, 5-9, 6-8, 7-9, 7-NS, and 8-NS. The numbers of occurrences appear different between SST level 7-NS, 6-8, and 8-NS. There are hardly any differences at SST levels 4, 5, and 9. However, as the numbers of transcripts differed (i.e. SST lv.4=4; lv.5=5; lv.9=2), the resultant percentage of JACET8000 Lv.4 words was larger at SST level 9.

This, again, raises questions about using such word lists to identify which levels of words the speakers were able to produce during narration. In addition to the discussion on the pre-determined vocabulary range by the task, there is an issue of selective use of words by the learners. SST level 8 candidates in this study did not use any JACET8000 Lv.4 words, but it does not necessarily imply that they did not have any lexical knowledge of them. The same applies to SST level 7 candidates who did not use many words at JACET8000 Lv.4. In sum, rather than expecting to find meaningful differences in lexical use among different proficiency levels with these measures, it would be more sensible to analyse the narrative performance qualitatively. For example, we might explore if there are any differences in the expressions about the same characters, items, or events in the story at different levels.

Narrative structure

The last measure that is discussed here is narrative structure: the numbers of main and minor idea units. As Figure 7 below plots, most of the SST candidates covered more than 4 main idea units out of 6 (by NS performance), which means that even lower level learners could convey the essential events of the story to an extent. The minor idea units showed more variation.
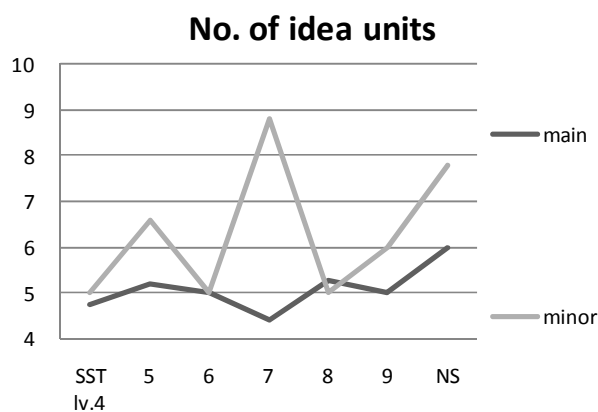
No. of idea units

Figure 7 Patterns of the idea units

The numbers of idea units closely relate to how much they talked. Judging from the means of the number of words in Table 4, SST level 8 candidates talked less than level 7, which explains why the level 8 candidates produced less numbers of minor idea units. As the time available for narration may influence the number of words produced, the patterns of this measure emphasise again the importance of task administration to produce the same conditions for every speaker.

Conclusions, Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

To sum up, this study has found that the only 'sensitive' measure with high correlation with the proficiency levels and high discrimination among many levels was the speech rate. Among the rest of the measures, some either correlated highly with the SST levels but could not discriminate, or could discriminate to some extent but did not correlate highly with the levels. Others satisfied neither of the conditions and were not 'sensitive.'

The major limitation of this study lies in that it used SST levels as a reference measure for the quality of Japanese learners' performance on the narrative task. As it was explained in Section 3.1.1., an SST level is an overall rating for the entire interview with three different

types of tasks. The narrative task is only one of them. Although the SST raters decide the provisional level for the performance on each task type, they are averaged out and not revealed with the final SST level. So, it is possible for a candidate to do well (or poorly) on the narrative task but poorly (or well) on the other tasks, and his final SST level does not reflect the quality of performance specifically on the narrative task.

What is more, SST raters use analytic scales (explained briefly in Section 3.1.1.) for different aspects of the performance on each task, but these 'sub-levels' are not revealed either. Therefore, SST levels cannot provide information on how the candidate is profiled in different aspects of their performance. By employing the SST levels as the reference measure for correlation, this study implicitly presupposed that there was a linear increase in complexity or decrease in errors as the levels go up, which is not always the case in second language research (Fulcher, 2003: 103). Thus, it is highly desirable to rate the narrative individually and then to use the ratings, rather than the SST levels which are decided after considering performance on other tasks in the interview.

In addition to having the ratings solely based on the narrative performance, three suggestions should be made for future research. Firstly, the task should be given under the same conditions for every speaker. It may be especially important to allow speakers to talk as much as possible with no test-like pressure or no time limit for narration, so that the measures for syntactic complexity and idea units can be fully explored without the possible interference of pressure and time. The second suggestion is to run more qualitative analyses, especially for lexical complexity, rather than relying on the word lists for meaningful information about the differences in how the story is expressed. Lastly, the design of this study needs to be replicated with a larger sample size in order to verify if the patterns observed in this study can be generalised. Measures for accuracy and syntactic complexity may benefit the most from this suggestion.

Although this study has its limitations, its contribution is very unique in that it systematically and empirically examined various measures for their sensitivity. In the future, a similar study using a larger sample size, ratings based solely on the narrative performance, as well as qualitative analyses, and stricter control in task administration will be able to build on the conclusions drawn from this study, and is likely to have important implications for the field of language testing and task-based research.

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Beyond 'Baby English':

Stories of writing and the emergent writer identity of a first-year business studies undergraduate student

Eleanor Ka-Po Kwan

Lancaster University

Abstract

Despite its contributions to conceptualisation of a writer's identity in academic writing, Ivanič's (1998, 2005, 2006) concept of discoursal identity tends to foreground the synchronic development and background the historical development of a student-writer. Drawing on the increasing number of studies informed by narrative analysis in second language acquisition literature (e.g. Benson & Nunan, 2004; Coffey & Street, 2008), I will examine the stories that appear in my interview with one business studies undergraduate student about his writing experiences before and after university. I will show that the learning trajectory of the student-writer displays a change from a notion of writing associated with an overemphasis on the surface features, such as syntax and grammar, prior to university, to an awareness of the importance of collaboration in group projects in business studies. Closely related to this changing notion of writing is the changing self-identification of the student-writer, as the collaborative nature of business studies group projects allows the student-writer to move beyond his identification as a poor writer to a competent writer/group member.

Introduction

Researchers' interest in the university students' writing coincided with the increasing number of non-traditional students in higher education in the UK since the 1990s (e.g. Ivanič 1998; Lillis, 2001; Leung & Safford, 2005) and the growing population of bilingual or multilingual students in English-medium universities in other countries (e.g. Angélil-Carter, 1997; Thesen, 1997; Canagarajah, 1997, 2002; Casanave, 2002). These studies aim to address the exigencies experienced by these students in their socialisation into the academic discourse community. Among the studies, Ivanič's (1998) seminal research on writer identity shows that writing an essay is more than the mastery of the academic register but is also an identity project in which student-writers position themselves in relation to different discourse communities. In this paper, I will suggest that the historical aspect of a student-writer and the characteristics of specific academic disciplines can be further explored in research on student writing.

This paper will focus on changes of writer identity of a first year business undergraduate student Sam. [35] By examining Sam's three stories about writing, I will explore (1) the overall trajectory and turning points in Sam's writing experience, and (2) the way Sam constructs his writing experience and the identifications available or denied to him in the stories. The stories reveal that for Sam, writing before university was associated with assessments and was related to his access to a particular community such as the workplace. However, the business school curriculum, with its emphasis on group work, provides a context for Sam to develop new writing practices that are beyond the textual aspect.

Changes, however, will not come without a student-writer taking the initiative. In this paper, I will draw on narrative analysis and the concept of the imagined community, developed by Norton (2001) and other researchers (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007), to examine the ways Sam positions himself in his stories about writing that emerged in my interview with him. I will also explore how Sam's image of an idealised business community triggers changes in his writer identity, and show that in Sam's story about a management group project, the group project setting provides a space for Sam to negotiate not only his identity as a student-writer but also membership of his imagined community of the business world. In other words, Sam's imagination of the idealised team work dynamic in the workplace enables him to negotiate writer identity. Furthermore, I will discuss how narrative provides Sam with a fluid medium through which he can contextualise his writing experiences in specific time and place and thus make sense out of his experiences.[36]

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[35] The names of the student and other institutes are all pseudonyms.

[36] I use the term 'the student-writer' to emphasise a student's institutional identity and his/her role as a writer who can draw on different linguistic devices and subject knowledge in accomplishing his/her disciplinary writing. The term 'business disciplinary writing' is inclusive of the different genres (case studies, recommendation reports, essays, individual assignments and group projects) that are assigned to business students.

Theoretical Framing

Ivanič's Framework of Writer Identity

Ivanič's framework of writer identity (1998) is informed by Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical metaphor that distinguishes the character, defined to represent a certain type of human characteristic, and the performer, who evokes a particular human characteristic in a performance. This distinction of character and performer leads to Ivanič's classification of four aspects of writer identity: (1) the autobiographical self that is associated with a writer's representation of his/her past experiences (writer-as-performer); (2) the discoursal self that refers to the self-portrait the writer presents in writing and is related to the notion of a writer's 'voice' (writer-as-character); (3) the self-as-author that refers to the student-writer's sense of ownership of the discourse of his/her academic discipline; and (4) possibilities for selfhood which is concerned with the possible positionings available to the writer in a literacy event. Ivanič, however, states that the 'main focus' of her research falls on the writer's discoursal self (1998: 14).

In her later articles, Ivanič shifted her focus from the textual, represented by the discoursal self, to the contextual dimension of writing. For instance, Ivanič (2005) introduces the concept of relational identity which is concerned about the writer's anticipation of the reader and how this perceived reader-writer relation can have an impact on a writer's textual production. This concern with the contextual becomes more salient in an article published in 2006, in which Ivanič draws on the sociocultural theory of learning (primarily Activity Theory) and identifies five dimensions of identity for investigation: (1) identity is relational; (2) identity is discoursally constructed; (3) identity is not so much a state as a process of identification; (4) identity is networked; (5) identity is continuously reconstructed. Although the discoursal identity is preserved from the earlier framework, the new framework accentuates the ongoing construction of identity (points 3 & 5) and the situatedness of learning and writing (points 1 & 4). The changing framework implies Ivanic's attempts to capture the contextual elements in writing and finally to demonstrate how the textual is mediated by the contextual. This interest in contexts is symptomatic of the research agenda of the social theory of writing (e.g. Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Lillis, 2001, 2003) that points out that studies of writing need to include the social contexts in which a text is embedded.

In the following section, I will identify two directions to pursue in my study of Sam's writer identity in order to capture his development over time and the impact of the uniqueness of business disciplinary writing on a student-writer.

Beyond a synchronic notion of identity: Historical development and the notion of change

The term 'synchronic' suggests a snapshot of a process at one particular moment in time. Although in Ivanič's framework the concepts 'autobiographical self' and 'possibilities of

selfhood' show an interest in the historical development of a writer, Ivanič's analysis emphasises one particular stage of a student-writer development. This can be explained by Ivanič's research objective which aims at explicating the tension between privileged academic discourse and other less privileged discourses; however, this focus on multiplicity and the associated identity negotiation in a single literacy event leaves the temporal dimension or change relatively underexplored in her analysis. For instance, Menard-Warwick (2005) calls for a more thorough theorisation of the historical development of a writer's identity and suggests that a study needs to capture both the institutional constraints and ongoing identity project over a period of time in order to further understand the continuity and changes in a writer. I would add that a formulation of identity about a writer's historical development should not only look at the past and present experiences of a writer, but also the writer's aspiration and his/her desired membership of any particular community. As Section three will show, Sam's attempt in constructing the practices of the business world is one factor that leads to change in his writer identity.

Beyond the essayist tradition: Business studies assignments as group project

Although the essay genre is still the dominant genre for undergraduate students in social sciences and humanities departments (Hyland, 2009), in my interviews with six business studies undergraduates in my university at the pilot stage of my research project on students' writing practices, I was told that essays were rarely assigned in their business courses. However, all of my participants needed to complete one or two 'group projects' each semester. This finding is similar to that of Zhu (2004). In his study of 242 business course assignments at both undergraduate and graduate levels over five semesters at one American university, he finds that 67% and 65% of the 'business discipline genres' (case analysis, business reports, business proposals, and design projects) of graduate and undergraduate levels, respectively, required team work (2004: 122-3). Furthermore, the purpose of assignments was mixed. On the one hand, the assignments showed 'a strong problem-solving and decision-making orientation' and yet the assignments also fulfilled institutional purposes and tutors expected the students to demonstrate how well they understood the concepts of their courses. As Sam's story about his management group project shows, this ambiguity about the purpose of the assignment means that students need to negotiate with their tutors about the purpose of their group projects.

My interest in the historical development of writer identity and the unique characteristics of business disciplinary writing led to two questions I will examine in this paper:

1) What is the overall trajectory and what are the turning points in Sam's literacy history?
2) How does Sam construct his writing experiences and what are the identifications that are or are not available to Sam in the stories?

To answer these questions I will examine related questions such as what writing means to Sam in the stories, what purposes writing serves and Sam's orientations towards his experience and his evaluation of his experiences.

But before my analysis of Sam's stories, I will first discuss the use of narrative analysis in social sciences and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) literature in order to show the importance of the stories that Sam gave spontaneously in the interview.

Narrative Analysis

'Narrative Turn' in social sciences and educational research

Narrative, advocates of narrative analysis argue, has been considered a means for humans to make sense of and interpret their experiences. For instance, Bruner (1990) writes that narrative provides an 'organising principle' by which 'people organise their experience in, knowledge about, and transactions with the social world' (1990: 35). In social sciences, the narrative turn signals a change in research interest, which according to Brockmeier and Harré (2001) shifts from 'a futile search for universal laws of human behaviour' to 'the problem of accounting for the dynamic patterns of human behaviour' (2001: 39). Researchers have also recognised the importance of narratives or stories in interviews. Cortazzi (2002) states that 'narrative analysis gives a researcher access to the textual interpretative world of the teller, which presumably in some way mediates or manages reality' (2002: 385). Similar observations are also made by other social sciences researchers who suggest that impromptu stories in interviews usually render rich data and contextualised insights into the life experience of the researched (Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 1993; Rubin & Rubin 1995), even though they may not fit into the researcher's predetermined coding system.

Narrative analysis has been used by SLA researchers in recent years to investigate how social and institutional factors contribute to or do disservice to language development (e.g. Norton, 2000; Block, 2005; Coffey & Street, 2008; Ros i Sole, 2007). Narrative analysis is also used to explore topics in SLA such as motive, affect and age, because narrative is regarded to shed light on the contextual elements related to these topics (Benson, 2004). These foci in SLA are accompanied by a growing interest in learners' stories and also signals researchers' concern about language learners' identity development (e.g Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

The use of narrative in my study

The significance of narrative emerged during my interviews with the student-writers. Although stories did not appear very frequently in the interviews, they usually emerged in two points in the interview: when I asked my participants how they learned to write since childhood and whether anything particularly challenging happened when they worked on

their business studies assignments at university. Narrative, it dawned on me, allows the participants to situate their experience in specific time and community and to make sense of the different factors, such as schools, family members and peers, had an impact on their writing. These are moments when institutional constraints as well as power relations become salient.

Although Brockmeier and Harré (2001) argue that the term narrative 'has become rather inflationary' (2001: 40), they suggest it is generally agreed that the basic elements of narrative contain characters, a setting and a plot that develops over time (see also Riessman, 2002). More than a recounting of events, narratives also involve the teller's perspective that makes the story worth telling (Bruner, 2001; Cortazzi, 2002). When identifying narratives in my studies, I focus on the basic elements of character, setting and plot. To examine the significance of the stories, I will focus on two elements that will be discussed in the next section, learning trajectories and the turning points.

Learners' trajectories and the role of turning point in narrative

Narrative analysis enables a researcher to examine a learner's development, one common focus in SLA research, through tracing a learner's learning trajectory (e.g. Norton, 2001; Murphy et al.,2004; Ros i Solé, 2007; Coffey & Street 2008). Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) point out that the focus of the learning trajectory is to provide a contextualised view of learning, taking into account the social and institutional factors:

> In a sociocultural approach, the focus of learning and education is not children, nor schools, but human lives seen as trajectories through multiple social practices in various social institutions. If learning is to be efficacious, then what a child or adult does now as a learner must be connected in meaning and motivating ways with 'mature' (insider) versions of related social practices (1996: 4).

Since narrative is a medium that allows the teller to locate his/her experience in time and space and illuminates the questions such as who was involved and what purposes the writing event served, it is not surprising that the medium can provide the researcher an entry point to the situated experiences of a learner.

When tracing a learner's learning trajectory, a researcher in particular pay attention turning points in a learner's narrative, which refer to experiences of change as a result of the teller's perspective or change as the consequence of some unexpected events. For example, Riessman (2002) refers turning points to moments 'when the narrator signified a radical shift in the expected course of a life' (2002: 705); Bruner (2001) defines turning points as 'those episodes in which, as if to underline the power of the agent's intentional states, the narrator attributes a crucial change or stance in the protagonist's story to a belief, a conviction, a thought' (2001: 31). In the case of Sam, I will argue that the turning point regarding to his changing notion of writing becomes salient when comparison is made between his stories of writing before and after university.

Data and the researcher's roles

The data is drawn from the pilot study I conducted from December 2008 to June 2009 at one university in Hong Kong with a student population of about 10,000, and about 1,000 undergraduate students being business majors. The goal of the research project is to explore how the contextual aspect of writing mediates business students' textual production. Six business undergraduate students were invited. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the six participants and writing samples were collected. The data of this paper is from the first interview, which included six questions about the participants' literacy acquisition history (the questions can be found in Appendix 1). The interviews were conducted in Cantonese, and the translation is mine. Although the translated transcripts may not be able to capture in full the student-writer's meaning in Cantonese, the transcripts aim to preserve the important elements of narrative as well as Sam's evaluation of his experiences.

I worked as a language tutor in the university for three school years and conducted English discussion groups, participation in which was on a voluntary basis and no assessment was involved. It was through the discussion group that I came to know Sam. My role as a language tutor he met in an extra-curricular setting has two impacts on the researcher-researched relation. On the one hand, I might have been placed in a higher institutional status by the student-writers and this might have made the student-writers self-conscious of their institutional identity as good students. But the fact that I met them through a non-credit bearing extracurricular activity where the participants were encouraged to express their own ideas in a more relaxed setting could have a leveling effect on our relationship. I would say that Sam joined the interview because he is a serious student and i was curious about the kind of research postgraduate students do.

Sam's stories were selected in this paper because they show that writing is a great challenge even for hard-working students who are willing to accommodate institutional conventions. Second, the stories shed light on how changes in writer identity involve active negotiation of the context of writing. A study of Sam and his stories thus share the purpose of heuristic case studies, which are used to stimulate the researcher's imagination and to develop theory (Mitchell, 1983: 193).

Sam's writer identity

Sam is a year one Business Studies student who transferred from the Mathematics Department, where he studied for one year, since his public examination results did not let him go to the highly competitive business school. To get permission for transfer from the university, students need exceptionally good grades (straight As in fact), and so for the whole year as a Mathematics student Sam got up at six in the morning, stayed in the library

apart from going to lectures and tutorials and went home at eleven in the evening, the closing hour of the library. Perseverance as well as an awareness of and willingness to accommodate the 'rules of the game' are characteristics of Sam, who needed to overcome all the hurdles to get into the business school.

Despite his good work ethics, Sam seems to show a sense of ambivalence towards his peer community in business school. For instance, since students at the Mathematics Department wear jeans most of the time and pay little attention to fashion, Sam feels uncomfortable about business suits, which form part of the norm for presentations in business courses. Further, Sam thinks some of his local Hong Kong students are slightly elitist as these students usually got good grades in public examinations and tend to think highly of themselves. It can be said that in order to get into the business school, Sam is willing to learn and adopt the 'rules' but to blend into the community of local Hong Kong business students is another question. As the stories unfold, I will show how business disciplinary writing is a site for identity negotiation for Sam.

Stories of writing before university

In the interview, Sam told two stories about writing before university as shown in Figures 1 and 2. At first glance, the two stories seem to suggest very different orientations towards writing. In the first story, Sam won a writing competition when he was a primary school student. The happy ending seems to suggest a positive orientation towards writing and Sam said that after winning the competition he was more motivated to read books to improve to his writing. In contrast, what is salient in the second story is the face-threatening scenario in which Sam was criticised by the manager of a theme park in front of all of the other job applicants for making a mistake. A mistake Sam described to be 'silly', in the job application form. However, although these two stories seem to show opposite feelings towards writing, I will argue that they share a few similarities.

1	Eleanor: Here comes more or less the end of part 1. Do you want to add anything to what you have said? Do you have some important experience [about writing] you want to talk about?
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3	
4	Sam: About learning [to write] from other people. Once, I read a book, I highlighted one particular sentence. I was in primary school and my composition was bad. We had a composition competition at primary school. I copied the sentence in my composition, and I won the competition. It's like everyone who read the composition remembered that sentence.
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8	E: Alright.

9	S: It's like it didn't look like I could write that well, but the sentence was really good. The sentence had a parallel structure [Sam tried to replicate the sentence structure for me but he could not remember the exact wording]. Because I won the prize, my teachers changed their opinions of me. This is a special experience.
10	
11	
12	E: They changed their opinions of you or of your writing?
13	
14	S: I think both, because I felt more confident of my writing. And I found that reading is useful. So I read a lot even when I was in primary school. I think it is an effective way to improve writing.
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Figure 1: Sam's story about the Chinese writing competition[37]

1	Eleanor: Have you had any summer jobs or part-time jobs [that involved some kind of writing]?
2	Sam: Yes, I even needed to fill in an application form. I worked in a theme park [in the summer] before I started university. I made a silly mistake in my application form, and other applicants and I went to a room like this [Sam pointed to the room where he and I had the interview]. The manager was standing in the middle and he was surrounded by other applicants. He read each of the application forms. He would say 'There is a mistake in this form' and he would put the form in one box [the box for rejected applications]. He would make criticisms in front of the whole group. Then it was my turn. He said to me 'you studied at Sir Edwards' School. Do you know I also graduated from that school? Do you know that you made a mistake?' But he put the form in the box where the applicants would get an offer. It was a really memorable experience, someone speaking in front of everybody that you made a mistake in the form in front of so many people and by an alumnus of my
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[37] In the transcripts in Figures 1, 2 and 3, brackets ([ ]) are used to insert additional information to preserve coherence in meaning.

9	secondary school.
10	
11	E: But that was the application process?
12	
13	S: Yes, there were 200 applicants and they took only 40 applicants.
14	E: It was like a recruitment day.
15	S: A lot of students who finished their public examinations would apply because it sounded fun.
16	
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18	

Figure 2: Sam's story about filling in an application form for summer job

Writing is associated with assessments and embedded in institutional settings

In both stories, writing, whether in the form of school composition genre or form filling, is assessed by someone who has more institutional power than Sam, and the results of the assessment can affect Sam's access to a particular community, no matter whether it was about his membership to the community of good writers at school or his access to a job. In the first story, the power differential between Sam-the-assessed and the assessor is obscured by the fact the judge acts like a benevolent authority who favours Sam's writing over other students'. But power differential is more obvious in the second story about Sam's theme park application, which is also registered by Sam's use of reported speech to imitate the manager's comments and thereby separate the manager's words from his own (lines 6 to 10, Figure 2). In fact, that was the only instance of direct speech Sam used in a one-hour interview. Sam also tried to describe the physical setting of the scene by using gestures to compare the room where the story took place and the room we had the interview; this again reveals how vividly Sam remembered the experience.

In the story, the theme park manager draws his authority on his institutional status and, instead of talking to the applicants one by one, asks them to form a circle so his criticisms can be heard by everyone. Furthermore, the manager's criticism of Sam's mistake

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suggests that a mistake is considered to be a stigma and the writer deserves criticism even in front of the other applicants. Although it can be argued that a mistake on an application form made by a fresh graduate from high school who is unfamiliar with job application forms is not surprising, the point is that the manager's criticism reflects the impact of the deficit account of literacy.

Since writing is institutionalised and is related to assessments, it is not surprising that for Sam writing is something he does not like very much, although Sam is a writer who is willing to accommodate the expectations and rules of the different writing games he has encountered. Sam told me that the writing he enjoys is the thoughts he scribbled on newspapers, and the notes he made when studying. In Sam's own words:

> 'A pleasant experience, there was one or two. As I said, I will write down my thoughts when I study. If I feel that I can write down a logical argument, I feel very happy because I feel that I understand the material' (Sam interview, January 2009).

Sam considers himself to be a good, logical thinker but this quality was not assessed in these two stories. So Sam's investment in his identity as an analytical person who likes to read and has his own thoughts is not recognised in these stories.

The surface features of writing are used to index other qualities of the writer

In the story about writing composition, Sam attributed his success to the use of an intricate sentence that showed a parallel structure. When I asked him if he could remember where the sentence came from and the topic of the writing composition, he told me that he could neither remember the original contexts in which the sentence was from nor what he wrote in his composition. What remained of the piece writing is the formal, surface feature of the sentence, decontextualised from the original context or the new contexts in which it was transplanted.

The textual, however, has great indexing power. In the two stories, although what is assessed is the textual dimension, it is the other qualities of the writer that writing is supposed to evaluate. When talking about his writing composition, Sam said that his teachers changed their opinions of him (see lines 12 and 13, Figure 1). This shift in focus, from surface features of writing to the qualities of a good student, confused me and made me ask a clarifying question during the interview. However, Sam did not make any distinction in his reply.

The second story (about Sam's job application) shows that the manager judged the applicant's competence for the job based on whether the applicant made any mistake on the form. The textual, associated with form-filling skills, is used by the manager to identify general competence in the workplace. It would be understandable if the job involved a lot of administrative work, but the only form Sam filled in during the whole summer was to write a few sentences to explain why a visitor slipped on the floor.

The writer of simple style could be infantilised

Although Sam got an overall mark of 8, out of 9, in IELTS[38], which is considered a very good mark for university students in Hong Kong[39]. Sam attributed his good mark to his understanding of the test's instructions. He thought that there are students whose English is better than his but they got average grades because they were mistaken about the rules. In fact, one repeated expression Sam uses to describe his English is 'Baby English', which is characterised by simple lexis and sentence structures:

> 'But starting in form 6[40], more logical thinking was required. We started to write argumentative essays. This came with more stringent requirements for formal language use and vocab and sentence variety. At form 7, I tried not to use Baby English in my writing, like "lots" and to find some words to substitute it. My teachers and tutors also told me not to use Baby English' (Sam interview, January 2009).

The expression (Baby English) suggests that a user of simple English is infantilised; furthermore, since we do not tend to attribute intellectual rigour to babies, this expression again shows the indexing power of the textual and how a person's intellectual qualities could be undermined by the textual aspect of his/her writing. The expression thus best captures Sam's anxiety that his identification as an analytical person would be denied because of his use of relatively simple style.

In short, Sam's two stories about writing before university show that although he is willing to accommodate institutional conventions, writing is still an unpleasant and onerous task because it is associated with assessments. Sam considers himself an intelligent person by emphasising his logical thinking and his habit of jotting his thoughts down when reading the newspaper and during revision. This identification might allow room to negotiate identity. Unfortunately this does not happen in the stories. What becomes salient is that the surface, mechanical aspect of writing has huge indexing power. The use of complex sentence structure is used to index a good student, and a mistake is used to index the general competence of a job applicant.

Before talking about Sam's third story of writing however, I will explore Norton (2001) and other researchers' (e.g. Kanno & Norton, 2003; Murphy, Chen & Chen, 2004; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007) discussion of the imagined community. The concept shows that imagination

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[38] IELTS stands for International English Language Testing System. Although the test is usually used as an entry test by universities in English speaking countries, many Hong Kong universities encourage their students to take the test during their university years and will finance the students who are willing to publish their scores on their official university transcripts.

[39] For instance, in 2007 the average IELTS mark scored by university students in Hong Kong was 6.67 out of nine (Jiang, 2007).

[40] In Hong Kong, forms 6 and 7 are the final two years of secondary school study before university. Students have to sit in the Advanced Level Examinations for about four to five subject areas, with English and Chinese as mandatory subjects.

plays an important role in a learner's investment in a language, and I will show how Sam's imagination of the business community triggers changes in his writer identity.

The imagined community

The concept of the imagined community is about what we can be, what we would like to be and what we do not want to be affiliated with, and how these questions become constituting factors of our identification. Although this concept may seem rather commonsensical, this notion is intended to contribute to an understudied area in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), that of the learner's imagination. The concept was first used by Norton (2001) borrowing from Benedict Anderson (1991), a political scientist who attempts to explore the development of individual members' affiliation with their nations. The concept has later been further developed by other SLA researchers (e.g. Kanno & Norton, 2003; Murphy, Chen & Chen, 2004; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

The concept of the imagined community, these SLA researchers argue, points out that in studies on language learners' motivation and participation in the target language community, factors regarding the learner's sense of their future and aspired identities are often overlooked. For instance, Pavlenko and Norton (2007) write that:

> [S]o far it [SLA literature] has focused predominantly on learning that takes place as a result of the learners' direct engagement in face-to-face communities. Learning that is connected to learner participation in a wider world has been little explored. Yet we humans are capable, through our imagination, of perceiving a connection with people beyond our immediate social networks. Our orientation toward such imagined communities might have just as much impact on our current identities and learning as direct involvement in communities of our everyday life. We argue that the notion of imagination as a way to appropriate meanings can create new identities (2007: 670).

In Norton's and other researchers' formulation of imagined communities, several characteristics can be seen. First, the concept of imagined communities, instead of referring to a learner's fantasy, involves active pursuit on the learner's part to align to the 'rules and regulations' of the imagined community (Kanno & Norton, 2003: 246), even though the learner's construction of the imagined communities may not reflect the reality (e.g. Kanno 2000). Second, this active pursuit of the rules and regulations of the imagined community usually does not leave the learner's sense of identity unchanged; Kanno and Norton (2003) argue that a learner's imagined identity 'may compel learners to seek certain kinds of educational opportunities they might otherwise not seek' and therefore 'imagined identities can reframe the learning experience of a given student' (2003: 246). Third, a learner usually constructs an imagined community when there is a problem of access to the community, such as the case of immigrants whose professional degrees and work experiences are not recognised in their countries of adoption (e.g. Norton, 2001).

The concept of imagined community helps to further extend Ivanič's framework (1998, 2005, 2006) because of its emphasis in a learner's participation both in the immediate learning environment and in the 'rules and regulations' of the imagined community. These characteristics also provide an analytical lens for me to examine Sam's group project experience.

Sam's story about a management group project at university

Like other vocational oriented subjects at higher education, business disciplinary writing is different from more traditional academic disciplines. Business disciplinary writing usually shows a strong problem-solving orientation, and the tutor may see assignments as sites for students to examine real business phenomena; furthermore, group projects are common and are supposed to facilitate collaboration among members, a workplace skill that students are encouraged to learn (Zhu 2004). However, based on my interviews with six business students in one university, collaboration is variable across groups. Some groups prefer to divide the project into equal parts and each member works on his/her own; the parts are combined and submitted right before the due date.

1	S: Yes, one thing, in this project, we had a presentation and a report. Usually, Hong Kong students divide the project in equal parts and put them together at the end. But I did something different. Because there were two exchange students, and they don't know Cantonese. So I asked questions for them [during the interview with the university security centre] and the security centre people were Hong Kongese. So I gave the exchange students the data. And we all needed to do the write-up. I know that my English is less proficient than theirs. So I wrote a draft, using "Baby English", and gave it to the exchange students to proofread. I could make sure that my write-up was grammatically correct and it saved us time. That was a great experience. That is synergy.
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8	E: So the distribution of work, would the local Hong Kong students be responsible for drafting …
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10	S: No, only me used this strategy [i.e. asking the foreign students to proofread his draft], the other two local Hong Kong students just did their own parts. But I thought it was an opportunity to have exchange students in the same group and why don't we try to learn more from each other? The other two local students know each other very well. They had all the classes together last semester. And the other three members, including me, spent more time talking to each other.
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	E: So the distribution of work was like… you were responsible for asking

14	questions…
15	
16	S: It was more like we three students distributed the work among ourselves.
17	
18	S: The dynamics among the three of us were good. But the other two [local students] I didn't pay much attention to. I would say the collaboration is more at the group level rather than the team level, because every one did the same thing [responsible for different parts of the project in an individual manner] but I think it would be better if work was assigned depending on the strength of individual members. I
19	think it is what management is about, but I hope next time my team members are more open-minded. There weren't many troubles. It's just that the collaboration could be better. Actually we got an above average grade for our project.
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Figure 3: Sam's story about his management group project

The background of the story is Sam's management group project, as shown in Figure 3. The project asked each group to investigate the management culture of an organisation by drawing on ethnographic methods such as site visits and interviews. Sam's group asked the tutor to clarify whether theoretical discussions would be important and Sam's tutor reply was that he wanted the students to focus more on their observations of the organisation than theories. I will argue the story reveals how Sam makes use of the group dynamics to negotiate his learner and writer identity.

Identity project and the construction of the business community

In the story, Sam positions himself in different relations to two groups of students, the exchange students and other local (i.e. Hong Kong) students. Sam disaligns himself from the two local students. For Sam, although local students may have good public examination results, they do not know how to collaborate or communicate with people from different cultures (lines 91-4, Appendix 5). On the other hand, Sam positions himself as a person with international outlook by highlighting his good collaborative relationships with exchange students from other countries. One particular student with whom he has a good friendship is from Israel and had served in the army for two years before he came to Hong Kong for business school. Sam's affection with this friend is shown in the interview when he told me he was glad to hear that his friend had returned safe from Israel after a Christmas marked by intensifying tensions between Israel and neighboring countries.

Sam's alignment with the exchange students in the group is a way for him to resolve his ambivalence towards the peer community of local Hong Kong students. For Sam, the peer community of local students might have represented the business community up to this point in his life since this peer group represents more or less the kind of people he will work with after graduation. Dissatisfied with the elitism shown by the members of this community, Sam explored other student groups in the management class. The group setting can be considered a site for Sam to explore and to construe the business community, which for him is still a remote concept.

Writing means more than the surface features

Unlike the writing competition story that centers on one intricate sentence structure and the job application story that focuses on a single 'silly' mistake, in this story about the management group project, the role of the textual is downplayed and Sam's relationship with other team members instead forms the focus. The term 'Baby English' reappears in the story (line 7, Figure 3) but is no longer an issue for Sam because he trades duties with other team members and so his writing will be edited by team members whom Sam regards to be more proficient in English. Sam does not seem to consider this strategy to be a compensatory strategy for his shortcoming in writing. Rather he considers his initiative contributes to team building and knowledge exchanges among members; for instance, he uses the word 'synergy' (which Sam said in English; line 9, Figure 3) to describe the collaboration between him and the other two exchange students. If Sam is a poor writer in the technical sense, he is a 'good' writer in the sense that he is able to mobilise the 'human resources' in the team. And I would add that he is also a good writer because by asking other students to edit his writing for him, Sam is able to focus on the logical flow of the writing, something he feels he is good at.

Use of management terminology in the story

In his evaluation of his management group project experience (lines 29-36, Figure 3), Sam makes the distinction between 'group' and 'team' (Sam again uses English for the two terms) and suggests that a team shows greater member cohesion than a group. This use of management terminology can be considered attempts in constructing the workplace

practices. Whether Sam is correct in his distinction is beside the point; the point is that Sam is trying to imagine how things should be done in the workplace and uses this as a benchmark to evaluate his and other local Hong Kong students' current practices. Again, Sam's focus is more than the textual but the writing practices of the (imagined) business world.

A trajectory can be drawn from the three stories. Before university, Sam's stories show that writing tends to center on the surface features. Writing is associated with assessments which regulate Sam's membership to any particular community. After university, the group project seems to liberate him from this notion of writing since Sam takes the initiative to collaborate with members from other countries. The group project experience can thus be considered a turning point for Sam who draws on the management discourse about the importance of synergy to exchange tasks with other members and by doing so positions himself not as a writer of simple English but as an innovative team member.

Sam's identification has also changed. Before university, although what is assessed is the textual, it is usually other qualities (such as job competence) of the writer that are at stake. This point demonstrates the indexing power of the textual and also explains Sam's lack of interest in writing. But Sam's self-identification as an intelligent person is available to him in the management group project when he could exchange job duties with other members.

Conclusions and future directions

This analysis of Sam's stories about writing shows how the historical development of a student writer's identity can better capture change in a student writer's identification, and how this historical development is shaped by the institutional requirements at different stages of the student writer's life. This analysis also shows how a student writer's sense of affiliation with an imagined community enables the student writer to negotiate his writer's identity. Furthermore, the use of narrative analysis is part of a project investigating how business students construct the business disciplinary writing as participation in the academic and/or business communities and how their writer identity as well as textual production is mediated by the way they construct the context of their writing. This analysis suggests two areas for further exploration: Sam's concern about his simplistic writing style and desire for a sophisticated writing style is also the concern of other participants in my study. It would be interesting to further understand students' notion of 'a sophisticated style' and the indexing power of the style. Sam's story also reveals that business disciplinary writing may not only serve the institutional purpose of the academe but is also a space for Sam to negotiate his identity as a sensible, business-like person, as reflected by Sam's use of management discourse in his evaluation of his business project experience.

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Appendix 1: The section of interview guide about writing experience

1. Can you describe how you first learned to write English? Chinese?

2. Since you were a small kid, you have learned how to read and write in English. Now, after so many years, you have a good command of the language. Could you tell me 2-3 things that have helped you to learn writing and reading? (It can be people, material things, or some other activities that you have participated in.)

3. Could you describe one experience of English writing that you enjoyed and one experience that you disliked a lot?

4. Could you describe one experience of Chinese writing that you enjoyed and one experience that you disliked a lot?

The linguistic landscapes of Chişinău:

Forms and functions of urban public verbal signs in a post-Soviet setting

Sebastian Muth

Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University of Greifswald

Frederik Wolf

Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University of Greifswald

Abstract

As one of the fairly new fields of research in linguistics, the study of linguistic landscapes (LL) is concerned with language as a medium of communication in its written form. This includes virtually all displays of written language such as shop signs, billboards, placards and other formal and informal displays of written language visible to us in publicly accessible places. Apart from a purely discursive dimension, this approach also serves as a useful tool to study language use in multilingual urban settings where the linguistic landscape often is a highly contested and politicized space. In this paper we explore the linguistic landscape of such a multilingual agglomeration, Chisinau, the capital of the Republic of Moldova. Based on a corpus of digital pictures displays of written language this paper explores the status, various functions and quantitative distribution of the country's two main languages, Romanian and Russian. Keeping historical as well as political aspects in mind, assumptions on language preferences and functional domains of the languages displayed will be made, allowing for an insight into patterns of language use in a post-Soviet republic.

Introduction

This article analyses the linguistic landscapes of the capital of the Republic of Moldova, Chişinău. This study is part of a larger study on public verbal signs in this Eastern European capital. The analysis of a linguistic landscape or cityscape is a fairly new approach to study multilingualism in urban contexts and concentrates on the observation of urban public verbal signs visible to everyone. These include advertising billboards, shop signs, placards or any other displays of written language (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 25) and as such refer to 'any sign or announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location' (Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006: 14). By analysing these specimens of written language, assumptions about the functional domains, prestige, status and spread of languages in bi- and multilingual settings can be made. The objects of our analysis are commercial shop signs, advertisement banners, placards and election posters that are part of a corpus of over 1300 digital pictures of the linguistic landscape of Chişinău taken in March 2009. As the given survey of the linguistic landscape of Chişinău is still a work in progress, we will concentrate on a limited number of signs that nevertheless constitute representative examples within their context. Contextualising these signs following the paradigms in linguistic landscape research includes the identification of the *textual genre*, *external position*, *location*, *domain*, *context* and *place* to which the sign belongs to (Barni & Bagna, 2009: 132). Other aspects play a role as well, such as the 'semiotic reading of the dominance of one linguistic code over another on bi- or multilingual signs' (Malinowsky, 2009: 108) and a distinction between symbolic and informative meaning of the languages depicted. Based on these aspects it is the aim of our analysis to identify the different functions the two main languages spoken in Chişinău – Romanian and Russian – fulfil the contexts they are used in. Furthermore, it is the aim of this analysis to examine whether English is in a process of replacing Russian, the former *lingua franca* of Soviet Moldova in certain domains. This is crucial from two perspectives: first of all it might, according to Ben-Rafael (2009: 51), show patterns of language use against the background of political dissent between Moldovans and the Russian-speaking minority that characterised the political development of the country since its independence in 1991. Second it will show if English emerges as a third language and an integral part of the cityscape of Chişinău.

Moldova – A nation on the margins of Europe

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and national independence in 1991, Moldova struggles for its existence. Unsolved territorial issues, the loss of 12% of its territory and a major part of its industrial complex after a brief but violent war of

secession, a defunct concept of national identity, a failed social and cultural transformation and a high dependence on foreign resources hinder a positive development of the country (Gabany, 2004: 9).

While most countries of the former Eastern bloc did not experience any fundamental change in their conception of national identity and were able to connect to pre-war traditions, Moldova already struggled in finding consensus about what is part of a genuine Moldovan cultural and political identity. Without discussing decisive events in Moldovan history in detail it can be stated that alternating influences from both Romania and Russia dominated, allowing no development of a concept of national identity. After the Second World War Moldova became part of the Soviet Union and formed the Moldovan Socialist Soviet Republic. Large scale work migration from Russia and other republics of the USSR was fostered and changed the ethnic composition of the country. Nevertheless Moldova found itself in a peculiar situation 'as it was the only Soviet Republic where the language spoken by most of the population was in the same time the national language of a neighbouring non-Soviet albeit socialist country' (Kraft, 2009: 3). To tackle this problem, Soviet authorities fabricated a concept of a distinct Moldovan people with an own language, culture and history. Still, most expected a swift accession to Romania after the breakup of the USSR in 1991. This has never been realized and Moldova was faced with the task of building up an own notion of national identity. During the first instable years of independence till 1995 the political elites of the country developed no clear and consistent concept of national history and of what constitutes the Moldovan nation (King, 2000: 160). Although no government distanced itself from the concept of a distinct Moldovan identity and tried to promote it to various degrees, the people of Moldova largely ignored such discourse on national identity. The concept of a Moldovan identity remains 'a mystery and a miracle in history' (van Meurs, 1998: 39). Thus it is of no great surprise that on the question 'What is the meaning of citizenship in Moldova today?', 'Having a blue passport' was the most frequent answer given by inhabitants […] of Moldova'[41] (Heintz, 2008: 2).

Language and politics

The conflicting self-image of Moldova and its troubles in finding national self-consciousness can be exemplified by the relationship between language and politics in the country. Already before the declaration of independence language had political implications in Moldova. In 1990 the Supreme Soviet of the republic passed new language laws that changed the national language Moldovan[42] from Cyrillic to

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[41] Moldovan passports are light blue in colour
[42] Following the conventions in Romance linguistics, Moldovan is considered a dialect of Romanian and as such will be referred to as Romanian in this paper

Latin script along the conventions of contemporary Romanian. The status of Russian was devalued as well, as it lost its distinguished status as a language on equal footing with Romanian and became a 'language of interethnic communication' (Dumbrava, 2003: 54). At the moment of independence, about half of the ethnic Moldovan population had a sufficient command of Russian, while most of the Russian speaking population were not able to speak Romanian. Till then Russian dominated in all public domains and was essential to know in higher education and work life. In independent Moldova the sharp decline of the status of Russian continued and Romanian became the working language of all public institutions and the country's administration. This ethnic revival triggered fears of a rising Romanian cultural dominance within the Russian- and Ukrainian-speaking community, especially in the highly industrialized eastern regions of Moldova. Romanian was declared the national language in the Moldovan declaration of independence in 1991 and public opinion among ethnic Moldovans turned towards reunification with Romania. Following an armed conflict that resulted in the secession of Russophile Transnistria, the Moldovan administration introduced progressive minority language laws that recognized the right to choose one's ethnic group freely and granted individuals the right to use their mother tongue in public domains such as the judiciary.

Within Moldovan society controversies emerged when Moldovan and not Romanian was codified in the country's constitution as the national language in 1993, marking the end of a pro-Romanian policy and a turning point towards the recognition of the distinct Moldovan language as part of the concept of a distinct national identity. Nevertheless, political elites and the general public disagreed about the denomination of the country's official language. This cleavage is best exemplified by the three lines of conflict and their different approaches towards Moldovan Romanian itself: the Bucharest-, Chişinău- and Tiraspol-line, named after the respective capitals of Romania, Moldova and Transnistria.

The Bucharest line views the idea of a distinct Romanian language as a propagandistic invention of Moldovan national elites. As Moldovans are in fact ethnic Romanians, their language ought to be classified as Romanian. Moreover, as differences between the two languages are minimal on a grammatical, lexical and phonetic level and as such at most justify the status of Moldovan as a dialect of the Romanian language.

The Chişinău-line has been tied to the idea of Moldovanism. In regard to Soviet efforts to construct and define a Moldovan nation, the differences between the Moldovan and Romanian people where emphasised. Nonetheless, especially the administration under President Vladimir Voronin from 2001 until 2009 maintained this very notion of Moldovanism and tried to promote it in all domains of society (Tomescu-Hatto, 2008: 196). Interestingly, the idea of Moldovanism does not necessarily imply a rejection of the country's second language, Russian. On the contrary, the political protagonists of Moldovanism around former President Voronin even tried to implement Russian as a compulsory language at schools, an

attempt that triggered mass protests in Chişinău in 2002 and that was abandoned later on. Constructing a national identity is still an issue amongst Moldovan cultural and political elites, but in October 2009 the new pro-Western government under Prime Minister Vlad Filat announced that the constitution of the republic will be changed and Romanian reintroduced as the country's official language (Tudor, 2009).

The Tiraspol-line of argumentation follows traditional patterns of Soviet-Moldovan language policy and accentuates the distinctiveness of Moldovan Romanian, highlighted by the use of the Cyrillic script. Although it is one of the three official languages of Transnistria, apart from Russian and Ukrainian, Moldovan Romanian is marginalized, as the dominant language in all domains is Russian.

At this point it is not necessary to decide which of these three lines has to be adhered to, although within linguistics the Romanian point of view is favoured and even the Moldovan Academy of Sciences supports this position. Of greater importance are everyday patterns of bilingual language use in both Romanian and Russian and observations regarding the different functional domains both languages fulfil in the country. While it is of no surprise that Russian lost a significant share of its prestige and status after Moldovan independence, current research indicates that Russian is gaining ground again. Exemplarily, studies conducted in villages close to the Romanian border by Belina & Arambasa (2007: 194) showed that approximately 52% of those questioned claim to use Russian as an everyday language. Also the underfunded Moldovan media accounts for a revival of the Russian language. Often it is not possible to acquire American or European TV productions or dub them into Romanian and cheaper Russian programs are broadcast instead. These are viewed by over 60% of the population on a daily basis (Belina & Arambasa, 2007: 194).This is a considerable number considering that, according to the 2004 census, urban centres such as Chişinău have a 30% share of Russian speakers. Does this indicate a revival of Russian in Moldova, possibly accompanied by changing patterns of national self-image and identity? Up to now this question remains unanswered, as certain structural factors have been widely ignored by researchers. On the one hand, many elderly Moldovans have difficulties in using the Latin script and are equally insecure in using standard Romanian[43] as in using standard Russian especially in rural parts of Moldova (Belina & Arambasa, 2007: 194). On the other hand, Russian is widely preferred over Romanian by other national minorities such as the Gagauz or the Bulgarian population and used as a tool for interethnic communication (Sarov, 2007: 106).

Another point to consider is the phenomenon of large-scale work migration of Moldovans and the influence this might have on the language situation in the country. At present almost a quarter of the population – approximately 800 000 Moldovans – are living and working abroad mainly in Italy, Spain, Romania, Russia,

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[43] People who see Moldovan as a dialect of Romanian often have a very negative attitude towards their mother tongue up to a form of 'linguistic self hate' (Dumbrava 2004: 62)

the Arabian Gulf region and the US. Their influence on the language situation upon their return to Moldova will show in the future but to a certain extent it can be assumed that the level of English proficiency and the general importance of English will grow, especially as a language used on public displays of written language. Nevertheless it remains to be seen if the claim that English is entrenched firmly 'as the globally dominant language' (Mair, 2006: 10) can be applied to Moldova as well or if Russian can uphold its status as a *lingua franca* in the country.

Meaning in context – Different languages, different functions

Signs in public areas accessible to everyone can mirror a particular language background and especially in bi- and multilingual cities serve as a useful tool to find out more about the functions these different languages fulfil within specific contexts. Are just those languages displayed one might expect by considering the demographic structure of the city or are other languages represented as well? And if so, do these languages, according to Cenoz & Gorter (2009), carry symbolic meaning and can we – to a certain extent – even assign certain connotations to them? Furthermore, is there a relation between the location of the signs and the languages displayed on them, a phenomenon discussed, among others, by Landry & Bourhis (1997), Cenoz & Gorter (2009) and Ben-Rafael et al. (2006)?

The meaning of languages displayed might go beyond the mere informative and opens up another dimension, namely a symbolic one. In this respect it is not only important to analyse the distribution of different languages on one sign, but also the space each language occupies on it, allowing assumptions on the dominance of one code over another on multilingual displays of written language. In addition to that, the actual content has to be considered as well. Often, languages on bi- or multilingual signs do not necessarily tell the same: one language might have rather symbolic value whereas others directly address passers-by with information assumingly valuable and informative to them. Also, location plays a crucial role when focusing on multilingual signage in urban centres, combining many aspects such as the imminent location of the sign within a certain street, shopping centre or neighbourhood, but also its location in a more wider sense, meaning if it is located in a commercial or residential area of the city, close to main transport hubs such as railway stations, airports or main thoroughfares or on the margins of urban districts, in deprived or affluent residential areas. Various studies of linguistic landscapes in urban centres (cf. Backhaus, 2007; Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006; Huebner, 2006) have shown the crucial role the location of a sign plays in the overall distribution of languages on it.

In that respect, Chişinău is a multilingual urban centre where the study of public signage will certainly yield interesting results. On the one hand, the linguistic

landscape of the city can be analysed along what McCormick and Agnihotri (2009: 12) call 'non-linguistic forces', determining the 'currency value' certain languages have, including those that one might not expect within a particular environment. A look at the demographic structure of the city is useful in that respect (Ben-Rafael, 2009: 52), as it clearly shows that roughly two third of the city's inhabitants claim to speak either Romanian or Moldovan as their mother tongue, whereas one third of the population states that Russian is their first language. But also the particular location of a sign is worth exploring in Chişinău, as the city features a main shopping street, two Western style shopping malls, a train station area of considerable size as well as various peripheral residential areas known since Soviet times as microdistricts (Rus. *Микрорайоны*).

Advertising as linguistic landscape

The observations presented in this article are part of a larger study on the linguistic landscape of Chişinău that focuses on the relationship between demographic data and the frequency of different languages visible on displays of written language in four districts of the city, namely *Centru*, *Rîşcani*, *Botanica* and *Ciocana*. The examples discussed in this article are part of a corpus of approximately 1300 pictures compiled in spring 2009 that contains pictures of displays of written language taken from various predefined streets. On these streets most signs visible were taken into account and considered as units of analysis. Although not exhaustive, these nevertheless show clear and easily distinguishable patterns of language use in respect to context and function. On the one hand, both Romanian and Russian are used fairly frequently, although differentiations have to be made in regard to certain aspects. Within the city centre around *bd. Ştefan cel Mare* Romanian seems to be the preferred language especially on shop signs. Often Romanian is used in conjunction with English and to a lesser extent Russian, but this pattern clearly changes the further away from the city centre the sign is located. Especially in residential areas Russian fulfils the same informative functions as Romanian and in that context cannot just be seen as a second language. This is underlined by patterns of language use on informal advertisements such as placards or small posters which often showed Russian alone, leading to the assumption that Russian is a local *lingua franca* still widely understood in the city, presumably also by those who speak Romanian, Ukrainian or any other language as their mother tongue. By and large, signs put up by private enterprises or individuals shown here are the obvious choices for an analysis of a linguistic landscape in a predefined area, as they reflect best which functions particular languages have and how they are used to communicate information in various contexts.[44] A quantitative summary of all signs observed in

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[44] Such a bottom-up approach to study linguistic landscapes is usually the most feasible way to analyse the various functions different languages have on urban verbal signs, as these most likely reflect 'real life' patterns of language use. Nevertheless this does not hold true for a small number of countries such as Estonia or Latvia

four districts of the city underlines the impression that Russian is firmly entrenched in the linguistic landscape of the city. This is exemplified in Table 1 below. Furthermore it shows, that English is used fairly frequently as well, but as our examples will show, carried rather symbolic functions.

	Chişinău
Romanian	23.7
Russian	17.8
Romanian/Russian	22.1
Romanian/English	15.5
Russian/English	3.4
Romanian/Russian/English	6.0
English	4.8
Other*	6.7

* This category includes other multilingual signs
  with languages not frequently observed

Table 1 Distribution of languages on signs in Chişinău showed as percentage

The area most inhabitants and visitors of Chişinău alike will encounter fairly often is the city's main shopping street, *Bulevardul Ştefan cel Mare*. It is the commercial centre of the city, located within the *Centru* district. The street itself as well as the areas in close proximity can be considered the most prestigious places to live and work in Chişinău. Along *bd. Ştefan cel Mare* most government buildings including the presidential palace and the parliament are located; furthermore, embassies, headquarters of Moldovan and foreign companies and prestigious Western style chain stores and fast-food outlets can be found in its vicinity. In this area Romanian is by far the most frequently used language on signs and is present virtually everywhere, seen in front of shops, restaurants, offices or as part of advertisement banners or placards. But an analysis of signs on *bd. Ştefan cel Mare* and its side streets also reveals that most of the time, Romanian is used alongside at least one other language – either Russian or English, in some instances even both.

Typical examples of bilingual signs in both Romanian and English were fairly frequent and displayed by upmarket shops or travel agencies. One example found was a travel agency at the corner of *str. Puşhkin* and *bd. Ştefan cel Mare* in the very heart of the city (picture 1).

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where – apart from official signage (top-down) – also language use on bottom-up signs is regulated. In Moldova on the other hand, bottom-up signs put up by private enterprises are not regulated, although at least the name of the establishment has to be written in Latin script.

Picture 1   Travel agency at the corner of *str. Puşhkin* and *bd. Ştefan cel Mare*

At first sight it seems clear which language is the dominant one as both the company's name *Royal Garden* as well as the names of the different countries signalling possible tourist destinations are displayed in English. Although *Sirya* is spelled incorrectly and *Tunis* seems to be rather ambiguous, possibly relating to the city rather than the country, together with the pictures on the right, English conveys the notions of exclusivity and internationality. Apart from this rather symbolic meaning of English, Romanian is used to actually inform the audience about what the agency has to offer, namely that it is a travel agency (*turism*)[45] offering airplane tickets (*bilete de avion*). These phrases are also found above the entrance of the agency, in conjunction with a telephone number and an e-mail address. Interestingly, although most clients of this agency are certainly Moldovans, for an e-mail address the English term *office* (*office@royalgarden.md*) is used to carry notions of exclusivity, affiliation to the Western world as well as a sense of modernity.

Another sign-in-sign found at the front door is the ubiquitous phrase *exchange* which is found all over the city displayed not just by banks but virtually every shop or travel agency of considerable size. Here English is dominant if compared to the Romanian term underneath, stating the Romanian equivalent in meaning, *schimb*

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[45] A term in Romanian denominating a travel agency and thus similar in meaning to the English one

valutar. At first one might assume that this sign is aimed at tourists. But as the number of foreign visitors from Western countries is relatively low, even in the country's capital and keeping in mind that many Moldovans rely on money send to them by relatives working in countries of the European Union or in the United States, the choice of the English term probably relates to the overall distribution of English and Romanian on this particular shop front. Although the English term *exchange* is fairly often seen especially around *bd. Ştefan cel Mare*, most signs signalling exchange offices either used the Russian term *обмен валют* on top and the Romanian *schimb valutar* beneath it or vice versa. Especially along the Eastern end of *bd. Ştefan cel Mare* adjacent to the main train station Russian was by far the dominant language in this context.

Another commercial sign from downtown Chişinău depicting both Romanian and English was found on *str. Vlaicu Pîrcălab* opposite the *Skytower Business Centre*, again in the vicinity of *bd. Ştefan cel Mare*, displayed by a beauty parlour (picture 2). Already the name of the establishment – *Estetic Art* – is a code-switch between the Romanian term *estetic*, meaning 'aesthetical' and the English *art*. Although it is not uncommon that English terms with rather symbolic value are not necessarily understood by Moldovans, *Art* is certainly an exception, as it is lexically close to the Romanian *artă* and thus mutually intelligible for the audience. Such an example of language combination raises questions about the 'salience of language boundaries or identities' (McCormick & Agnihotri, 2009: 15). Certainly sign producers are often aware of their target readers and know, if and to what extent such alternations are at least accessible if not even attractive to the reader. McCormick & Agnihotri (2009: 15) identify two main strategies for language combination: alternation of phrases from different languages as well as incorporation of 'elements from two languages into one phrasal structure'. Of the two possibilities the latter strategy is used here, although it seems that this practice is not commonly used on commercial signs in Chişinău. As already stated, the term *Art* will be easily understood by a Moldovan audience, whereas other terms seen throughout the inner city such as `Celebrate in Style'[46] are probably not part of the linguistic repertoire of most inhabitants of the city.

The various forms of treatment displayed below the shop's name are mostly depicting Romanian, except two terms that probably do not have an equivalent in that language, namely *NAIL-ART* and *STOUN-MASSAGE*. Nevertheless, both have rather symbolic functions and convey notions of trendiness as well as a Western orientation.

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[46] *Celebrate in Style* was a slogan found on billboards in the *Centru* district put up by the fashion shop 'Steilmann'

Picture 2   Beauty parlour on *str. **Vlaicu Pîrcălab*** near *bd. Ştefan cel Mare*

The misspelling of *STOUN-MASSAGE* – originally intended to mean *stone massage* – is certainly not an example of intentional language alteration as observed in various studies on linguistic landscapes in urban centres such as Bangkok (Huebner, 2006), Tokyo (Backhaus, 2007) or Cape Town and Delhi (McCormick & Agnihotri, 2009), but rather accounts for a lack of language proficiency. But such instances of unintentional creativity in language use will most likely go unnoticed by clients and passers-by, as the actual information about the function of the establishment is unambiguous for a Romanian-speaking audience.

Moving on in close vicinity of *bd. Ştefan cel Mare*, one notices a significant number of clothing stores catering to the relatively small number of middle- and upper-middle class Moldovans. Unlike some of the travel agencies, beauty parlours and upmarket fashion stores, these mostly local run businesses show quite different patterns of language use on their commercial signs, exemplified by one store located on *str. Vasile Alecsandri* seen on picture 3. Advertisement seen in front of the shop uses both English and Russian, but not Romanian. In this case, English is by far the dominant language, denoting both the store's name – *dresscode* – and giving an additional inscription on the top left corner reading *discount center*. Arguably, these are catch-phrases signalling an orientation towards Western style clothing and a somewhat sublime sense of modernity, underlined by pictures of young women and men dressed according to the latest fashion.

Picture 3   Clothing store on *str. Vasile Alecsandri* in the city centre

This notion of 'percept' Western orientation is further underlined by a barcode in the upper-left corner that is somewhat related to the store's name. While certainly some clients and passers-by will be able to 'decode' the precise meaning of *discount center*, not many will comprehend the meaning of *dresscode*. Nevertheless they probably understand the Russian phrase *МАГАЗИН СТИЛЬНОЙ ОДЕЖДЫ* positioned above the shop's name, signalling a shop with "stylish" clothes. Whereas English is employed to trigger positive associations, Russian is used to inform the audience about what is on sale. As with most signs that featured English to some extent in the city centre of Chişinău, it is also the dominant code on this one and again it is used to carry notions of an orientation towards the West, of cosmopolitanism and internationality. Romanian on the other hand is only visible on the very bottom of the sign to signal the address where the store can be found. Understandably it is not written in Cyrillic script as this would exclude some of the occasional visitors from neighbouring Romania and other European countries. Apart from small placards and other informal notes put up by individuals on lampposts or walls, addresses were given in Romanian and written in Latin script. In that particular case one might argue that the English name of the shop is a way to meet the states' language laws that require shopkeepers to have the name of the store written in Latin alphabet and not in Cyrillic. By using English instead of Romanian, this criterion is met.

Moving away from the area around *bd. Ştefan cel Mare* towards the district of *Rîşcani* to the north, one encounters an abundance of agencies arranging work permits and work and study visas for Western countries, primarily the United States, Canada and, to a lesser extent, countries of the European Union. These are located around *str. Cosmonauţilor*, *str. Mitropolit Bănulescu Bodoni* and *str. Pedru Rareş* in close proximity to the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova ASEM. Signs put up by these agencies as in picture 4 are a mirror of the grim political and economic

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situation of the country and at the same time are testament to the exodus of urban, Romanian-speaking youths and well educated professionals towards the West. The banner put up in front of the 'USA Immigration' visa agency uses Romanian, Russian as well as English to address potential clients, but each language features a distinct function. One might argue which the actual dominant language on the sign is, but the English phrase *Register Now!*, printed in red with an exclamation mark at the end certainly draws on the attention of the addressee and can be interpreted both as an invitation or even as a direct order. The company's name 'USA Immigration' on top of the banner, written in blue and red – colours easily associated with the United States – underlines this assumption.

Picture 4　　　Banner in front of an agency arranging green cards on *str. Cosmonauților*

One could argue that the term 'immigration' is mutually intelligible to locals as it translates into Romanian as *imigrare*. But it is very likely that 'immigration' as an English word is understood by most addressees. Given the facts that migration is a phenomenon that affects most Moldovans either directly or indirectly and that the continuously high number of work migrants are of great concern to the society as a whole, one could assume that the concepts behind terms such as 'immigration' and 'green card' are comprehensible to most. In this context English carries a highly symbolic function, but at the same time we can assume that most of the people addressed by the sign associate the agency's name, the font it is written in and the stylised American flag with a notion of the American dream. This is underlined by the person dominating the left part of the sign, an 'average man' pointing his right

index finger on a green card, which – metaphorically – represents the way to success in life and suggests that everyone has the potential to achieve the goal to live and work in the United States. To underline the general notion of Western orientation and modernity the web address of the agency in the lower right corner reads *www.greencard.md*. The actual details on how to get a green card are written in Romanian, which is fairly obvious, as most of the clients are Romanian-speaking. Nevertheless, at the very bottom of the banner, *Register Now!* is also written in Russian. Although the orientation of young Russian speakers in Moldova is mostly towards Russia, the command *Регистрируйтесь Сейчас!* nevertheless signals the Russian-speaking Moldovans that they are also potentially eligible for the services the agency has to offer. The command being written in three languages also opens up an interesting semiotic dimension, if we take the man's picture on the left and the red arrow of which the command *Register Now!* is stylistically part of into account. Moldovans and Russians will understand the underlying message, namely that registering with this company means getting a green card and eventually, having success in life. Although this might be a rather trivial message for some, obtaining a permission to permanently work and live in the United States is very prestigious in Moldova, considering the overall level of income and the general living conditions in the country. The geographical location of the banner has to be considered as well: many of such agencies can be found around *str. Cosmonauţilor*, as it is in close proximity to ASEM, thus having access to a considerable number of potential clients, namely young, well educated Moldovans most willing to migrate and seek employment elsewhere.

Further north on the way to the various microdistricts of *Rîşcani* and *Ciocana* along the main thoroughfare *bd. Renasterii* the observer encounters a considerable amount of bilingual billboards mainly written in both Romanian and Russian. Although the area around the northern end of *bd. Renasterii* can be considered rather affluent by Moldovan standards, its cityscape differs from the prosperous inner city and does not feature any upmarket shops or restaurants. One billboard representative for this neighbourhood was located near the circus of the city above a pedestrian underpass (picture 5). It is a commercial ad put up by a company offering sanitary accessories and it uses Romanian as the dominant code. In this language potential customers are informed of what the company offers and of the special offers with discounts up to fifty percent. The address is given in Romanian as well. What is remarkable though is the fact that the banner includes a huge red overprint in Russian, reading *ПОСЛЕДНЯЯ НЕДЕЛЯ СКИДОК*, which translates as "last week when discounts are given."

Picture 5   Billboard on *bd. Renasterii* put up by a company offering sanitary accessories

Here, both languages share an informative function, but each language gives different information, assuming that the readership is actually bilingual in Romanian and Russian. Still, Russian serves as a kind of *lingua franca* here, as those who put up the banner were most likely conscious that most who speak Romanian as their first language have – due to obvious historic reasons – at least a sufficient command of Russian to comprehend this particular phrase. Furthermore it reveals that Russian as a minority language can be used to address not only those who speak it as their first language but for speakers of Romanian as well. This is not necessarily a usual pattern in post-Soviet countries, as observations on the linguistic landscape of the Lithuanian capital Vilnius have shown (cf. Muth, 2008). There, Russian seems to evoke rather negative connotations amongst speakers of Lithuanian because of shared feelings of oppression and dominance of Russian in Soviet times.

Apart from commercial shop signs, billboards and advertising banners, a lot of rather informal placards put up by individuals or small-scale businesses can be found all over the city. Exemplarily, picture 6 will be discussed here. A placard found attached to a lamppost in the residential district of *Botanica* in the southeast of the city on the areas' main through road *bd. Dacia*. Quite unusual for the Western European spectator it offers to buy women's hair, paid according to the hair's length and colour. In terms of language choice it is exemplary in two ways: on the one hand it is typical, because most informal placards solely used Russian to convey information, on the other it is found in a residential area characterized by huge apartment blocks. Nevertheless, demographic figures indicate that the number of mother-tongue speakers of Russian and Ukrainian is not higher than in other

districts of the city[47], although Russian was used far more often on signs in peripheral areas than in the city centre. Both the exact date – the 18th – and the term *ВОЛОСЫ* (hair) were printed in bold text, presumably intended to catch the eye of passers-by. As on most other informal signs, the address is written in Russian and states the name of the neighbourhood, *Старая Почта* as well as the street, *ул. Соколова 9*. In other contexts this would be an unusual practice, as it does not resemble the official name of both the neighbourhood (*Vama Veche*, literally "Old Post") and the name of the street, *str. Socoleni*. But instead of the transliteration *ул. Соколень*, the name used in Soviet Moldova – *ул. Соколова* – appears. Such a pattern is also characteristic of informal conversations among native speakers of Russian and Ukrainian in Chişinău, where streets and neighbourhoods are often referred to by their Russian names.

Picture 6 Placard offering to buy hair on *bd. Dacia*, *Botanica* district

As such names are part of a cultural or distinctly urban cultural identity as '*Кишинёвцы*'[48], one could argue that a certain degree of cultural resentment against the Romanian language might reveal itself here, extending to informal displays of written language.

A district perceived by inhabitants as having rather low prestige is *Ciocana* in the north-eastern part of the city. It is characterized by industrial estates, low-rise apartment blocks and single houses in its southern part and several microdistricts located further north. As in *Botanica* the number of informal signs such as graffiti, placards and small posters was high and most of them were either bilingual in both Romanian and Russian or written in Russian alone. Signs put up by supermarkets, fashion stores or gaming arcades usually depicted both Romanian and Russian; in addition to that, also English was occasionally used. As in pictures 2 and 3 English had symbolic functions and was often used as an 'eye catcher', communicating internationality and in particular a notion of Western culture.

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[47] Demographic data provided by the Moldovan National Office for Statistics indicates that the number of mother tongue speakers of Russian and Ukrainian is almost equal in all four districts (data obtained from *Biroul Naţional de Statistică al Republicii Moldova* in Chişinău)

Picture 7 is a billboard located on the main thoroughfare of one of *Ciocana's* microdistricts, *bd. Mircea cel Bătr*.

Picture 7 Billboard put up by an employment agency on *bd. Mircea cel Bătrîn*, *Ciocana* district

It is a trilingual sign depicting Russian, Romanian as well as English. Russian is the dominant language here embodied by the call *Работа в Дубае!*, meaning 'Work in Dubai!', highlighted by an exclamation mark. The term *Работа* (work) is accentuated by its orange print and its dominant position on the sign. Although it is Russian, we can assume that *Работа* is also understood by speakers of Romanian in Moldova. This term alone communicates a range of connotations comparable to those of 'USA immigration' on picture 4, but this time within a broader context. On the one hand it naturally has a certain appeal in what is at present Europe's poorest nation with low wages and substantial underemployment and as such points towards a general understanding of a future perspective for those willing to emigrate. On the other hand it addresses a far wider audience than the sign put up by the visa agency depicted on picture 4. It is of possible appeal to those with an academic education as well as to unskilled labourers or factory workers. In its vagueness the term *Работа*

[48] Mas. *chişinăui'eni/ fem. chişinăui'ene* in Romanian, denoting a person from Chişinău

serves as an expression of success, future perspectives, money and – taking the skyscrapers behind into account – of internationality. The catchphrase also appears in Romanian on top of the sign, but unlike the Russian phrase it is not accentuated by a specific colour. English is used as part of the internet address depicted in the centre of the ad. As it seems to be widespread practice throughout the city, URL's most likely contain at least some English words. Here the term 'job' is used and we can assume that the younger part of the audience is able to relate the address *www.MoldovaJobS.md* to the advert itself. In addition to that, more detailed information about the program is given on the very bottom of the sign in Russian, English and Romanian. The reasons to include English here are not perspicuous, as there are no potential addressees who speak English as a first or second language in Moldova. Presumably the phrase *3 Years Employment, Residence, Airline Ticket, No Fees Required* is used to accentuate the agency's international reputation and credibility. Although one could argue that these words have an informative function as well, the context in which the sign is found in suggests that they are rather to be seen as emblematic. Firstly, the sign is located in a peripheral residential area; secondly these job offers are not aimed at the few Western expatriates currently living in Chişinău. On the lower right part of the sign some telephone numbers related to specific countries in the Middle East and Central Asia are given. Interestingly, unlike the catchphrase suggests – it is not only Dubai where this agency offers work, but also in less affluent countries such as Egypt and Kyrgyzstan. This certainly highlights the difficult economic situation Moldova finds itself in. Furthermore, highlighting Dubai with an exclamation mark also shows which places seem to have a special appeal and a good reputation among Russians and Moldovans alike. Sadly though, numerous NGO's in the country warn that most of these agencies offering work abroad do engage in human trafficking and often, young Moldovan women are forced to work as prostitutes once they arrive in their country of destination (Heintz, 2008: 8ff).

Election posters as part of the linguistic landscape

Moving away from the aspect of location the study of public verbal signs in Chişinău gets another, more political dimension when including signs that can be attributed to specific politic actors such as election posters. Regardless of the location of the sign these reveal language attitudes that would go unnoticed when just concentrating on bottom-up displays of written language. All specimens considered here were part of the campaign for the fifth parliamentary election in independent Moldova on April 5th, 2009 and include all contestant parties of political significance. Because of allegations of electoral fraud committed by state institutions close to the former governing *Partidul Comuniştilor din Republica Moldova* (Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova), civil unrest along a dividing line between pro-Western urban Romanians and a rural population in support of the Communist Party broke out in

Chişinău and other urban centres of the country that lasted for days. Whereas most Moldovans living outside the capital region as well as most Russian speakers overwhelmingly supported the Communist Party, many voters from Chişinău favoured the main opposition force *Partidul Liberal Democrat din Moldova* (Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova) or one of the country's other pro-European parties. Exemplarily, election posters of the two main contestants, the Communist Party PCRM (picture 8) and the Liberal Democratic Party PLDM (picture 9) are discussed here.

Picture 8 Election poster of Moldova's Communist Party PCRM

Considering the political disposition of the PCRM, a bilingual sign displaying both Romanian and Russian is nothing unusual. Both languages are given equal space and font, with Romanian depicted on top and Russian at the bottom of the sign. As part of communists symbolism stylised hammer and sickle are depicted in the centre of the sign, highlighting both the party's self-conception as being 'Communist' as well as drawing on those who have a rather positive attitude about the Soviet era in Moldova. The message depicted on the poster in Romanian and Russian stands in contrast to that and resembles the conflicting agenda of the party. The use of Soviet symbolism possibly evokes positive feelings of Soviet Moldova, whereas the rather indecisive slogan that reads *We build a European Moldova together* seems to be aimed at a European-friendly audience, reflecting the two-faced and at times unclear orientation of the PCRM, which so far has been characterized by the search for political allies both in the European Union and the CIS. The use of both languages indicates where the PCRM draws its voters from: on the one hand Moldovans from the rural parts of the country, on the other urban speakers of Russian and the elderly.

Picture 9 Election poster of Moldova's Liberal Democratic Party PLDM

The PCRM's main antagonist on the country's political scene is the populist pro-Western Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova that is at present part of the governing Alliance for European Integration where it plays the leading role and thus provides the country's Prime Minister Vlad Filat. The party views itself as liberal conservative, pro-European and pro-Western and is in support of a policy of European integration and closer ties with neighbouring Romania. Interestingly, the party uses both Romanian and Russian on its election posters, but unlike the PCRM it uses monolingual posters in either Romanian or Russian. This is a pattern not expected as the Liberal Democrats are strongly opposing political and cultural ties with Russia and mainly focus on ethnic Moldovan Romanians. The catchphrase of the poster is in fact not identical in both Romanian and Russian. Whereas the Romanian slogan translates as *Green for Chişinău Green for Moldova*, the Russian version reads *The capital in green colour Moldova in green colour*. Judging by their contents, both slogans share the same meaning, but in the Russian version *Chişinău* is replaced by the Russian term *столица* (capital city). This has two reasons, as during Soviet times the city was commonly referred to as *Кишинёв*, a name preferred by Russian-speaking Moldovans and native speakers of Russian in general. In using this term the PLDM would certainly thwart its own political agenda of rejecting cultural or political influence of Russia in Moldova. Using the official denomination of Chişinău in Cyrillic – *Кишинэ́у* – on the other hand would certainly be of no appeal to native speakers of Russian, as this name is just used in official contexts and not part of the language repertoire of the Russian-speaking population.

Other political parties roughly follow the same patterns of language use as both Communists and Liberal Democrats, but it shows that language choice is closely related to the political agenda and the potential audience the election poster is aimed at. Centre-right parties such as the *Partidul Alianţă Moldova Noastră* (Party Alliance Our Moldova) used monolingual posters in either Romanian or Russian, while

nationalist parties like *Partidul Popular Creştin Democrat* (Christian-Democratic People's Party) solely used Romanian on all signs. Centre-left and left parties such as the *Partidul Democrat din Moldova* (Democratic Party of Moldova) on the other hand displayed bilingual signs both in Romanian and Russian.

Conclusion

The representation of different languages in multilingual urban environments is a phenomenon that has emerged in linguistic landscape research in recent years (cf. Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006; Ben-Rafael, 2009; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). By analysing specimen of written language assumptions about the functional domains, prestige, status and spread of languages in bi- and multilingual settings can be made. For the study of multilingualism in urban settings the distribution of minority languages on signs and other specimen of written language are obvious indicators on the language situation within an urban area. In the same time they are also part of a wider picture that relates to aspects of political and cultural representation and status of the respective national languages within bi- and multilingual societies. The observation of signs in various parts of the Moldovan capital led to interesting results. Considering our examples, in respect of its linguistic landscape, Chişinău is a genuinely bilingual metropolis where Romanian is the primary language of communication and Russian functions as a local *lingua franca*, apparently used in a wide range of functional domains. It is used on informal displays of written language such as on placards (picture 6), but also gives additional information on otherwise monolingual Romanian signs (picture 5), leading to the assumption that the authors of these displays of written language presuppose a sufficient knowledge of Russian by those the sign is addressing. English on the other hand has largely symbolic value, but nevertheless carries distinctive connotations. First and foremost it conveys notions of internationality, success and Western orientation (pictures 1 and 4) and is mainly used to appeal to mobile and young Romanians, often those most likely willing to emigrate from the country. An assumption that English is taking over functional domains that characterise the status of Russian as a local *lingua franca* cannot be upheld, as the use of English never goes beyond a purely symbolic dimension. Still, as Russian is used to carry informative meaning that is expected to be understood by most of the population, the status of English seems to be equally entrenched in the linguistic landscape of the city, although it is the symbolic value of English that most of the population seems to be aware of.

The project of Moldovanism and the construction of a Moldovan national and cultural identity pursued by some of the political elites of the country does not manifest itself in the linguistic landscape. The election posters discussed in 3.1. are emblematic for the obvious failure of the promotion of Moldovan/Romanian as a tool for constructing a national identity. Regardless of the political affiliation of a

party the country's second language Russian is used alongside Romanian by almost all political actors, an exception being one far-right pro-Romanian party. This certainly accounts for a failure of the project of promoting Moldovan Romanian as a prime marker of national self-consciousness, but on the other hand is testament to an unbiased approach to bilingualism and is rather surprising given the fact that language policy has been a hotly contested topic ever since Moldova's independence. It remains to be seen if Russian will be able to uphold its exposed position in the linguistic landscape of the Moldovan capital. Given the highly symbolic connotations English has up to now, it will not replace Russian as a second language in the foreseeable future, but taking the spread of English as a world language into account and considering the high number of Moldovans living and working abroad, it will continue to hold its place as an integral part of the city's linguistic landscape. A diachronic perspective will show if its functions on public signs will go beyond a symbolic dimension in the future.

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From "I" to "You":

A look at discursive hegemony of love in Iranian love blogs

Maryam Paknahad Jabarooty

Lancaster University

Abstract

The idea for this paper emerged out of a discussion about positioning gender in romantic relations, while the hegemonic structure of the society aligns 'love' with power. Then I decided to explore the idea that the concept of 'power' in discourses of online romantic relations constructs and represents identities aroused from a hegemonic society.

Foucault notes 'power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society' (1978: 93), and Feminist Poststructuralist theory has interesting parallels with this position. The recognition of the force of 'discursive practices', the ways in which people are 'positioned' through those practices and the way in which the individual's 'subjectivity' is generated through the learning and use of certain discursive practices are commensurate with the 'psycho-socio-linguistics' (Davies, 1989; Henriques *et al*., 1984; Potter and Wetherall, l988; Weedon, 1987) enfolding discourse analysis.

In Iran, the concept of 'shame' is the main component of 'love'. Therefore, 'love' is aligned with the family and private relations. In this paper, I discuss the way these relationships are publically expressed, by examining the phenomena of "love blogs", or blogs which are used as public expressions of love between two people. I examine how love blogs are used in order to construct gendered identities and power relations, drawing on a number of theoretical stances.

Introduction

The focus of this paper on love suggests that love can be understood as a particular kind of human power, which brings about some effects. I presume the identification of love as a "power" to make something new in humans' life represents it as a discursive power.

Therefore, an important part of this paper is to investigate and elaborate on theoretically how love as a set of relational, practical activities and discourses that are formed and regulated through complex cultural powers and political institutions, intersects with hegemonic construction and cultural institutions and ideologies in Iranian society. Therefore, in theory, this study owes a certain amount to the works of Raewyn Connell (1995) on hegemonic masculinity, and Judith Baxter's (2003) Feminist Post-structuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA) approach of the web of power.

Additionally, in current Iranian society there are a number of restrictions on the ways that gender, sexuality and desire can be expressed. Homosexuality is illegal and gay men have been publicly executed while lesbians have been imprisoned or lashed (although the government appears to be more sympathetic towards some men and women who are labelled as 'transsexuals' and helps them to have gender-reassignment surgery). While heterosexuals do not face such stringent measures, sexual relationships or even friendships between un-related men and women prior to or after marriage are forbidden by the government (although such relationships still occur).

Iranians must take care to monitor their own behaviour in public at all times – for example, kissing is frowned upon. Therefore, Iranians have found other ways to express aspects of their identities that are publically suppressed, by using the internet.

This study focuses on the ways that love relationships between couples are publically expressed, by examining the phenomena of "love blogs", or blogs which are used as public expressions of love between two people. A blog is a personal journal which is published on the internet, and is a relatively new form of media, becoming popular in the last decade around the world. Bloggers write about many topics, although in Iran, many chose to frame their blog postings around the concept of love.

Bloggers in Iran are afforded freedom via anonymity, but blogging is closely monitored by the government – for example, web filtering programs remove any pages that contain certain banned words like *women*. Bloggers must therefore develop strategies in order to express themselves without being censored. In this paper, I intend to examine how love blogs are used in order to construct gendered identities and power relations, using Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, Feminist Post-structuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA) approach and Computer Mediated Discourse (CMD) analysis.

Looking at the crucial role of power in the gendered construction of love, this research provides information on how people orient themselves to relationship restrictions in the Iranian context by using language creatively in a relatively new form of media.

These debates lead me toward two significant questions. Firstly, how are romantic relations in Iranian society affected by the dominant hegemonic masculinity?, and secondly, what is the role of love blogs in responding to this dominant power imposing on discourse of love? In other words, are they reinforcing or deconstructing this wall between individuals in their romantic relations?

In response to the above mentioned questions, I also analyse a blog posting to exemplify the achieved answers.

Discourse of Love in a web of power

Backing Judith Butler's theatrical notions, I say love is a strategy, medium, site and scene. Love is an act rather than a quantifiable element able to be parsed between politics and poetics, because it constantly transforms the definitions of those very terms. Distinguishing this discourse of love as one that implicitly speaks about resistance and change, we do not take for granted modes of reproduction, and exchanging values. Love as a medium is part of an economy of resistance, ecstatic resistance provoking questions of (hidden) rules and strategies. What is love for? Or how are we positioned in romantic relations? Therefore, I discuss the concept of love within the relations and attitudes put into the *Discourse(s) of love*.

A look at the Foucauldian notion of discourse clarifies the complexity of the term, because it draws on other concepts such as power and subjectivity. Discourse, as defined by Foucault, refers to:

> ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (Weedon, 1987: 108).

Therefore, a significant feature of discourse is its '*network formation*'. There are many discourses connected with each other and used by various people for different processes, social situations, interpersonal relationships and even technologies.

Power being represented by language is another core concept in the Foucauldian notion of discourse. Baxter (2003: 24) argues that Foucault's view of 'language as a system does not represent experience in a transparent and neutral way but always exists within historically specific discourses. These discourses are often contradictory, offering competing versions of reality, and serving different and conflicting power interests'. By this notion, Baxter (2003: 9) binds the concept of discourse and power with 'competing discourses' when she concludes, 'individuals are rarely consistently positioned as powerful across all discourses at work within a given context – they are often located simultaneously as both powerful and

powerless'. Thus, the relationship between discourse and power is one that concentrates on subjugation. Who speaks for whom? In answering this question Baxter (2003: 8) defines "power" and "powerfulness" as 'the way in which individual speakers are often *better placed* than others to benefit from the experiences, interests and goals of a particular context – by virtue of their more privileged positioning within a combination of dominant discourses'. In other words, the power relations which interplay with the discourse authorize the sets of beliefs, actions and ideas that they help to create, justify and legitimize. Therefore, discourse of love carries with it specific expectations and affects the verbal or non-verbal behaviour of the subject (lover). This behaviour is self-regulated and the ways in which we as a society value and locate the romantic relationships is a good example of how power relations operate at some hidden levels.

In response to the subjectivity embedded in the discursive power of love, the economy of resistance can be highlighted when the agency of individuals resist their positions of powerlessness within prevailing or dominant discourses in order to open up alternative voices, and diverse points of view (Baxter, 2002b: 831). Then not only the complex and contingent web of discourses and positions for subjects to navigate between is underlined but also subjects are located and locate themselves in and by different discourses (Krolokke, 2006: 58).

In terms of Iranian society, this discourse of love is very complicated, because love and romantic relations are much privatized legally and culturally. By law, any romantic relationship between couples should be legitimized under the heterosexual marriage contract. Therefore, homosexuals don't have marriage rights. Gay men are executed by the government and ignored by the people; while lesbian women are lashed by the government and rejected by the people. Couples (even many married ones) don't talk about their romantic feelings in public, especially women. One reason might be that any behaviour showing romantic feelings in the public is investigated by the police. For example, if a couple kiss each other in public, they are arrested, or if they are holding hands, police can ask if they are married or related, and they should *prove* that they are related.

From a cultural point of view, in more privatized spaces like houses, couples normally don't say 'I love you' when they are with others. And although sex is a part of a couple's love, couples are expected to ignore it. Also, it is not accepted for a woman to talk about her passion for a man. On the other side, people write about their feelings and emotions toward each other in public pages of love blogs more explicitly than in real life.

Therefore, I attempt to highlight 'the possibilities for resistance and reinterpretation of social practices' based on existing moments of *strength* in individuals' (particularly women's) interactions with others (Baxter, 2003: 66), by using FPDA as an approach which considers gender construction in a "localised" or diversified context. I also point out the ways women (in particular) are positioned as 'relatively powerful, powerless or a combination of both' (Baxter, 2003: 66).

Constructing a wall: Hegemonic masculinity in romantic relations

The concept of 'hegemony', driving from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations, refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life. At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than any other is culturally exalted (Connell, 1995:77). Hegemony does not imply total control because masculinity is dialectical; it is not just a process of one-way socialisation. What it does imply is that hegemonic masculinity is a form of social dominance which excludes women and men who do not conform to the hegemonic model in question or who fail to do so (Connell, 1995: 37). Because of the variety of hegemonic masculinities (complicit, marginalised, or subordinate), the hegemonies can come into conflict with each other; a good example in Iranian society is the usual conflicts between fathers and young sons. The exclusivity of dominant hegemonic masculinity leads to other forms which are usually under the support of the law, in the lower classes or belong to ethnic and sexual minorities. However, it should be noted that these various forms of hegemonic masculinity have much in common and typically re-work elements from the dominant hegemony that they do not already share (Connell, 1995: 114). Connell describes the dominant form of hegemonic masculinity to be "exemplary". The dominant form sets standards, has popular support and rejects those who fail. Exemplars are represented in the major genres of popular culture, often the exemplars at the top of the hegemony are purely fictional, or idealised. Connell describes three other types of hegemonic masculinity which are not the dominant form as: marginalised, complicit and subordinate. What is expelled from the dominant form is subordinate (typically gay masculinity). Marginalised hegemonic masculinity is 'always relative to the authorization of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group' (Connell, 1995: 77-81). It seems that the majority of men practice complicit masculinity, the form that benefits from "the patriarchal dividend" in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command, leading to subordination of women and some other (marginalised) men. These men have a connection to the exemplar form, but they do not embody it. They are not involved in overt domination or absolute displays of control. These are the "ordinary" men who do not question the gender order (Connell, 1995: 80-82).

Though extremely useful as a theoretical tool for this study, certain problems with the notion of hegemonic masculinity present themselves which make theoretical alterations necessary. One of these problems goes back to the concept of multiple hierarchies. This re-conceptualisation is in terms of multiple hierarchies defined by the struggle for status of people based on their gender and sexuality taking place on a day-to-day level. This is the inequality in power between men and men, men and women, and even women and women, implying that some people are more privileged or oppressed than others. Looking at Iranian society, I propose considering a hierarchy in terms of the arrangement of cliques in a descending scale from being most powerful masculine to lacking powerful masculinity, an

arrangement which doesn't exclude heterosexual and homosexual women, transsexuals and bisexuals. In Figure 1, I have tried to show a schema of such a hierarchy in Iranian society.

Normative (real) man: exemplar, straight, strong, married, rich, independent, cool, most popular, though, perceived attraction, sexually successful, intelligent, etc.

Normative woman: straight, healthy, cooperative, married, has kids, etc.

Gay man: Acting like women

Lesbian woman: Acting like men
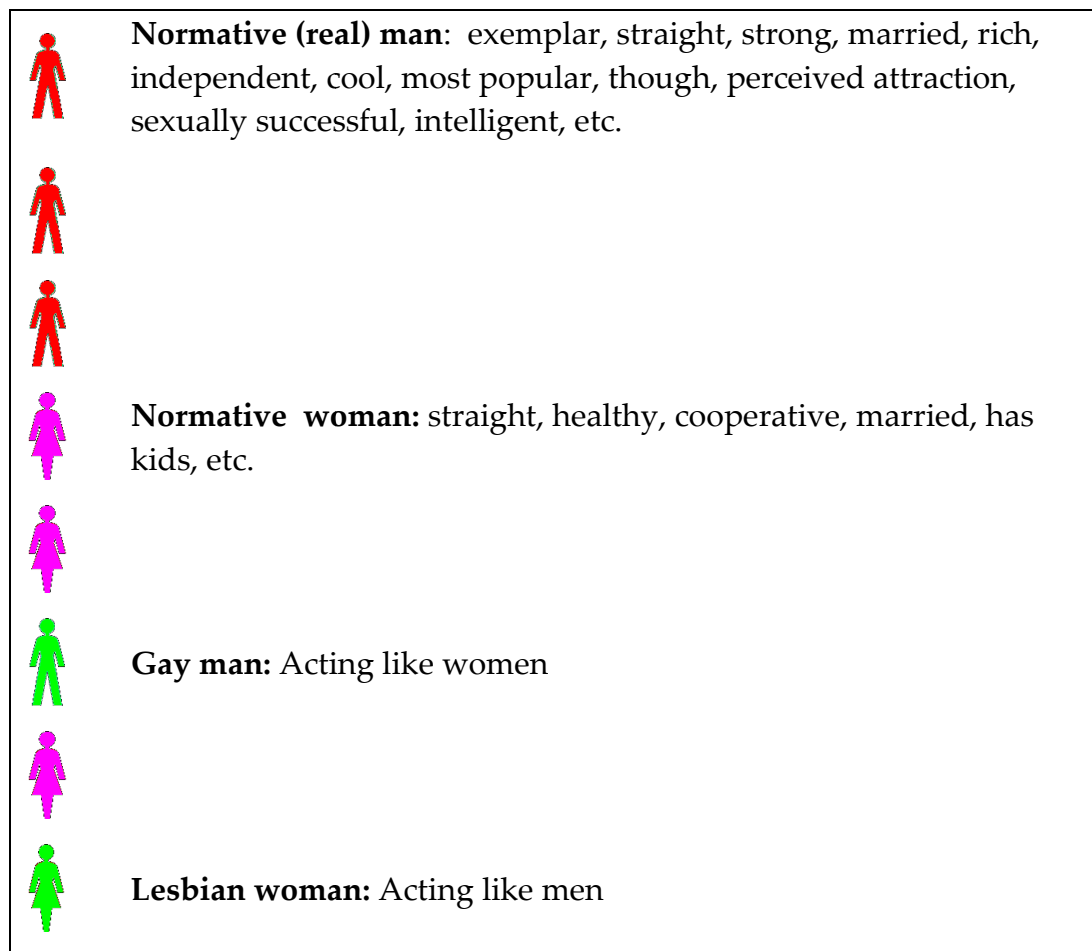
Note: transsexuals and bisexuals are ignored completely; they are not even named inside the society.

Figure 1: Hegemonic masculinity in Iranian society

On the other hand, as Jackson (1999: 120) states 'emotions are culturally constructed; they are not fixed for all time. Recent accounts of love suggest that it has indeed changed its meaning over time and that this has come about in part because personal life has been the object of political, especially feminist struggle (Baruch, 1991; Cancian, 1990; Giddens, 1992; Seidman, 1991)'. This notion underpins the possibility of change in power equation by means of, for example, complicity and resistance lied in struggle for gaining power.

Considering the different masculinities which Connell introduced, we can claim that power in masculine hierarchies is not just "top-down" from a central institution or exemplar, because power is always in constant flux, struggle and entanglement, expressed in social relations, which are always subject to change and unevenly spread. Thus, power permeates, structures and changes hierarchies, resulting in the multiplicity of masculine hierarchies. As Baker (2008: 176-7) suggests, '[w]ithin the gay subculture, men who look or behave as

though they are typically heterosexual are afforded higher status (yet are still positioned as inferior to heterosexual men). The conflation of masculinity and heterosexuality (or gender and sexuality per se) is not just restricted to hegemonic masculine identities, it occurs within subordinate identities also'.

This process leads to subjugation of less powered people by making them silent and unheard. Therefore, the hegemonic power coming from the society constructs a wall against love and romantic expectations. In fact, 'although romantic relationships are often seen as egalitarian, the compulsiveness and insecurity of romantic passion imply a struggle for power. To be in love is to be powerless, at the mercy of the other, but it also holds out the promise of power, of enslaving the other' (Jackson, 1999: 117).

Connell (1995:196) notes that '[f]rom the point of view of hegemonic masculinity, the potential for homoerotic pleasure was expelled from the masculine and located in a deviant group, symbolically assimilated to women or to beasts. There was no mirror-type of "the heterosexual". Rather heterosexuality became a required part of manliness'. Therefore, romantic love is culturally constructed via a link between love and 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980) institutionalized in marriage. Though many lovers are banned from doing so, because they are homosexual, transsexual, or already married. In this way, the marriage contract is underpinning the social gender order by putting people in some pre-made boxes of socio-culturally conceptualized romantic feelings and expectations.

Jackson (2006) suggests applying four intersecting levels of social construction to practice hegemonic masculinity (Figure 2). I have adopted these facets in my data analysis, because these intersecting levels work very well in recognizing the web of power embedded in discourse of love in Iranian society.
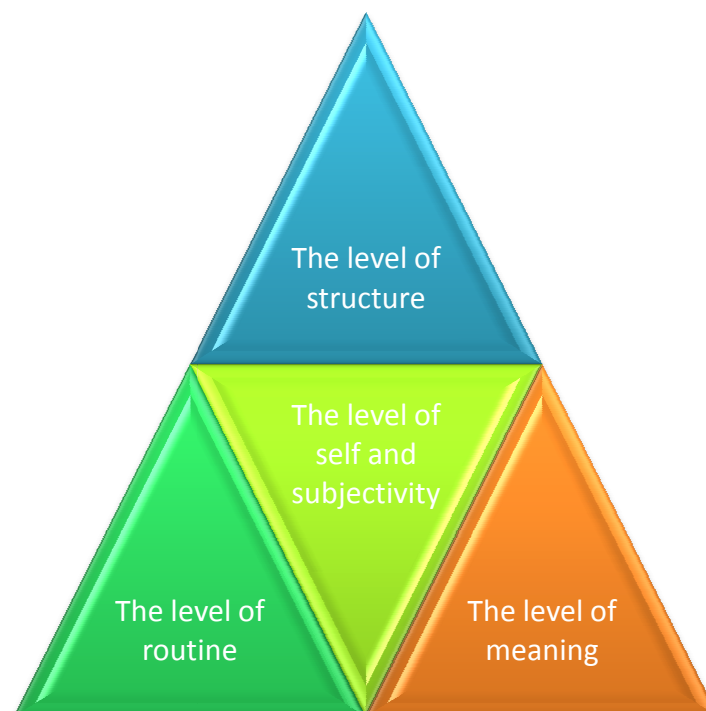

Figure 2: Intersecting levels in a heteronormative construction

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The first level points out the structure in which gender as a hierarchical social division is constructed and heterosexuality is institutionalized; for example, by marriage or the law. The second level includes the meaning, encircling the discursive construction of gender and sexuality by the conceptual themes negotiated in everyday social interaction. The third one backs as routine everyday social practices through which individuals *do gender* (Butler, 1990) within localized contexts and relationships. And the forth level adds subjectivity as a framework through which individuals experience desires and emotions leading to constructing and representing themselves as embodied gendered and sexual beings (Jackson, 2006).

For example, in Iranian society, the heterosexual family is the core unit of social institutions and power practices are formulated through it. Polygamy for men is legal, though culturally it is not accepted. Moreover, the government considers the barrenness as an acceptable appeal for divorce. It makes bearing child the offspring and reason for continuing the marital life by the law. Therefore, in structural level, love is needed to be approved and constructed based on the marriage contract and ability of child bearing.

On the level of meaning, both heterosexual sex which is legitimized, and attributes and emotions like attraction, warmth, and affection which are called 'love' are parcelled into marriage. But the marriage contract considers an almost unlimited right of sexual relations (polygamy) for men and a limited one (monogamy) for women. Therefore, for most of the women:

> Monogamy has come to be the definition of love, a yardstick by which we measure the rest of our emotions. 'Real' love is only that which is exclusively focused on one person of the opposite sex - all else is labelled 'liking'. Like so much butter, romantic love must be spread thickly on one slice of bread; to spread it over several is to spread it' thinly' (Comer, 1974:219).

Then conspiracy and resistance appear as major themes amongst women in response to the polygamy right of men.

On the level of routine, romantic love has not even the same meaning for heterosexual men and women, because it is constructed based on a systematic notion of hegemonic masculinity imposed by unfair marriage laws. Therefore, in desiring power over a man, women attempt to enslave men by using different strategies under the name of romantic love, like mothering or humbling themselves to nothingness before him as a kind of conspiracy. Men also learn to deny feelings of intimacy, 'and are encouraged further to see physical affection and intimacy primarily if not exclusively in sexual terms' (Brod, 1992: 128). Such strategies by women may make men dependent on a woman's nurturing and she may continue to gain a sense of power providing it. But what she is providing is emotional labour which, like domestic labour, may offer her a sense of self-worth while simultaneously being exploitative (Bartky, 1990; Delphy and Leonard, 1992). Therefore, as Jackson (1999: 105) argues '[l]ove is often requited and rarely balanced". A recurrent theme in Barthes' *A*

lover's Discourse is this imbalance which is played out around the theme of waiting. For Barthes, the concept of 'waiting' encapsulates the powerlessness of the lover, being in the power of the other. 'The lover's fatal identity is precisely: I am the one who waits.' The other does not wait (Barthes, 1978: 40).

Finally, on the level of subjectivity, Iranian society interiorizes practices of power in romantic relations from the outside, but one that does not involve determinism or total dependence. As Deleuze (1988: 96) argues '[t]he outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside'. Therefore, discourse of law in Iranian society subjugates heterosexual women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transsexuals as well as non-exemplar men by privatizing discourse of love in the concept of family and heterosexual marriage. Today, this wall which is made of the non-egalitarian system of hegemonic masculinity is faced with different strategies which bring love to the public like blogging and making narrations by silenced groups in order to use intertexualities and make changes based on the agency of individuals.

Destroying the wall: The Hegemonic masculinity in Iranian love blogs

During recent years, the use of the Internet has rapidly increased; consequently, computer mediated communication (CMC) has attracted more and more attention by many Iranians. Although CMC technology, contents and usage patterns are still in a process of rapid change, the use of CMC as a popular medium for reinforcing self-expression, and socialization is increasing dramatically. In fact, the internet operates in a complex way that, upon closer inspection, appears to affect the real world by resembling it and may at times require a critical eye to uncover. The focus on content and communicative practices in CMC highlights the possibilities of new gendered identities being constructed through online interactions. These new gendered identities may appear in a different form from the more fixed forms of "real life".

Referring once more to Butler (1990:25), 'gender is always a doing... no gender identity behind the expressions of gender. Identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results'. On the other hand, Mullany (2000:3) notes that 'masculinity and femininity are not traits that we inherently have, rather they are effects that we perform by the activities we partake in'. While fully aware of the existence of dominance and power structure through performing hegemonic masculinity in the society, it is believed that the differences implemented in the socialisation process profoundly affect male and female discourses (Maltz & Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1990, 1994). That is, although there are 'norms that govern how individual speakers decide to perform either masculinity or femininity... men and women are fully capable of resisting and subverting these norms' (Mullany, 2000:4).

Such an instance shows itself when looking at the collected information from some Iranian love blogs, in which actual people construct their gender identity through an online representation of the self. Love blogs are a type of diary blogs by CMC settings, whose main topic is love and expressing it through various forms.

Love bloggers as owners and writers of blogs coming from a real society in which dominant hegemonic masculinity subjugates them by pervading the gendered norms of real life. On the other hand, they resist this subjectivity by constructing their gender identities through expressing their emotions, values and attitudes toward their romantic relations and representing their agency. The possibility of appearing anonymous is a significant privilege for the bloggers, male or female, though it is found that females prefer anonymous interaction through CMC because it does not allow judgment on the basis of gender (Gopal, Mirana, Robichaux, & Bostrom, 1997). Further, anonymity actually leads to increased idea generation (Connolly, Jessup & Valacich, 1990).

By the way, it is clear that real life and love blogs are affecting each other through doing gender and subverting the gender norms simultaneously, when love bloggers change the position of love from the private and put it in the hands of the public. However, it is important to know how love bloggers may affect hegemonic masculinity in real life, while they as non-exemplar people will also be affected by it just as they are in real life.

It is also important to understand and attempt to ascertain the effects that such an environment may have on both bloggers and blog readers -- are they picking up on these norms and conforming to them? With blogs like "Lost Gender", which as an example, I analyse one of its postings in this paper, this is a matter that could be having a major impact on the social life of those involving production and consumption of love blogs.

Exploratory Data: Lost Gender

Baxter (2003: 67) introduces the concepts of polyphony and heteroglossia as being important considerations for FPDA based research. Such research places emphasis on diversity and provides a space to hear unheard voices, which fits well with the concept of Iranian love blogs.

Ideally, the data should be as easy to collect as possible. In my study, the selected texts are in electronic format, published in publicly accessible pages. As the area of study is on blogs which are public spheres of CMC, ethical issues are minimal, although I have chosen to examine blogs where the blogger has taken care to hide their own identity (which was actually the case for the vast majority of the blogs I examined). Data is taken from a popular Iranian blog server called Persian Blog. I collected 9998 blogs which were created from September 2001 (when blogging became popular in Iran) to October 2007. As I am carrying out a qualitative analysis using FPDA methods, I needed to reduce my sample to a

manageable number which was felt to be both representative and interesting in terms of analysis. Looking at some approaches in the study and classification of CMDs[49] some criteria for data selection is used. These criteria are classified into three categories such as: type of blog, type of blogger, and type of blog posting.

Additionally, taking a post-structuralist approach to language, intertexuality has a very important role in this study. In talking about competing discourses, Baxter (2003: 8) argues that 'Such discourses do not operate in discrete isolation from each other but are always intertextually linked, that is, each discourse is likely to be interconnected with and infused by traces of others'. Therefore, diversity in self identity of bloggers and their relation in constructing their on-line world (and the off-line one later on) are emphasized in this study. This intertexuality is discussed mainly when the web of power in the posting is under question by classification of Jackson (2001).

Trying to provide a structure for analysis, which makes answering the research questions possible, I have used four steps in analysing all of the selected blog postings, as: (1) Translation of Posting; (2)Descriptive overview of the posting; (3) Line by line discourse analysis of the posting and looking for linguistic features such as metaphors, euphemism, referencing, and self-referencing; and (4) Analysis of social constructions within a web of power through the four intersecting levels of structure, meaning, routine, and subjectivity.

As an example of my data, I look at a posting[50] from a blog called "Lost Gender":

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[49] Computer Mediated Discourse(s)
[50] Dated in 17/10/2004, URL: http://jensiyat-e-gomshodeh.blogsky.com/1383/08/

01   **Dear Respected Gentleman; I am not your** (singular, informal) **wife. I am a pot of tea!**

02

03   I am not just your (singular, informal) wife.

04   Sometimes, I become a pot of tea [for you (singular, informal)] to swig its tea,

05   when you (singular, informal) are tired and you (singular, informal) have come back from work,

06   Then [you (singular, informal)] stare at my eyes and with your (singular, informal) manly rudeness tell me that nothing more than a pot of tea refreshes you (singular, informal).

07   And I look at you (singular, informal) ;

08   and my glass of tea stays on the table for hours, and becomes cold!

This posting belongs to a blogger who writes as a female heterosexual artist. Her lover has left her some years ago and now she is married to another man. In most of the postings in the blog, the blogger writes about her previous love and her sorrow from what has happened to her, rather than writing about her relationship with her current husband. In a few postings like this one, the blogger writes about her feelings in her legitimized romantic relationship of heterosexual marriage.

Pronoun use is interesting in this blog entry and I will refer to pronouns in the analysis below. Grammatically, Persian pronouns have special characteristics that make their resolution more difficult than that of English pronouns. Persian pronouns do not provide any information about gender. Additionally, second-person plural pronouns are sometimes used in place of singular human pronouns to show respect. These features make gender and number agreement (which are two of the most effective features in pronoun resolution) either useless or less effective in Persian pronoun resolution. Tables 1 and 2 clarify the situation of singular and plural second-person pronouns in Persian language.

	Singular		Plural	
	Persian	English	Persian	English
Informal	tʊ	you	ʃʊmɑ	you
Formal	ʃʊmɑ	you	ʃʊmɑ	you

Table 1: Second person subjective or objective pronouns

	Singular		Plural	
	Persian	English	Persian	English
Informal	{t	your	Itʌn	your
Formal	Itʌn	your	Itʌn	your

Table 2: Second-person possessive pronouns

Therefore, in translation of this posting, the use of *you (informal, singular)* instead of *you* shows the informal and intimate relation between the blogger and his lover. Persian has two second person pronouns in order to distinguish between single and plural references. The second-person singular pronouns are also used to show close relationships between a speaker and a referent. I have translated them to *you (informal, singular)* and *your (informal, singular)*, whenever intimacy and informality has been conveyed by them.

The original text was written as a paragraph (in Persian language). I have divided the translated text into eight parts, including title, applied photo, and main paragraph. Each part includes one complete sentence in Persian embedded by several clauses which are connected by adjunctive elements like *and* or punctuation like commas.

On the other hand, the blogger produces a monologue by using the self-referencing pronoun '*I*' in the text, to construct her gender identity within expressing her expectations and conceptualization of her romantic relationship.

In the title (line 1), the blogger clarifies her position as a *wife* positioned in two different levels of relationship. She addresses her husband very formally as *dear respected gentleman* and immediately objectifies herself as *pot of tea* in an intimate relationship. Using a very formal address for the 'other' and objectification of 'self' in a sentence refers to a huge gap between the position of involved people in this relationship. This gap points to an exaggerated respect for one against humiliating the other. Therefore, by using some referencing techniques and objectification, she positions herself in a lower hierarchical order (less powerful) in an intimate relationship which comes from the combination of a social position defined by a legitimized contract (marriage) and an interpersonal and emotional relation (romantic relationship). Emphatically, she objectifies herself as *a pot of tea*.

The photo (line 2), has many connotations too. It is probable that the blogger has been inspired by the work of the surrealist Belgian artist, Magritte, called the Great War (1964)[51]. The woman in this photo is using a traditional Islamic covering called 'chador'. The textile pattern of chador which is called "Persian pickles[52]" is a traditional pattern rooted in Iranian culture (and not Islam). The pot in front of the woman's face might be a metaphor for the objectification of woman. The steel tea pot might show the reflexivity of the outer world or identity of other versus the identity of self. The reflection of light in the surface of the pot shows an indoor space, which can reflect the inner relationship between the blogger and her husband. It can also refer to the domestic sphere allocated to the blogger as a woman.

In line 3, the blogger uses *just* to emphasise a (maybe hidden) role rather than her apparent role of being a *wife*. In this way, the blogger refers to attributes and expectations attached to the concept of *wife* by the husband or social norms.

In line 4, the blogger explains her other role from that of being a wife. The adverb *sometimes* is referring to shifting times between these roles. Tea is a popular drink in Iranian culture and serving tea is a traditional role for Iranian women in traditional families. The metaphor of *becoming a pot of tea* is an odd metaphor, probably referring to restricting the identity of the blogger to a 'male server' and emotional labour of 'husband care'. As the tea is the content of container (tea inside the pot), the verb *swig* refers to the certainty and calmness of the drinker (here, the husband). The possessive pronoun of *its* may stand for man's feeling of ownership as well as woman's duty to devote and propose her inner emotions to her husband (the role that Iranian married women are expected to play in their marital life).

In line 5, the blogger explains the adverb *sometimes* by referring to the setting in which she is expected (at least in the eyes of the man) to play a 'husband carer' role. The blogger refers to expected labour division between her and her husband as man works outdoors,

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[51] http://bertc.com/g9/magritte3.htm
[52] It is also called Paisley Design

becomes *tired* and in returning home needs some refreshment, while woman is expected to do housework and emotional work (explained in following lines).

In line 6, the verbal phrase *stare at my eyes* refers to a rude manner of looking at somebody in Iranian culture which correlates with directness and shamelessness. As there is no shame (indirectness) in this way of looking and shame is considered as a sign of love in Iranian culture, the blogger denies the love from the man's side. By using the adjective of *manly* for the word *rudeness*, she generalizes her husband's behaviour as a gendered norm for men. I mean she accepts man's behaviour as a social norm for men while it is considered negative behaviour for women. It might be referring to this point that men are not expected to be indirect in their romantic relations. Using the noun *rudeness*, clarifies the negative view of the woman toward the man's behaviour, because she feels that the man has taken her for granted. In other words, 'heteronormativity structures heterosex and intimate heterosexual relationships by setting out the 'taken–for-granted' gendered norms in different areas of social life' (Jackson 2006).

In line 7, the blogger uses the verb *look* for herself rather than *stare* used in the previous line for her husband. She also uses the pronoun of *you (singular, informal)*. By this technique, she may shows her tenderness and her appealing for love, whichshe doesn't see in her husband's manner. A comparison between the verbs *stare* and *look* respectively for husband and wife implicitly refers to their different positions leading to more powerfulness of the man in this relationship.

In line 8, the blogger refers to *her* glass of tea. Comparing *glass* to *pot*, which are serving respectively woman and man, the woman might be referring to fewer rights for her in this legitimized and institutionalized romantic relation. Though she introduces herself as the provider (pot of tea) of emotional care, what she owes is less than the man. The process of coldness of *tea glass* stands for the feelings of the woman which are ignored by the man.

This posting is a good example of the hegemonic construction of love in Iranian society. On the structural level, heterosexuality is institutionalized by the marriage contract and the (traditional) family as an important aspect of heteronormative society. As the marriage contract doesn't provide the same rights for both parties (husband and wife), its endowed social power forms the hegemonic masculinity in the couples' relationship. Therefore, the romantic relationship between the blogger and her husband has been put into the legitimized contract of marriage.

On the level of meaning, it is arguable that 'each heterosexual couple 'does' heterosexuality as much through divisions of labour and distributions of household resources as through specifically sexual and reproductive practices' (Jackson, 2005: 14). This posting shows that the blogger and her husband are doing gender since, despite the emphasis on togetherness and sharing feelings in modern life-style of hetero-relations, the evidence suggests that it is still women who do most of the domestic work necessary to keep the household running and most of the emotional labour necessary to maintain the relationship itself (Van Every 1996). Here, the emotional work[53] of woman in the form of

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[53] Delphy and Lenard (1992) define the "emotional labour" as the:

objectification (denial of subjectivity) treats it as if there is no need to show concern for the blogger's feelings and personal values; specifically when she emphasises that "*I am a pot of tea*".

On the level of routine, the blogger depicts the emotional labour defined for her in a marital relationship, when she refers to fetching her husband by serving tea for him. She uses metaphors, like '*glass of tea*' or adverbs of frequency, like *sometimes* and wh-adverbs, like *when.*

And finally, on the level of subjectivity, some strategies of address (reference/self-reference), like *you (informal, singular), I, dear respected gentleman* are used to represent the hegemonic construction of the marital relationship between the couple of this posting. This hegemonic system puts the woman in a less powerful position, though by expressing her feelings and thoughts as well as network formation, the woman resists this oppression and provides a competing discourse rather than accepting the dominant discourse.

Conclusion

This paper has presented a review on contradictions between self and subjectivity in Iranian online societies (particularly blogs) with respect to the dominant hegemonic masculinity indexing some gendered social norms, web of power and discourse of love in Iranian love blogs that is a relatively new topic in this field.

It is important to realise that the circulation implied in the concept of discourse makes it possible to move from the off-line society (real life) towards the on-line society and back it with new concepts and changes in gender construction. Demonstrating the current dominant hegemonic masculinity in Iranian society, I have attempted to clarify whether love blogs are an equaliser in romantic relations of Iranian internet users. Although research in this field is still scant, it clearly shows that 'just because the technology is presented as 'genderless,' though this is very highly debatable, it does not mean that the interactions taking place through the technology will lose any of their complexity nor will the technology strip away existing social structures' (Yates, 2001:32). Though, the focus on content and communicative practices in love blogs highlights the possibilities of new gendered identities being constructed through online interactions. These new gendered identities may appear in a different form from the more fixed forms of "real life." In particular, the research reviewed in this paper regarding discourse of love leads one to conclude that although 'the

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work which establishes relations of solidarity, which maintains bonds of affection, which provides moral support, friendship and love, which gives people a sense of belonging, of ontological strength, of empowerment, and thereby makes them feel good. This too requires effort and skill. It is not just a question of thinking about someone, but of doing actual activities: talking to them about things that interest them, fetching them things that give them pleasure, smiling at them, cuddling them, and stroking their bodies and their egos.

"democratic" perception of CMC is seriously flawed' (Yates, 2001:32) because there are some other social and cultural variables needed to be included in the study of gender issues within the blogs, the CMC through blogs makes it possible to make a more 'democratic' society. For example, expressing emotions and attitudes toward romantic relations by the bloggers increases the competing discourses of love which leads to a more democratic perception of romantic relations in day-to-day life.

The concept of "power" in discourses of online romantic relations constructs and represents identities aroused from a hegemonic society. Having said this, it is important to realise that individuals are 'fully capable of using strategies associated with either masculinity or femininity' (Mullany, 2000:4), both in love blogs and face to face settings. Though, regardless of the environments, other factors beyond gender, such as culture, age, ethnicity, and class, also play important roles in conceptualising the discourse of love. For example, emotional labour identified in the analyzed blog is happening in various forms and different levels in the real life of many Iranian women, and the blogger conceptualizes it from her own point of view. In this regard, bloggers use various linguistic techniques and strategies to construct their identity within a romantic relation such as metaphors, objectification, reference strategies and so on.

Therefore, it seems that the web of power in love blogs is constructed based on the identification of the blogger's self with other (lover or society) in a co-constructed and relational contact with the real life.

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Writing in English as a second language:

A study of the development of structure and modality in the argumentative genre

Irene Pascual Peña

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Abstract

This paper deals with the writing skill and, specifically, writing in English as a foreign language. Some argumentative texts written by foreign learners of English (Spaniards) will be analysed in terms of structure and modality. The argumentative genre is one of the most difficult ones; hence, we will see whether foreign learners of English are able to deal with it and its characteristics in a satisfactory way. The main objective of this paper is to analyse and compare two groups of students with regard to the features mentioned above: firstly, all the compositions were graded; after that, they were analysed (in terms of structure and modality), so that comparisons between groups could be established and so that it could be observed a relationship between quality and the features of structure and modality. The first group of students is students in their last year of high school; the second one, postgraduate students. The results show us that we can find differences between both groups and that postgraduate students' writing seems to be at a more advanced level, at the same time that they got better marks.

Introduction

This paper will deal with the development, in foreign learners of English, of structure and modality in the genre of argumentative texts. Firstly, a theoretical background will be explained in order to contextualise this research. Secondly, it will be described how the data was collected. Thirdly, the results found will be explained and discussed. Finally, some conclusions and interpretations will be highlighted in order to make clear what the results show.

The main objective of this paper is to compare the compositions of 2º Bachillerato students (students who are in their last year of high school) and postgraduate students in order to see whether there is some kind of development. Although the subjects are not the same studied at two different points of their learning, the results and the comparison could hint at a probable future development of high school learners' writing. Likewise, differences among students in the same group (postgraduate students or 2º Bachillerato students), if any, will be pointed out and explained. Thus, the research questions are the following: is there any development regarding the features under study (modality and structure) if we compare students from 2º Bachillerato and postgraduate students? And, if so, what does this development consist of? Is there any relationship between the quality of the compositions and the two features under analysis?

The reason to study the structure of an argumentative text (the different parts it is made of) is that these types of texts have certain structure that they have to fulfil in order to be effective. In the next section, it will be explained what this structure consists of. In the same way, I decided to analyse hedges and modality as markers of the interpersonal function of language (this function establishes the relationships among participants involved in the act of communication). Modality is one of the features which are more complex to acquire for foreign learners of English. That is why I had a special interest in seeing whether there was a development in the use the two different groups of students make of modality (a better and more diverse use).

Theoretical framework

This research works within the systemic functional linguistics framework, a theory whose father is Michael Halliday (1978, 2004). This theory stresses the fact that language is communication and has a social purpose (Martin and Rothery, 1993). Genres, specifically, also have social purposes and are seen as a staged and goal-oriented social process (Hyland, 2002). The different structures of the different kind of genres serve specific and different social purposes (Hyland, 2002). Language is linked to context and grammatical, lexical and cohesive devices are said to construct the functions of the different stages of the different genres (Hyland, 2002). The context in which we are communicating is very important in

systemic-functional theory. The teaching of these genre structures and functions provide non-native learners of English with a tool to be on a similar level as native speakers of English. Genres are fundamental to understanding how we see reality, how we act and construct social situations (Hyland, 2002). Genre and grammar are inseparably tied, since meaning in a text is constructed through the lexico-grammatical choices the writer makes (Gerot and Wignell, 1994).

The main written genres are recounts, argumentations and expositions ((Martin, 2001, Gerot and Wignell, 1994). The genre of arguing is very important in effective social participation and in school as well because it involves reasoning, evaluation and persuasion (Knapp and Watkins, 2005). Some lexico-grammatical features of this genre are the following: mental verbs expressing opinion ("I think", "I believe"…), logical connectors to link different points in the argumentation ("furthermore", "on the contrary", "for example"…), causal connectors ("because, "since", "as a consequence"…) modality ("can", "must", "should"…) and nominalisations ("clarification" instead of "to clarify", "development" instead of "to develop"…). Knapp and Watkins (2005) differentiate between exposition, a kind of argumentation in which the writer offers his/her point of view and argues in favour of it in order to persuade the reader, and discussions, an argumentation where the writer considers an issue from a number of perspectives. The kind of argumentative texts we are dealing with in this paper is, then, exposition: the writers defend their viewpoint about an issue by elaborating arguments that support that viewpoint.

The structure of an argumentative text has different stages or parts:

1. Introduction: first part of an argumentative text that, ideally, should include the following subparts:
    1.1 Thesis (Gerot and Wignell,1994, Knapp and Watkins,2005 and Martin,2001): statement of the issue under discussion.
    1.2 Position: (Gerot and Wignell, 1994) the writer indicates his or her position about the topic that will be discussed about.
    1.3 Preview: (Gerot and Wignell, 1994): the writer outlines the main arguments that will be presented.
2. Body paragraphs: the main part of the text, in which the arguments are developed.
    2.1 Argument: (Gerot and Wignell, 1994, Knapp and Watkins, 2005 and Martin, 2001) reason that supports the position the writer is defending. It should have a topic sentence (Martin, 2001), where the main idea of the argument is expressed.
    2.2 Elaboration of the argument (Gerot and Wignell, 1994, Knapp and Watkins, 2005 and Martin, 2001): development of the main idea expressed in the topic sentence, in order to reinforce the argument (writer's viewpoint) and to persuade the reader.
    2.3 Counterargument (Knapp and Watkins, 2005): an argument to refute the writer's argument. In this way, the reader realises that the writer takes into account other points of view and other arguments which are contrary to his or her thinking. This counterargument, then, should be refuted by a counter-

counterargument, in order to persuade the reader and reinforce the whole argumentation. This may be a very effective (if well used) and mature technique, especially in high school. It seems that it would be a necessary prerequisite for postgraduate students.

3.   Conclusion: final paragraph that should include different parts, which are the following:

3.1   Reiteration (Gerot and Wignell, 1994 and Martin, 2001): the writer repeats his or her position about the issue of discussion.

3.2   Summing up (Martin, 2001 and Knapp and Watkins, 2005): a summary of what has been presented and discussed in the body of the text.

3.3   Recommendation or suggestion (Knapp and Watkins, 2005): the writer ends the text by giving some recommendation or suggestion to improve the state of affairs (the topic under discussion).

This structure has been taken and adapted from different authors (Gerot and Wignell 1994, Martin 2001, Knapp and Watkins 2005), yet it must be recognised that there is not just one way of structuring arguments. It may depend on the topic and the length, but also on the writer: postgraduate students may have not used the same model as high school students. However, a model structure had to be chosen in order to analyse compositions according to it and be able to compare them.

Let us now turn to modality, the different types of modal verbs that exist and their meanings (what they express). For this purpose, I have used Downing and Locke's (1992) classification:

1. Epistemic modality (has to do with the expression of the speakers' thoughts, beliefs, predictions…).

1.1   Certainty: from high certainty ("must", "can't") to low certainty (may, might, could…).

1.2   Prediction: from high confidence in the prediction ("will") to low degree of confidence (should, may, might, could…).

1.3   Possibility or probability: from high ("may", "might", "would") to low ("could").

2. Non epistemic or deontic modality (that which has to do with ability, permission and obligation).

2.1. Ability: in the present ("can") or in the past ("could").

2.2. Permission: from less polite ("can") to medium ("may") to more polite and formal ("could", "might").

2.3. Obligation: from strong obligation ("must", "have to") to middle obligation ("should", "ought to") to lack of obligation ("don't have to", "needn't") to prohibition ("mustn't"-equivalent to strong obligation not to do something-).

I have considered as hedges mental verbs (such as "I think", "I believe", "I agree"…), expressions showing the writer's opinion ("in my opinion", "from my viewpoint"…), adverbs and expressions denoting the writer's attitude ("obviously", "fortunately", "it is very important", "it is better"…) and verbs of liking ("I like", "I hate"…). All these features are indicators of the writer's opinions, thoughts, evaluations, attitudes etc. That is why all of them are features of the interpersonal metafunction of language, and that is why all of them have been considered here as hedges in general.

There have been previous studies which have analysed the development of different features (such as topic development, development of genre structures and development of register features) in different text types. For example, Martín Úriz, Whittaker and Hidalgo Downing (2005), studied the topic development in 185 compositions (written in English by Spanish learners of English) of their large corpus (students from the last two years of high school). They found that the majority of the compositions had a principal idea (84.3%); 97.3% had a first argument; 68.8% had a second argument, and the percentages of compositions with three or four arguments was very low (27% and 7%, respectively). They found a correlation between the argument and its correspondent elaboration, as well as a significant correlation (though low) between argument one and argument two. A stronger correlation was found between argument two and argument three; and even a stronger one between argument three and four. By correlation, what is meant is that if there is correlation between two elements, the presence of one guarantees (at a high level of certainty) the presence of the other. Another finding was that only half of the compositions included a conclusion.

A study carried out in 2002 by Morán deals with argumentative texts in Spanish produced by native speakers of the language. The findings were that only half of the younger group of students (who were 13 years old) obtained a good expression of the thesis. Moreover, 70% of them obtained a low mark in the argumentation and 80% obtained a low mark in generalization and closing of an argument. This shows that the argumentative genre is quite difficult, at least for high school Chilean students, even in their mother tongue (in a foreign language, we have to take into account more complex cognitive processes).

Shaw and Ting-Kun Liu (1998) carried out a project which studied register features in the writing of overseas students before and after they enrolled full-time courses in English for Academic Purposes. They wanted to know if there was any development in register features. They found a general development from spoken to written style and an increasing awareness of the requirements of different genres. They also found stylistic shifts in the vocabulary but the total number of different words did not increase. Students abandoned the overuse of "I", increased their use of nominalisations, subordination, WH- relatives, modal verbs, non-standard discourse markers and logical connectors. Another finding was that a decrease of "I think" was noticed. These findings may suggest that development will also be discovered in the case of this study (although students in this research did not enrol in EAP courses and their only nationality is Spanish).

Finally, I will mention another study by Martín Úriz, Whittaker, Barrio, Murcia, Ordóñez and Vidal (in press). In this study, the researchers wanted to find out whether Spanish students of 2º Bachillerato (last year of high school) were able to respond appropriately to the context of the foreign language (English) in which they were communicating. This would be manifested in the structure of texts and lexicogrammatical

features. That is, if students were able to build the appropriate genre asked. This study focuses on recounts. The conclusions reached were that students knew the different stages of the genre, but these did not fulfil the expected functions. This might be relevant for my study, since it may be the case that 17-year-old students are able to build the argumentative genre in the same way that they can do it with recounts. However, it could also happen the opposite, since the argumentative genre is more complex.

Data

My data consists of nine compositions: four from students in 2º Bachillerato (the last year of high school) and five from postgraduate students who studied English Philology.

All of them belong to a corpus collected by Martín Úriz and Whittaker (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), a corpus that has led to many studies (some of them have been mentioned in the "theoretical framework" section). The topic of the composition was, for all the students, "The drinking age should be 21". Students had to agree or disagree with this claim and support their point of view. The students were allowed a time of just thirty minutes to write the compositions.

The four compositions belonging to 2º Bachillerato students were chosen at random (they are compositions number one, two, three and four). I have to say that five compositions were chosen. However, one of them was discarded because it was very difficult to analyse, given its incredibly short length and its very bad grammar: there were some parts difficult to understand. The discarded composition had 50 words, whereas the rest had, at least, 200. Besides, I (advised by my supervisor) considered that the other four were enough and that they could be a representative sample, at least for the purpose of this paper.

Regarding the compositions written by postgraduate students, all of them were chosen at random too (they are compositions number five, six, seven, eight and nine). None of the chosen ones had to be discarded because of lack of understanding, short length or very poor grammar.

The first thing to be done was grading all the different compositions, although no correlation between quality and structure or quality and modality will be established, since to make such an affirmation (that there is or there is not correlation between them) would require a very large corpus with hundreds of examples (as Martín Úriz, Whittaker and Hidalgo Downing did with 185 compositions). After that, the proper analysis of the structure and modality in all the compositions was carried out. Once done this, the results were tabulated so that they could be observed in a clearer way.

Results

		Comp 1	Comp 2	Comp 3	Comp 4	Comp 5	Comp6	Comp7	Comp 8	Comp 9
	Thesis	Yes	Yes* [54]	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
INTRODUCTION	*Position*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Preview	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Argument 1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Elaboration	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Counterargument	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

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[54] The asterisks mean that either the parts are wrongly placed or there is some kind of problem with them

	Counter-counterargument	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Argument 2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Elaboration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
BODY	*Counterargument*	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
	Counter-counterargument	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
PARAGRAPHS	*Argument 3*	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Elaboration	Yes	No	No	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Counterargument	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Counter-counterargument	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Argument 4	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes*	No

	Elaboration	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
	Counterargument	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Counter-counterargument	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Summary	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
CONCLUSION	*Reiteration*	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
	Sugg/Recomm	Yes*	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 1 Genre structure of compositions

Two tables show the results obtained by the analysis of the nine compositions: table 1 and table 2. The first one shows the results regarding structure, whereas the second one presents the results about modality and hedges.

First of all, there are some clarifications to make regarding structure: this is the reason why some of them have an asterisk drawn in some of the parts of the structure. The asterisks mean that there are problems with some parts of the structure, mainly problems of position. In many compositions by both groups, we find parts of the structure where they should not be. Likewise, sometimes there are sections that are longer than they should. Let us see this in a detailed way:

- In composition number one, we find the writer's position towards the issue concerned right after the topic sentence of the first argument. In the same way, the suggestions are found after the position, where some elaboration of the first argument was supposed to be included ("For example, in the discos this workers

should pedir the DNI when people will go to alcoholic drink"). It has to be said that all the three arguments have a topic sentence. However, there is a problem with the topic sentence in argument number three: it is too long ("On the other hand, if the age to drink is the twenty one years old, if will have a lot of problems for the young people, because the age to go to the discos also will be twenty-one").

-      In composition number two, it can be seen that thesis and position of the writer are placed in the same clause ("But I think that drinking prohibitions won't solve anything: the young people has brains and intelligence. They are not fools just for being young people"). Topic sentences are present.

-      In composition number three, topic sentences are also found. What I would like to stress here is that this composition has a very long introduction (and no conclusion), where there are many preliminary sentences and generalizations. This would be acceptable if the length of the whole composition would have been longer.

-      Composition number four has four arguments, something that surprised me, given that it is written by a 2º Bachillerato student. This fact is something unusual, since, as it can be seen in the rest of the compositions written by these students, the usual thing is that the compositions have two arguments (three at the most). However, the elaboration of argument number three is quite messy, and not all readers would be able to get the message ("I think that when a person is 18 should have enough mind to think what they can do if you are 18 you are an adult in our society while your article say you can not drink if you are not 18. It is a contradiction"). Elaboration of argument number two is not placed in the same paragraph as the topic sentence. On the contrary, it is placed one paragraph later. Again, as in the previous compositions, topic sentences are included.

-      Now we enter in the domain of compositions written by postgraduate students. In composition number five, we find the position and the thesis in the same clause complex ("I fully agree with your opinion that the drinking age should be raised from 18 to 21"), as in the second composition. It has to be stressed that argument one has not all the elaboration expected for a postgraduate student. The topic sentence of argument one is that many foreign countries prohibit people under 21 to drink. Its elaboration is "For example, in the US the pubs ask for the identification card and if people are under 21, they cannot get into the pubs". This is not really an elaboration of the argument, but a measure that one country practices to keep youngsters away from drinking alcohol. Likewise, argument number two is a personal experience of the writer ("there was an occasion where my friends…"), which shows a lack of maturity in academic writing. Moreover, this makes the argument rather unpersuasive for the reader.

-      In composition number six, the writer's reiteration is placed in the same sentence as the first suggestion (since the writer offers more than one suggestion or recommendation): "I would suggest putting all our efforts in education rather than in prohibitions".

-      The same happens in composition seven as it happened in number six: reiteration is implicit in the recommendation: "raising the age limit could be one solution, but it has to be reinforced with other measure: education and heavier fines".

-      In composition number eight, the fourth argument is found in the conclusion and after the reiteration. The writer should have put this argument after the third one, not in the conclusion part: "For all said, I am not in favour of restricting alcohol

to young people, and if they are old enough to vote, they can also control themselves when they can drink or not".

- In composition number nine, it should be noted that the position of the writer is not properly stated in the introduction, but in the body paragraphs and the conclusion parts.

- All the compositions written by postgraduate students have topic sentences for each of the arguments elaborated in the essay. Some of these topic sentences are quite long ("I don't think we would be acting properly if we expected them to be adults for some things, like to vote, or to drive, but forced them to wait until they are twenty one to be eligible for drinking"). In spite of this, after it, the writer has been able to create further elaboration.

- Finally, it should be noted that, in all the nine compositions, preliminary sentences and generalizations are found ("In the last years young people have been drinking more and more", "the last weeks people have talked much of this"). This preliminary stage can be more or less long, but it is found in absolutely all the compositions.

		MODALITY				HEGDES
	Obligation	Possibility & Probability	Possibility & Probability	Ability	Prediction	
	Verb	Verb	Adverb	Verb	Verb	
Com po 1	-Should (in clauses 11,14,17) -Haven't got to(lack of obligation) in clause 28			-Can (in clause 25 and 26)	Will (in clauses 16,31,33)	I think (in clauses 6,13,19,24)
Com po	-Must (in clause 10) -We have the necessity (in clause	-Can (in clause 14, 17)		-Can't (in clause 27)	Won't (in clause 5)	I think (in clauses 4,10)

2	12) -we have the obligation (in clause 15)					
Com po 3	-Have to (in clauses 9,20)			-Can (in clauses 12,25)	Will (in clause 15)	-My opinion (in clause 4) -In my opinion (in clause 6) -I think (in clauses 10,22)
Com po 4	-Should (in clauses 5,25,42,44,47,48)			-Can (in clause 5, 13, 27, 37) -Can't (clause 31)		-From my point of view (in clause 7) -From my experience (in clause 11) -I think (in clauses 23,39,43 -I am not agree (in clause 6) -I do not like (in clause15)
Com po 5	-Should (in clause 4)	-Cannot (in clause 9)				-I fully agree (in clause 3) -I think (in clause 20) -I hate (in clause 24)
Com po 6		-Will (in clauses 41,42) -Would (in clauses 10,26,38) -Can (in				-Disagree (in clause 2) -Fortunately (in clause 5) -I think (in clause 6) -I thought (in

	clause 20,17)				clause 7) -I don't think (in clause 26)
Com po 7	-Should (in clauses 10,15,19,24) -Has to (in clause 39)	-Would (in clauses 5,23) -May (in clause 35) -Could (in clause 38)	Maybe (in clause 7)		-I believe (in clause 8) -Obviously (in clause 27)
Com po 8	-Should (in clause 4) -Shouldn't (in clause 12) -Must (in clauses 23,27,54,61)	-Can (in clauses 3,62)		-Can (in clause 48) -Cannot (in clause 52)	-I don't agree (in clause 5) -My opinion (in clause 7) -I don't know (in clause 35) -I am not in favour (clause 45) -It is better (clause 42) -It is very important (clause 55)
Com po 9	-Must (in clause 25) -Should (in clause 9)	-Would (in clauses 37,17,60) -Could (in clauses 19,51,53) -Can (in clause 47) -Cannot (in clause 43)			-My opinion (in clause 7) -Don't you think?(in clause 61)

Table 2 Types of modality and hedges

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In table 2, all the different types of modal verbs used by students, as well as the hedges they deploy, can be clearly observed. In addition, it can also be seen how many times a modal or hedge appears and in what clause number.

Discussion of results

Similarities and differences among 2º Bachillerato students

As regards the introduction, the four compositions belonging to students from 2º Bachillerato have the thesis and position of the writer included. In the same way, none of them has a preview (outline of the main arguments to be presented).

All the compositions had two arguments at least. Only half of them have three arguments, and just one has four arguments. Regarding elaboration, it can be seen that, in the first argument, half of the compositions (one and four) do not have any elaboration of the argument. On the other hand, compositions number two and three do have elaboration. As regards the second argument, all of them have its correspondent elaboration (one example could be "I think that person can have a good night without to drink, you can dance with yours friends, speak with them and you haven't got to do the things that your friends do"). The same is true for argument three in compositions one and four (precisely the ones that did not have elaboration for argument one). Composition four, in the fourth argument, also includes an elaboration.

The fact of not having found any counterargument in the compositions written by the group of students of 2º Bachillerato was expected, since it is a mark of the writer's maturity, and so it may develop later. It is a technique that has much effect when persuading, since the reader sees that the writer takes into account other arguments that favour the opposite viewpoint to that s/he is defending. Then, the counterargument is refuted by the writer with a Counter-counterargument, and persuasion is more likely to be achieved. As it can be observed in the table, no Counter-counterarguments have been found.

Only one of the four compositions written by these students has a concluding paragraph. In the first composition, some suggestions are detected "the government should close the shop where his propietaries sell drinks a young people". Nonetheless, they are not included in the appropriate place: they are placed after the topic sentence of the first argument. That is why, although there are suggestions, which is one of the parts forming the conclusions, we cannot say that there is a proper conclusion. It is in composition number two where a conclusion can be found: it consists of a suggestion, and maybe a reiteration could be implicit ("Like we, young people of this new millennium has his own concepts and ways of living their lifes, so ¿why can't we show them the different options of what is good and what is bad, and let them make his own personal choice?"). However, it is not separated into another paragraph, as it could be expected (the conclusion should have its own paragraph). Neither composition three nor four have a conclusion: an imbalance is observed

in composition number three, since it has a very long introduction and no conclusion at all. A possible explanation for the fact that the majority of the compositions of this group do not have conclusions could be the time constraint.

Now we turn to highlight the similarities and differences among the writers of this group regarding modality and hedges. None of the writers uses any adverbs which mark modality; their only device to express modality seems to be modal verbs.

Regarding modal verbs, students have a limited variety of them. The writers of compositions three and four only use one modal verb to express obligation ("have to"-"they have to have the possibility to choose"- and "should"-"the owner of the shop should ask for this document"-, respectively). Composition number one uses "should" to express obligation ("the drinking age should be 21") and "haven't got to" to express lack of obligation ("you haven't got to do the things that your friends do"). It is student who wrote composition number two the one who has wider variety of forms to express obligation: "must" ("we must think about seriously in education programs"), "we have the necessity" (we have the necessity to teach young people"), "we have the obligation" ("we have the obligation to be a good example"). Compositions number one, two and three also make use of the modal verb "will" and its correspondent negative form to express the epistemic meaning of prediction "will have a lot of problems for the young people"). All the compositions express the meaning of ability by using "can" ("you can dance with yours friends", "people can get easily all the drinks"). Only in composition number two the meaning of possibility is expressed (twice), and it is done through "can" ("how bad the alcohol can be") In summary, we can say that students from 2º Bachillerato have a limited range of modal verbs to express different meanings: "will" for prediction, "can" for ability, and "should" and "have to" for obligation (although there are some exceptions, as explained above).

As far as hedges are concerned, it can be observed that "I think" is the most typical and frequent one: it is present in the four compositions several times. In half of the cases, it is almost the only hedge that can be found (compositions one and two). In composition one there is "I would want" ("I would want to give my opinion"), which can be counted as a hedge (it shows writer's intentions), and in composition number two the same happens with "I was always agree" (it shows the writer's thinking). Composition number three also includes expressions such as "in my opinion". It also includes some expressions such as "I would want" ("I would want that you know my opinion") or "is true" ("is true that in the last years young people have been drinking"), which could be considered as hedges as well, since they show the writer's attitudes and thinking. Finally, composition number four is the one which has more variety of hedges: apart from the typical "I think", the writer includes expressions such as "from my experience", "from my point of view", "I do not like", "I am not agree". However, some of these expressions ("from my experience" and "I do not like") reveal a lack of maturity in the writing: the writer including himself too much in the text, the expression of personal experiences and likes or dislikes are said to be a feature of immature writing (Shaw and Ting-Kun Liu, 1998).

Similarities and differences among postgraduate students

Concerning structure and, specifically, introduction, it can be observed that all the writers (regardless of the group) have stated the thesis (some examples are "…that the drinking age should be raised from 18 to 21", "there is a problem among young people and alcohol", "the age at which young people can start drinking should be raised from 18 to 21"). In the case of the writer's position, only one, composition number nine, has this part of the introduction stated throughout the whole composition, but not properly in the introduction section (in this part the writer only says "I would like to express my opinion"). The rest have clearly stated the position the writer is in favour of ("I don't agree with this", "please let me disagree with the intention of your article", "I fully agree with your opinion"). As to the preview, none of the compositions has included it, like the students from 2º Bachillerato.

Regarding the body paragraphs of the structure, the five compositions have two arguments, at least. Composition number five is the one that has fewer arguments: only two. The other four have a third argument as well, and only composition number eight has a fourth argument.

A great homogeneity can be found regarding elaboration of arguments: all the arguments in all the five compositions have their correspondent further elaboration: "First, no only young people drink. There are also many people, mainly men, who drink at home and then become violent and start to hit their family, shouldn't there be forbidden to sell alcohol to these people?"). In composition number nine, there is a counterargument for argument two ("However, I must admit that it is true (…) that a lot of traffic accidents (…) are due to (…) very young people driving under the effects of alcohol"), and also a refutation with a Counter-counterargument ("This would not be a solution (…) since there are a lot of people pf that age who do not consume alcohol"). It is the only composition where counterarguments have been included. However, the writer does not include a counterargument for each of his/her arguments, but just for one of them.

As opposed to the group of students from 2º Bachillerato, in this group, conclusions are present in 100% of the compositions. As in the other group of students, none of them includes a summary of what has been said to guide the reader. All the conclusions include a reiteration of the position of the writer of the text: their stance is reinforced after the whole argumentation, and so it is good to reiterate the position ("For all said, I am not in favour of restricting alcohol to young people", "instead of raising the drinking age to 21, we could look for other solutions"). As to suggestions and recommendations, only composition number five lacks this feature. In the other four compositions we can find examples such as "give them guidance, "offer them a place where they can drink", "It is very important to teach young people to behave themselves and drink moderately", "I would suggest putting all out effort in education".

Now we turn to the aspects of modality and hedges. Surprisingly enough, composition number six does not make use of any modals of obligation in the whole composition. In the same way, composition number five only uses the modal "should" ("the drinking age should be raised"), and no more examples of different modals expressing obligations can be found. Composition number seven uses "should" ("this mass media should be used appropriately") and "has to" ("it has to be reinforced with other measures"). Composition number eight makes use of "should" ("the drinking age should be 21"), "shouldn't" ("shouldn't there be forbidden to sell alcohol to these people?") and "must" ("this must be a

task undertaken principally by parents"), and composition number nine, "must" ("I must admit"), "should" ("there are different points that should be taken into account") and "have to" ("you only have to think about "Ley Antibotellón"). Thus, it can be noticed that "have to", "should" and "must" are the most common modal verbs to express obligation.

In the use of modals expressing probability and possibility, a greater variety and a higher frequency (this meaning was only expressed twice in one of the compositions from the other group) can be appreciated than in the other group of students: now, it is not only "can" the verb used to express this meaning, but also "will" ("better cultural activities that will fill their mind"), "would" ("Fixed ages for certain activities (…) would make them violate the restriction"), "may" ("It may not be such a good idea") and "could" ("raising the age limit could be one solution"). Nonetheless, I have to remark that compositions number five and eight only use the verb "can" to express possibility ("but also in schools teachers can help their parents"). An adverb, "maybe", is found in just one of the compositions, number seven, expressing probability or possibility.

Only composition number eight makes use of the meaning of ability through "can" ("they can also control themselves"), which contrasts with the high frequency with which we can find this meaning in the compositions written by high school students.

As opposed to 2º Bachillerato students, the epistemic meaning of prediction is hardly used in this group of postgraduate students. None of the five compositions use any verb expressing this meaning of modality. However, composition number seven uses the adverb "obviously", which I have considered to express prediction: the writer is predicting something, and s/he is absolutely sure about it, s/he is totally convinced that what s/he is saying will be the case. Specifically, s/he is predicting that, although the drinking age is raised to 21 years old, youngsters will manage to get alcoholic drinks anyhow.

The last section to be analysed is hedges. "I think" is found in some of the compositions, although not in all of them (as it occurred in the previous group of students). In composition number seven we find "I believe". "I agree" or "I disagree" are found in three of the five compositions, in compositions number five, six and eight. In composition number five we find the following hedges: "I hate", "I think", "I fully agree" and "we didn't know". "I hate" ("I hate to hear any more stories like this") and "we didn't know" ("we didn't know what to do") are related to personal experiences, denoting a lack of maturity in the academic writing style. Composition number six, apart from "I think" and "disagree", has "fortunately" ("who fortunately did not have this problem"), which denotes the writer's evaluation of something, and "expected" ("if we expected them to be adults for some things"), which expresses the writer's attitude and thinking. Composition number seven is very poor in hedges: it only has "I believe", and "obviously", if, instead of being considered as an adverb of prediction, it is considered as a hedge (it can also be an interpretation). Composition number eight is the richest. It has a lot of hedges which denote the writer's thinking, attitudes, knowledge etc: "my opinion" ("express my opinion about it"), "I don't know" ("I don't know why"), "it is better" ("it is better to leave free for everybody"), it is important" ("it is very important to teach young people"), "It is more attractive" ("when something is forbidden (…) it is more attractive for young people"), "I don't agree" (I don't agree with this"), "I am not in favour of" ("I am not in favour of restricting alcohol to young people"). Composition number nine has several and varied hedges as well: "I would like",

"my opinion" ("I would like to express my opinion") "expect" ("many people react in the opposite way, and not how we expect"), "it is true" ("I must admit that it is true (…) that a lot of traffic accidents….") etc.

Similarities and differences among the two groups of students: a comparison. Is there any development?

First of all, I will establish a comparison regarding structure (table 1). There seems to be little difference between the introductions of the compositions written by 2º Bachillerato students and the ones written by postgraduate students, since all of them include a thesis and the writer's position, and none of them includes a preview of the arguments that will be developed later on. Nonetheless, there is development in this component: position sentences, in postgraduate students' compositions are not placed wrongly. Even in composition number nine, where position is not included in the introduction, it is implicit and easily deduced from the whole argumentation. In composition number five, we find that position and thesis are in the same clause complex, as in composition number three. In compositions from postgraduate students, the error of too long introductions is not found, in the way it is in composition number three (written by a student from 2º Bachillerato). As a consequence, although not very visible differences can be identified, if we analyse and compare the two groups deeply, it can be seen that there is development.

There is a visible development in what concerns arguments and elaboration. Half of the students from 2º Bachillerato develop three arguments. In contrast, all the compositions written by postgraduate students (except composition number five) have three arguments. In each group, there is only one case (composition number four and composition number eight) where the writer elaborates four arguments. It is somewhat surprising to find four arguments in a composition written by a 2º Bachillerato student; however, it could be expectable (and desirable) in the case of a postgraduate student. The difference is that the writer of composition number four does not elaborate his or her first argument, whereas the writer of composition number eight elaborates all the arguments (I have to note, though, that the fourth argument in composition number nine is wrongly placed in the conclusion part, after the reiteration). Also, the level of sophistication between the arguments of the two writers is very different: a great development is visible in this aspect. The level of sophistication and reasoning in the elaboration of each of the arguments is much richer and higher in the compositions written by postgraduate students. As a consequence, the development can be said to be great. The perfect exemplification of this sophistication is the use of counterarguments and Counter-counterarguments, though they are present only in one of the five compositions written by postgraduate students. However, their presence is very telling.

A great development can be appreciated as regards conclusions, simply because in the group of 2º Bachillerato students, only one of the compositions has a conclusion. In contrast, all the postgraduate students' compositions have a conclusion. None of them has the summary part, contrary to what was expected. All of them have a reiteration of the position, and almost all (except composition number five) include some suggestions or recommendations. Composition number two, which is the only one that includes a

conclusion in the group of 2º Bachillerato students, only has the recommendation part. Composition number one, as it has been already said, has some suggestions, but wrongly placed. That is why we cannot say that it has a conclusion. Therefore, in this stage of the structure of the argumentative genre, a great development can be observed.

Next, it is the turn for a comparison of modals and hedges between the two groups of students analysed (table 2). In composition number five, it can be observed that, to express obligation, the writer only uses "should", as in composition number four. In composition number six, there is not any expression of obligation at all. The rest of the compositions make use of "must", "should" and "have to". Therefore, there is no difference in the modals used, but there is difference in the variety of modals used to express this meaning in the same composition: in that aspect, there is development. Except composition two, the rest of the 2º Bachillerato students' compositions use just one or two different verbs to express obligation. However, it can be seen that there are two compositions by the postgraduate students that show no development with respect to the other group. These are compositions number five and six, as has already been stated.

More or less the same phenomenon can be observed with respect to modals which express possibility and probability. In the group of students from 2º Bachillerato, the only modal used to express possibility is "can" (only used in one of the compositions from this group). The range of modal verbs used is very limited, thus. In contrast, a greater variety, as well as a higher frequency, is found in the group of postgraduate students: not only "can" is used, but also "may", "will"; "could", "would". Nonetheless, in two of the postgraduate students' compositions, no development can be appreciated: the writers of, again, composition number five and composition number eight, limit their expression of possibility to the use of "can". Another difference between the two groups in the expression of possibility is that an adverb is found in one of the compositions of the postgraduate students, "maybe".

Regarding the expression of ability, only one composition from the group of postgraduate students makes use of it. However, all the students from the high school group use the meaning of ability. "Can" or "can't" are the verbs used to express ability.

As to prediction, none of the postgraduate students expresses this meaning (as opposed to 2º Bachillerato students). Only, if we consider "obviously" as an adverb which expresses prediction, this meaning can be found once in composition number seven).

As a conclusion, it could be said that postgraduate students express obligation and possibility with a wider variety of modal verbs and adverbs than students from 2º Bachillerato. They also sacrifice the meanings of ability and prediction to enrich the expression of obligation and possibility meanings, which are more important in the argumentative text than the other ones (ability and prediction), at least in this concrete argumentative text.

As far as hedges are concerned, a great development can be appreciated from the 2º Bachillerato students to postgraduate ones: while students from 2º Bachillerato mostly use "I think", "I agree", "in my opinion" and "I do not like", postgraduate students' hedges are more varied: apart from the expected "I think", "I agree" etc, they use expressions such as

"fortunately", "it is very important", "expect", "I am not in favour"… Composition number four, among compositions from 2º Bachillerato students, is the one that shows more variety in the use of hedges: "from my point of view", "from my experience"; "I do not like"… However, it lacks maturity, since the writer includes personal experiences and likes/dislikes. The same occurs with composition number five: one of its two arguments is the recounting of a personal experience, something which is not appropriate in argumentative texts and manifests immaturity. This characteristic was not expected to be found in a composition of a postgraduate student, though it is only found in one of the five compositions of this group. This lack of maturity is more expected to be found in less proficient and inexperienced writers (2º Bachillerato students).

Quality: differences between groups

Composition number five is the composition which has obtained the lowest mark within the postgraduate students group, 5.95. In fact, its mark is very close to composition number four, which has the highest mark in the 2º Bachillerato students group, 5.85. The rest of the marks within the group of postgraduate students are quite uniform: composition number six got a 7.5; composition number seven a 7.6; composition number eight is 7.1; and, finally, composition number nine has the highest mark, 8.65. The mean mark of the group is 7.36. The mark of composition number five is closer to 2º Bachillerato students' compositions. This is something that could be expected, since it could be seen that it had more similarities with the compositions written by high school students: the personal hedges, more appropriate for recounts and a feature of immature argumentative writing (one of its two arguments consists in the recounting of a personal experience); the only use of "should" to express obligation; the only use of "can" to express possibility; the inclusion of only two arguments, and the lack of suggestions or recommendations.

In the group of 2º Bachillerato students, composition number three obtained the lowest mark: 3.9. Composition number four obtained the highest one (5.85), and compositions one and two obtained similar marks: 5.35 and 5.25. In this group, the marks are quite uniform as well (except composition number three). The mean mark in this group is 5.08, considerably lower than the mean of the group of postgraduate students.

Conclusions

In this paper, I have analysed the development of 2º Bachillerato students and postgraduate students with respect to the structure of an argumentative text and the use of modality and hedges.

The first part of this paper dealt with the theoretical framework used in this study, which is the systemic-functional linguistics framework: language is considered as a social

process, and genres are goal-oriented, staged activities that serve a purpose. Some of the previous studies have been taken into account and briefly outlined. Next, the data has been explained: nine compositions, four from 2º Bachillerato students and five from postgraduate students. The topic about which students had to write was: "the drinking age should be twenty-one". They were supposed to have read an article of a newspaper suggesting this idea, and they had to send a letter to the editor agreeing or disagreeing. The time was limited: only thirty minutes.

The analysis of the results leads me to some conclusions that will be presented next. Regarding structure, in both groups thesis and position were present and the preview absent. However, 2º Bachillerato students have some problems that postgraduate students do not, such as very long introductions, the placement of the position in the first argument... In the body paragraphs, all postgraduate students (except the writer of composition number five) have developed three arguments, at least. Furthermore, composition number eight even developed four arguments. In contrast, half of the 2º Bachillerato students' compositions have developed just two arguments (like composition number five). There is another composition of this group that has three arguments, as the majority of postgraduate students' compositions do. The last composition has four arguments, something which was not expected in a composition from a student in 2º Bachillerato. However, it has to be noted that the inclusion of many arguments does not mean a better quality: sometimes, one argument correctly developed and reasoned is more effective than four arguments wrongly elaborated. Nonetheless, these students have some problems with the elaboration of the arguments. Whereas postgraduate students make an elaboration of all the arguments, half of the 2º Bachillerato students' compositions lack elaboration for the first argument. Therefore, some development has been achieved. In Martín Úriz and Whittaker's study (2005), they found a strong correlation between argument number three and argument four: that correlation indicated that the fact of elaborating three arguments, often involved the capacity of developing four arguments.

Finally, regarding the conclusion part of the structure, we have to say that a great development is observed: only one of the four 2º Bachillerato students' compositions has a conclusion. In contrast, all the postgraduate students' compositions have a conclusion. Therefore, there is an actual development: students learn to make conclusions and learn the importance of this part of an essay. Lastly, I would like to point out that there are not any compositions that include in their conclusion a summary of what has been said, not even in the postgraduate students' conclusions. The summary is important, since it positions the reader, making him/her remember what has been said and the main points argued. Contrary to my expectations, this part of the conclusion was not found in postgraduate students compositions. Maybe this could be explained by a lack of time: maybe they had time to write a conclusion, but not a complete one. Or maybe they did not remember or they did not know a summary should be included. Further research would be necessary in order to test these hypotheses.

Regarding the use of modality and hedges, there is also development. Although more or less the same modal verbs are used to express obligation by both groups of students (most frequently, "must", "have to" and should"), a wider variety can be appreciated in postgraduate students' compositions. That is, instead of using only one or two verbs to express obligation, they use three or four. This is true for all postgraduate compositions

except number five, which only uses "should", and composition number six, which does not use modals of obligation at all. With respect to the expression of possibility, there is development, since postgraduate students, again, use more variety of verbs: whereas 2º Bachillerato students only use "can", postgraduate students make use of verbs such as "will", "would", "could", "may"… and adverbs such as "maybe" as well (only in composition number seven). Two exceptions to this variety are compositions number five and eight, which only use "can", as the 2º Bachillerato students. In the same way, it seems that high school students express ability with much frequency, and this is not the case in the compositions by postgraduate students. It may be the case that the meaning of ability gradually disappears to give way to the meaning of possibility. Regarding prediction, just the compositions written by 2º Bachillerato students (three out of the four) express this epistemic meaning, by using the modal verbs "will" or its negative form, "won't". On the other hand, compositions belonging to postgraduate students do not express prediction meaning: their focus is mainly on obligation and possibility (meaning that has certain similarities with that of prediction. What happens is that the meaning of prediction is many times expressed from a personal viewpoint, while the expression of possibility is likely to be expressed more objectively). Only the adverb, "obviously", in composition number seven, can be interpreted as a prediction of which the writer is totally sure about.

As far as hedges are concerned, there is also development: postgraduate students, though still use the typical "I think", they opt for more hedges, some of them that are not very obvious and can be considered as hedges or not: "it is true", "it is better", "fortunately", "expect", "I am not in favour"… These kinds of hedges are not found in the compositions from the other group of students. The most typical hedges found in the group of high school students are "I think", "I agree" and "in my opinion". It does not mean that postgraduate students do not use them, since, in fact, they also do. The difference is that they also use other ones. Composition number four is the one by the 2º Bachillerato students that includes a wider variety of hedges than the rest: "from my viewpoint", "from my experience", "I do not like", "I think"… Nonetheless, "I do not like" is too personal to be included in an argumentative text. It lacks maturity, since it is an interpersonal device that immature writers use, and thus is unsuitable. Composition number five, again, also has these traits: "I hate"; "we didn't know". These hedges show personal experiences, which would be more appropriate in a recount than in an argumentative text.

To finish this paper, two final conclusions will be drawn: quality is considerably higher in the group of postgraduate students than in the group of 2º Bachillerato students. Likewise, some development can be appreciated in all the features analysed in this study: in some features there is a greater development than in others, but there is development in all of them. These conclusions fit the initial expectations and hypotheses that one could have about the results to be obtained. Though correlation between quality and the two features analysed has not been calculated (because a huge amount of data would be needed), it seems probable that some correlation exists between quality and modality. This is because, as it has been seen, postgraduate students' quality of their composition was substantially better than high school students'. In the same way, postgraduate students used a more varied and more precise range of modal verbs. Therefore, there may be a relationship between the two features: quality may be affected by the use of modality; the varied and precise use of modal verbs may mean a higher mark. A stronger correlation seems to be

present between quality and structure, just at first sight and by looking at the data. A possible explanation for this is that structure is more visible than modality: a bad structure is immediately perceived, but a poor use of modal verbs may require a more detailed reading to be noticed. In the same way, structure is the means through which the message is organized and so it can determine whether the message reaches the reader properly or not. If the reader is unable to decipher or understand the message because of a bad structure, it will be detected immediately, and, therefore, the quality will be affected: the mark of that composition will be lower than if a correct structure would have been used.

I urge more analyses and studies dealing with writing in English as a foreign language in order to be able to strengthen and consolidate the results obtained in previous research studies, as well as in order to uncover new pedagogical implications. This would give us a deeper insight of what goes on in the academic writing development process of foreign learners of English. If new pedagogical implications are found, teaching writing can be improved and writing in an L2 may become a more effective process.

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Native or non-native?

Exploring Hong Kong students' perspectives

Chit Cheung Matthew Sung

Lancaster University

Abstract

While the majority of English teachers around the world are non-native speakers, numerous cases of discrimination against non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) have been reported in the literature (Braine, 1999). In an attempt to investigate whether students do show a preference for native English-speaking teachers (NESTs), the present study examines Hong Kong secondary school students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs. By administering an open-ended questionnaire, the study revealed that Hong Kong secondary school students show favorable attitudes towards both NNESTs and NESTs, and that they do not necessarily prefer NESTs over NNESTs. While NESTs are perceived as good oral teachers who use interesting and varied teaching methods, they are not preferred as their grammar teachers. On the other hand, NNESTs are considered by students to be competent grammar teachers who show care for them, but are perceived to use less interesting and diverse teaching methods.

Introduction

English is an international language and is now increasingly used as an important means of international and intercultural communication around the world. In view of its current role and status, English cannot be exclusively associated with native English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada, or the United Kingdom. Meantime, non-native speakers of English around the world outnumber the native speakers by far (Crystal, 1997), and according to Kachru and Nelson (1996), 'accepting even cautious estimates, there must be at least three nonnative users of English for every old-country native user' (p. 79). A similar phenomenon is also apparent in the English Language Teaching (ELT) profession, with the vast majority of teachers of English as a second and foreign language in the world being non-native teachers.

However, despite the vast number of non-native teachers of English in the world, numerous cases of discrimination against non-native English-speaking teachers have been reported, especially in employment (e.g. Braine, 1999) and NESTs are preferred over NNESTs when employment decisions are to be made. The discrimination impacts negatively on the confidence of NNESTs, their identities as ELT professionals, and their evaluations of their proficiency and pronunciation of English (Burns, 2005). Amin (1997) also found how being non-white influenced their relations with their students, as expressed by a group of 'visible minority' women who were NNESTs in Canada. They thought that some students equate only white people with native English speakers, believe that only native speakers know 'real' English, and see only whites as 'real' Canadians. Braine (1999) also reports that at the master's degree level, while most English Language Teaching (ELT) jobs are restricted to intensive English programs, few non-native speakers (NNSs) have managed to break the unwritten rule 'No non-native speakers need apply'.

A commonly used excuse for the discrimination against NNESTs is that students prefer to be taught by native speakers (Braine, 1999). However, it is doubtful whether students do show a preference for NESTs. Up until now only a handful of studies have been carried out on students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs (see, for example, Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Liang, 2002; Mahboob, 2003, 2004; Moussu, 2002; Moussu & Braine, 2006; Moussu, 2006). Among them, only Cheung and Braine's (2006) study was conducted outside of the United States, while the other studies were carried out in the United States. As a result of this, it is worth examining the issues surrounding NNESTs and NESTs in a context outside of the inner circle, such as Hong Kong where English is used and taught as a second language. And in particular, it is worthwhile to explore the issue from the students' perspective in order to ascertain whether students do show a preference for native English-speaking teachers over non-native counterparts. In this study, I aim to investigate Hong Kong secondary school students' attitudes towards NNESTs and NESTs. By administering an open-ended questionnaire to 81 secondary school students in Hong Kong, I examine their attitudes and perceptions towards native and non-native English-speaking teachers, with respect to six different areas, namely (1) teachers' teaching methods, (2) students' understanding of teachers' instructions, (3) teachers' care for students, (4) teachers' pronunciation, (5) teaching of English grammar, and (6) teaching of oral English.

Literature review

The native speaker construct

In the ELT profession, it is commonly believed that native speakers are ideal language teachers. According to Braine (1999), native speakers are believed to possess a superior command of fluent, idiomatically correct language forms. They are considered more knowledgeable about the cultural connotations of their mother tongue and as the arbiters of the acceptability of any instances of the language.

A generally agreed upon definition of a native speaker takes the circumstances of acquisition as the major criterion for defining a native speaker; that is, a native speaker is seen as someone who acquires a language in early childhood (Piller, 2001; Davies, 2003). Cook (1999) also sees 'the language learnt first' as a crucial element in defining what constitutes a native speaker. However, in the case of balanced bilinguals who acquire two or more languages simultaneously since the earliest days of language development, the term 'native speaker' becomes more problematic.

It is also problematic to define who is a native speaker and who is not. Indeed, the dichotomy of native speaker/non-native speaker (NS/NNS) is not only problematic, but also counterproductive. According to Davies (1991), no consensus exists as to what is the proper definition of a native speaker. He rejects the idea that the 'native speaker is uniquely and permanently different from a nonnative speaker', arguing that the notion of nativeness in language is a 'myth' and that the native speaker construct is regarded as an idealised construction (1991: 45).

Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001) suggest that 'nativeness' constitutes a socially constructed identity rather than a linguistic category. According to Kramsch, the native speaker status is determined by 'acceptance by the group that created the distinction between native and nonnative speakers' (1997: 363). Whether international speakers of English are considered as 'native' or 'non-native speaker' depends upon various social parameters, such as the preconceived notions of what native speakers should look like or sound like (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001).

Dominance and difference approaches

In the controversy of NNESTs and NESTs in the ELT profession, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999) identify two major approaches to NNESTs based on the concept of "nativeness", namely the *dominance approach* and the *difference approach*. In particular, the dominance approach is premised on the paradigm of 'deficit linguistics' (Medgyes, 1994; Quirk, 1990), whereby NNESTs are viewed as 'linguistically handicapped' (Medgyes, 1994: 103) in relation to NESTs. The difference approach to the NNESTs, on the other hand, emphasizes the strengths of NNESTs. According to such an approach, both NNESTs and NESTs are

equally capable of being good language teachers, regardless of their different backgrounds. Indeed, NNESTs should not be considered inferior to NESTs, given that they possess valuable linguistic and pedagogical resources which are as important as the resources that NESTs possess. Scholars (see, for example, Braine, 1999) taking such an approach place particular importance on pluralism and collaboration in the profession. However, what is common in both approaches are the underlying assumptions and ideology of the opposed identities of professionals in the field of TESOL (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999).

Native and non-native teachers

Medgyes (1992) acknowledges the native/non-native distinction, with particular reference to their language competence. He suggests that NNS teachers cannot aspire to acquire a NS's language competence, given that 'non-native speakers can never achieve a native speaker's competence' (1992: 342). He argues that NESTs and NNESTs reveal considerable differences in their teaching practices and that most of the discrepancies are language-related. However, NNS teachers are not by definition less efficient (Medgyes, 1992). Whilst Medgyes (1992) recognizes the language deficiencies of NNESTS, he assets that NNESTs possess a number of distinctive strengths and advantages over NESTs. For example, NNESTs can serve as imitable models of the successful learners of English; they can teach learning strategies more effectively; they can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of their students; they can provide learners with more information about the English language; they are more able to anticipate language difficulties; and they can benefit from sharing the learners' mother tongue.

Drawing on an empirical study of the self-perception of a group of Austrian teachers, Seidlhofer (1999) found that a majority of the teachers felt insecure rather than confident being non-native teachers of English. While they see the main advantage of being non-native speakers is that they share their students' L1, their confidence based on the shared language and culture with their students is coupled with a lack of confidence they have about themselves as speakers of English. Despite the feeling of insecurity, other factors such as experience are found to help teachers gain self-assurance. As non-native teachers have to learn the language they teach themselves, they are distanced from it, which gives them confidence in explaining certain aspects of the language and other concepts. Indeed, Seidlhofer argues that an important strength of non-native teachers is that they show a high degree of conscious, or declarative, knowledge of the internal organization of the English language because of their own language learning experience. Hence, they can 'get into the skin of the foreign learner' (1999: 43). In short, non-native teachers are at the same time familiar with the target and distanced from it, enabling them to be effective teachers of English. Indeed, non-native teachers are what Seidlhofer calls 'double agents' in the sense that they mediate between the different languages and cultures through appropriate pedagogy so as to make informed choices that benefit learners.

Empirical studies on students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs

In what follows, I shall review a number of empirical studies on students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs, including Samimy and Bruff-Griffler (1999), Kelch and Santatn-Williamson (2002), Mahboob (2004), Adophs (2005), Butler (2007), Cheung and Braine (2007), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) and Moussu and Braine (2006).

Samimy and Bruff-Griffler (1999) examined how non-native students in a graduate TESOL program perceived themselves as professionals in the field of ELT, whether they believed that there were differences in the teaching behaviors of native speakers and non-native speakers. Qualitative data were collected by means of classroom discussions, in-depth interviews, and analysis of autobiography writings of student participants. The results suggest that more than two-thirds of the participants reported that difficulties with the language affected their teaching from "a little" to "very much". They saw NESTs as being fluent and accurate; using different techniques, methods and approaches; being flexible; using conversational English; knowing subtleties of the language of the language; using authentic English; providing positive feedback to students and have communication as the goals of their teaching. On the other hand, NNESTs were perceived as relying on textbooks; using the first language as a medium of instruction; knowing the students' background; being sensitive to the needs of the students and having exam preparation as the goal of their teaching. Despite these differences, the students did not consider the native speaker teachers superior to their nonnative counterparts.

Kelch and Santatn-Williamson (2002) investigated the attitudes of 56 ESL students towards NESTs and NNESTs in the United States. By using audio-taped passages read by 3 native and 3 non-native English speakers and an attitude survey questionnaire, the study revealed that the students were in most cases unable to distinguish a native English speaker from a nonnative speaker, and that attitudes towards teachers with different accents of English is not correlated with whether a speaker's accent is native or nonnative, but instead is correlated with the students' perception of whether the speaker is native or nonnative. In addition, they found that there is a correlation between (a) what students considered as native-speaking accents and (b) favorable teacher traits such as a high level of training and education, greater teaching experience and excellence in teaching. In other words, a teacher who was perceived as a NS was viewed more favorably by the students than a perceived NNS. In particular, the students showed a preference for a NS instructor when it came to learning speaking, listening, and pronunciation. Despite the students' preference for a teacher with a native accent, they cited two major advantages of NNESTs, namely, that NNESTs had experienced same difficulties in learning a second language as the students themselves, and that NNESTs were viewed as a source of motivation, showing students the possibility of reaching a higher level of proficiency.

Mahboob's (2004) study aimed at evaluating ESL students' attitudes towards NS and NNS teachers in the United States and investigating factors that influence students' perceptions of their teachers. 37 students were invited to write their own perceptions regarding the issue of NS and NNS teachers in response to a stimulus topic, and data were analyzed using a discourse-analytic technique, following Hyrkstedt and Kalaja (1998). It needs to be noted that Mahboob's study is one of the first studies to employ qualitative data in exploring students' perceptions of NS and NNS teachers. An advantage of using such an approach is that the findings are not based upon a priori categories. The results of the study show that ESL students in the United States do not display a clear preference for either NS

or NNS teachers. Rather, they think that both NS and NNS teachers have unique attributes. Indeed, the distribution of perceived strengths for NS and NNS teachers is complementary. While NS are perceived as good at teaching oral skills, vocabulary and culture, NNS teachers are seen as good at teaching literacy skills and grammar, and answering students' questions, and the students also show a preference for NNS teachers' teaching methodology. However, NNS teachers were criticized as being unable to teach oral communication skills, and such weakness may be due to the students' belief that in order to acquire a 'true' and 'correct' pronunciation, they must follow native speaker models. In Mahboob's (2004: 143) words, '[b]oth NESTs and NNESTs working collaboratively can provide a better learning environment to ESL students'. Importantly, Mahboob suggests that students are not naïve and do not necessarily hold the belief that native teachers are ideal language teachers, or what Phillipson (1992) calls 'native speaker fallacy'.

Taking a longitudinal perspective, Adophs' (2005) study examined how language learners' attitudes towards native speaker English are affected by exposure to native-speaker English. By interviewing a group of students from different countries who study in a British university, she investigated their attitudes towards language learning and towards the host country. Adophs found that many language learners have a rather simplistic notion of the native speaker, but such a concept soon becomes fragmented as they live in an English-speaking environment. It is argued that exposure to native-speaker English plays an important role in assessing the value of it for one's own language learning goals. A number of students in the study underwent a considerable change in attitudes towards the concept of native speaker. While they considered that assimilation to native speaker norms may facilitate communication and integration into the host culture, such a process is also associated with great difficulties. Also, they were more critical of the usefulness and learnability of certain aspects of such a variety, as well as the value of conforming to native speaker norms. Instead, they redefined the ideal model as someone who speakers 'standard English' or 'BBC English', distinguishable from the type of native speakers that students encounter in their lives in the UK, and they shifted the focus of their language learning goals towards mutual intelligibility in an international context. Meanwhile, other students took a more pragmatic view and argue that as long as they can understand one another, they do not feel the need to be able to speak like a native speaker. Adophs' study is particularly interesting in the sense that she demonstrates how students develop a critical awareness of the notion of 'native speaker English' and redefine their language learning goals accordingly based on their experience with native speaker English in the UK. Her study is also original, since very few studies in the field of World Englishes have taken a longitudinal perspective like Adophs' study.

Butler's (2007) study examined students' attitudes towards teachers with American-accented English and Korean-accented English. A matched-guised technique was employed. The study found significant differences in the students' attitudes towards the teachers with American-accented English and Korean-accented English with regard to their 'goodness of pronunciation', 'confidence in their use of English', 'focus on fluency versus accuracy, and 'the use of Korean in the classroom', but not regarding 'general teaching strategies'. More specifically, the Korean students thought that the American-accented English guise had better pronunciation, was relatively more confident in her use of English, would focus more on fluency than on accuracy, and would use less Korean in the English. In other words,

certain qualifications are more important to NS teachers while a different set of qualities are more important for NNS teachers. Yet, other qualities may be regarded as important regardless of NS or NNS status. In addition, the students generally showed a preference for the American-accented English guise as their English teacher. Butler's study contributes to the attitudinal studies on NS and NNS by employing a matched-guised technique in probing into students' attitudes. However, her study did not look at students' actual experience with NS and NNS teachers, but relied on the use of different accents in eliciting students' attitudes towards NS and NNS teachers.

Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) study explored students' views on the pros and cons of having NESTs and NNESTs as their English teachers. Seventy-six university students from the Basque Country participated in the study and were asked to complete both closed and open questionnaires. A 5-point Likert scale was used in the close questionnaire which was made up of 42 statements. The results suggest that more than half of the respondents (60.6%) show a preference for NS and 35.5% do not have a clear preference. However, when they were given the possibility of having both NS and NNS teachers, the percentage increased to 71.6%. Lasagabaster and Sierra also found that the university students preferred NESTs in the areas of pronunciation, culture and civilization, listening, vocabulary and speaker, while they showed a preference for NNESTs in the areas of grammar and strategies. However, the students did not show any preference for NESTs or NNESTs in the other areas, namely reading, assessment, attitudes towards English speaking countries and attitudes towards the learning of English. Another interesting finding is that whereas the students preferred NESTs at university level in most areas, this was not true for primary education. In the open questionnaire, most of the respondents recognized the strengths of NNESTs. In particular, they valued the NNESTs as a resource of learning strategies, and saw NNESTs as imitable models. Lasagabaster and Sierra's study is important in that it looks at students' perceptions towards NESTs and NNESTs with respect to different aspects of language teaching and in relate to different levels of education. Hence, their study goes deeper than the question of students' preference for NS or NNS teachers in general.

Moussu and Braine (2006) attempted to examine ESL students' attitude change after being taught by NNS teachers. Two questionnaires were administered to almost 100 students in a university in the US. While the initial one was administered at the beginning of the semester and the second one was given at the end of the semester. It contained three sections to measure students' perceptions of their NNS teachers: (a) demographic information, (b) opinions about and past experiences with NNS teachers in general and (c) questions about the students' current teachers. Moussu and Braine found that students held positive attitudes towards NNS teachers at the beginning of the semester. Most students indicated that they could learn English just as well as from NNS teachers and that they respected and admired their NNS teachers. On the whole, the students' responses showed a high degree of support for their NNS teachers. In Moussu and Braine's study, the most important finding is that the students' attitudes towards their NNS teachers increased positively over time, despite a lack of significant change over time. A possible reason is that the students already had positive opinions of their NNS teachers at the beginning of the semester. In particular, 76% of respondents recommended their NNS teachers to a friend by the end of the semester, compared to only 57% at the beginning of the semester.

Up until now, Cheung and Braine (2007) is the only study which investigated the attitudes of students towards their NNESTs in the context of Hong Kong. Data were collected through a questionnaire adapted from Plakans (1997) and semi-structured interviews. The results of the study indicate that on the whole, the students showed a favorable attitude towards their NNS English teachers. They stated that NNESTs could employ effective strategies in teaching English, understood the difficulties encountered by the students, and were capable of designing teaching materials according to the needs and learning styles of the students. However, the respondents also cited several NNS teachers' shortcomings, including their examination-oriented teaching approach, their limited use of English in class, and the tendency to over-correct students' work. Cheung and Braine also found that final-year students indicated a more positive attitude than first- and second-year students, implying that the students' positive attitude towards NNS English teachers tended to increase with longer stay at the university. A possible reason may be that the students are likely to meet more qualified and more competent NNS English teachers at university and are less conscious of the 'native speaker fallacy' (Phillipson, 1992). As a result, they are more willing to question the superiority of NS English teachers.

In summary, the studies on NESTs and NNESTs reveal that NESTs are still preferred by students in the areas of pronunciation and language accuracy, while NNESTs are also found to be perceived in a positive light by their students. In other words, students do not necessarily show an unfavorable attitude towards NNESTs. While most of the studies reviewed are situated in the United States, it is worth exploring the issues surrounding NESTs and NNESTs in an outer-circle context, such as Hong Kong. While Cheung and Braine's (2007) study employed a largely quantitative methodology, my present study intends to complement their study by adopting a qualitative approach to the issues surrounding NNESTs and NESTs with the use of open-ended questionnaires. In particular, it is the intention of the study to probe into the specific reasons for the students' preferences for NESTs or NNESTs so as to present a more complex picture of students' perspectives on native and non-native English teachers, especially when students' preferences for NESTs or NNESTs may vary depending on different aspects of ELT involved. Moreover, whereas Cheung and Braine's study looked at NNESTs only, the present study attempts to explore students' perceptions of *both* NNESTs and NESTs so that a comparison can be carried out.

Research questions

For the present study, two research questions are set out to guide the general direction of the research, namely:

(1)   Do Hong Kong secondary school students prefer NNESTs over NNESTs?

(2)   What are the respective strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs in teaching English as perceived by Hong Kong secondary school students?

Methodology

In order to gather the students' attitudes towards native and non-native English-speaking teachers, an open-ended questionnaire was designed by the author and distributed to 81 secondary school students in Hong Kong.

Participants

The 81 participants in the present study came from two secondary schools in Hong Kong. They were studying in Secondary 4 and were aged between 15 and 16. One class from each school was chosen to participate in the study. 40 students from School A and 41 students from School B were involved. Of the 40 students in School A, 24 were male and 16 were female. As for School B, 22 were male and 19 were female.

Instrument

Six questions were included in the questionnaire, as shown below. All the questions required the students to indicate a preference for either an NNEST or an NEST in different aspects of teaching, although they may also indicate a neutral position in their answers. The questionnaire was written in English, but the students were allowed to answer in either English or Chinese. Despite the choice of using Chinese in answering the questionnaires, all the respondents completed the questionnaires in English. In the analysis that follows, the student quotations are cited verbatim from the questionnaires without any editing.

(1) Do you like an NNEST or an NEST's teaching methods more?

(2) Do you understand an NNEST or an NEST's instructions better?

(3) Do you think an NNEST or an NEST show more care for you as your English teacher?

(4) Do you prefer an NNEST or an NEST to teach you pronunciation?

(5) Do you prefer an NNEST or an NEST as your oral English teacher?

(6) Do you prefer an NNEST or an NEST as your English grammar teacher?

Data collection

The open-ended questionnaires were distributed to the two classes by two research assistants in March 2009. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaires during class time. They were also informed that they were allowed to withdraw from the study if they felt uncomfortable about completing the questionnaire, and no penalty would be imposed. The questionnaires took approximately 40 minutes to complete, and the return rate of the questionnaire was 100%.

Data analysis

The written data was typed and word-processed, generating 31 pages of comments from the students. All the comments were categorized according to the six questions listed above, but were later re-categorized if the comments did not actually fit into any of the particular questions. In the process of categorizing comments, I noticed that quite a number of students' answers to a particular question might actually be more appropriate to another question. In the end, I re-arranged all the comments into six main categories we first intended to look at, namely, namely (1) teachers' teaching methods, (2) students' understanding of teachers' instructions, (3) teachers' care for students, (4) teachers' pronunciation, (5) teaching of English grammar, and (6) teaching of oral English.

Result

In presenting the findings of the questionnaire, I divide this section in six sub-sections corresponding to the six categories. The number in the square brackets below is used to identify the student whose comments are cited.

Teaching methods

In the area of teaching methods, NESTs are preferred over NNESTs by the majority of the students (76%, N=62) who think that NESTs use more interesting and wide-ranging methods in teaching English and prepare more attractive materials. On the other hand, NNESTs employ more traditional teaching methods which students sometimes find boring.

A majority of students express their preference for NESTs' teaching methods because they think that there is a greater variety of activities in the lessons of NESTs. Students think that such activities as games can help them learn better, as one student says, '*I can learn a lot from the games… And we were not just playing games but we could also learn English. For example,*

when I was singing the English song, I can improve my oral skills' [#26]. Some students also find that the teaching methods used by NESTs are new to them and are seldom used in a NNEST's class, as one student reveals, *'I like NETs because they don't have the same culture as ours so they may have new ideas or games to apply in class*' [#50].

It is also notable that the students think the materials used by the NESTs are more interesting and more wide-ranging than those prepared by NNESTs. A student comments that '*Hong Kong local English teachers […] always give us some worksheets to do or let us write a composition and then improve our grammar […] I feel this way of learning English is very standard and sometimes it will be boring […] It is very different from the NET. The NET uses many materials to teach us English*' [#1]. And when students receive the tailor-made notes prepared by the NESTs, they find them more interesting and appealing. On the other hand, the students find NNESTs' notes look stereotyped and of a fixed or standard format. It may be the reason why the students find the notes and handouts designed by NESTs more interesting.

Another reason why students prefer NESTs' teaching methods is that they think that they can with the NESTs than with NNESTs. Here are some comments of students on lessons with NNESTs: '*[t]he local English teacher would not let us learn from the games and the lyrics of a song. Instead, they rather prefer us to sit in the class and pay attention to them*' [#21] and '*Hong Kong local English teachers are always serious in class. Most of them wouldn't play games with us. They just teach us in a formal way. So, students always think the lesson is very boring*' [#5].

Students' understanding of teachers' instructions in English

In investigating students' understanding of NNESTs' and NESTs' instructions in English, I find that the majority of the students (81.5%, N=66) indicate that they understand NNESTs better, and find it hard to comprehend NESTs' speech.

A number of students state that they cannot understand the NESTs because they speak too fast and there are too many difficult words used in their speech. *'It is not very difficult to understand the NET teachers, but sometimes they speak quite fast because they expect the students to understand. They also use some difficult words that we do not understand*' [#13] and '*[t]he words that they (the local teachers) use are more simple and easier to understand*' [#48]. In addition, students think that the NESTs are not familiar with the level of English of the students and that they maintain their fast speaking rate and use difficult words when teaching English. It results in students experiencing some major difficulties in listening to NESTs as they cannot catch up with the speed of NESTs. On the other hand, other students think that the speaking pace of local teachers is about right for them: '*I felt it was more difficult to understand what the NET said than what the local teachers said. It is because their speaking pace is fast. They say many difficult words. The local English teacher's speaking is easier to understand than the NET. Their speaking pace is suitable for us. I can understand what they say*' [#29].

Indeed, some students comment that they cannot understand the NESTs even though the NESTs try to slow down their speaking pace and use some simpler words. As the NESTs cannot explain the concepts or words in Cantonese, some students may continue to fail in understanding the ideas. A student, for example, mentions that, '*if there are some difficult words or abstract concept, they [local teachers] can explain in Cantonese to let us understand clearly*'

[#52]. Some even comment that the NESTs are not considerate as they do not use easier words to explain the ideas: *'NET teachers don't understand how to speak in Chinese. They just express their opinions as they want. They may ignore whether we understand. They may not consider whether the words are difficult for us'* [#31].

However, while it is quite challenging to understand the English spoken by NESTs, some of the students think it can be beneficial. For example, a student states that *'it's not bad at all, as I understand the meaning of the difficult words gradually if they always say those words'* [#18].

Teacher's care for students

When asked about whether they think NESTs or NNESTs show more care and sympathy for students, the majority of students (74%, N=60) think that NNESTs show more care for them than the NESTs do.

While the students think that the NESTs are nice, they believe that the relationship with NESTs is not as close as that with the NNESTs. As NESTs can only speak in English and most of them do not know Chinese, students are afraid to talk to them as the students think their English is not good enough to engage in a conversation with NESTs. One student points out that *'I don't know how to strike up a conversation with the NET as I'm afraid of talking with a foreigner'* [#2], and the other student thinks that *'sometimes, I want to talk to the teachers, but the NETs cannot understand or misunderstand if I do not speak well, they can't show their care to me'* [#58]. Another student also provide similar remarks: *'Maybe I have less chance to talk to the NETs , so I think they show their care less'* [#34].

Students think that since the NESTs are from different cultures, they sometimes may not understand their situations and do not share similar topics to talk about with the students. This might be another reason why students think that the NESTs show less care for them: *'the NET do not understand us very clearly due to our difference in culture and language'* [#19]. Some students may even think that the cultural difference may worsen their relationship: *'Sometimes we will not agree with the culture or values of the NETs, there will be arguments. With local teachers, we share the same culture and can easily understand each other'* [#58].

Nevertheless, there are students who think both types of teachers care for them as well as students who think all of them do not care for them at all. A student mentions that *'No, I don't feel any care for me from both of them'* [#6]. On the most positive end, a student says, *'Yes, I can feel them care about me, NET and local teacher listen to me, and they know what I said'* [#3]. Here, we can see that some students do like both teachers and think that the care they show for them is of the same degree.

Teacher's pronunciation

Turning to students' comments on NESTs and NNESTs' pronunciation, most students (86%, N=70) share the impression that the NESTs speak better English than NNESTs do. A

majority of the students think that NESTs speak more 'standard' English and their pronunciation is more accurate. For example, one student says, *'Hong Kong teacher's spoken English is not standard when compared with the NET teachers'* [#9]. They assume that NESTs must speak English accurately and should be superior in teaching pronunciation because they are native speakers of English: *'I think that pronunciation of NET teachers is more professional, although Hong Kong local English teachers' pronunciations are not bad'* [#12] and *'NETs' English is more standard and traditional'* [#37].

In addition, some students expect the NESTs to correct their pronunciation mistakes and to help them get rid of their accent when speaking English: *'I prefer NET teachers…because the foreigners can speak more accurately. To learn English, we have to talk in correct sounds. The NET will correct our Cantonese accent so that we can speak English more accurately'* [#35]; and *'their [the NETs'] pronunciation is more correct. And I was once taught the differences between British and American English'* [#59].

A number of students mention that they could acquire the accents of the NESTs if they are taught by NESTs. For example, some students state that: *"I can learn their accent and they speak in English more fluently and naturally"* [#2], and *"I would prefer NET teachers as my oral English teachers. It's because I can learn standard foreign English and get used to listening to standard English. I can also understand more about the intonation of English"* [#33]. It shows that students recognize that the NESTs speak with a different accent from their own, and that the students appreciate the opportunity to be exposed to the NESTs' accents because they may think that if they can manage to listen to and learn from the NESTs' accents, then they may be able to understand or speak with the other foreigners who come from the same countries.

Oral teacher

When the students are asked if they prefer NESTs or NNESTs as their English oral teachers, the majority of them (71%, N=58) prefer NESTs. The major reason is that they think that the NESTs speak better English and they can correct students' pronunciation, a point which was made in the last section on pronunciation.

Another major reason why most students prefer NESTs as their oral teachers is that they are forced to speak English during the communication because NESTs cannot speak Cantonese. A number of comments are as follows: *'we are forced to speak in English because they don't know Chinese'; 'they can push students to check the dictionary and train us to listen and speak because they won't speak in Chinese'* [#53]; *'NET teachers cannot speak Chinese and don't know Chinese, so students must talk in English'* [#12]; *'[i]f the oral English teacher is a HK local teacher, I would like to talk to him/ her in Cantonese but not in English, so I can't practice my spoken English'* [#5]; *'[i]f we have any questions, we must ask them in English and without saying any Chinese because they don't know any Chinese. So, we can improve our English if a NET teaches us'* [#29].

In addition, some students prefer NESTs to be their English oral teacher because they think that the NESTs employ better teaching methods and that their lessons tend to be more interesting than those taught by NNESTs, as some respondents say, *'NETs' teaching is more fun!'* [#12]; *'NET teachers teach you how to speak by drawing pictures or watching movies. It's a*

useful way to improve our speaking skills' [#8] and *'they may have new ideas or games to apply in class'* [#48].

Another major reason why students like to be taught by NESTs in oral lessons is that NESTs encourage students to speak more. So students are given more opportunity to speak in English: *'NET teachers encourage us to speak more and help us to overcome speaking difficulties'* [#14]; *'[s]ome students think that the NETs encourage more interaction. The NETs have different materials, for example, the songs and the games. And they encourage more interaction'* [#38]. In general, the NESTs are perceived to employ interactive teaching approach and encourage students to speak and interact with students more. In addition, some students think that they can gain more confidence by taking with NESTs in speaking classes: *'we can learn to speak confidently in front of foreigners'* [#53]; *'they can help us to build up our confidence in speaking in English'* [#34]. Here, we see that students feel that if they can communicate with the NESTs effectively, they will be able to speak in front of other foreigners with more confidence.

Some students prefer both NESTs and NNESTs to be their oral teachers as they think that both of them can train them in different oral aspects. For example, one student mentions, *'I think both the NET teachers and Hong Kong local teachers are good oral English teachers. On the one hand, the NET teachers can teach us the correct pronunciation. On the other hand, Hong Kong local teachers can practice oral discussion with us because they can understand our thoughts more, and they can teach us oral discussion skills'* [#20].

Grammar teacher

When students are asked if they prefer NESTs or NNESTs as their grammar teachers, the result is completely different from the previous section on students' preference for oral teachers. It is found that the majority of the students (80%, N=65) prefer NNESTs as their English grammar teachers.

An important reason is that students rely on NNESTs to explain the difficult grammatical structures in Cantonese because students think that English grammar is difficult to master and they may not be able to understand what the NESTs mean if they explain grammar in English. Here are the students' comments, *'I would prefer HK local teachers to teach me English grammar. Sometimes, grammar is difficult to understand. If the teachers use English to teach me English grammar, I can't understand it. So using Cantonese to explain would make me feel easier to follow'* [#5]. Another student states, *'I prefer Hong Kong local teachers to teach me English grammar because I'm not good at grammar. I can ask the teachers in Chinese and they can explain to me in Chinese'* [#24]. A student points out that NNESTs can explain abstract concepts in English grammar with the use of Cantonese: *'if there are some difficult words or abstract concept, they can explain in Cantonese to let us understand clearly'* [#50].

Furthermore, students point out that NNESTs understand their problems and difficulties better by knowing their level of English proficiency. For example, they say, *'HK local teachers would know our problems about learning English grammar better'* [#21]; *'[i]f local English teachers teach us English grammar, we will understand it more easily because the local teachers know more what we need'* [#29]; *'local teachers know our level clearly but the NETs do not'*

[#30]. Some students think that NNESTs know their English level better and tend to use simple English to explain grammar, as some students say, *'[t]he words that they [local teachers] use are more simple and easier to understand'* [#46]; *'they [local teachers] will consider our English level and ability. They can use simple English to let us understand those difficult grammar items'* [#2].

Meanwhile, a number of students comment the NESTs do not care much about grammar. For example, some students say, *'most of the NET teachers' grammar is not good'* [#12]; *'the NETs may not be good at grammar, like I am not good at Chinese'* [#32]. Another student also mentions that *'[w]hen we use the wrong tense and ask the NET teachers questions, they cannot help us solve our problems'* [#11].

Still, some students prefer both NESTs and NNESTs to teach them English grammar because they think that both possess the professional ability of teaching grammar, as one student says, *'[b]oth of them are very good at English and they have their professional ability to teach us'* [#19]; *'I prefer both. English is the main language of NET, so they know more about their English tradition. They have full knowledge of English. On the other hand, HK local teachers learn English for many years, they have many experience'* [#1]. Some also think that NESTs and NNESTs can focus on different aspects when teaching grammar. For example, one student says, *[l]ocal English teachers can give me lots of grammar materials and provide effective training. But I think NET teachers can teach us more typical English grammar'* [#33]. From the students' comments, it seems to be a good idea for the co-operation between NESTs and NNESTs when planning grammar lessons, although most Hong Kong secondary schools tend to assign most oral lessons to the NESTs who seldom take up grammar lessons.

Discussion

It is evident in the present study that Hong Kong secondary school students do not necessarily prefer NESTs over NNESTs in every aspect of language teaching. Indeed, when analyzing the qualitative data, we can see a wide range of comments made by students about NESTs and NNESTs, and it is very difficult to say with certainty whether NESTs or NNESTs are preferred by the students. Even when it comes to oral teachers, not all students prefer NESTs, even some of them mention the disadvantages of NESTs as being oral teachers. In other words, we should move away from asking the broad question of whether students prefer NNESTs or NESTs. Instead, we need to focus on students' preference for NESTs/NNSTs in specific areas of teaching, such as pronunciation, grammar and oral skills, so that it is possible for us to understand a more nuanced picture of students' perceptions of NNESTs and NESTs.

In accordance with the findings of the previous research (e.g., Cheung & Braine, 2008; Moussu, 2006; Moussu & Braine, 2005), the results of this study reveal that Hong Kong students show favorable attitudes towards NNESTs. It is found that the students recognize the strengths of NNESTs in teaching English, especially in showing care and sympathy for

students, teaching English grammar, and understanding students' English levels and needs. Hence, in light of the students' positive attitudes towards NNESTs, NNESTs should not be discriminated in employment in the ELT profession simply because of the unjustified excuse that NESTs are preferred by students.

Significantly, the perceptions of the students about native and non-native English-speaking teachers have implications for language teacher education in general. In particular, the students' comments point to the specific areas of weaknesses of both native and non-native English-speaking teachers. For example, NNESTs may need to prepare more attractive and wide-ranging materials for the students. It is possible that the students may be more motivated to learn English if the materials are more creative and if more interactive activities can be incorporated in the NNESTs' classes. NNESTs may also need to make an effort to improve their English proficiency, despite their heavy teaching duties. On the other hand, NESTs may need to re-evaluate their ways of teaching grammar, since a number of students mention that NESTs pay little attention to the area of grammar. It is important to acknowledge the students' concern about grammar and NESTs should make an effort to accommodate the students' expectations and needs, especially if grammar is an important component in the students' examinations.

In view of the different weaknesses of NNESTs and NESTs, team teaching practices may be implemented in schools in order to maximize the strengths of both NESTs and NNESTs. As Carless (2006) notes, team teaching between NESTs and NNESTs allows the complementarity of NEST and NNEST skills to be exploited profitably. Such practices are premised on the assumption that NESTs and NNESTs possess vastly different abilities and attributes so that they can complement each other (Carless, 2006). According to Medgyes (1992, 1994), the strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs are largely complementary. It is believed that students can benefit most if they are given the opportunity to learn from both NESTs and NNESTs. In such a case, students may be more content with what they are learning, and it may enhance their motivation in learning English.

Furthermore, the present study demonstrates the importance of raising students' awareness of the 'native speaker fallacy'. It is important to promote the strengths of NNESTs in students' mind. In addition, the professional identities of NNESTs need to be validated by the schools and other authorities, so that students do not develop the impression that NNESTs are inadequate and incompetent language teachers. Meanwhile, the weaknesses of NESTs must be recognized by the schools, so that they do not blindly hire native speakers of English, regardless of their professional training and experience. It is hoped that with the increased awareness of the 'native speaker fallacy', students do not hold the belief that NESTs are superior to NNESTs.

It is also noticeable that misconceptions exist among students with regard to the goals of language learning and the notion of language standards. In some cases, they may believe that they need to sound like a native speaker, and that native speaker's English is more 'accurate' than Hong Kong speakers' English. It is suggested that students should be informed of the latest developments of English as a *lingua franca* in international contexts. One way to do so is to engage students in critical discussion of the politics of English in class, and the topics may range from the use of English around the world, the different varieties of English, the role of English in international communication, to the notions of language

standards, ownership of English, and the relationship between language and culture. For example, Baumgardner and Brown (2003: 248) suggest that 'the pluricentrality of English should be a part of [the] students' linguistic knowledge, and they should know when to use one variety versus the other'. It is therefore imperative for students to understand the reality surrounding the English language, so that they do not hold misled prejudice against NNESTs.

Conclusion

The present study examined Hong Kong secondary school student's attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs, with respect to six aspects of language teaching: (1) teachers' teaching methods, (2) students' understanding of teachers' instructions, (3) teachers' care for students, (4) teachers' pronunciation, (5) teaching of English grammar, and (6) teaching of oral English. The results of the study reveal that Hong Kong secondary school students generally show favorable attitudes towards NNESTs and NESTs, and that they do not necessarily prefer NESTs over NNESTs. It was also found that the students recognize the strengths and weakness of both NNESTs and NESTs. While NESTs are perceived to be good oral teachers who use interesting and varied teaching methods, they are not preferred as their grammar teachers. On the other hand, NNESTs are preferred by students as their grammar teachers who show care for their students, but are perceived to use mundane teaching methods. It is noteworthy that the results of the study also draw attention to the range and diversity of comments made by students about NESTs and NNESTs, thereby underscoring the complexities of the issues surrounding NNESTs.

However, the present study is merely a small-scale research project, with a small student sample size (N=81) which was drawn from only 2 different schools in Hong Kong. It would be worth investigating students' perspectives on NNESTs and NESTs with a larger sample size. Another limitation of the present study is that questionnaires, although they could be of great help in an exploratory study or in the preliminary study of a large study, may not be the most useful tool in probing into students' views and perceptions in greater depths. It is suggested that other research instruments, such as semi-structured interviews, can be used to triangulate and expand upon the findings. Despite the shortcomings, it is hoped that the present study provides a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs from the students' perspectives, and that the contributions of NNESTs can be duly recognized and valued, so that cases of unjust discrimination against NNESTs may be reduced in the years to come. Further research on NNESTs is necessary, and in particular, it would be encouraging to see more empirical studies that move away from the simplistic question of whether students prefer NESTs or NNESTs to more nuanced questions about the specific strengths and weaknesses in particular areas of language teaching.

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Comparison of female and male sports hero constructions in newspaper coverage

Ayako Tominari

Lancaster University

Abstract

This paper applies selective parts of van Leeuwen's (1996; 2008) social actor theory and investigates the differences or similarities in how female and male players are constructed as sports heroes in terms of gender in broadsheet and sports newspaper articles. It focuses on two players: Yukiko Ueno (female) and Yuki Saito (male). Ueno was a pitcher in the national softball team when her team won a gold medal in the Beijing Olympics in 2008. Saito was a pitcher in the champion team of the National High School Baseball Championship in 2006. I selected articles about them from national broadsheets and sports newspapers when they drew the most attention from the media. Despite some similarities in the ways of constructing them as sports heroes, I argue that Saito's hero construction is associated with masculinity in the sports newspaper articles, while Ueno's is not associated with femininity in either the sports newspaper or the broadsheet articles.

Introduction

This paper[55] presents a part of my PhD research, which explores male sports hero construction and masculinity in the newspaper coverage of the National High School Baseball Championship 2006 (the Championship hereafter). This is a comparative study, which aims to explore the similarities and differences of female and male sports hero constructions and the extent to which gender is relevant to a male sports hero construction in the main study.

This paper compares the representations of two players: Yukiko Ueno and Yuki Saito. Ueno was a pitcher in the national softball team when her team won a gold medal in the Beijing Olympics in 2008. Saito was a pitcher in Waseda Jitsugyo High School team (Waseda-jitsu or Sojitsu for abbreviation) when they won the Championship title in 2006. Because baseball is one of the most popular sports in Japan, although the players are all high school students, there is a lot of media coverage on the National High School Baseball Championship every year. Softball is similar to baseball; it uses a similar field with four bases and a slightly bigger and softer ball and a bat. It is sometimes regarded as a girls' substitute for baseball in Japan. Many schools have a softball team for girls and a baseball team for boys. Also in the Olympic Games, softball was played only by women, while baseball was played only by men.

The backgrounds of the two players are different: Saito was in a high school baseball team and had games at national level, while Ueno was in the national team and had games at international level. However, the duration of the tournaments and their positions in the game are similar as both Ueno and Saito were pitchers. Pitcher is an especially important position and tends to draw attention in the game. There was considerable media coverage on them during and after the respective events. Therefore, I think they are comparable.

The media play a crucial role in the construction of sports heroes (Okamoto, 2004; Vande Berg, 1998). In sport media, representation of sportswomen is scarce in relation to sportsmen (Duncan and Messner, 1998; Lines, 2002). Sport media often attribute stereotypical masculine aspects to sportsmen and feminine aspects to sportswomen. On the one hand, the focus is on power and strength in media representation of sportsmen, whilst on the other hand, the media representation of sportswomen shows weakness and emotional vulnerability more than for sportsmen and tends to underestimate their achievements. Moreover, studies on the visual media (Duncan, 1990 and Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990, mentioned in Duncan and Messner, 1998) reveal that their body parts, such as breasts and thighs, are sometimes highlighted in photos and they are represented as sexualised (Duncan and Messner, 1998). Media representation of sports heroes is part of sport media. Reflecting the underrepresentation of sportswomen, most sports heroes are male (Lines, 2002; Vande Berg, 1998), and media representations of male sports heroes 'reproduce and instantiate hegemonic masculinity' (Vande Berg, 1998: 139).

Defining the concept of 'sports hero' is not easy. Sports heroes, as has already been mentioned, are media constructs. It is almost impossible for most people to actually meet them, knowing about them only through the media. As male sports heroes' features are concerned, Vande Berg (1998) lists outstanding athletic performance, courage, expertise, perseverance, assertiveness, generosity, honesty, character and so on. Not all sports heroes necessarily have all of these virtues. Some sports heroes or stars are referred to with moral concerns over such as corruption and drug taking (Whannel, 2002). For sports heroes, outstanding athletic performance is what counts most. Aspects of morality and personality depend on how they are represented in the media and how the public respond to them. Rebellious attitudes can draw attention from the media and help to construct a star, while good manners can be represented as dull (Lines, 2002).

Looking at Ueno and Saito's media representation of what they achieved, I regard them as 'sports heroes'. Ueno and her team won a gold medal for the first time in the Olympics 2008. The national softball team had never won a gold medal before. She drew most attention from the media in the team because she was the best pitcher. She pitched in the most important games including the final. She suddenly became well-known nationally and appeared on TV shows and events. A few books about her were published as well.

Saito's team won the Championship after having two final games, which is unusual. He pitched in all the games they had in the Championship, which is quite hard. He was actually referred to as 'hero' in the media as I will show later in the paper. Like Ueno, books about him were also published. Both sports events that Ueno and Saito were involved in were crucial in the Japanese sporting world in that year. However, the feverish media focus on them did not last long because they were not professional athletes like sports heroes in professional football or baseball, whose performance and celebrity status draw attention year after year.

For this study, I use data from two broadsheets and two sports newspapers (i.e. tabloids) on each player in this study and apply selective parts of social actor theory (van Leeuwen, 1996; 2008) as an analytical method. My research questions are addressed below.

1. What are the similarities and differences in the representations and constructions of a female and a male sports hero in the broadsheet articles and the sports newspaper articles?

2. What are the similarities and differences between the constructions of a female and a male sports hero in terms of gender?

The first question will be answered by comparing the two types of newspapers and the second question, by comparing female and male sports hero constructions. Representation means what is presented explicitly in a text and construction means what is presented implicitly in a text.

The paper consists of five sections. The next section will describe my data. The third section will explain social actor theory and the categories I apply for this study. After that, I will present findings from the analysis. Finally, I will conclude with answers to the research questions and implications of the study.

Data description

In this section, I briefly describe the sample texts for each player with regard to the size of the sample articles. I also give some background to the events and newspapers.

Sample articles on Ueno

Sample texts on Ueno include articles focusing on her that were published on the days after her team's semi-final and final games. The articles are mainly about her pitching at the game including some quotes from her. The dates of the articles are the 21st and the 22nd August, 2008. Her team reached the final on the 20th and won a gold medal on the 21st. The articles are from two national broadsheets and two national sports newspapers. They are the *Asahi Shimbun* (AS) and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (YS) as the broadsheets and the *Nikkan Sports* (NS) and the *Sports Nippon* (SN) as the sports newspapers. Sports newspapers are similar to tabloids. Most readers of sports newspapers are men. For example, 79.5% of readership of NS is male (The Nikkan Sports, 2008). The gender proportions of the broadsheets are almost equal. The main contents of sports newspapers are sports news and betting/racing information. Most of them have a section of sex entertainment for heterosexual men. It is obvious from the contents that the target readership of sports newspapers is men.

I collected one article from each newspaper. The total number of sample articles on Ueno is eight. Because the fact that Japan reached the final and won a gold medal in softball at the Olympics was big news, all the sample articles are from the front page of each newspaper. Table 2.1 shows the number of characters in each article on Ueno, as the size of a Japanese corpus can best be shown by the number of characters. The table shows that the sports newspaper articles are longer than the broadsheet articles.

Date	Broadsheet		Sports newspaper		Total
	AS	YS	NS	SN	
21st	681	634	1055	1020	3390
22nd	943	633	1015	891	3482

| | **Total** | 1624 | 1267 | 2070 | 1911 | 6872 |

Table 2.1 Number of characters in the articles on Ueno

Sample articles on Saito

Sample articles on Saito are from the newspapers issued after the last two days of the Championship. Because the final game ended in a tie first and it was played again on the next day, the sample articles are about the two final games. They are from the 21st and the 22nd August, 2006. The titles of the newspapers are the same as Ueno's sample: AS and YS as broadsheets and NS and SN as sports newspapers. The broadsheet articles are from the sports section. The sports newspaper articles are from the front page. I collected one article from each newspaper. YS did not have any articles focusing on Saito in the sports section on the 22nd. So, the number of sample articles on Saito is only seven. Nevertheless, the sizes of the whole data of Ueno and Saito are not so different. Table 2.2 shows the number of characters in the articles on Saito.

	Broadsheet		**Sports newspaper**		**Total**
Date	AS	YS	NS	SN	
21st	586	663	1356	857	3462
22nd	648	-	1203	1154	3005
Total	1234	663	2559	2011	6467

Table 2.2 Number of characters in the articles on Saito

Analytical method

Since I apply van Leeuwen's social actor theory (1996; 2008) as an analytical method in this study, I will introduce this theory and then explain what parts of the theory I will use for the analysis.

Social actor theory

Social actor theory (van Leeuwen, 1996; 2008) originally intends to explore social issues such as immigration and racism in English texts employing a Critical Discourse Analysis approach. He proposes categories to investigate how social actors are represented in a text. It is useful to look at, for example, which social actors are included or excluded in a text, individually or collectively represented, specifically or generically represented; how social actors are referred to, and so on. The theory enables us to systematically investigate which social actors are foregrounded and the linguistic strategies used to achieve this. Such investigation can be helpful to reveal the intentions of the writers and the ideologies that the intentions are based upon.

I adapt this theory to look at sports hero construction and gender in Japanese. The theory can be useful in the examination of how Ueno or Saito and other social actors are represented; and how the ways of representing them can contribute to the hero construction of Ueno or Saito. Moreover, I would like to explore how gender relations, femininities and masculinities, are relevant to their representations. Van Leeuwen (1996, 2008) does not mention gender very much. He only points out the representation of fathers in children's stories and the ways of referring to men and women in newspapers are sometimes different, but does not discuss gender regarding these. My sample texts do not include men and women together; Ueno's texts have only women and Saito's texts have only men. So the study cannot explore whether men or women are foregrounded. Rather, it intends to compare the texts on a woman and a man and explore the respective gender representation. The next section explains how I adapt this theory to my data.

Categories in social actor theory to be applied

This section describes the categories in van Leeuwen's theory (1996; 2008) that I apply. The categories I use in this study are exclusion, genericisation, nomination, categorisation, assimilation and impersonalisation. These categories are important for representations of Ueno and Saito. Most of the categories can be applied to Japanese similarly as to English. However, it is necessary to look at features of Japanese such as honorifics to examine nomination in a Japanese text. I explain the categories and supplement the theory to look at Japanese texts where necessary.

Exclusion

Exclusion is to exclude social actors from the text. Van Leeuwen (1996: 38; 2008: 28) proposes three types of exclusion: *radical exclusion*, *suppression* and *backgrounding*. Radical exclusion is not to mention social actors and their activities at all in a text. Therefore, radical exclusion does not leave a linguistic trace in a text. In other words, social actors radically excluded from the text are social actors involved in what is not written in the text. Only by comparing the text with other representations of the same event, is it possible to know the radically excluded social actors. Suppression is to exclude social actors, but include their activities in a text. For example in my data, a play is described, but the players involved in the play are not

described in the text. Backgrounding is to exclude social actors in a description of a given activity but they are mentioned elsewhere in the text.

Nomination and categorisation

Nomination and *categorisation* are related (van Leeuwen, 1996: 52; 2008: 40). Both are used to look at how social actors are referred to in a text. Nomination is how social actors are named. For example, it looks at whether a social actor is referred to by surname or first name. Social actors can be represented by a category they share with others. Categorisation has two sub-categories: *identification* and *functionalisation.* Identification is to represent social actors by their identities such as gender, age, or race. Functionalisation is to represent social actors by their function such as roles and occupation. In Japanese baseball reports, players are often referred to with their names and their roles such as fielding positions and the batting orders. In Japanese, honorifics, which are often attached to the end of names, can represent gender, relationship between the addresser and the addressee, roles, occupation, and so on. For instance, *san* is an honorific which can be attached to both women and men, *kun* is usually used to refer to boys and men and *chan* is commonly used to refer to children or younger people and can show endearment or closeness[56]. On the other hand, an honorific like *sensei* is used to refer to teachers and doctors.

Although van Leeuwen (1996; 2008) does not mention pronouns in his discussion of nomination, I would like to include pronouns in nomination to analyse Japanese texts. Japanese has a variety of first and second person singular pronouns. They can indicate gender identity, formality and the relation between the addresser and the addressee. Therefore, they can be useful to explore gender and power relations among social actors. For instance, a first person singular pronoun, *boku*, is commonly used by young men and boys. Another first person singular pronoun, *watashi*, is commonly used by women in any context and by men in formal contexts.

Additionally, I include reflexive pronouns such as *jibun,* which often appear in Japanese, in nomination. They can be used as a substitute of the first person or the second person singular pronouns but they do not represent gender, formality, or power relations.

Assimilation

Assimilation is to represent social actors collectively, i.e. referring to them as groups (van Leeuwen, 1996: 48; 2008: 37). For instance in my sample, a player can be referred to individually with his or her name (*individualisation*), while a player can be represented with other players as a team.

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[56] In this paper, I only deal with Japanese commonly used in the major media including my samples, i.e. 'common Japanese'. The meanings and implications I exemplify can be different in different dialects.

Impersonalisation

Impersonalisation means not to represent social actors as human beings but to represent them by other means (van Leeuwen, 1996: 59; 2008: 46). There are two main types of impersonalisation. *Abstraction* is to represent social actors by their qualities, while *objectivation* is to represent social actors by places or things associated with them. Objectivation can thus be a form of metonymy. For example, a reference to a pitcher as 'a right arm' in Japanese baseball reports, represents the pitcher by a part of his or her body. It is objectivation according to van Leeuwen (1996; 2008) as well as metonymy.

Now that I have explained the main points of selective parts of van Leeuwen's (1996; 2008) social actor theory, the next section will present findings from the analysis of my sample articles applying these categories.

Findings from the analysis

This section presents findings from the analysis of the sample articles on Ueno and Saito. It has two parts: The first part will present references to the two players, while the second part will show the representation of social actors in the articles focusing on the two players.

References to Ueno and Saito

I will now show the references to Ueno and Saito in each article. These involve nomination, categorisation, and impersonalisation. Firstly, I show the references from the broadsheet articles and secondly, from the sports newspaper articles.

Table 4.1 and 4.2 show references to Ueno and Saito and the number of times they are used in each article in the broadsheets. I include references used in quotes, which are shown with quotation marks. First and second person singular pronouns used in reference to them and reflexive pronouns are included.

Date	AS References	No. of times used	YS References	No. of times used
21st	Ueno	3	Ueno	5
	Yukiko Ueno (26)	1	Ace	2
	'Self' (*jibun*)	1	'I' (*watashi*)	1
			Japan's ace	1

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Date	AS References	No. of times used	YS References	No. of times used
22nd	Iron arm Ueno	1	Ueno	3
	Yukiko Ueno (26)	1	26 year-old right arm	1
	The iron arm	1	The iron arm	1
	The body of 174cm and 72kg	1	Self (*mizukara*)	1
	'I' (*watashi*)	1		
	'Yukiko-*chan*'	1		
	'Self' (*jibun*)	1		

Table 4.1 References to Ueno in the broadsheet articles

Date	AS References	No. of times used	YS References	No. of times used
21st	Saito	2	Saito	3
	Waseda-jitsu's Saito	1	'I' (*boku*)	1
	'I' (*boku*)	1	Self (*jibun*)	2
	Ace	1	'Self' (*jibun*)	1
22nd	Sojitsu iron arm	1	No article	
	Waseda-jitsu's Saito	1		
	'I' (*boku*)	1		
	'Self' (*jibun*)	2		
	The ace	1		
	Self (*jibun*)	1		
	Self (*mizukara*)	1		
	Iron arm with poised face	1		

Table 4.2 References to Saito in the broadsheet articles

Note: Waseda-jitsu, Sojitsu: abbreviation of Saito's team name

Both Ueno and Saito are mostly referred to by their surname in the articles. Ueno is called 'ace' in the YS article and Saito is also called 'ace' in the AS article on the first date. 'Ace (*eesu*)' means the best pitcher in the team. So, referring to them as ace is functionalisation

according to van Leeuwen (1996; 2008), here involving evaluation. It shows that they are both good pitchers.

On the second date, after getting a gold medal, Ueno is referred to as 'the iron arm' in both broadsheets. Saito is also referred to as 'Sojitsu iron arm' after winning the Championship. The iron arm is both a metaphoric and a metonymic reference and objectivation in impersonalisation according to van Leeuwen (1996; 2008). The expression is commonly used to refer to a great pitcher in Japanese. It represents power and strength by the use of iron and focuses on arm, which is an important body part for a pitcher. There are other metonymic references to Ueno in the articles on the 22nd. The YS article refers to her as '26 year-old right arm'. This reference also focuses on her arm. In the AS article, her body, 'the body of 174cm, 72kg' represents her. Placing emphasis on her body reflects the fact that the articles are on the topic of sport.

'Yukiko-*chan*' in the AS article on the 22nd is a quote in the story of Ueno's childhood. It refers to Ueno as a child, so it uses the honorific *chan*. The first person singular pronoun Ueno used is *watashi* (AS 22nd, YS 21st), while Saito used *boku* (AS 21st and 22nd, YS 21st). This is because their gender is different. The first person singular pronouns in Japanese can indicate gender identity: *watashi* is the most commonly used first person singular pronoun for women and girls, whereas *boku* is commonly used for young men and boys. This different use of the first person singular pronouns in the quotations by Ueno and Saito is the only indication of their gender in the articles. Apart from this, there is no gender indication in the references to them.

The references to Ueno and Saito in the broadsheet articles show that they are great pitchers. The same expressions 'ace' and 'the iron arm' are used to refer to them. Apart from the first person singular pronouns in their quotations, there are no references indicating gender. Therefore, the broadsheet articles do not represent gender in their references to the two.

Table 4.3 and 4.4 show references to Ueno and Saito in the sports newspaper articles.

Date	NS References	No. of times used	SN References	No. of times used
21st	Ueno	4	Ace	3
	Self (*mizukara*)	1	Ueno	6
	The big ace	1	'Ueno'	1
	'Ueno'	1	A reliable pitcher	1
	The right arm of the ace	1	This iron arm	1
22nd	Ueno	4	Ueno	2
	'You' (*omae*)	1	Self (*jibun*)	2
	The ace	1		

'Ueno'	1			
'I' (*watashi*)	1			
The iron arm medal to Japan	1			

Table 4.3 References to Ueno in the sports newspaper articles

Date	NS References and predicates	No. of times used	SN References and predicates	No. of times used
21st	Saito	3	Sojitsu's uniform number 1, Saito	1
	'A man'	2	Cool man	1
	'Saito'	2	The ace	1
	Saito, who has the ace number	1	Saito	1
	'Self' (*jibun*)	1	'Self' (*jibun*)	1
	Self (*jibun*)	1	The iron arm	1
22nd	Saito	3	'I' (*boku*)	1
	18-year-old who is usually gentle	1	The iron arm	1
	'Saito'	1	18-year-old boy	1
	'Self' (*jibun*)	2	Saito	5
	Saito becoming a hero at Koshien	1	Self (*jibun*)	1
	The man, Yuki Saito		'Self' (*jibun*)	3
			Sojitsu's uniform number 1	1

Table 4.4 References to Saito in the sports newspaper articles

Again, both Ueno and Saito are referred to as 'ace' in both the NS and the SN articles. Ueno is even called 'the big ace' in the NS article on the 21st. Both Ueno and Saito are referred to as 'the iron arm' in the SN article from the first date. Such representations of the two players are the same as in the broadsheet articles. In the NS article on the 22nd, however, Saito is referred to using the word 'hero', which is not seen in the broadsheets.

In both NS and SN articles on Saito, there are some references to him indicating his gender. He is referred to with the word 'man' in both NS and SN on the 21st. This is an indication of masculinity. I show an extract from the NS representing a masculinity of

emotional competitiveness. It uses Saito's mention of 'man'. The first line is in Japanese, the second in Japanese in phonological alphabets and the third line is a word-by-word translation. The translation of the whole sentence is at the end.

(1)
駒大苫小牧の　　　「怪物」　エース　田中への　　闘争心が、
komadaitomakomai-no　'kaibutsu'　eesu　tanaka-eno　tososhin-ga,
Komadai-tomakomai's　'monster'　ace　　to Tanaka　　fighting spirit
斎藤の　心を　　さらに　強くした。
saito-no　kokoro-o　sarani　tsuyokushita
Saito's　　spirit　　even　　made stronger
The fighting spirit towards 'the monster' ace Tanaka in Komadai-tomakomai made Saito's spirit even stronger. (Saito, S14, NS-21st)

　「男と男の　　　勝負　　ですから」と、
'otoko-to otoko-no　shobu　　desukara'-to,
'a man and a man　　confrontation　is　since'
珍しく　　熱い　言葉を　口にした。
mezurashiku　atsui　kotoba-o　kuchinishita
unusually　　hot　　words　　mentioned
'It's a confrontation between a man and a man', (Saito) unusually used passionate words. (Saito, S15, NS-21st)

The sequence of two sentences uses Saito's quote to relate masculinity to the confrontation between Saito and Tanaka, a man and a man, strong pitchers. Tanaka, the pitcher in the opposing team, is referred to as '"the monster" ace' and represented as a very strong pitcher. Saito refers to Tanaka and himself as 'a man and a man' and represents their confrontation as serious. 'A man and a man' is even used in the small headline of the paragraph having this sequence, i.e. as a pullout. It shows the article's focus on the word 'man' and the masculinity represented by it. A man here represents a masculinity of emotional competitiveness, which implies that men are competitive, passionate and serious about winning.

On the 22nd, the SN article uses the word 'boy' to describe Saito after finishing the final game. The two extracts below are from SN. The first one is from the 21st and the second one from the 22nd.

(2)
クールな 男が　滴る　　汗を ハンドタオルで ぬぐうことも せず
kuuruna　otoko-ga　shitataru　ase-o　handotaoru-de　nuguukoto mosezu
cool　　　man　　　dropping　sweat　with a face towel　　without wiping
直球を　続けた。
chyokkyuu-o　tsuzuketa
fastballs　　continued
The cool man continued fastballs without wiping his dropping sweat with a face towel. (Saito, S14, SN-21st)

(3)

重圧から　　解放された　瞬間、
jyuuatsu-kara　　kaihousareta　shyunkan,
from pressures　relieved　　　　at the moment
18歳の少年に　　あらゆる感情が　一度に　襲ってきた。
18sai-no shyonen-ni　arayuru kanjyo-ga　ichidoni　osottekita
to the 18-year-old boy　all emotions　　　　at once　attacked
At the moment of being relieved from pressures, all emotions attacked to the 18-year-old boy. (Saito, S12, SN-22nd)

The first extract refers to Saito as 'the cool man' and describes him pitching in the game. On the other hand, the second extract depicts the game as over and refers to him as 'the 18-year-old boy'. Saito is represented as an adult man during a game and as a boy outside of a game. Such representation associates being an adult man with his good performance in baseball. Although it does not use the word 'boy', the NS article on the 22nd refers to him as '18-year-old, who is usually gentle'. This reference also associates his being 18-year-old, implicating that he is still a boy, with his daily life, when he is not pitching. Thus, the sports newspapers contrast Saito's adult manhood during the game and boyhood outside of the game.

Moreover, the NS article on the 22nd associates being a man with Saito's great achievement, as below.

(4)

数々の　　記録　だけでなく、　　　記憶にも　　残った　男、　斎藤佑樹。

kazukazu-no kiroku　dakedenaku,　　　kioku-nimo　　nokotta　otoko,　Saito Yuki.

many　　　　records　not only but also　in the memory　remained　man　　Yuki Saito

The man Yuki Saito will be remembered not only in many records, but also in the memory of people. (Saito, S36, NS-22nd)

In this sentence, Saito is referred to with his full name. Using a full name in Japanese is rather formal and official. By juxtaposing the word 'man' and Saito's full name, NS asserts that Saito is the man and represents a masculinity of accomplishment (Tominari, 2008).

Thus, the sports newspaper articles on Saito represent masculinities using references to him. They represent the great achievement of Saito in the Championship as a sign of his masculinity as an adult man and the confrontation between Saito and Tanaka as serious because it is between men.

By contrast, there is no reference indicating femininity in Ueno's articles in the sports newspapers. Like the broadsheet articles, representation of gender is only found in the pronouns used in quotations in the sports newspaper articles on Ueno.

There is a reference to Ueno with a second person singular pronoun *omae* in a quote from her manager (female) in the NS article on the 22nd. There are various second person singular pronouns in Japanese and they can indicate formality, as well as the relation between the speaker and the addressee. *Omae* is commonly used by male speakers to address either males or females. It is not usually used by females and it cannot be used to address someone older or of a higher status either. Instead, it is used to address someone in equal or lower position than the speaker. The relation between the speaker and the

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addressee is usually close and it is used in an informal context. So, the manager's use of *omae* for Ueno gives a masculine impression. This shows that they are close and their hierarchical relation, which is commonly seen in sports and their rather masculine linguistic habit. Including *omae* in the article implies that NS does not mind representing their masculine habit and rather wants to show the reliable relationship between Ueno and her manager.

As I have demonstrated, the references to Saito in the sports newspapers are different from those in the broadsheets. The sports newspapers represent masculinity in the references to Saito explicitly. On the other hand, they do not represent femininity in the references to Ueno. Rather, they represent a masculine impression by her manager's use of *omae* to Ueno.

Representation of Ueno or Saito against other social actors

This section looks at the representation of the social actors, Ueno or Saito and other people. The findings will show that the articles on both Ueno and Saito sometimes apply similar ways of foregrounding them and exaggerating their achievement as a pitcher.

To focus on Ueno or Saito, respectively, the articles do not mention other players very much. They are sometimes not referred to even when their actions are described in the text, which is suppression in van Leeuwen's theory (1996, 2008). I show examples of suppression from both Ueno's and Saito's samples from AS. Both examples describe the scene when Ueno or Saito's ball was hit for a homerun by an opposing batter.

(5)
まさかの　　同点　　本塁打を　　浴びる。
masakano　　douten　　honruida-o　　abiru
unbelievable　tied　　homerun　　had (showered)
(Ueno) suffered an unbelievable homerun to be tie scored. (Ueno, S15, AS-21st)

(6)
先頭に　　安打を 許し、
sento-ni　　anda-o　yurushi,
the first batter　a hit　　allowed
続けて　　初球を
tsuzukete　　shokyu-o
consecutively　the first ball
バックスクリーン左に　打ち込まれた
bakkusukuriin hidari-ni　　uchikomareta
centerfield fence left　　　being hit
(Saito) allowed a hit to the first batter, and then the next ball was hit to the left side of the centre field fence. (Saito, S6, AS-22nd)

Although hitting a homerun is important in softball and baseball, the batters who hit a homerun in the above examples are suppressed. By doing so, the focus of the depiction is on the pitchers while the batters who hit the homeruns are represented only vaguely. This represents the unhappiness of the pitchers with their balls being hit for a homerun rather than the happiness of batters hitting a homerun.

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Even when other players are referred to, they are sometimes not referred to specifically or individually like Ueno and Saito. They can be referred to only with their roles or positions, i.e. functionalisation, without their names like 'the first batter' in the above example (6).

They can also be referred to collectively (assimilation) such as 'the team'. By referring to Ueno and Saito specifically and referring to other teammates collectively, Ueno and Saito can be represented as separate and clear and the other players as blurred. In the next extract from SN, Ueno's teammates are not only represented collectively but also impersonalised.

(7)
歓喜の　輪の　中心には、　　上野が　いた。
kanki-no　wa-no　chushin-niwa,　　ueno-ga ita
joy　　　　circle　in the centre,　Ueno　　was
Ueno was in the centre of the circle of joy. (Ueno, S5, SN-22nd)

In this example, Ueno's teammates are referred to as 'the circle of joy'. The expression does not refer to them individually and moreover, it does not represent them as human beings. This is an example of impersonalisation according to van Leeuwen's theory (1996, 2008). Only Ueno is represented separately and clearly as a human in this sentence and other teammates are represented collectively and blurred.

By assimilating their teammates, Ueno and Saito can be represented as the one who led their whole team alone.

(8)
強じんな　体力　と　　精神力で、
kyojin'na　tairyoku-to　　seishinryoku-de,
strong　　　stamina and　　spirit
２試合３１８球を　投げきった　　エースが、
2shiai 318kyu-o　　　nagekitta　　　　eesu-ga
2 games 318balls　　　having pitched　　ace
日本を　決勝に　導いた。
nihon-o　kessho-ni　michibiita
Japan　　to the final　led
The ace, having pitched 318 balls for two games with powerful stamina and strong spirit, has led Japan to the final. (Ueno, S3, YS-21st)

'The ace' in (8) refers to Ueno and 'Japan' refers to the whole team. Ueno is represented separately from the whole team and the sentence represents that she is the one who led the team. This exaggerates what she did. A similar representation is found in Saito's sample from NS as well.

(9)
甲子園で　　　ヒーローになった　　斎藤が
koshien-de　　hiiroo-ni natta　　　　Saito-ga
at Koshien　　　becoming a hero　　　　Saito

創部　１０１年の　　古豪・早実を
soubu　　101 nen-no　　　　kogou　Soujitsu-o
founded　for 101 years　　　old　　Soujitsu
初優勝へと　　　　　導いた。
hatsu yuusho-eto　　　　　michibiita.
the first　championship　　led
Saito, becoming a hero at Koshien, led the old Soujitsu, which was founded 101 years ago to the first championship. (Saito, S33, NS-22nd)

In (9), Saito is referred to with the word 'hero' and represented as the one who led 'the old Soujitsu'. The sentence represents the team not only collectively but also in a historical context and locates Saito in the historical context (Tominari, 2008). It exaggerates what Saito did. Representations as in the two extracts exaggerate Ueno and Saito's ability, power and responsibility as a pitcher, which can contribute to constructing them as heroes.

　　　The above discussion was about examples representing Ueno and Saito specifically and their teammates collectively. Referring to Ueno and Saito specifically and referring to the opposing team members collectively can represent that they alone confronted the opposing team. This can also exaggerate their power, ability and responsibility as a pitcher, which can contribute to constructing them as heroes.

(10)
４大会　　　連続の　　金メダル
4taikai　　　　renzoku-no　kinmedaru
4th Olympics　consecutive　gold medals
独占を　狙った　　米国打線は、
dokusen-o　neratta　　　beikokudasen-wa,
monopoly　aimed　　　　the US batting line-up
26歳の　右腕の　前に　屈した。
26sai-no　　uwan-no　mae-ni　　kusshita
26 year-old　right arm　in front of　yielded
The US batting line-up, who aimed at dominating gold medals consecutively for four times, yielded in front of 26-year-old right arm. (Ueno, part of S2, YS-22nd)

Ueno is referred to as '26-year-old right arm'. The batters in the US team are referred to collectively as 'the US batting line-up'. Since it also indicates their role as batters, it is a combination of functionalisation and assimilation. By representing the batters that Ueno pitched at as in this sentence, the batters who hit from Ueno, for example, are ignored. This again exaggerates what she did and her ability as a pitcher.

　　　From Saito's sample of AS, the sentence shown in (11) represents teams that Saito had games with collectively.

(11)
すまし顔の　鉄腕が　かもす　迫力に、
sumashigao-no　tetsuwan-ga　kamosu　hakuryoku-ni,
poised face's　　the iron arm　make　　power
数々の　強豪は　　　屈していった。

kazukazu-no kyogo-wa   kusshiteitta
numerous   powerful players/teams   yielded
The power of the iron arm with poised face made numerous powerful players/teams yield.
(Saito, S23, AS-22nd)

Saito is represented as 'the iron arm with poised face'. The reference is impersonalisation using a metaphoric and metonymic expression to represent his strength and power as a pitcher (see 4.1). Powerful players or teams that he had games with are referred to collectively with the word 'numerous'. It shows that the players or teams that Saito beat are many and exaggerates what Saito did, as well as his power and ability as a pitcher.

Thus, the ways of representing Ueno or Saito as separate from other players and representing other players collectively are common in both broadsheet and sports newspaper articles and in both Ueno's and Saito's articles. Such representation not only distinguishes Ueno or Saito from other players, but in some cases also helps to construct them as heroes.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude the paper by answering the research questions addressed in Section 1. The first research question is about comparing the constructions of a female and a male sports hero between the broadsheets and the sports newspapers. As I have demonstrated, both types of newspapers foreground Ueno and Saito by referring to them specifically and individually as well as referring to other players collectively. This can represent them as separate from others and represent them clearly and others vaguely. Such representation can even emphasise their power, ability, and responsibility as a pitcher and lead to their construction as heroes. As a difference between the broadsheets and the sports newspapers, only the sports newspapers represent masculinities and relate them to the construction of Saito as a hero. However, there is no representation of femininity in Ueno's articles in either the broadsheets or the sports newspapers.

The second research question is about the similarities and differences between the constructions of a female and a male sports hero. The ways of representing social actors to foreground Ueno and Saito and exaggerate their power, ability and responsibilities are similar in both hero constructions. However, the sports newspapers explicitly associate masculinity with a male hero construction while, they do not associate femininity or masculinity with a female hero construction. They represent masculinities of accomplishment and emotional competitiveness in Saito's representation. In the male hero construction in the sports newspapers, representation of masculinity is an important aspect. The sports newspapers celebrate masculinity by relating it to the hero construction of Saito and his achievement as a pitcher.

As far as this study shows, the broadsheets treat both players equally regardless of their different gender and the sports newspapers do not represent femininity in Ueno's articles and construct her as a hero regardless of gender. This is, in a way, a good result in

terms of gender neutral media representation, compared to past studies showing gender differentiated representation of athletes in sport media. Needless to say, the limitations of this study, such as small data set and only one analytical method applied, may affect the result. Moreover, this may be related to Ueno being a softball player. Softball is not like tennis and figure-skating, which are thought to be 'consistent with conventional "femininity"' (Duncan and Messner, 1998) and appearance and fashion tend to be focused on. In addition, it may be relevant that Ueno looks rather boyish with very short hair. Different heroes are represented differently. The nature of the sport is also very important in sports hero construction and gender representation.

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Focusing on article forms:

A study of language transfer in CLIL contexts in Spain

Amaya Vázquez Díaz

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) on split-triggered transfer errors. The study is longitudinal and the data comprises a set of one-to-one interviews with CLIL learners involved in Madrid's Autonomous Community's bilingual program. The analysis focuses on a specific language feature that usually results in article errors. The findings so far suggest that transfer is 'developmentally moderated' (Hakansson et al. 2002). As split transfer errors seem to be particularly difficult to overcome with the help of CLIL input alone, the present study calls for explicit *focus on form* (Lyster 2007) in CLIL instruction models.

Introduction

A new outlook on transfer research

Nowadays, the phenomenon of transfer is informed by new cognitive models such as that presented by MacWhinney (1992), namely, the Competition Model. Within this framework, phonological transfer involves 'the accretion of new lexical items based on an old set of phonological units' (1992: 375). Thus, new words are constructed by figuring out new matches between old semantic units and old phonological units. This theory predicts massive L1 transfer in the early stages of L2 learning. Moreover, the closer to the L2 the L1 is, the more positive transfer is expected. Syntax is said to be acquired through translation by using a one-to-one lexical mapping strategy. However, if it fails, the learner turns to many-to-one mappings whereby an L1 phrase is translated as a single L2 word.

The latter strategy is otherwise known as *coalescence* and its counterpart (the one-to-many mapping) is called *split* (Ellis 1994). A very simple, grammatical realization of the afore-mentioned phenomenon would be the splitting of Spanish infinitives into two English patterns. In other words, where the Spanish language uses one infinitive strategy regardless of the syntactic collocation, English uses either an infinitive clause or a gerund, as can be seen from the examples below:

> Spanish: Voy a **hacer** los deberes
> **Hacer** los deberes es aburrido.
> English: I'm going **to do** my homework
> **Doing** my homework is boring.

Interestingly, it is the split phenomenon that seems to pose problems for L2 learners. Apparently, it is cognitively more demanding to map a single L1 conceptual category onto two or more L2 categories than to do it the other way around. In Rod Ellis's words, '... difficulty will be greatest when there is a split and least in the case of coalesced forms. No difficulty arises when there is a complete correspondence of items in the two languages' (1994: 307).

Why CLIL students?

Many regard Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a useful tool 'directed at creating a multilingual population in Europe' (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). However, applied linguistics research still has a long way to go if it is to develop a full-fledged CLIL model of instruction. The bare bones of CLIL instruction can be traced back to the Canadian Model of French immersion. The existence of two official languages within the country prompted Canadian scholars to put forward a mixed model of instruction, combining traditional second language classes with a rather innovative teaching mode in which the second language is the vehicle of instruction for curriculum subjects. This model was a major breakthrough at the time when it was implemented and the European context soon set about creating and adapting a parallel model specific to foreign language teaching environments.

The [57] *CLIL-Compendium* has formulated the goals of CLIL-instruction as follows (Dalton Puffer, 2007):

> Develop intercultural communication skills.
> Prepare for internationalization.
> Provide opportunities to study content through different perspectives.
> Access subject-specific target language terminology.
> Improve overall target language competence.
> Develop oral communication skills.
> Diversify methods & forms of classroom practice.
> Increase learner motivation.

However, this set of educational objectives is still far from specific. The goals to be achieved remain out of focus and many researchers, such as Dalton-Puffer (2007: 15), call for a clearer definition of language learning aims:

> [I]n order to avoid stagnation of the CLIL enterprise it will be necessary in the future to state more explicitly which language learning aims are pursued through the practice of CLIL (and by implication, therefore, which are not or cannot be pursued but must be taken care of by EFL lessons or altogether different learning environments).

So far CLIL research has yielded fairly positive results as far as content is concerned. The evidence suggests that CLIL learners know as much about the topic subject as their L1-instructed peers. Language-wise, though, the results are not that homogeneous. While receptive skills, vocabulary, morphology and pragmatic abilities are improved noticeably through CLIL instruction, syntax and informal, non-technical language seem to remain unchanged (Dalton-Puffer 2007). Thus, it seems that grammar skills cannot be improved via CLIL unless there is explicit instruction in traditional EFL classes.

Some researchers claim that a second language cannot be fully acquired on the basis of CLIL input alone. Lyster (2007: 3) argues against this underestimation of the target language in immersion and content-based instruction and calls for 'counterbalanced instruction', i.e., a two-fold model combining implicit input-triggered language learning and language-focused reference. Yet, however obvious the need for language focus, the controversy over this issue is far from settled and further research is most welcome.

The present study and beyond

Research questions and aims

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[57] The members of the CLIL Compendium Development Team are Anne Maljers (National CLIL coordinator in the Netherlands, 1997-2009), David Marsh (University of Jyväskylä, Finland), Do Coyle (Vice-dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Nottingham, England), Aini-Kristiina Hartiala (CLIL Research and Development Team, University of Jyväskylä, Finland), Bruce Marsland (Researcher at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland), Carmen Pérez-Vidal (Associate Professor at the Department of Translation and Philology at the Pompeu Fabra University, Spain) and Dieter Wolff (Researcher and professor at the University of Wuppertal, Germany).

In the light of the available evidence of transfer research so far, this study aims to delve deeper into the phenomenon of splits/coalescence in learner interlanguage. It is for this purpose that I use the UAM-CLIL Corpus of oral learner English. Several research questions are posed below:

1. Which is the most frequent phenomenon, coalescence or split transfer?

2. Is it more frequent at the syntactic or the lexical level?

3. What are the most frequent types within the most frequent transfer category, be it syntactic or lexical?

4. Is there a need for more *focus-on-form* (Lyster 2007) in the CLIL classroom to speed up the disappearance of specific transfer types that linger longer in the learners' interlanguage?

The English article system
It is widely agreed that the English article system is a most challenging language feature and learners seem to find it extremely difficult to grasp the rules governing such an intricate grammar point. In fact some researchers go as far as considering it as *hard grammar*, that is, very difficult to teach, if at all learnable (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). Goto Butler (2002: 452) captures the difficulty inherent to the acquisition of the English article system as follows:

> Part of the complexity can be attributed to the fact that the English article system does not consist of one-to-one form and meaning relationships.

However complex, though, the acquisition of this grammar feature has been on the top of the list in many research agendas for decades now and several studies (Bickerton, 1981; Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982; Goto Butler, 2002; Jarvis, 2002; Liu & Gleason, 2002; Master, 1987a; Parrish, 1987) have given us useful insight into the inner workings of article usage rules. As Liu & Gleason point out, 'if the grasp of the use of the English article system entails a command of the discourse and referential constraints on NPs, the acquisition of the article must in turn involve the learning of these constraints' (2002: 3). Further, many have called for a bigger research effort into the effect of the L1 on the acquisition of articles (see, for example, Goto Butler 2002, Jarvis 2002).

Foremost among those who took the lead in studying English articles is Bickerton (1981), whose work turned out to be one of the most important thorough descriptions of article use in English. His research focuses on the semantic functions that govern the use of English articles, namely, *a, an, the,* and the zero article. The semantic functions of NPs, according to Bickerton (cf. Jarvis 2002: 388) are specified by two discourse features, namely, whether a noun is a specific referent (±SR) and whether the hearer knows the referent (±HK); and, thus, this binary system gives way to four categories.

According to Type 1 (-SR, +HK) indefinite and definite articles pre-modify singular nouns and zero articles pre-modify plural nouns. Type 2 posits a specific referent that the hearer knows (+SR, +HK), and so it demands definite articles. Type 3 proposes a specific

referent that the hearer does not know, so singular nouns take indefinite articles while plural ones take the zero article. This category comprises two subgroups. It might be the first time that a NP unknown to the hearer appears in the discourse, in which case an indefinite article must be used (e.g. *My aunt bought a fridge*). Otherwise, the NP unknown to the hearer might follow existential *have* (e.g. *My car has a big trunk*). Last but not least, type 4 demands a non-specific referent that is unknown to the hearer and it can be further divided into four subcategories. Equative NPs using the verb *to be* demand an indefinite article (e.g. *He is a doctor*), as do negative statements (e.g. *She does not have a computer*), interrogative sentences (e.g. *Do you have a cell phone?*) and hypothetical statements (e.g. *If I were rich, I would buy an island*).

Learners apparently tend to overuse definite articles in the early stages of article acquisition regardless of whether or not the hearer knows the referent of the NP (Huebner, 1983; Jarvis, 2002; Master, 1987). Jarvis (2002: 389) concluded that the Finns and the Swedes taking part in his research project used the zero article in a similar way as they did in their L1s. Their first language, he says, determines the stages following that of overgeneralization (2002: 389). This observation is supported by sound evidence by researchers Chaudron and Parker (1990).

As far as Spanish learners of English are concerned, the obligatory use of Spanish definite articles was found to split up into three different English settings. In Spanish the use of definite articles is compulsory before singular, plural, personal property/body parts and uncountable nouns alike, whereas English requires a definite article before singular nouns; not so before plural and personal property/ body part nouns. Plural nouns demand either no article -if the reference is generic- or else a definite article -if it is specific-, while personal property/body part nouns require possessive determiners. Uncountable nouns, on the other hand, do not require any definite articles.

What is more, splits and coalescence can work side by side to produce *doubly-determined* transfer errors (Ellis, 1994: 333). English demands an indefinite article (*a/an*) that precedes a singular countable noun, but this is not always the case in Spanish. Spanish-speaking learners of English may or may not leave out the indefinite article when producing TL's singular indefinite NPs. Therefore, either positive or negative transfer, -if there is any-, would be expected. It is plain to see that the noun in the sentence *No tengo coche* (English: *I don't have a car*) is countable, thereby requiring an indefinite article in English. Somewhat surprisingly, though, **No tengo un coche* would be deemed to be a rather marked construction by native Spanish speakers, who otherwise prefer the alternative *No tengo coche*. Hence, as *I don't have car* is not available in English, Spanish-speaking learners of English are most likely to make split transfer mistakes.

When it comes to plural countable nouns, the match is rather straightforward. Both English and Spanish require indefinite articles or the zero article, the only difference being that L1 negative sentences might use singular rather than plural nouns.

	Spanish	English
Singular noun indef. NP. Affirmative sentence.	Tengo un libro Tengo libro	I have a book (NOT AVAILABLE)
Singular noun indef. NP. Negative sentence.	No tengo un libro No tengo libro	I do not have **a book** (NOT AVAILABLE)

Plural noun indef. NP. Affirmative sentence.	Tengo libros Tengo unos libros	I have **books** I have some books
Plural noun indef. NP. Negative sentences.	No tengo **libros** No tengo ningún libro	I do not have **books** I do not have **any books**

Table 1: Indefinite NP split mapping

It is a similar case for the L1 Spanish speakers using uncountable nouns, as for both the L1 and the TL demand the zero article or an indefinite article/pronoun:

	Spanish	English
Uncountable noun indef. NP. Affirmative sentence.	Tengo azúcar Tengo algo de azúcar	I have **sugar** I have some sugar
Uncountable noun indef. NP. Negative sentence.	No tengo **azúcar** No tengo nada de azúcar	I do not have **sugar** I do not have **any sugar**

Table 2: Indefinite NP split mapping

It has been mentioned elsewhere (MacWhinney, 1992: 375) that L2 learners aim to find one-to-one mappings between the L1 and the L2, since this is a powerful tool that enables them to ease their way through the target language. Therefore, transliteration is as close as they can get to proper translation. The more genetic and typological similarities between the L1 and the L2, the more chances of matching transliteration and translation there are, and so negative transfer is rarely to be seen when the following conditions are met. Thus, if transfer eventually occurs, it is always positive when the following conditions are met:

> a) When perfect syntactic transliteration between the L1 and the L2 is possible.
> b) When cross-language synonymy is perfect.
> c) When both factors are at work.

It becomes clear that Spanish learners of English are likely to make such mistakes as the following if this principle is applied to such sentences as *No tiene coche*:

> *He doesn't have car.

Method

Subjects
The study I discuss here was conducted in two bilingual schools in the Autonomous Community of Madrid from 2006 to 2007 and it is part of a bigger research effort that aims to analyze the evolution of the learners' interlanguage over a four-year period of secondary

education. As a result of the agreement signed by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science and the British Council in 1996, the two schools have been leading the way in the implementation of an official bilingual program in which some of the curricular subjects, such as arts and crafts, natural science and social science, are taught in English.

In this study, there are altogether twelve students involved. They are Spanish 11/12-year-olds immersed in the aforementioned CLIL program. By the time the research project was carried out, all the participants had been doing CLIL for 8-9 years as they had started their content-and-language integrated education at the age of three. Throughout the secondary education period, they had been exposed to English via a CLIL subject (social science) and also through traditional EFL classes. According to the British Council/Ministry of Education program, a wide group of curricular subjects may be used as L2-learning vehicles. However, school authorities usually choose the subject "Geography and History" to teach, simultaneously, both the content and the English language because this particular content subject facilitates the teaching of a wider range of TL structures and lexicon.

Materials and procedures

The data I am using is part of the UAM-CLIL Corpus, which evolved from the UAMLESC (UAM Learner English Spoken Corpus)[58]. This is a learner English data-base comprising a long list of transcriptions of class sessions and interviews with English learners. The project began in 1998 and the bulk of data has continued to increase ever since. Among the transcriptions researchers may find a wide array of bilingual schools, ranging from total immersion curricula to partial immersion, and so they can choose the model that meets their needs the most. Some of the schools teach the whole syllabus in English while others teach a limited set of curricular subjects in the TL. Furthermore, the Corpus encompasses different socio-economic settings as the schools that take part in the project are scattered all around the Autonomous Community of Madrid.

For the purpose of this particular study, a set of one-to-one interviews with students from two different schools was chosen in order to control the variability of students. As the study was going to be longitudinal (i.e. the study takes place over a long period of time, while the students' linguistic performance is analyzed at different points in time and so we can observe the evolution of their interlanguage), class session recordings would not have allowed the student variable to remain constant as there were over thirty students intervening randomly in each session.

The procedure consisted in recording conversations about different social science topics that had just been studied by the learners at the time. The researchers asked questions and the students had to provide answers that required them to use their knowledge of the subject. Prior to the recording of the conversational exchanges, though, the teacher had carried out a brainstorming class session - usually recorded as well - in which students had to go over and review previously learned concepts through a list of question prompts provided by researchers. This task was followed by a composition to be written on the basis of the same prompt.

Below is a sample of questions based on those used in the class sessions, for the written compositions and interviews.

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1. Why and where did cities appear?
2. Why did ancient civilizations become empires?
3. What do you know about pharaohs and kings in ancient civilizations?
4. Why were Egypt and Mesopotamia so important at the time?

The data for the present study were gathered throughout 2006 and 2007. The first round of interviews took place in the spring of 2006 and the topic of conversation was natural disasters; the second was about ancient civilizations and was recorded before the summer of 2006, while the last set of interviews - about feudal Europe - took place before the summer of 2007. There were six students per school, two of which were advanced, while the others were intermediate and beginner level respectively. At the end of the data-gathering period, there was a set of 36 interviews, comprising three interviews on three different topics per student.

Results

Qualitative Analysis

As far as definite NPs are concerned, the most frequent mistake involved plural nouns. The subjects were prone to overusing definite articles with plural nouns in the L2 -no matter the distinction between generic and specific- and most of the errors registered in the study were as follows:

(1) ST: And then **the** people can, can, eat.

(2) ST: Because, because they, they don't have **the** time to to react?

(3) RES: Right. And what do you do in order to, not to, pollute, the area? Is there anything that you personally do, that you're conscious that, you're doing that?
ST: With **the** cars.

(4) ST: And **the** earthquakes, eh, it can be prevent, more or less.

(5) ST: The power of all the world was centred in those cities, because they, they were kings and the most important people, **the** noblemen, **the** priests, **the** scribes.

(6) ST: Because **the** children didn't go to school and they had to work very hard.

Singular nouns, on the other hand, hardly ever triggered negative transfer errors. As a matter of fact the subjects turned out to have a very good command of singular definite NPs, which may be enhanced by positive transfer more often than not. Notice that the right use of definite articles before singular nouns does not necessarily mean that the child has properly acquired the TL structure. Learners might also be mapping an L1 structure straight onto the L2, there being a powerful potential for L1-L2 positive transfer. Be that as it may, though, negative transfer, albeit infrequent, took the following shape:

(7) ST: So peasants work the land of **(the)** aristocracy.

As the match between the L1 and the L2 in this particular grammar point is absolute, there is hardly any room for negative transfer. Yet, the L1 still manages to work its way into the child's interlanguage in the shape of simplification. As the L1 and the L2 differ in the use of definite articles before plural nouns - the L1 requiring a definite article with generic and specific nouns alike - the child tends to mistrust the similarity regarding singular noun NPs, and ends up avoiding definite articles. It should be noted, though, that this phenomenon might be put down to second language development, as simplification has been traditionally considered a feature of early stage interlanguage. However, if that were the case learners might also have been expected to drop the definite article - which they seldom do - before plural, personal property /body parts and uncountable nouns alike.

As for indefinite NPs it was singular nouns that caused most of the trouble for the learners. As was mentioned elsewhere, L1 singular noun indefinite NPs may or may not demand indefinite articles, whereas the L2 always requires them. The data, though, revealed a very interesting realization of the above-mentioned split. As the Spanish countable noun *trabajo* splits up into two English lexical items, namely, *work* and *job*, L2 learners tend to use the uncountable one because it allows for a one-to-one transliteration between the L1 and the L2. In other words, L2 English learners whose mother tongue is Spanish are predisposed to avoidance of the lexical split *job*:

(8) ST: … and now is better, eh, eh, look for **work** (meaning a job).

In this particular example, the split is thus two-fold - both lexical and syntactic - and so is transfer. In the present data hardly any learners use the lexical split *job* when it is due, but there is further trouble when they attempt to use it as part of an indefinite NP although they are aware of the mentioned lexical split. The syntactic split usually makes them dodge the count noun by getting them as close to perfect transliteration as possible. However, if at all used, the lexical split *job* is seldom pre-modified by an indefinite article in the students' L2 interlanguage. As the presence of the article is more marked than the absence in the L1, learners lean towards the latter alternative, thereby dropping the otherwise compulsory indefinite article in the L2 for the sake of word-for-word transliteration.

(9) ST: They don't have **(a)** job.

Quantitative analysis

As the English article is a rather frequent - hence, salient - grammatical feature the recordings yielded relatively high numbers of potential errors, thereby making the samples more reliable. It is worth remembering that the students were recorded at three different moments, namely, the spring and the summer of 2006 and the summer of 2007. So, the study comprised a one-year period and three cross-time sets of samples. Also, two of the subjects were left out after their L2 production was found to be too poor as to yield enough transfer error settings. Had their samples been taken into account, the study's significance would have been compromised.

In order to carry out a quantitative analysis of the data, the ANOVA significance test was applied. ANOVA is an analysis of variance allowing us to compare several group

means at the same time. In this particular case we were to compare three group means of the same subjects across time. There is a dependent variable, which corresponds to the number of split-transfer article errors, and also an independent variable, namely, the effect of CLIL instruction over time. The null hypothesis was equalled to a lack of significant differences among the group means, in which case the three samples would belong in the same population

The following table includes potential error figures per subject and interview. Potential errors, or else error settings, refer to the number of occurrences of the English article, be it definite, indefinite or null. As the English article is quite a salient feature the numbers were high enough as to allow for accurate statistical calculations of significance.

Article Error Settings				
School	Student	Spring 2006	Summer 2006	Spring 2007
A	1A	36	59	57
	2A	26	21	40
	3A	43	49	31
	4A	45	75	64
	5A	29	46	43
	6A	22	29	__
B	1B	33	35	27
	2B	59	87	90
	3B	39	29	30
	4B	19	31	33
	5B	17	23	31
	6B	59	57	57

Table 3: Potential error settings figures per student and interview

The second column on the right is that of the students, who were taken from different schools, A and B. The topmost row, on the other hand, makes reference to the number of split-transfer error settings per interview. It is worth mentioning that student 6A dropped out in the last interview and 5B was eliminated from the study due to the fact that some of the samples were too small in size.

The next table shows the amount of mistakes made by the subjects per 100 error settings and the figures in it shall be interpreted as follows hereafter. If student 1A had 36 chances to produce English articles in the spring 2006 interview, and 10 out of 36 were realized as article errors, it follows that student 1A makes an average of 27.8 article transfer mistakes every 100 article settings.

		Article Errors 100%		
School	Student	Spring 2006	Summer 2006	Spring 2007
A	1A	27.8	23.7	15.8
	2A	19.2	9.5	17.5
	3A	14	10.2	9.7
	4A	2.2	13.3	14.1
	5A	17.2	13	18.6
	6A	22.7	10	___
B	1B	12.1	8.6	18.5
	2B	17	18.4	20
	3B	10.3	34.5	16.7
	4B	21.1	29	18.2
	5B	23.5	4.3	29
	6B	11.9	28.1	5.3

Table 4: Error percentage numbers

As article error rates could increase, drop, or else remain the same over a one-year period of CLIL instruction, the ANOVA test was applied to the data above to find out if significant changes had taken place from one recording to the next. Having tested out the figures for statistical reliability, it was demonstrated that there were no significant differences among the group means. In the spring of 2006 the group mean was 15.28, but then it soared up to 18.83 over a three-month period. Notice, however, that it failed to be significance, and went down again one year on (15.44).

It seems that the learners went through a period of heavy article transfer before being able to apply English article-governing rules properly, or else that they reached a ceiling effect before transfer gave way to L2 structures. However, such a lack of consistency in the transfer load - which seems to be very deeply into a state of flux and interlanguage uncertainty - might be due to different reasons. On the one hand, it is possible that the learners may have studied English articles in language-focused classes between the summer of 2006 and the spring of 2007, or else such an improvement in their command of English articles might be put down to the natural development of the second language. In regard with the statistic significance, I am aware of the fact that the improvement was not significant. However, a non-significant result can also provide some useful evidence or insight regarding the evolution of the learners' interlanguage.

Be that as it may, though, the learners did not receive explicit instruction on the use of English articles in CLIL classes. Further, it seems that transfer does not necessarily decrease along with the improvement of proficiency levels.

Discussion and further research

Khon (1986) pointed out that the first level of transfer analysis is that of *transfer potential* and the evidence found in this research study suggests that there is a strong potential for language transfer between Spanish and English, as they are related both typologically and genetically. Cross-language splits have been proved to be a powerful transfer trigger insofar as they entail further complications in second language acquisition and a fairly large proportion of interlanguage errors seem to arise from this phenomenon.

As suggested by earlier work on transfer errors, the coalescence phenomenon -or else, the opposite of splits - does not seem to cause as much interference, and so further transfer research should not only focus on coalescence-led, but also on split-led transfer errors. However, it is important that the structures under investigation evince the same frequency of occurrence. Otherwise it might not be possible to determine which structure is triggering the largest amount of transfer errors, let alone draw significant conclusions.

Dulay and Burt called attention to so-called *ambiguous goofs* (1974), or else errors that could be ascribed to either L1 transfer or L2 development. Yet, the present study suggests that transfer and L2 development do not necessarily exclude each other as potential causes of learner errors. When it comes to interlanguage errors, Selinker's Multiple Effects Principle (1992) seems to be at work in that no single factor can be pointed at as the one and only cause behind learner errors.

In keeping with Hakansson's claims (2002), this study suggests that transfer is 'developmentally moderated'. As article use is seldom to be seen as the explicit focus of EFL grammar lessons, it is more than likely that the constant variation in the transfer load evinced by the learners were the upshot of natural language development. As discussed in the previous section, the learners seemed to have reached a ceiling effect before getting to apply L2 article use rules properly. Yet, it was plain to see that article transfer was decreasing as language proficiency increased. Hence, there is evidence supporting Hakansson's stance in that this particular transfer type seems to vary as the interlanguage improves.

The time frame covered by the study comprised the first two years of secondary education. However, the bilingual instruction was to go on for two more years of Content and Language Integrated Learning and so the students were half way through the 4-year CLIL education period when the sessions were recorded. Therefore, as the data from the final years is yet to be analysed, the results cannot but be preliminary and it remains to be seen whether or not transfer figures went back on the rise once the first research period had concluded, all the more so because the period covered by this study lasted hardly over a year and a half.

Just as Kean (1986) claims that the 'domains of allowable transfer' change along with the interlanguage grammar, so this study suggests that transfer casuistry and load goes parallel to the evolution of the interlanguage. In other words, transfer does not necessarily diminish as the proficiency level increases. It follows, therefore, that different IL stage

samples should yield different transfer types and load. However, the current CLIL model does not seem to meet the students' L2 learning needs insofar as transfer errors usually go unnoticed. Lyster (2007) as well as other scholars have pointed out that the model is over-focussed on content, and language skills seldom come to the fore unless they hinder communication.

Article transfer errors do not impede communication, but they are none the less important. In fact, it is more than likely that they would fade away more quickly if they led to communicative breakdowns. Furthermore, I would like to argue that gaining command of a most complicated grammar structure like the English article system might improve academic rewards in the long run. If students are to master academic language it is necessary to put emphasis on formal aspects which cannot be acquired through content-oriented input alone, as studies in the Canadian context have shown (Swain 1984). Hence, not only should they get a grip on Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills, but they should also achieve Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Cummins 2003), and the latter can only be acquired via exposure to grammar-rich input focussed on function and content words alike. While they do not seem to pose a big problem for communication in a foreign language, article errors deserve more research attention. The mastering of accuracy-demanding grammar features such as the English article system might help develop metalinguistic awareness, not only in the second language, but also in the students' mother tongue.

CLIL research still has a long way to go, but the current findings might open up new investigation tracks for the study of language transfer, as they have provided useful insight into transfer stage development. It would be of the utmost interest to compare CLIL students with learners who are acquiring a second language through EFL classes only in order to see if there are any differences between them transfer-wise. Moreover, as the most reliable piece of evidence in favour of transfer processes is usually to be found in cross-L1 learner comparisons, future research should also compare CLIL learners having different mother tongues.

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Editors

Grace Bota is a PhD student at the Department of Linguistics and English Language, Lancaster University. She was the Abstracts Coordinator for the 4th LEAL PG conference, 2009. Grace is interested in Gender and Language, Critical Discourse Analysis and Sociolinguistics. Her current research is on gender, language and identity construction by Ghanaians in the UK Diaspora. For future research, she plans to work on Ghanaian media discourses on domestic violence and sexual assault.

Helen Hargreaves is carrying out doctoral research in stylistics at Lancaster University. Her thesis research investigates the analysis of viewpoint presentation in prose fiction, and focuses more specifically on how existing taxonomies of viewpoint can account for more complex instances of viewpoint presentation. Her work involves in-depth analyses of extracts from John Le Carré's *A Perfect Spy.*

Chia-Chun, Lai is currently carrying out her doctoral study in interlanguage pragmatics at Lancaster University. Her thesis study investigates the development of Taiwanese learners' pragmatic competence in a studying abroad context. Other research interests include cross-cultural pragmatics, intercultrual communication, and language acquisition.

Rong, Rong is carrying out doctoral research in stylistics in literature and films at the Linguistics Department of Lancaster University. She was the Chair of the 4th LEAL PG conference, 2009. Rong's thesis research investigates flashbacks and other types of flash-presentations in novels and films, with special reference to John le Carré's novel *The Constant Gardener* (2001), and the film of the same name (2005). Her other current research interests include stylistic analysis of multimodal texts, narratology and film studies.

Contributors

Steve Disney is a lecturer and programme leader for the English Language and Linguistics degree at University College Plymouth Marjon. His interests include, but are not limited to, Construction Grammar, Historical and Social Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. He spent a number of happy years teaching English out of the UK and returned to take an MA in Modern English Language at UCL and later a PhD at Lancaster University. His PhD thesis was a usage based study of some evidential expressions in English, with an application to a language specific semantic maps of universal conceptual space. He likes photography and sailing, but not at the same time.

Francesca Gallina is a Research Fellow at the University for Foreigners of Siena. She completed her PhD in February 2009 with a dissertation on the development of the lexical competence of learners of Italian as a L2. Her main interest areas are: vocabulary acquisition, educational linguistics, language contact.

Elizabeth M.C. Guerin teaches English at the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Florence, Italy. Her research interests include assessment and policy, especially in relation to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEF(R)), Teacher Professional Development, and technology-enhanced language learning. She is a member of the European Association of Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA www.ealta.eu.org).

Ralph Guth studied political science in Vienna and is now a first year PhD Student here in Lancaster with the Department of Politics. During his studies he concentrated on Critical Realism, State Theory, and Critical Discourse Analysis. In his PhD-thesis he is working on the 'Cultural Political Economy' approach, changing cultures of competitiveness, and Southeast Asia with special focus on Thailand.

Chihiro Inoue is interested in the fields of language testing and second language acquisition. Her interests led to obtaining BA in Linguistics and MA in Language Testing at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies as well as 2-year experience of teaching English at a senior high school in Japan. She is now carrying out a PhD research on the parallelness of spoken narrative tasks at Lancaster University, UK.

Eleanor Ka-Po Kwan is currently a second year PhD student in Applied Linguistics at Lancaster University and has been working as a language tutor at the tertiary level in Hong Kong. Her research interest is academic literacy and writer identity negotiation of university students.

Sebastian Muth is a lecturer at the Chair of Modern English Linguistics at Greifswald University (Germany). He holds a Magister Artium (M.A.) in English/American Studies and Political Science. He teaches a variety of courses such as language and politics, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics and is currently working on his PhD about the linguistic landscapes of Chisinau and Vilnius. His main research interests are linguistic landscapes, social semiotics, sociolinguistics and the connection between language and politics.

Maryam Paknahad Jabarooty is a PhD student in Lancaster University and a research fellow in Örebro University. Her research interests include language, gender, cyberspace and Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis. She is also a member of IGALA (International Gender and Language Association) Executive Board from 2008. She is currently researching on gender construction in Iranian online society using the approach of Feminist Post-structuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA). She has been a member of Gender and Language (GaL) research group in Lancaster University since 2007 and acts as its Web Weaver from 2009.

Irene Pascual Peña obtained the degree in English Language and Literature in 2006. She is currently investigating to do her Ph.D in the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid in English Linguistics, specifically in the field of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). She has been teaching English for two years at University of La Salle, Madrid.

Chit Cheung Matthew Sung is working towards a PhD in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University, UK. He received a BA (Hons) in English and a Master of Philosophy in English from the University of Hong Kong. He also holds an MA in Applied Linguistics. His research interests include world Englishes, language education, sociolinguistics, and gender and language.

Ayako Tominari is a PhD student in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University. Her PhD research looks at heroism and masculinity in the newspaper coverage of baseball in Japan. She holds a BA in Language and Area Studies from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and an MA in Education and Women's Studies from Lancaster University. Her research interests include Critical Discourse Analysis, language and gender, and Cognitive Linguistics.

Amaya Vázquez Díaz works at the Department of Foreign Languages at Lasalle Centro Universitario, ascribed to the Autonomous University of Madrid (Spain). Her research interest includes applied linguistics, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and second language acquisition.

Frederik Wolf is a graduate student at Greifswald University (Germany). Currently he is working on his Master Thesis in Political Science about normative theories of secession, focussing on the Republic of Moldova. His main research interests are political theory, language and politics, history of ideas and legal philosophy. Together with Sebastian Muth he has been on numerous field study trips to Moldova.