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Carolina Pérez-Arredondo; Margarita Calderón-López;

Hilda Hidalgo-Avilés; David Pask-Hughes;

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Introduction to the volume

The 9th International PG Conference in Linguistics and Language Teaching, held in July 2014 at Lancaster University, was organized by research students to create a space for postgraduate students across universities to present their current research projects. This volume includes five of these papers and the topics range from different fields, including language acquisition, language teaching, corpus linguistics and pragmatics.

Emilie Riguel in *Phrasal verbs, “the scourge of the learner”* uses a mixed method approach to compare the use of phrasal verbs with native speakers and non-native speakers’ written productions. Her contribution to the field goes beyond the administration of a multiple-choice test to both groups to show the avoidance strategy as she also uses corpus analysis in order to understand the difficulties, ambiguities and errors of non-native English students’ in terms of comprehension. Her results confirm that learners of English as a second language tend to adopt an avoidance strategy with respect to phrasal verbs. This work also shows that ‘the phrasal verb errors of use in learners’ productions are caused by the constraints induced by the learners’ mother tongue on the target language, as well as the inherent complexity of the target language’.

Muna Alshehri in *The effects of frequency of exposure, elaboration, and individual differences on incidental vocabulary learning* intends to address the gap to measure incidental learning vocabulary from oral input (listening). The study measured the short-term word retention of young Saudi EFL learners after listening to a story from the three dimensions of spoken form. Results revealed that words could be learned incidentally from listening. More importantly, regression analyses showed that the provision of definitions of the new words during listening was the most significant predictor of word knowledge retention in all three post-tests.

In *Perception, production and perceptual learning in the second language: a study of perceptual learning* by L1 Bengali speakers of L2 English, **Jacqueline Ingham** describes an initial pilot study which tests whether evidence of perceptual learning of word-initial obstruents can be extrapolated between learners from the same L1 background with differing L2 linguistic experience. The study provides evidence to confirm the initial claim. However, as this student researcher suggests ‘this study must be extended to larger groups’.

As the title suggests, *A corpus-based investigation of the Given Before New (GBN) principle in Tanzanian English* by **Sondos Hassan Ibrahim** employs corpus-based methods

to analyse the personal columns category of the Tanzanian component of ICE-EA (The East-African component of the International Corpus of English). The study compares the frequency of GBN and NBG (New before Given) structures in this corpus category, evaluating the contexts in which these structures occur. Her findings reveal that, although NBG is more prevalent in Tanzanian English than in standard British English, GBN remains a dominant feature in this English variety.

Name-calling in Greek YouTube comments, by **Maria Vasilaki**, focuses on the functions of name-calling in the comments' section of a Greek YouTube political video. Using Culpeper's framework for analysing impoliteness and Ljung's schema, the author examines the themes and the internal structure of name-calling constructions. Findings suggest that the themes of name-calling vary according to the (un)specificity of the addressee. The study aims to throw some light on online impoliteness and, specifically, name-calling in Greek as little is known in this particular context.

We would like to thank all the staff and students at the Linguistics and English Language Department at Lancaster University who contributed to this conference; it would not have been possible without their ongoing support.

Hilda Hidalgo-Avilés
Margarita Calderón-López,
David Pask-Hughes,
Carolina Pérez-Arredondo

Phrasal verbs, “the scourge of the learner”

Emilie Riguel

University Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3

Abstract

Previous studies have considered phrasal verbs as the scourge of the learner (Dagut & Laufer 1985, Hulstijn & Marchena 1989, Klein 1989, 1995, McPartland 1989, Yorio 1989, Sjöholm 1995, Lennon 1996, Sinclair 1996, Liao & Fukuya, 2004). Indeed, phrasal verbs are significantly challenging and puzzling for non-English speakers, especially in terms of idiomaticity and polysemy (Cornell 1985, Side 1990, Cowie 1993, Klein 1995, Neumann & Plag 1995, Moon 1997, Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999, Kurtyka 2001, Rudzka-Ostyn 2003). A quantitative and qualitative corpus study was carried out in order to compare the use of phrasal verbs in native and non-native students' written productions. In particular, phrasal verb errors and misinterpretations in non-English speaking learners' written productions were identified. Their analysis confirms that the transfer from one language to another depends on the constraints induced by the source language (L1) on the target language (L2) and the inherent complexity of the target language (L2).

Keywords: *phrasal verbs, second language acquisition, corpus linguistics, errors, negative transfer.*

Introduction

Phrasal verbs represent a fascinating category of the English language and are thus considered as a specificity of English (Fraser 1976, Moon 2005, quoted in Macmillan 2005). As McArthur (1989, p. 38) points out, they have always represented “a vigorous part of English”. Indeed, phrasal verbs make up one third of the English verb vocabulary (Li, Zhang, Niu, Jiang, & Srihari 2003). They are more used in spoken than in written English. Besides, there are approximately 3,000 established phrasal verbs in English, including 700 in everyday use (Bywater 1969, McArthur & Atkins 1974, Cornell 1985). In addition to the large number of existing phrasal verbs, new ones are constantly coined. As noted by Bolinger (1971, p. xi), they are a very productive class and correspond to “an explosion of lexical creativeness that surpasses anything else in our language”. Furthermore, phrasal verbs continually evolve and adapt to the spirit of the times; newly created phrasal verbs thereby getting impregnated with changes and evolutions in society (e.g., Google up as derived from look up).

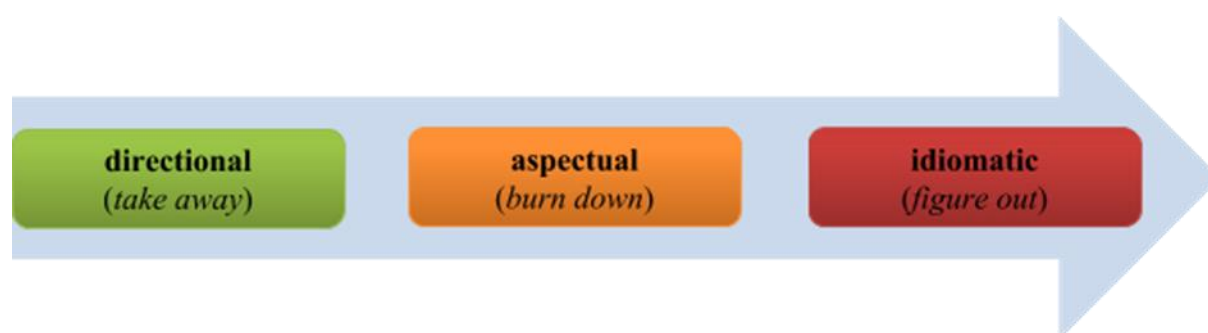
There is no universal definition of phrasal verbs. Indeed, as underlined by Gardner & Davies (2007), “linguists and grammarians struggle with nuances of phrasal verb definitions”. One of the reasons for this lack of consensus (Darwin & Gray 1999, Sawyer 2000) is that some linguists define the phrasal verb as the combination of a main verb (also called “support verb”) and a preposition or an adverbial particle whereas others only consider the phrasal verb as a main verb followed by an adverbial particle exclusively. Phrasal verbs have, however, traditionally been understood as consisting of a main verb and an adverbial particle.

The main verb (also called “support verb”) making up the phrasal verb is a monosyllabic verb of Germanic origin which expresses a concrete or an abstract movement. Main verbs forming phrasal verbs are “light” verbs and they convey a very broad semantic content. Also, their frequency of use is very important in everyday language. The main candidates to be support verbs in phrasal verbs are bring, come, get, give, go, make, put, set, take, etc.

As for the characteristics of the adverbial particle, it is morphologically invariable and carries a rather broad, sometimes vague, semantic content. The adverbial particle conveys motion or result. There is a core set of particles which have varied very little over time. These particles are indeed listed as the most common particles in everyday language: up, down, in, out, on, off, back, away and over (Akimoto 1999, Claridge 2000).

As regards to the meanings of phrasal verbs, they may range from spatial or directional, literal or transparent (e.g., stand up, take away) to aspectual, completive (e.g., burn down, eat up) to non-compositional, idiomatic or opaque, (e.g., face off, figure out) (Live 1965, Fraser 1965, 1966, Bolinger 1971, Makkai 1972, König 1973, Moon 1997, Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999). The semantic classes of phrasal verbs can thus be represented on a broad continuum spanning from the most compositional (directional and aspectual) meanings to the most non-compositional (idiomatic) ones (Bolinger 1971, Moon 1998) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Continuum illustrating the semantic classes of phrasal verbs



Phrasal verbs and non-native learners of English

Many linguists and researchers have recognized the importance of multi-word expressions, and especially verb-particle constructions, as they attest to mastery of English and they are the pledge of its authenticity (Klein 1989, Folse 2004, Wood 2004). Phrasal verbs can thus assess learners' level of English language proficiency, as evidenced by tests such as the TOEFL. Cowie (1993, p. 38) views them as "a nettle that has to be grasped if students are to achieve native-like proficiency in speech and writing". As for Cullen & Sargeant (1996, p. vii), they explain that "understanding and being able to use these constructions correctly in spoken and written English is essential if the learner is to develop a complete command of the language".

Phrasal verbs, "the scourge of the learner"

There has been much discussion about the challenges imposed by phrasal verbs to foreign learners of English. Indeed, not only may verb-particle constructions have reduced syntactic flexibility, they may also be semantically more figurative. Therefore, in some cases, the meaning of a phrasal verb turns out to be difficult to infer from its component words. For instance, the phrasal verb 'to play something down' has nothing to do at all with a sporting or

theatrical event. Rather, it means ‘to minimize the importance of something’, as the following example from the British National Corpus (BNC) (Davies, 2004-) illustrates:

- (1) The European Commission sought to **play down** fears yesterday that new European Community rules limiting imports of cheaper bananas from Latin America would force up prices for consumers. K59_1005 (BNC)

In addition, many phrasal verbs are highly polysemous (e.g., *make up*, *pick up*), making the task of grasping their different meanings even more difficult for learners. Therefore, interpretation of such ambiguous forms can only be solved and clarified by using the context. The following examples illustrate the case of *make up*, a highly polysemous phrasal verb:

- (2) “Come on, Annie. Let’s **make up**.” ALJ 2705 (BNC)
- (3) Full of cynical amusement, she continued to stare at herself until, inspired, she started to **make up** her face carefully, emphasising her brown eyes with liner, and smoky eyeshadow, and dusting her high cheekbones with blusher. HGM 934 (BNC)
- (4) You could **make up** a whole story. On no real evidence. It would change all sorts of things. APR 1125 (BNC)
- (5) The girl in the chemist’s shop said the chemist would **make up** the prescription the minute he got back from the bank. H9G 2630 (BNC)
- (6) I understand life, and the family ties that **make up** almost all of it, much less than I ever did. AE0 2910 (BNC)
- (7) “Give me time to **make up** my mind. I promise I’ll do everything I can to help the rest of you.” AEB 1717 (BNC)
- (8) “I’d be ever so appreciative if you could, lass. And as I’m putting you out on your half-day I’ll **make it up** to you, there will be something extra by way of a thank you in your pay packet on Friday.” AN7 304 (BNC)
- (9) Since the plant manager was never able to **make up** a day’s loss of output which pulled down his monthly overall efficiency figures on which he was judged, it was never difficult for Clasper to prove his point. AC2 530 (BNC)
- (10) “Here’s your chance to **make up** for the naughty things you’ve done to me.” B0B 2568 (BNC)
- (11) “You hypocrite, stop **making up** to my sisters and playing the shining knight, I saw you go to communion today, and it made me sick. How could you? When you don’t even.... You looked like.... I saw you coming back from the communion rails, with your eyes down and your hands folded, as if you weren’t putrid inside, but I know. I know.” GUX 107 (BNC)

All these examples taken from the BNC clearly show that the context fully helps to eliminate and clarify ambiguities and to correctly make sense of the various meanings of *make up*: (2) to become friendly with someone again after an argument; (3) to put makeup on someone's face; (4) to invent a story, often in order to deceive; (5) to prepare/arrange something; (6) to form/constitute something; (7) to come to/reach a decision about something; (8) to do something good that helps someone to feel better after you have caused him/her trouble; (9) to replace something that has been lost, to compensate for something; (10) to do something that corrects a bad situation; and (11) to be pleasant to somebody, to praise somebody, especially in order to get an advantage for yourself.

Given their complexity and their unpredictable nature, multi-word expressions, and especially phrasal verbs, can be difficult to both understand and memorize for non-English speakers in the current language experience (Coady 1997). They are a source of confusion and ambiguity – in terms of idiomaticity and polysemy, in particular (Cornell 1985, Side 1990, Cowie 1993, Klein 1995, Neumann & Plag 1995, Moon 1997, Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999, Kurtyka 2001, Rudzka-Ostyn 2003) – in such a way that Sinclair (1996, p. 78) called them “the scourge of the learner”.

Aims and objectives of the study

This study aims to analyse quantitatively and qualitatively the use of phrasal verbs in native and non-native students' written productions. Not only does the present work intend to account for the avoidance and the “under-representation” (Levenston 1971, p. 115) of phrasal verbs by non-English speaking students through multiple-choice tests, as previous studies did (Dagut & Laufer 1985, Hulstijn & Marchena 1989, Klein 1989, 1995, Yorio 1989, Sjöholm 1995, Liao & Fukuya, 2004), it is also based on computer learner corpora generating huge quantities of data. Furthermore, the goal of my research is to identify and interpret various types of errors and misinterpretations made by learners. Finally, I will show that the “negative transfer” from the native language (L1) to the target language (L2) results from the influence of the learner's mother tongue (L1) and L2 inherent complexity.

Corpus and methods

In order to highlight the avoidance of phrasal verbs in non-English speakers' productions, an experimental study was carried out among French-speaking students (132 participants enrolled in the first year of English Philology degree at the University La Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3) and among English-speaking students (29 participants from the New York University) to which I submitted multiple-choice tests. From a quantitative corpus study, I then show that phrasal verbs are underused in non-native learners' written productions. All phrasal verbs have been extracted from the International Corpus of Learner English, version 2 (ICLEv2) (Granger et al., 2009), which is composed of student essays (intermediate to advanced level) from twelve different mother tongue backgrounds (Bulgarian, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Swedish), and from the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS) (Granger et al., 1998), the corpus control completing ICLEv2. Finally, from the ICLEv2 corpus, I analysed excerpts of non-native English students' productions, as well as the main difficulties phrasal verbs represent and the ambiguities and errors they generate in terms of comprehension for non-English speakers. I thus extracted, identified and qualitatively explored phrasal verb errors and misinterpretations (style deficiency, semantic errors, lack of collocational awareness, incorrect and inappropriate phrasal verbs thought up by learners, syntactic errors) made by learners.

Phrasal verbs in non-native learners' written productions

Quantitative study

Avoidance of phrasal verbs

Learners of English as a second language tend to adopt an avoidance strategy with respect to phrasal verbs, mostly preferring using a single-word verb of Latin origin as an equivalent. This idea of avoidance has been clearly highlighted by Bywater (1969, p. 97):

The plain fact is that what distinguishes the writing and, above all, the speech of a good foreign student from those of an Englishman is that what an Englishman writes or says is full of these expressions, whereas most foreigners are frightened of them, carefully avoid them, and sound stilted in consequence.

Foreign students who enjoy being flattered on their English can best achieve this by correctly using masses of these compound verbs.

This avoidance strategy is confirmed by the results of the multiple-choice tests that I submitted to both native and non-native students (see Table 1).

Table 1: Results of multiple-choice tests submitted to native and non-native students (in %)

Group	Preference for a <i>phrasal verb</i>	Preference for a single-word verb	Correct answers (<i>phrasal verb</i>)	Correct answers (single-word verb)	Wrong answers (distractors)
Native students	61.28%	38.72%	61.28%	38.72%	0.00%
Non-native students	34.91%	65.09%	25.82%	59.64%	14.54%

Contrary to native English speakers, non-native learners “avoid” phrasal verbs and show a strong preference for simple verbs of Latin origin. Indeed, native French-speaking students have spontaneously chosen the structure with which they are familiar from a morphological point of view. Thus, the lack of a similar linguistic feature between L1 and L2 prevents its production and its use in L2.

Under-representation of phrasal verbs in learners’ productions

After extracting and counting all the phrasal verbs taken from the LOCNESS corpus and from all the sub-corpora of ICLEv2, I compared the number of phrasal verbs produced by non-English speaking learners in comparison with native speakers (see Figure 2). I then calculated the percentage of use of phrasal verbs in non-native students’ productions compared to native speakers’ ones (see Figure 3). Finally, the results have been reordered and classified according to language families in order to get the average production of phrasal verbs according to language families (see Figure 4).

Figure 2: Number of phrasal-verb tokens in LOCNESS and ICLeV2

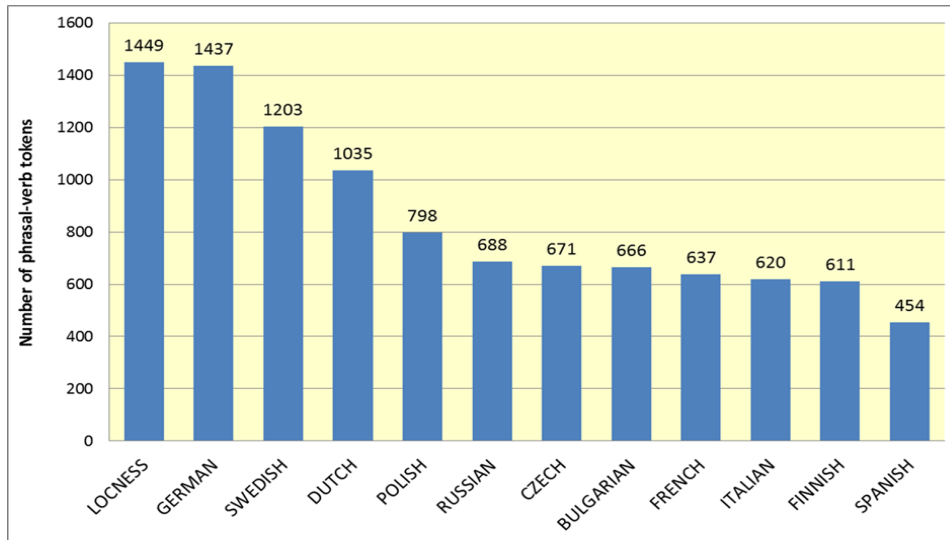
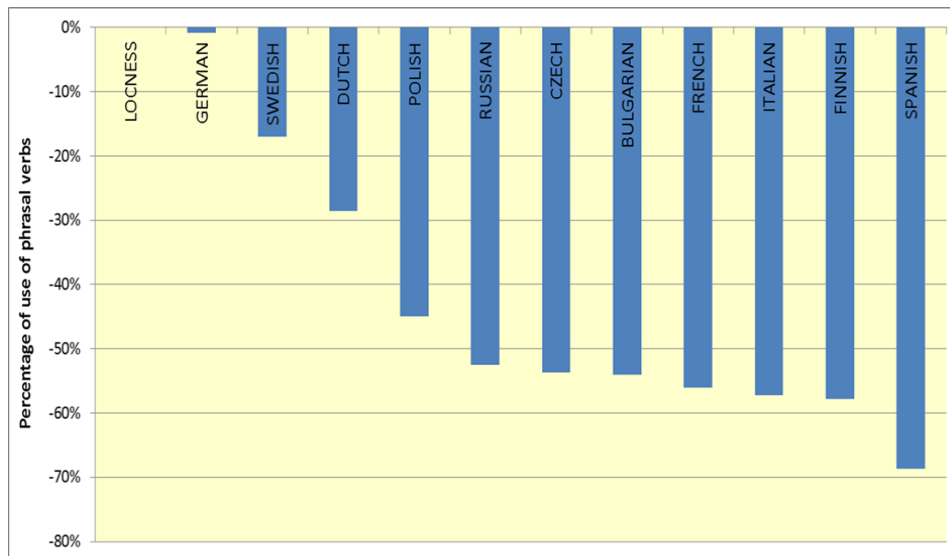


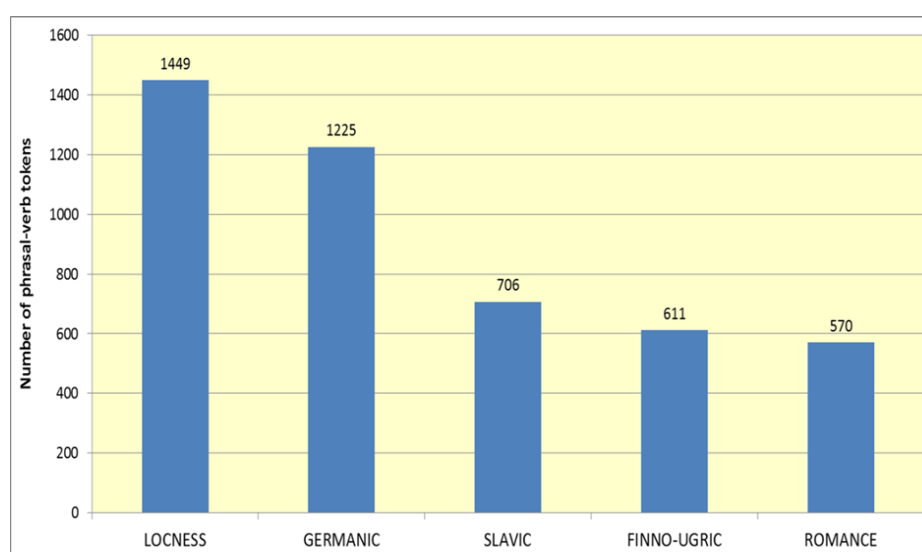
Figure 3: Percentage of use of phrasal verbs in LOCNESS and ICLeV2



Learners whose mother tongue belongs to the family of Germanic languages (German, Swedish, Dutch) produce almost as many phrasal verbs as native speakers. This is unsurprising since phrasal verbs are a specificity of Germanic languages. There is therefore a similar linguistic feature between L1 and L2. When the L1 belongs to the family of Slavic languages (Polish, Russian, Czech, Bulgarian), the “under-representation” of phrasal verbs in non-English speaking students’ productions is moderately marked; the aspect being marked by the presence of prefix or suffix in Slavic languages. Learners whose L1 is part of the Finno-Ugric languages (Finnish) considerably “underuse” phrasal verbs in their productions.

This can be explained by the fact that English verb-particle constructions are expressed by single-words verbs in Finnish. Two-word verbs also exist in Finnish; however, they are scarce and correspond to the informal or colloquial register. Finally, the “underrepresentation” of phrasal verbs is very highly marked in learners’ productions whose L1 belongs to the family of Romance languages (French, Italian, Spanish). As seen in section 4.1.1., this “underuse” of phrasal verbs is due to the major structural difference that exists between L1 and L2.

Figure 4: Average use of phrasal verbs according to language families



The following section deals with phrasal verb errors and misinterpretations made by learners.

Qualitative Study: Errors made by learners

Different types of errors and misinterpretations were clearly identified: style deficiency, semantic errors, lack of collocational awareness, incorrect and inappropriate phrasal verbs thought up by learners, and syntactic errors.

Style deficiency

Non-English speaking learners are somewhat unaware of the existing differences between informal speech and formal writing. As a result, they tend to use phrasal verbs

belonging to the informal or colloquial register, or even slang, in formal contexts and/or writings (and vice versa), as illustrated by the following examples taken from ICLEv2:

- (12) Try to **knock back** a few glasses some evening watching the lights in an opposite prefabricated house... ICLE-CZ-PRAG-0040.3
- (13) At that moment I did not know at all what to do, what would be better, how they would react: if I **bumped off** one of these boys I could have problems as a teacher because physical punishment is not permitted or I could be hit with any punch as well. ICLE-CZ-PURK-0014.1
- (14) So Tony helps the couple Hastings-Neville, or tries to do so, for he **mucks things up**. ICLE-SP-UCM-0005.8

Semantic errors

The most common mistakes made by learners are semantic errors, responsible for major misinterpretations, as shown by the examples below.

Verb errors

Learners use the correct particle but they combine it with the wrong support verb.

- (15) Butter **went out** in the course of the week and new one not bought. ICLE-GE- AUG-0057.1
- (16) You can get your energy from peas, beans, cheese, and bread in the same way as from steaks. there are lots of people that feel better since they have **put away with** meat. CLE-GE-AUG-0049.2

In (15), the student should have used the phrasal verb *run out* (have none left, be depleted) instead of *go out* (exit, go outdoors). In (16), the phrasal-prepositional verb *put away with* does not exist. The phrasal verb *put away* means tidy up, put in correct place, or save money. Here, however, the student should have used the phrasal-prepositional verb *do away with* (abolish, eliminate, get rid of).

Particle errors

Learners use the correct main verb but they associate it with the wrong particle.

- (17) Every time I read the newspaper I learn more about the terrible actions against people that should be our friends. Their houses are set on fire, they're **beaten down** with bottles or baseball rags or they are even killed in fights...ICLE-GE-AUG-0069.1

(18) It will then be much easier and rapid to find a job that suits you if you can search for it in different countries at the same time, and if you do not have to **fill up** many forms and to do a lot of administration work. ICLE-FR-UCL-0064.3

In (17), the student should have used the phrasal verb *beat up* (assault) instead of *beat down* (break down/knock down a door, or negotiate lower price). In (18), the student should have employed the phrasal verb *fill in/out* (complete a form, a questionnaire, write) instead of *fill up* (fill a container, a room, etc.).

Lack of collocational awareness

The word *collocation* comes from the Latin *collocare* meaning “place together”. Learners are, however, unaware of the special and privileged relationships which naturally exist between certain words within a statement and they tend to combine awkwardly and in an inappropriate manner some phrasal verbs with other words, as illustrated by the following statements:

(19) In former days girls did not often have the chance to enjoy education or to get a job beside traditional professions like chambermaids or housemaids. Usually they had to marry and to **set up** a family. ICLE-GE-SAL-0013.3

(20) This well established middle-class still didn't give women the same opportunities as men, so in the seventies due to the ferments developed feminism **broke out**. ICLE-IT-ROMS-0034.2

(21) Anyway, it is also true that others problems have showed up as consequences of the fights that have been **carried out**. ICLE-IT-ROMS-0004.2

In (19), the student should have used the single-word verb *start* in this context (start a family) instead of the phrasal verb *set up*. Indeed, *set up* naturally occurs with words relating to business (set up a business, create something or start it). In (20), the student should have used the simple verb *emerge* (start to exist, appear, become known) because it is the birth of the feminist movement, whereas the phrasal verb *break out* rather occurs with words belonging to the lexical field of war, battle, violence, revolt, rebellion, etc. In (21), the student should have used the phrasal verb *put up* instead of *carry out*. Indeed, the phrasal verb *put up* something means “to show a particular level of skill, determination, etc. in a fight or contest”. As a result, *put up* perfectly fits with the given context (lead the fight, fight, defend, resist),

whereas *carry out* naturally occurs with words referring to experiments, researches, surveys, inquiries, investigations, etc. (conduct, do and complete a task).

Incorrect and inappropriate phrasal verbs thought up by learners

In order to make up for a lack or deficiency in the target language, learners feel the need to create new phrasal verbs which very often do not exist in English.

(22) The “insiders”, that is her family including me of course, know that she has got a fancy about “Freundin” not because of the latest hair-cuts, about “Brigitte” not because of the instructions to **fashion** your jeans **up** by stone-washing and colouring them...ICLE-GE-AUG-0048.3

(23) Tennis courts and clubs **mushroomed up** all over the place...ICLE-GE-AUG-0012.4

(24) It is obvious that we cannot reach absolute equality but we sure can level down social differences.
ICLE-FIN-JYV-0062.1

Although the phrasal verbs *fashion up* (22) and *mushroom up* (23) do not exist in English, we cannot strictly speak of mistakes in learners’ productions. Indeed, in these examples, the particle *up* means “more”, “greater”; it acts as an intensifier or emphazier. This clearly shows that non-English speaking learners have well understood and memorized the aspectual value of phrasal verbs formed with *up*, and that they properly apply the rule and use it in a creative manner in (22) and (23). In (23), *mushroom up* can be corrected by using the phrasal verb *pop up* (spring up suddenly) or by using the idiomatic expression *spring up like mushrooms*.

As for the example (24), the phrasal verb level down does not exist in the dictionary. The student has deliberately associated the support verb level (make something flat or smooth, make something equal or similar) with the particle down (decrease) since he speaks of “reducing social differences” in his/her essay. His/her intention is interesting and clearly shows that he/she is aware of the semantic value of the particle down. His/her production is, however, incorrect since the phrasal verb level down does not exist. The most judicious correction would thus be the phrasal verb *iron out* (reduce, eliminate, eradicate, get rid of any problems or difficulties that are affecting something) or the phrasal verb *smooth out* (resolve, eliminate, make problems or difficulties disappear).

Syntactic errors

Non-native learners are unaware of the syntactic properties of phrasal verbs and they transitively use non-transitive phrasal verbs, and vice versa.

(25) Although parents use light or heavy manners in **growing up** their children, they are not able to control the future and the idea of having to pay a large sum of money for their children's offences cannot change the situation. ICLE-IT-TOR-0015.1

(26) Then, the hormones having ceased to be excessively produced, which is only after two or three years, he or she begins to look for another love, **splitting up** the relationship. ICLE-PO-POZ-0031.5

In (25), the student transitively used the phrasal verb *grow up*, which is, however, non-transitive. He should have used the transitive phrasal verb *bring up*. In (26), the student transitively used the non-transitive phrasal verb *split up*. He should have used the transitive one-word verb *end* or the transitive phrasal verb *end up*.

Influence of the mother tongue

The “negative transfer” or “interference” from the native language (L1) to the target language (L2) is mainly due to the great influence of the learner's mother tongue, but also to the intrinsic complexity of the target language.

(27) The ideal environment to **grow up** children is the traditional family made up of mother, father and one or more children. ICLE-IT-TOR-0017.3

(28) Finally as I had decided to leave my bed, to **stand up** in order to take off the receiver, I heard the well-known voice of my mother saying: “Good morning, darling,... ICLE-GE-AUG-0024.1

(29) Butter **went out** in the course of the week and new one not bought. ICLE-GE-AUG-0057.1

(30) How to come up again when you were fallen in the snow without having to **make** your skis **off**. ICLE-GE-AUG-0057.1

Example (27) is taken from the Italian learners' sub-corpora. At first sight, we could think that it is a confusion between the phrasal verbs *bring up* (transitive) and *grow up* (non-transitive) on the student's part. However, a closer examination of the Italian learners' sub-corpora shows that the phrasal verb *grow up* is used thirteen times transitively and that there are four occurrences of *grow a child*. Yet, *raise a child* in English is translated into Italian as *crescere un bambino*, and *crescere* in Italian is translated into English as *grow*, hence the

incorrect use of the phrasal verb *grow up* in the example (27). Thus, the great influence of the Italian learners' mother tongue and the ignorance of the syntactic constraints of the target language (i.e. English) on the Italian learners' part both have resulted in a negative transfer (also called interference) in the Italian learners' productions.

The examples (28), (29) and (30) are extracted from the German learners' sub-corpora. The English phrasal verbs *get up*, *run out* and *take off* are respectively translated into German as *aufstehen*, *ausgehen* and *abmachen*, which are respectively formed from the combination of *auf* + *stehen* (translated into English as *up* + *stand*), *aus* + *gehen* (translated into English as *out* + *go*) and *ab* + *machen* (translated into English as *off* + *make*), hence the incorrect uses of the phrasal verbs *stand up* in (28), *go out* in (29) and *make off* in (30). The student should have respectively used the phrasal verbs *get up* in (28), *run out* in (29) and *take off* in (30). The great influence of the German learners' mother tongue has thus resulted in a negative transfer (interference) in their productions.

Conclusions

Whereas previous studies (Dagut & Laufer 1985, Hulstijn & Marchena 1989, Klein 1989, 1995, Yorio 1989, Sjöholm 1995, Liao & Fukuya, 2004) only explored the avoidance strategy adopted by foreign learners of English with regard to phrasal verbs and involved a small number of participants, this work – based on computer learner corpora generating large quantities of data – identified and examined the different types of phrasal verb errors and misinterpretations committed by learners.

The present study helped account for the challenges faced by non-English speaking learners with respect to phrasal verbs. In particular, this work has shown that the phrasal verb errors of use in learners' productions are caused by the constraints induced by the learners' mother tongue (L1) on the target language (L2), as well as the inherent complexity of the target language.

In order to extend this study, it would be interesting to examine the use of phrasal verbs in non-native students' productions by taking into account other factors such as the influence of the learners' level of language proficiency, the duration of the period of exposure in English-speaking countries, the semantic value of phrasal verbs (spatial, aspectual, idiomatic) and so on.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Multiple-choice test on phrasal verbs

TEST

1. Native language: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Gender: Male / Female
4. Language at home: First language: _____ Second language: _____
5. Other foreign languages: First: _____ Second: _____ Third: _____
6. How many years have you studied English? _____
7. Years of English at university: _____
8. How long have you been in English-speaking countries? _____

Read the following sentences and choose the best answer that completes the sentence.

Write the letter of your answer in the blank. Be sure to answer all of the questions.

1. When the bomb _____ , people were working in the factory.
a) burnt off b) went off c) erupted d) exploded
2. They never _____ their friend's death from suicide.
a) overcame b) got over c) left out d) defeated
3. Ashley has studied hard all semester; therefore she is likely to _____ her exams.
a) pass b) get through c) come through d) proceed
4. Francesco attended the University of Columbia for two semesters in order to _____ his English.
a) better up b) enlarge c) improve d) brush up on
5. Travelers and tourists had to _____ bad weather and muddy roads.
a) tolerate b) put up with c) stand out with d) outstand
6. Companies were forced to _____ interesting contracts because of the lack of manpower.
a) avoid b) strike off c) refuse d) turn down
7. – Good morning, I'd like to talk to Kate Smith.
– _____ a second. I'm trying to connect you. Who is calling?
– A friend from Brighton.
– _____ please.
a) hold on b) capture c) wait d) fall down

8. A year later, to my surprise, she _____ at our tree and confessed me her love.

a) turned up b) sprang up c) appeared d) occurred

9. Sarah was very concerned with family matters such as how to _____ one's children?

a) listen b) raise c) bring up d) come across

10. Brian _____ business for five years in Hong Kong.

a) ran b) liked c) carried on d) took off

The effects of frequency of exposure, elaboration, and individual differences on incidental vocabulary learning

Muna Alshehri

Lancaster University

Abstract

Incidental vocabulary learning from meaning-focused input has received increased attention in second language acquisition research (Nation, 2007). However, few have investigated the role of oral input (listening) in acquiring word knowledge, especially in the case of young EFL learners. Therefore, the present study measured the short-term word retention of young Saudi EFL learners after listening to a story from the three dimensions of spoken form recognition, meaning recognition, and meaning recall. It also examined the separate and joint effects of frequency of exposure and +/- elaboration on the degree of word retention in addition to the possible moderating effect of a number of individual differences on word retention from listening, namely that of prior vocabulary knowledge, listening competence, and phonological short-term and working memory capacity. Results showed that words could be learned incidentally from listening. Explanation of target words appeared to affect the recognition of form and meaning and recall of meaning while frequency of exposure seemed to only to affect the recall of meaning. Moreover, regression analyses revealed that the provision of definitions of the new words during listening was the most significant predictor of word knowledge retention in all three post-tests.

Keywords: *Incidental vocabulary acquisition; L2 vocabulary knowledge; L2 listening; frequency of exposure.*

Introduction

Vocabulary, in second language acquisition (SLA), is a basic component of language proficiency that constitutes the basis for learners' performance in other language skills such as speaking, reading, listening and writing. It is not an optional part of a foreign language because "words are the building blocks of language and without them there is no language" (Milton, 2009, p.3). It has also been identified by the U.S. National Reading Panel as one of the five key aspects of literacy next to phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and text comprehension (National Reading Panel). Limitations in vocabulary knowledge can hamper the ability of second language (L2) learners to effectively communicate in the target language because words carry the basic information load of the meanings they wish to express (Read, 2004). However, much of the literature on second language acquisition pays little attention to vocabulary learning (Milton, 2009). One topic which has begun to attract attention from researchers is how much vocabulary acquisition happens in EFL classrooms as a result of meaning-based communicative activities such as reading and listening. These activities could be a crucial source of incidental word learning in addition to the more direct methods of teaching vocabulary used by L2 teachers such as word lists.

Many scholars have agreed that much L2 vocabulary, beyond the first few thousand words, is learned incidentally while learners are engaged in extensive reading or listening (e.g. Huckin & Coady, 1999; Paribakht & Wesche, 1997). Ellis (1999) indicates that "oral input can constitute an effective source of data for incidental vocabulary learning even in the beginning stages of language acquisition" (p.38). Therefore, he calls for more research to be done to examine how incidental vocabulary acquisition can take place from oral input: "given the primacy of oral input in many learning contexts together with its potential to facilitate vocabulary acquisition, it is surprising that so little attention has been paid to it in L2 vocabulary acquisition research" (p.38). The study reported in the present paper serves to investigate the extent to which young EFL learners can acquire words incidentally, in the sense of being a by-product of the main learning activity of listening to a story. It starts with a brief review of relevant L2 empirical studies followed by a report on the experimental study at hand explaining its methodology and results and concludes with discussion and interpretation of those results.

Literature Review

Vocabulary acquisition occurs mainly through spoken input in child first language (L1) learning. Native children's vocabulary knowledge has usually been assumed to develop implicitly, as they grow older, with no explicit instruction needed. They generally develop their vocabulary in an incidental way from communication and through activities such as listening and reading at later ages. The situation differs in an L2 context where vocabulary acquisition often occurs more through written text. Evidence suggests that the vocabulary intake from incidental exposure is usually negligible and that successful L2 learners acquire large volumes of their vocabulary from words explicitly taught in the classroom and supplement their learning by targeting vocabulary in informal activities such as listening to stories, songs, and films (Milton, 2009). However, incidental vocabulary learning from communicative activities has some advantages over direct instruction such as providing the students with the opportunity of being engaged in the activity of reading or listening and vocabulary learning at the same time. They also can gain a richer sense of a word when it is learned through contextualized input. I have found that most L2 studies of incidental vocabulary acquisition have occurred in the reading context while few have been conducted in a listening context.

Benefits of extensive listening (i.e. listening to long, easy texts for fluency and enjoyment) have been mainly researched with native speakers, particularly with elementary school students (Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008). An important type of an extensive listening activity practiced with children is listening to stories. In addition to the benefits of improvement in reading and listening skills, listening to stories provides a rich context for incidental vocabulary acquisition. Findings from L1 studies of vocabulary acquisition have indicated that several key factors influence the extent to which story listening benefits vocabulary learning, such as explanation of the meaning of words (e.g. Elley, 1989; Reese & Cox, 1999; Senechal, 1997; Senechal, Thomas, & Monker, 1995; Brett, Rothlein, & Hurley, 1996; Penno, Wilkinson, & Moore, 2002; Beck & McKeown, 2007), frequency of exposure to the word (e.g. Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Elley, 1989; Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Beck & McKeown, 2007), frequency of retelling the story (e.g. Eller, Pappas, & Brown, 1988), and story type (Elley, 1989; Penno, Wilkinson & Moore, 2002). Explanations can be provided through various strategies, such as providing a definition, pointing to the illustration, role-

playing, and providing a synonym. Repeated exposures are more effective when coming from both repeated readings of a book and repetition of a word in a story (Collins, 2010). Moreover, children with high initial vocabulary levels show larger gains in new vocabulary than children with low initial vocabulary levels (Reese & Cox, 1999; Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Penno, Wilkinson, & Moore, 2002).

A number of studies have also examined the vocabulary learning of young ESL learners from listening to stories. For example, a number of school-based studies, referred to as The Fiji Book Flood, showed that ESL children learn the meanings of many new words just by listening to their teacher read aloud in class (Elley, 1980; Elley & Mangubai, 1983). These studies showed that the children in the shared reading groups, who listened to many stories, produced gains of 10% on a general vocabulary test of 30 words. Since it was not clear how much the listening to stories contributed to these improvements, Elley (1989) carried out a series of small follow-up studies on particular books to investigate the extent to which children were learning from listening to a single story. In the first of these studies, with ESL pupils in the South Pacific, the researcher found substantial increases in word knowledge following the reading of a single story, *Three Ducks Went Wandering*, to a class of Fiji Indian students (aged 11-12 years). The pupils were assessed on their understanding of target words from the story before and after three readings of the story over the period of a week. Although there was no teacher explanation of the words, the mean gain in word meanings was approximately 20%. Similar studies were undertaken on two other South Pacific Islands by the researcher, using the same story. In the first study, the story was read once only, with brief explanations of the target words. This time, the gains for the same target words were 26%. The reduction in the number of encounters was counterbalanced by the reader's explanations of the key words, at the point of interest in the story. In the next study, with pupils of 11 to 12 years, the story was again read three times, with brief definitions of the key words, and the gains increased to 38% on the same words. These studies were promising, as they supported the hypothesis that young children learning English as a second language can acquire new vocabulary from listening to stories, with and without some help from the teacher. However, Elley (1989) stated that the number of participants in these micro studies was small and the stimulus text confined to one book. Therefore, the claims were in need of a confirmation in a larger, more tightly-controlled experiment.

In more recent studies, Collins (2005, 2010) examined ESL pre-schoolers' vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. Participants were 70 pre-school-age native speakers of Portuguese who are also ESL learners. Children were first tested in L1 (Portuguese) receptive vocabulary and in L2 (English) receptive and expressive vocabulary and assigned to experimental or control groups. Eight picture books were selected and between five and nine sophisticated vocabulary words were inserted twice into the text of each book. Participants in the experimental group heard one pair of stories read three times per three-week period with rich explanations of target vocabulary words. While those in the control group also heard one pair of stories read three times per three-week period but without explanation of target words. After the third reading of each book, post-tests on the target words, based on the model of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (1997), were administered to the participants individually. Findings revealed that the explanation of new vocabulary caused significant gains in the children's vocabulary acquisition and that children who had higher initial L2 receptive scores learned more words than children with lower initial L2 receptive scores. The study concluded that rich explanation, initial English receptive level, initial English expressive level, and the frequency of reading at home made significant contributions to target vocabulary acquisition. In particular, explanation, initial L2 receptive knowledge, story comprehension, and the frequency of parental reading to children at home accounted for 69% of the variance in target vocabulary scores.

As becomes clear from this review of earlier work, a large amount of research is available about the benefits of listening to stories for developing the vocabulary of native children. However, there is still a lack in L2 studies on the benefits of listening to stories in improving young EFL learners' word knowledge. Most EFL studies on vocabulary learning from listening have been conducted on adult learners (e.g. R. Ellis, 1995, Vidal, 2003, 2011; Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008, Van Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013). For example, Ellis (1995) investigated two factors that could affect L2 vocabulary acquisition from oral input: pre-modification and interactional modification, with 51 Japanese high school students. Although more word meanings were learnt by the interactionally modified group than by the pre-modified group, the rate of acquisition (in words per minute) was faster with the pre-modified input. He also found that shorter definitions with fewer defining characteristics resulted in more acquisition and that pre-modified input was more efficient in promoting

acquisition than interactionally-modified input; an encouraging fact for teachers who teach in a context where negotiation is difficult.

Vidal (2003) studied EFL adult learners' vocabulary acquisition through academic listening and explored the effect of EFL proficiency and lecture comprehension on vocabulary learning. Findings showed that listening to academic lectures can be a source of EFL vocabulary acquisition and that vocabulary gain and retention are positively influenced by the participants' EFL proficiency and by their degree of lecture comprehension. Vidal (2011) also conducted a study on 230 Spanish EFL undergraduate students with the aim of comparing between the effects of listening and reading on the incidental acquisition and retention of vocabulary. Participants in the reading condition made greater vocabulary gains than those in the listening conditions. However, findings seemed to indicate that the difference in gains and retention between the reading and listening conditions decreased as the students' proficiency increased.

Reading also resulted in greater retention one month after the input, except for the highest proficiency students. The study also investigated the relationship between vocabulary learning through each of the two modes and the factors: frequency of occurrence, type of word, type of elaboration, and predictability from word form and parts. Of these four factors, *frequency of word occurrence* was revealed as the best predictor of vocabulary acquisition in the reading condition while *predictability from word form and parts* best predicted vocabulary learning through listening. Similarly, Brown, Waring, and Donkaewbua (2008) investigated the rate at which thirty-five EFL Japanese university students could acquire English vocabulary from the three input modes of reading, reading-while-listening, and listening to stories. They found that new words could be learned incidentally in all three modes but that most words were not learned and that the more frequent a word occurs in the text, the more likely that it would be learned and retained. In a more recent study, Van Zeeland & Schmitt (2013) investigated L2 learners' acquisition of three vocabulary knowledge dimensions through listening: form recognition, grammar recognition, and meaning recall. They found that learners start developing knowledge of a word (i.e. form and grammar recognition) long before they master the form-meaning link. It showed that knowledge of the three dimensions immediately after listening was form > grammar > meaning, with the former two being more sensitive to attrition than the last.

From the previous review, it can be concluded that (1) incidental vocabulary learning has been shown to occur in both extensive reading and listening conditions, (2) young L1 as well as young and adult L2 learners of English can ‘pick up’ new words when listening to stories, (3) adult EFL learners can successfully acquire vocabulary from different types of listening, and (4) frequency of exposure and explanation of target words are important factors in increasing vocabulary gain. The aim of the present study to determine if young EFL learners can also acquire vocabulary while listening to stories and whether factors like the amount of exposure, providing elaboration, and individual differences can affect the amount of their vocabulary retention. In order to investigate these issues, the following research questions were posed:

- RQ1: To what extent does listening to stories affect incidental learning of new vocabulary items?
- RQ2: To what extent does frequency of exposure to target words affect incidental learning of new vocabulary items?
- RQ3: To what extent does oral elaboration of target words affect incidental learning of new vocabulary items?
- RQ4: Are there any combined effects of exposure and elaboration on the learning of new vocabulary items through listening to stories?
- RQ5: Do the effects of frequency of exposure and elaboration differ across children with different (a) prior vocabulary knowledge, (b) listening competence, (c) phonological short term memory, and (d) working memory capacity?

Methodology

Design

The present study used a between-groups design in which the participants who experienced different treatments (single vs. multiple exposure and +/- elaboration) were combined and compared to each other in terms of their word knowledge. Participants of the experimental groups who took part in the listening task were compared to a control group using a post-test/control group design. Participants in the control condition took part in all the testing sessions without taking part in the treatment. Before the experiment commenced, all participants were tested in their receptive vocabulary, listening competence, and working memory (phonological short-term and complex working memory) to measure for their effect as mediating variables.

Participants

Participants in the study were 133 young Saudi female EFL learners from five classes of fourth grade at a private primary school in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia. Their age range was between 8 and 10 years old with an average age of 8 years and 9 months. All participants had a similar educational and linguistic background (i.e. typically native speakers of Arabic with an A2 intermediate level of English and had learned English for four years in an EFL classroom context). Five students were excluded from the study later on due to their absence in some parts of the study (such as the listening task or testing sessions) leaving a total of 128 participants.

Materials

Story preparation

A famous read-aloud story *Lon Po Po: A Red Riding Hood Story from China* by Ed Young (1989) used in many Language Arts curriculums in the U.S. and suitable to be read to children from the age of kindergarten to 8 years was selected for this study. Based on the textual analysis of the story using a vocabulary profiler website¹, the text was simplified by substituting low frequency words with easier synonyms so that about 96% of the text contained words from the list of the most frequent 2000 words. This procedure was done to ensure that the text would be easy to comprehend for young intermediate-level EFL students.

Selection of Target Words

Ten words that appeared with similar occurrence frequencies were selected from the read-aloud story *Lon Po Po* and were substituted with nonwords. These substitute words were carefully chosen from the list of nonwords constructed by Waring and Takaki (2003) (see Appendix A). Then, the text was manipulated to allow for an exact occurring frequency of four times per target word in each listening session with a total of twelve occurrences in all three listening sessions. For the second version of the story (+ elaboration), a simple English definition was provided in the text after the first occurrence of each target word (see Appendix B).

¹ <http://www.lex tutor.ca/vp/eng/>

Measurements

The Cambridge Key English Test (KET for schools)

KET for Schools is a Cambridge ESOL qualification that shows if a student can deal with everyday written and spoken English at a basic level. The test is at Level A2 of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The listening section of this test was used in this study to measure the participants' L2 proficiency level in listening. It contained twenty five questions in five parts. Each question was scored 1 point if answered correctly. They heard each recording twice and the time allowed on the test was about 30 minutes. The vocabulary section of the KET was also used as a measure of prior receptive vocabulary knowledge. This test contained 50 questions that focus on vocabulary and language used at KET Level (A2).

Working Memory Tests

An Arabic auditory working memory test was administered to measure the participants' working memory competence in their L1. It contained two tasks: (a) a forward digit span (FDS) to measure the phonological short-term memory (PSTM) of the children, and (b) a backward digit span (BDS) to measure their executive working memory (WM). The researcher, an Arabic native speaker, tested the participants by presenting an oral recording of a series of random numbers in Arabic at a rate of one digit per second and asked them to write down the numbers they heard in forward order in the first task and in backward order in the second task. The stimuli consisted of two lists of numbers for each consecutive sequence length. Sequences were presented in ascending series and ranged from three to nine digits. Both tests were calculated as the total of the highest number of digits that the children could repeat correctly twice.

Post-Tests

Story Comprehension Test (SC)

After listening to the story, the children were presented with a listening comprehension test, from *Tell it Again! Read-Aloud Anthology for Different Lands, Similar Stories* (2010) published by the Core Knowledge foundation. It contained six open-ended short-answer comprehension questions (see Appendix C). The participants had to write a short answer

either in English or Arabic to this question such as “to visit their grandmother for her birthday”.

Vocabulary Acquisition Tests

YES/NO Spoken-Form Recognition Test (FR)

The spoken-form recognition test tested the participants' recognition of the phonological form of the target words (see Appendix D). It was administered by presenting the participants with an oral recording of a random list of the ten substitute words that they had met in the text, plus an additional ten non-words as distractors, which were included to control for guessing. The 20 words are each repeated twice and the participants are asked to determine if they had heard the word when listening to the text by circling 'Yes' or 'No'. 'Yes' responses to target words ('hits') reflects the participant's vocabulary knowledge while 'Yes' responses to distractors ('false alarms') measures the participant's tendency to guess (Mochida and Harrington, 2006, p.74). Even though both hits and the correct rejections of distractors could be regarded as correct responses, researchers are usually interested in the number of hits (Mochida and Harrington, 2006). Therefore, scores of this test were calculated by only scoring the number of hits. This scale reached an acceptable internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.623 (Pallant, 2010).

Multiple-Choice Meaning Recognition Test (MR)

This test is a prompted recognition four-choice test with the correct meaning and three distractors. The option (I do not know) was added to allow the students to indicate when they did not know an item so as to reduce the effect of guessing. The participants listened to an oral list of the ten target words and were asked to circle the L1 words they thought were nearest to these words in meaning. These choices were the same part of speech and were semantically related (see Appendix E). This scale has an acceptable internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.782. Correct answers were given one point each.

Translation Test (T)

This is a meaning by translation test, also called a meaning recall test (Nation, 2001). This test presented the ten substitute words in an aural list. The participants are asked "What do these words mean? Write the meaning in Arabic." For each correct translation, one point

was awarded. This scale has an acceptable internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.780. The test appears in Appendix F.

Procedures

Following the methodology of previous incidental learning studies, participants in this study were asked to take part in a listening task by listening to a story and answering comprehension questions. After finishing the task, they were given a surprise vocabulary test that measured their form recognition, meaning recognition, and meaning recall. The study was administered over a period of four weeks starting on the 8th of December, 2012 until the 4th of January, 2013. The children listened to the story across constant time intervals of one week between listening sessions. The story was recorded to ensure that there would be no difference in listening time for different groups. There were two recordings of the story: one with only the target words included and the other with simple English definitions given after each target word's first occurrence. The difference between the two recordings respectively for session length was small (Time 1= 7.54 min., Time 2= 8.14 min.).

Results

Effect of listening on incidental vocabulary learning

The purpose of this section is two-folded: first, it investigates the extent to which listening to an oral context (i.e. stories) could affect word retention, in terms of overall word knowledge as measured by the total gain score for the three vocabulary tests for the treatment groups (listening condition) vs. the control group (no listening condition); and second, it examines the effect of listening vs. no listening on three types of word knowledge: spoken form recognition, meaning recognition, and meaning recall.

The mean scores in Table (1) demonstrate that the treatment groups outperformed the control group in the total post-test score. Examination of the performance of the treatment and control groups in the total scores of the word acquisition tests suggested that participants did indeed learn new words from listening to the story. In addition to significant differences in total word retention, treatment groups also significantly outperformed the control group in all three types of word knowledge measured in this study: spoken form recognition, meaning recognition, and meaning recall as shown in the descriptive statistics.

Table 1: Means (Ms), standard deviations (SDs), and t-test analysis: Overall word score for treatment and control groups

Groups	N	Overall word score		Form recognition		Meaning recognition		Meaning recall	
		M	M	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Treatment	87	41.65	41.03	41.03	20.29	54.60	22.09	28.98	22.39
Control	26	8.85	20	20	19.39	6.54	9.36	.00	.00

An independent samples t-test, similarly, revealed that the treatment groups significantly outperformed the control group in overall word knowledge ($t(111) = 10.30, p < .001$). Participants performed significantly better in the treatment condition than in the control condition, showing that listening to meaning in an oral context does lead to gains in word knowledge. Moreover, an independent samples t-test also revealed that the treatment groups scored significantly higher in all three vocabulary post-tests: the form recognition test ($t(42.71) = 4.80, p < .001$), the meaning recognition test ($t(111) = 10.78, p < .001$), and the meaning recall test ($t(112) = 6.58, p < .001$).

Separate and combined effects of exposure and elaboration

Table 2: Two-way Anova (Exposure and Elaboration): Overall word knowledge

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value	η^2
Exposure	243.607	1	243.607	13.108	.001	.136
Elaboration	95.350	1	95.350	5.131	.026	.058
Exposure * Elaboration	22.767	1	22.767	1.225	.272	.015
Error	1542.547	83	18.585			

df=degrees of freedom, η^2 =partial eta squared (effect size)

A two-way ANOVA in Table 2 reveals the effects of frequency of exposure and elaboration on the increase in participants' overall word knowledge. Results found a statistical effect for the main effect of elaboration ($F(1, 83) = 5.131, p = .026$, partial eta squared = .058) and for the main effect of exposure ($F(1, 83) = 13.108, p = .001$, partial eta squared = .136). The effect size shows that elaboration accounted for $R^2 = 6\%$ of the variance in the data, which is a small effect, and exposure accounted for $R^2 = 14\%$ of the variance in

the data, which is a large effect. The main effect of the interaction between exposure and elaboration were found to be non-statistical.

Moreover, a second two-way ANOVA (Table 3) examining the effects of frequency of exposure and elaboration on the increase in participants' form recognition knowledge found a statistical effect for the main effect of elaboration only ($F(1, 83) = 3.999$, $p = .049$, partial eta squared = .046). The effect size shows that this factor accounted for $R^2 = 5\%$ of the variance in the data, which is a small effect. Neither the main effect of exposure nor the interaction between exposure and elaboration were found to be statistical.

Table 3: Two-way Anova (Exposure and Elaboration): Form recognition test

Source	Sum of Squares	f	Mean Square	<i>F-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	η^2
Exposure	1065.416	1	1065.416	2.695	.104	.031
Elaboration	1581.229	1	1581.229	3.999	.049	.046
Exposure *						
Elaboration	.051	1	.051	.000	.991	.000
Error	32817.552	83	395.392			

df=degrees of freedom, η^2 =partial eta squared (effect size)

Table 4: Two-way Anova (Exposure and Elaboration): Meaning recognition test

Source	Sum of Squares	f	Mean Square	<i>F-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	η^2
Exposure	533.373	1	533.373	1.207	.275	.014
Explanation	4537.925	1	4537.925	10.267	.002	.110
Exposure * Explanation	393.763	1	393.763	.891	.348	.011
Error	36684.172	83	441.978			

df=degrees of freedom, η^2 =partial eta squared (effect size)

A third two-way ANOVA (Table 4) studying the effects of frequency of exposure and elaboration on the increase in participants' meaning recognition knowledge found a statistical effect for the main effect of elaboration only ($F(1, 83) = 10.267$, $p = .002$, partial eta squared = .110). The effect size shows that elaboration accounted for $R^2 = 11\%$ of the variance in the data, which is a moderate effect. Neither the main effect of exposure nor the interaction between exposure and elaboration were found to be statistical. Table 5 shows the fourth two-way ANOVA, which investigates the effects of frequency of exposure and elaboration on the increase in participants' meaning recall knowledge. Results found a statistical effect for the main effect of elaboration ($F(1, 84) = 5.680$, $p = .019$, partial eta squared = .063) and for the

main effect of exposure ($F(1, 84) = 4.216, p = .043$, partial eta squared = .048). The effect size shows that elaboration accounted for $R^2 = 6.3\%$ of the variance in the data and exposure accounted for $R^2 = 5\%$ of the variance in the data, which are both small effects. Moreover, the main effect of the interaction between exposure and elaboration was found to be non-statistical.

Table 5: Two-way ANOVA (Exposure and Elaboration): Meaning recall test

Source	Sum of Squares	F	Mean Square	<i>F-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	η^2
Exposure	1938.172	1	1938.172	4.216	.043	.048
Explanation	2611.231	1	2611.231	5.680	.019	.063
Exposure *	461.469	1	461.469	1.004	.319	.012
Explanation						
Error	38614.740	84	459.699			

df=degrees of freedom, η^2 =partial eta squared (effect size)

Effects of Instructional, Linguistic and Cognitive factors on Incidental Vocabulary Retention

This section reports the results of the final aspect of the study – the impact of frequency of exposure, +/- elaboration, and individual differences on vocabulary retention. Using objective testing (regression analysis) is necessary to determine the extent to which these four factors – prior vocabulary, listening competence, phonological short-term and working memory – have a differential impact on the vocabulary post-test scores in comparison to the effect of the main instructional factors – elaboration and exposure. The multiple Linear Regressions and the simple Linear Regression were applied to compare the effects of the two independent variables (elaboration and exposure) and the four mediator variables (prior vocabulary, listening, phonological short-term and working memory) on form and meaning retention.

First, the results of the main effects of the six factors on the overall word knowledge (total scores of all three post-tests) are presented in Table (6). In overall word knowledge, Table 6 reveals significant relationships between the two factors – elaboration and listening – and the total scores: $F(1, 87) = 13.24, p < .001$ for ELAB; $F(1, 87) = 5.63, p = .020$ for LIST. However, the main effects for the other four factors – exposure, vocabulary, phonological

short –term memory, and working memory – are not significant.

Table 6: Comparative fixed effects of the six factors: Overall word knowledge

Source	Numerator df	F	F-value	p-value
Elaboration (ELAB)	1	87	13.243	.000
Exposure (EXP)	1	87	3.706	.057
Vocabulary (VOC)	1	87	3.772	.055
Listening (LIST)	1	87	5.626	.020
Phonological Short-term Memory (PSTM)	1	82	.013	.909
Working Memory (WM)	1	82	.021	.886

Since the effect for four factors were insignificant, the Simple Regression was performed only for the two significant factors in order to determine which one better predicted the total scores. The results are shown in Table 7. ELAB clearly appears to be the best predictor for the total post-test scores as its Beta-value (β) was the highest (.363); whereas LIST was the second best predictor ($\beta = .246$).

Table 7: Comparative Beta-values: Overall word knowledge

Source	B	SE	β	p-value
Elaboration (ELAB)	3.431	.943	.63	.000
Listening (LIST)	.767	.323	.246	.020

Based on the results of the multiple and simple regression analyses, it could be proposed that providing explicit elaboration of the meanings of new words by means of definitions had the strongest impact on vocabulary retention. Listening competence was also significant with less powerful effect.

Following the report on overall word knowledge, the results of the main effects for the six factors on the outcomes of the three vocabulary post-tests individually are presented in Table (8) to Table (13). In word-form knowledge, Table 8 reveals significant relationships between only one factor – elaboration– and the form recognition scores: $F(1, 88) = 4.502$, $p = .037$. However, the main effects for the other five factors – EXP, VOC, LIST, PSTM, and WM – are not significant. A Simple Regression analysis showed that ELAB was the only significant predictor for the form recognition scores with a Beta-value (β) of .221.

Table 8: Comparative fixed effects of the six factors: Form recognition test

Source	Numerator df	F	F-value	p-value
Elaboration (ELAB)	1	88	4.502	.037
Exposure (EXP)	1	88	2.599	.111
Vocabulary (VOC)	1	88	1.051	.308
Listening (LIST)	1	88	.379	.540
Phonological Short-term Memory (PSTM)	1	83	.111	.740
Working Memory (WM)	1	83	.008	.928

Table 9: Beta-values: Form recognition test

Source	B	SE	β	p-value
Elaboration (ELAB)	.884	.417	.221	.037

In word-meaning knowledge, Table 9 reveals significant relationships between the two factors – elaboration and listening – and the meaning recognition scores: $F(1, 91) = 11.43$, $p = .001$ for ELAB; $F(1, 91) = 7.35$, $p = .008$ for LIST. However, the main effects for the other four factors – EXP, VOC, PSTM and WM – are not significant.

Table 10: Comparative fixed effects of the six factors: Meaning recognition test

Source	Numerator df	F	F-value	p-value
Elaboration (ELAB)	1	91	11.430	.001
Exposure (EXP)	1	91	.335	.564
Vocabulary (VOC)	1	91	3.221	.076
Listening (LIST)	1	91	7.349	.008
Phonological Short-term Memory (PSTM)	1	86	.315	.576
Working Memory (WM)	1	86	.037	.847

Therefore, a Simple Regression was performed only for the two significant factors to see which one better predicted the scores. Table 11 shows that ELAB seems to be the best predictor for the meaning recognition scores with a higher Beta-value ($\beta = .334$); followed by LIST as the second best predictor ($\beta = .273$).

Table 11: Comparative Beta-values: Meaning recognition test

Source	B	SE	<i>B</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Elaboration (ELAB)	1.476	.437	.334	.001
Listening (LIST)	.401	.148	.273	.008

In word-meaning recall, Table 12 reveals significant relationships between only one factor – elaboration– and the translation scores: $F(1, 92) = 7.153$, $p = .009$. However, the main effects for the other five factors – EXP, VOC, LIST, PSTM, and WM – are not significant.

Table 12: Comparative fixed effects of the six factors: Meaning recall test

Source	Numerator df	F	F-value	<i>p</i> -value
Elaboration (ELAB)	1	92	7.153	.009
Exposure (EXP)	1	92	3.539	.063
Vocabulary (VOC)	1	92	2.299	.133
Listening (LIST)	1	92	2.372	.127
Phonological Short-term Memory (PSTM)	1	87	.217	.643
Working Memory (WM)	1	87	.169	.682

A Simple Regression analysis showed that ELAB was the only significant predictor for the translation scores with a Beta-value (β) of .269 (see Table 13).

Table 13: Beta-values: Meaning recall test

Source	B	SE	<i>B</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Elaboration (ELAB)	1.201	.449	.269	.009

Discussion

Results of this study suggest that words can be learned incidentally from a controlled and structured listening activity. It lends support to previous L1 and L2 studies which show that children can ‘pick up’ new words from listening to stories. It also adds to the scarce literature on young EFL learners’ vocabulary learning from oral input. This study also confirms that oral input provides important contextual support for young EFL learners to acquire different types and degrees of word knowledge. Children in treatment conditions in

the present study learned the phonological form of 41% of the target words. They also were able to recognize the meaning of 55% of the new words and recall the meaning of 29% of the target words in all treatment conditions. However, they differed in the proportion of their retention of word form and meaning and their degree of word knowledge according to the different treatments they received.

Findings also revealed that providing explicit elaboration (i.e. L2 definitions) of target words during listening seems to facilitate the learning of their form and their meaning (i.e. form-meaning connections). In other words, children who were provided with an oral definition of the target words were able to recognize their form and meaning and also recall their meanings better than those who learned by inferring from context only. This is line with previous L1 research that showed that vocabulary learning increased significantly (and sometimes doubled) when explanations were provided for the children (Elley, 1989; Reese & Cox, 1999; Senechal, 1997; Senechal, Thomas, & Monker, 1995; Brett, Rothlein, & Hurley, 1996; Penno, Wilkinson, & Moore, 2002; Beck & McKeown, 2007). These findings could also lend support to previous literature that have argued for the importance of learner attention or 'noticing' as a crucial factor in incidental learning (e.g. Schmidt, 1994; Hulstijn, 2003). Noticing has been coined by Schmidt (1994) as the conscious registration of the occurrence of a stimulus. Within this framework, noticing involves attention and a low level of awareness, results in intake, and is considered crucial and necessary for learning to take place. However, Schmidt (2001) explains that what is relevant may not be if awareness is necessary or not, but rather the fact that more awareness results in more learning.

Moreover, frequency of exposure was a significant factor in the recall of word meaning. Meanings were better remembered as a result of both repeated listening and repeated occurrences of the target words. Studies have found that multiple encounters are beneficial for children to gain more than a temporary or surface level understanding of new vocabulary, whether these encounters are provided in repeated occurrences of the word within a story or in repeated readings of the same story (Elley, 1989; Justice, Meier, & Walpole, 2005; Penno et al., 2002; Senechal, 1997; Wilkinson & Houston-Price, 2013).

Results also revealed that elaboration was the best predictor of word retention in all three types of vocabulary knowledge out of all the instructional and learner factors investigated in the study. Providing definitions of the new words played an important facilitating role in children's word learning, regardless of their individual differences in

linguistic and cognitive abilities. Prior vocabulary did not seem to play a significant role in the participants' vocabulary learning which suggests that both children with high and low levels of prior vocabulary were able to acquire new words from listening. Research has suggested that elaborated exposure to new words in stories may narrow the gap between children with high and low vocabulary knowledge (Coyne, Simmons, Kame'enui & Stoolmiller, 2004). Phonological short-term and working memory also did not seem to have a significant affect on the children's vocabulary learning in this study. This supports research that claims that as a learners' language proficiency develops, the less they rely on their short-term memory to remember words. Gathercole and Baddeley (1993) suggest that the role of phonological short-term memory is probably most significant when beginning to learn another language because there is usually little other relevant knowledge to relate new forms to. The only learner factor that appeared to have a mediating effect on students' vocabulary learning was listening competence. Results of the regression analysis revealed that the children's listening ability was the second best predictor of their meaning recognition after the availability of elaboration. This suggests that learners with better L2 listening skills were able to learn the form-meaning connections better than those with lower listening competence. Studies have found statistically significant differences in strategy use in which skilled listeners reported larger use of strategies such as comprehension monitoring and questioning elaboration, while less-skilled listeners reported more use of on-line translation (e.g. O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Goh 2002; Vandergrift 2003; Chamot 2005). An exclusive bottom-up approach to L2 listening does not leave L2 listeners with adequate attentional resources to construct meaning (Vandergrift, 2007).

Conclusions

The present study has revealed several important findings and implications. Firstly, it supports the notion that words can be learned incidentally from oral context. The data suggests that more new words appear to be learned from a repeated reading than a single reading context. Moreover, providing verbal explanation of the new words significantly facilitates the construction of meaning to which the new word can be fast mapped. Secondly, the test type affects the gain scores that are shown from listening. Hence, researchers should be careful about only selecting multiple-choice tests to validate the learning of vocabulary.

Finally, individual differences in listening competence appear to play a significant role in word learning. Children with higher listening competence were better at recognizing meanings of new words. This supports previous research that has reported that lower-proficiency listeners had more difficulty with word recognition and word segmentation skills than higher-proficiency listeners (Goh, 2000; Hasan, 2000). Therefore, it is recommended to combine instruction in (bottom-up) word segmentation skills and (top-down) compensatory strategies such as inferencing when teaching listening skills for children.

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Appendices

Appendix A. The list of English words, their substitute word equivalents, definitions, and Arabic translation

No.	English Word	Substitute word	Definition	Arabic Translation
1	House (n.)	Windle	a building in which people live.	منزل
2	Latch (v.)	Vack	to close and lock with a bar.	يقفل
3	Old (adj.)	Greal	lived for many years; not young.	عجوز
4	Clever (adj.)	Tantic	smart and clever.	ذكي
5	Top (adj.)	Mear	the highest area or point.	أعلى
6	Taste (n.)	Sind	the taste of something.	طعم
7	Pluck (v.)	Mork	to take with the fingers and pull off; pick.	يقطف
8	Shout (v.)	Tance	to call out (or speak) loudly.	ينادي
9	Touch (v.)	Prink	to feel something with your hand or fingers.	يلمس
10	Pull (v.)	Nase	to bring something closer to you by using force.	يسحب

Appendix B: Extracts from the Story

Version 1: Story with non-words only

Once, long ago, there was a woman who lived alone in the country with her three children, Shang, Tao, and Paotze. On the day of their grandmother's birthday, the good mother went to see her, leaving the three children at their **windle**.

Before she left, she said, "Be good while I am away, my heart-loving children; I will not return tonight. Remember to close the door tight at night and **vack** it well."

But a **greal** wolf lived nearby and saw the good mother leave. At night, pretending to be a **greal** woman, he came up to the **windle** of the children and knocked on the door twice: bang, bang.

Version 2: Story with non-words and added definitions

Once, long ago, there was a woman who lived alone in the country with her three children, Shang, Tao, and Paotze. On the day of their grandmother's birthday, the good mother went to see her, leaving the three children at their **windle** (*Windle is a building in which people live*).

Before she left, she said, "Be good while I am away, my heart-loving children; I will not return tonight. Remember to close the door tight at night and **vack** it well." (*Vack means to close and lock with a bar*).

But a **greal** wolf lived nearby and saw the good mother leave. (*Greal means lived for many years; not young*). At night, pretending to be a **greal** woman, he came up to the **windle** of the children and knocked on the door twice: bang, bang.

Appendix C: Listening Comprehension Test

Answer the following questions about the story:

1. Why does the mother leave her three children alone at the beginning of the story?

To visit their grandmother for her birthday.

2. Who does the wolf pretend to be?

The children's Po Po, or grandmother.

3. What does the wolf want with the children?

He wants to eat them.

4. How does Shang discover that the wolf is not really their Po Po?

She feels the wolf's bushy tail and sharp claws, and when she lights the candle briefly, she sees his hairy face.

5. What is Shang's clever plan to keep the wolf from eating the children?

Getting the wolf to want the ginkgo nuts; she tells him they are magical and can make him live forever.

6. Why do the three children climb the ginkgo tree?

To get away from the wolf; to get closer to the ginkgo nuts.

Appendix D: Spoken-Form Recognition Test

Listen to a list of words and tell me if you have heard any of them in the story. Circle the answer YES or NO.

Windle	1.	YES	NO
Rimple	2.	YES	NO
Vack	3.	YES	NO
Greal	4.	YES	NO
Yoot	5.	YES	NO
Blund	6.	YES	NO
Tance	7.	YES	NO
Toker	8.	YES	NO
Prink	9.	YES	NO
Tantic	10.	YES	NO
Tring	11.	YES	NO
Sind	12.	YES	NO
Mand	13.	YES	NO
Cadle	14.	YES	NO
Smorty	15.	YES	NO
Mear	16.	YES	NO
Palk	17.	YES	NO
Mork	18.	YES	NO
Jurg	19.	YES	NO
Nase	20.	YES	NO

Appendix E: Multiple Choice Meaning Recognition Test

Listen to a list of words and circle the word with the nearest meaning to the word you hear.

Windle	لا أعلم	سوق	حديقة	منزل	مدرسة	1
Vack	لا أعلم	يصلح	يكسر	يفتح	يقفل	2
Greal	لا أعلم	حزين	عجوز	صغير	سعيد	3
Tance	لا أعلم	يضحك	يسأل	يعني	ينادي	4
Prink	لا أعلم	يسمع	يشاهد	يلمس	يشم	5
Tantic	لا أعلم	جميل	غني	هادئ	ذكي	6
Sind	لا أعلم	شكل	طعم	صوت	رائحة	7
Mear	لا أعلم	أيسر	أيمن	أسفل	أعلى	8
Mork	لا أعلم	يأكل	يطبخ	يقطف	يزرع	9
Nase	لا أعلم	يأخذ	يدفع	يعطي	يسحب	10

Appendix F: Translation Test

Listen to a list of words and write the meaning of each word in Arabic.

Windle	منزل ، بيت ، سكن ، دار	1.
Vack	يقفل ، يغلق	2.
Greal	عجوز ، كبير في السن	3.
Tance	ينادي، يصيح ، يصرخ	4.
Prink	يلمس ، يحس	5.
Tantic	ذكي ، نبيه	6.
Sind	طعم ، ذوق	7.
Mear	أعلى ، فوق	8.
Mork	يقطف ، يأخذ ، ينزع	9.
Nase	يسحب ، يشد	10.

Perception, production and perceptual learning in the second language: a study of perceptual learning by L1 Bengali speakers of L2 English

Jacqueline Ingham

University of Sheffield

Abstract

This study tests for evidence of perceptual speech learning with reference to two cross-linguistic perception models, the Perceptual Assimilation Model and the Speech Learning Model. A simulated longitudinal study is piloted with two adult native Bengali subjects with L2 English and differing L2 linguistic experience. The perception and production data of L2 English word-initial obstruents /p/ - /b/, /f/ - /v/ and /b/ - /v/, which are both shared and not shared in the L1, are compared and analysed for evidence of speech learning in intelligibility between the two learners. The context for this is whether perception-led classroom-based pronunciation training may improve adult L2 pronunciation of word-initial obstruents. Results show that the simulated longitudinal model may provide a window on perceptual learning. Evidence of learning in both perception and intelligibility in the production of word-initial obstruents /p/, /f/ and /v/ is detected in the participants in this study. It is argued, however, that whilst there is some evidence that perceptual speech learning may occur over time, further research is necessary to investigate speech learning at different stages of experience in the L2.

Key words: *Perceptual speech learning; Second Language Acquisition; Bengali speakers of English.*

Introduction

The debate on adult accented speech has developed over several decades (e.g. Flege, 1995; Lenneberg, 1969; Scovel, 2000) and, whilst the current focus may have shifted, age, input and ultimate attainment in second language acquisition remain highly topical (e.g. Montrul, 2010; Muñoz and Singleton, 2011; Rothman, 2008)¹. Initially, several studies focussed on the similarities and differences between child and adult first (L1) and second (L2) language acquisition, arguing for a biologically timed critical period beyond which neural plasticity is atrophied, preventing the post-pubescent learner from achieving target-like L2 speech (e.g. Scovel, 1969; Oyama, 1976, Patowski, 1990; Long, 2007). Other studies rejected claims of a critical period, with evidence of adult L2 learners able to produce unaccented speech (Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1977; Bongaerts, 1999), and pre-pubescent children unable to produce unaccented L2 speech (Flege & Eefting, 1987)². Studies such as that by Flege (1991) and Flege and Eefting (1987) argue that any advantage gained by learning to speak an L2 in the pre-pubescent years is tempered not by a critical period, but by the quality of L2 input. Proponents of perception based theories include Flege (1995), who proposes that L2 production is led by the perception and classification of new or similar L2 sounds through the L1 phonological system, and Best (1995) who claims new L2 sounds are subject to differing degrees of assimilation according to existing L1 categories.

Although teaching methodology is not the prime concern of this study, the critical period theories have arguably had extensive influence on the theory and practice of English as a foreign or second language (EFL, ESL) teaching methodology and language planning (Scovel, 2000). This is seen in the dominance of articulatory-based training for adult pronunciation practice (Rochet, 1995) and the replication of child L1 acquisition for older L2 learners (Scovel, 2000). The role of perception in promoting accurate production has arguably had little impact on L2 classroom practice (Rochet, 1995), despite a number of cross-linguistic perception studies (e.g. Best, 1995; Best, Halle, Bohn & Faber 2003; Best &

¹ The use of the term ‘accented’ and ‘target-like’ herein refers to how closely a native listener of the target language perceives and deems intelligible the segmental production of a second language speaker (see Higgins, 2003; Jenkins, 2005; Jenkins, 2006 for discussion on World Englishes and standard versions of English).

² There has been much debate regarding methodology, for instance in the analysis and representation of graphical data in critical period studies (e.g. Birdsong, 2005), and in areas such as the weight placed on accent compared to comprehensibility and intelligibility (e.g. Derwing and Munro, 1997) and the reliability of native speaker benchmarking (e.g. Bongaerts, 1999; Bongaerts, van Summeren, Planken, and Schils 1997; Rothman, 2008).

Tyler, 2007; Flege, 2003). It is this apparent lack of uptake of perception-based theories in the teaching of adult L2 pronunciation which motivates this current study. The question addressed is whether or not perceptual learning occurs over time, with the implications of this being whether perceptual learning could be harnessed in classroom-based pronunciation teaching.

There are a number of studies which test the perception and production of specific consonant or vowel phonemes by adult L2 learners of English or other languages, such as those in support of L2 perception based on L1 categories (e.g. Best, McRoberts & Sithole, 1988 on non-native Zulu click discrimination), or those which challenge the perception-production correlate (e.g. Chan [2014] on Cantonese ESL learners). Whilst other studies detail the effects of perceptual training on perception and production (e.g. Rochet, 1995; Hanulíková, Dediu, Fang, Bašňaková, & Huettig, 2012), there are comparatively fewer studies testing for evidence of perceptual learning of L2 sounds by adult L2 learners over time (e.g. Guion, Flege, Akahane-Yamada & Pruitt, 2000).

In this paper, perception and production data of word-initial obstruents from two L1 Bengali speakers of L2 English is examined for evidence of perceptual learning. An experimental simulated longitudinal test attempts to replicate the conventional longitudinal study by extrapolating between an initial state learner and an experienced or bilingual learner according to the predictions of two distinct but compatible perception-based models. It is proposed that this methodology allows insight into perceptual development over time, with evidence of perceptual learning and new category formation, as well as modification of similar categories in the L1 and L2. However, this perceptual learning is measured over a simulated, but significantly lengthy period of time, and the return in terms of improved pronunciation for such extensive exposure to quality L2 input may need to be considered in terms of applicability to classroom learning.

The following section discusses two cross-language perception models relevant for the current study. I describe the experimental methodology, and the predictions for perception and speech learning are detailed thereafter. A discussion of the results is given followed by the conclusion section.

Two models for predicting perception and production of L2 sounds

One of the problems in testing for evidence of perceptual learning is that it is proposed to be a lifelong faculty (Flege, 1995) and category formation and speech learning may involve several years of quality target-language input (Flege, 1995; Guion et al., 2000). Two cross-language perception models with which it is seemingly possible to examine the learnability of L2 consonant contrasts by L2 learners proficient at both ends of the learning spectrum, are the Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM; Best et al., 1988; Best, 1995) and the Speech Learning Model (SLM; Flege, 1995). Whilst there are studies which test PAM against SLM (e.g. Rohena-Madrozo, [2013] on occluded voiced stops by L1 Spanish subjects), PAM and SLM may also be seen as complimentary models (Best & Tyler, 2007). Used in tandem, PAM and SLM may test for learnability of the perception of L2 sounds with respect to language experience (e.g. Guion et al., [2000] on the perception of English consonants by adult L1 Japanese speakers).

The Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM)

PAM (e.g. Best et al., 1988; Best, 1995) proposes that the ability of naïve adult L2 learners to discriminate between non-native phonological contrasts is commensurate with how the features of contrasting L2 phones are assimilated and categorised to existing L1 phonological categories. This concerns how the articulatory properties, such as place and degree of constriction of an L2 sound are perceived in relation to the nearest L1 sound. The perceived distance between L1 and L2 sounds affects the learner's ability to discriminate between L2 contrasts. In practice, this means that some contrasting pairs of L2 sounds are proposed to be 'excellent' and easier to detect than 'poor' examples of an L1 category (Best, 1995).

PAM defines six assimilation patterns (Table 1) allowing predictions to be made regarding the discriminatory ability of the learner to detect the contrast between two L2 sounds. The ability to discriminate is rated according to whether the L2 phones are considered good or bad examples of the L1 category. In this respect, a two-category assimilation whereby two L2 phones are assimilated to two corresponding L1 categories is the most accurate in terms of discriminatory ability of the learner, whereas two L2 sounds assimilated to one L1 sound, as a single-category assimilation may cause poor discriminatory

ability. Not all L2 sounds are considered speech sounds. If an L2 segment is not perceived as a speech sound, then it is not assimilable within the L1 phonological space. An L2 speech sound which is within the L1 phonological space, but which does not correspond to any particular native category, is considered uncategorisable.

Table 1: The PAM assimilation patterns for non-native contrasts. Note: Adapted from Best (1995, p. 125).

Category	Assimilation pattern X → assimilates to Y	Predicted discrimination
Two-Category (TC Type)	Two L2 sounds → Two L1 sounds	Excellent
Single-Category (SC Type)	Two L2 sounds → One L1 sound	Poor
Category-Goodness (CG Type)	Two L2 sounds → One L1 sound. One L2 sound is a good example of the L1 sound, the other is a poor example	(Very) good (to moderate)

The Speech Learning Model (SLM)

Whilst PAM provides a framework for prediction of the discriminatory perceptual abilities between non-native L2 contrasts by inexperienced adult L2 learners, SLM focuses on the speech learning of very experienced learners and bilinguals, predicting how accurately experienced learners may both perceive and, importantly, produce L2 sounds with respect to the potential for lifelong learning of both perception and speech.

According to SLM, as proposed in the version set forward by Flege (1995), the L1 mechanisms used to create and store phonetic categories are available throughout adulthood and are applicable to individual L2 sounds, allowing new categories to be created for phonetically different L2 sounds when distant enough from the nearest category in the L1. Furthermore, bilinguals operate two language systems within the same phonological space, and significant effort is made to maintain the phonetic contrasts between the L1 and L2 categories. This is significant because according to this version of SLM, L1 ‘phonetic categories’ are susceptible to the influence of the properties of L2 sounds.

Similar to PAM, SLM proposes that L2 learners perceive auditory sounds through the L1 phonological system, but in contrast to PAM, SLM claims that the greater the perceived distance between an L2 sound and the nearest L1 sound, the more likely it is that a new category will be formed. Furthermore, L2 speech will be more or less accented according to

how similar the representation of the new category is to that of a native speaker of the target language. In other words, quality and quantity of L2 exposure remain integral to the success of new category formation (Guion et al., 2000).

Alongside the constraints imposed by advancing age, however, the formation of a new category depends upon whether an L2 sound is perceived as ‘new’ or ‘similar’. This is argued to be subject to equivalence classification, a process also at work in child L1 acquisition, which allows infants to identify a particular phonetic category even though a phone may be produced variably due to speaker idiosyncrasies or the surrounding phonetic environment (e.g. Flege, 1987, 1995). In adult and older child L2 language learning, Flege (1987) proposes that equivalence classification prevents discrimination between articulatory ‘similar’ segments, which are present in both the L1 and L2. This is illustrated in the case of L1 English speakers learning L2 French, whereby learners will identify that /t/ is a ‘similar’ phone, found in both the L1 and L2 (Flege, 1987). However, whilst ‘similar’, the French and English /t/ are not ‘identical’, (Flege, 1987) with differences in both Voice Onset Time and place of articulation (English /t/ is long-lag stop with alveolar place of articulation and French /t/ is a short-lag stop with dental place of articulation). Flege (1987) claims that equivalence classification prevents the learner from making a new phonetic category for the ‘similar’ L2 phone, and that target-like L2 production is subsequently inhibited, which may over time even cause amalgamation of the L1 and L2 qualities to a single category.

On the other hand, equivalence classification does not interfere with the perception and category formation of new L2 phones, which are acoustically distinct from those phones present in the L1, such as the ‘new’ L2 French /y/ for L1 English learners of French (Flege, 1987). Whilst Flege (1987) suggests that the French /y/ might initially be identified as /u/ by L1 English speakers, it is proposed that speech learning will occur so that highly experienced L1 English speakers of L2 French will produce target-like French /y/. The principles of speech learning (SLM; Flege, 1995) are set out in the following list adapted from Flege (1995, p. 239):

- L1 and L2 sounds are perceptually related at an allophonic level.
 ∠
- If a bilingual detects phonetic differences between L2 and closest L1 sound, a new phonetic category can be created.
 ∠

- Phonetic differences will be detected if there is a greater perceived variance between the L2 and closest L1 sound.

∠

- As age of learning increases the probability of detecting phonetic differences between L1 and L2 sounds, or L2 sounds which are not contrasted in the L1, diminishes.

∠

- Equivalence classification may obstruct the creation of a new L2 category so that perceptually linked L1 and L2 sounds will be processed into a single category, influencing production of both L1 and L2 sounds to sound the same.

∠

- A bilingual's category for an L1 sound may be different from that of a monolingual speaker if the L2 category is pushed away from an existing L1 category to preserve contrast.
- Sound production eventually matches with phonetic category representation.

Perception and production

According to both these models, the ability to discriminate between L2 contrasting consonant sounds depends on how the phonetic features of the L2 sound is perceived in relation to those of existing L1 sounds. The perceived distance between the L1 and L2 sound determines how accurately the L2 sound may be assimilated and categorized in relation to that of a native speaker of the target language. Whilst PAM does not make predictions on L2 production, perception precedes production in terms of the initial assimilation of articulatory gestures in L1 acquisition, which defines the discriminable phonetic distinctions underpinning L1 phonological contrasts against which non-native segments are perceived (Best, 1995). In terms of SLM, accurate perceptual L2 tokens are prerequisite to promote the sensorimotor learning in the production of target-like speech sounds (Flege, 1995).

The present study

In the present study, two L1 Bengali speakers with different experience of L2 English were tested for evidence of learning in both perception and production of word-initial consonants. The simulated longitudinal study in this experiment was designed as an initial pilot to test whether evidence of perceptual learning can be extrapolated between learners from the same L1 background with differing L2 linguistic experience, using the predictions of PAM and SLM at both the initial and advanced/bilingual stages of learning respectively. L1 Bengali speakers are relatively underrepresented in cross-language perception studies.

Participants

Two L1 speakers of Bengali with L2 English participated in this initial pilot study. The participants were selected following a cross-linguistic pre-pilot study in conjunction with a contrastive analysis of word-initial consonant phonemes shared and not shared in the L1 and L2 (see Table 4). A learner background summary is presented in Table 2. Levels of L2 English were evaluated by means of self-assessment, and although the L2 speaking level was not validated during this study, self-reports of target-like pronunciation in the L2 have similarly been recorded in other studies, such as that by Flege, Munro and MacKay (1995) with native Italian speaking subjects.

Table 2: Learner background of participants

	Participant A	Participant B
<i>Self-assessed level in speaking L2 English</i>	Elementary	Advanced
<i>and % of L2 usage per week</i>	20%	80%
<i>Age of arrival in UK</i>	31	7 - 10 Settled permanently in the UK at age 11
<i>Age at testing</i>	47	35

A point of discussion is age, age of arrival and age of testing of the participants. Flege (1987) distinguishes between young children as one category of learner and older children and adults as another, but it is not clear at which point a child progresses from being young to old. The age of arrival (AOA) in the UK of Participant B is particularly relevant, especially as permanent residency and full-time education in L2 English did not occur until the participant was aged eleven. Flege (1995) claims that the impact of AOA on the perception and production of L2 sounds that are not shared in the L1 remains unclear. Studies in support of a critical period also propose different critical ages for L2 speech learning. Oyama (1976) identifies a sensitive-period for acquiring an L2 phonological system with an AOA of twelve, regardless of the length of stay, whereas Asher and García (1969), propose children with an AOA of between one and six years old proved more likely to acquire target-like speech than those with an older AOA. The situation is much the same in perception-led L2 speech studies (see Flege for a brief review of some of the studies on AOA, 1995), although both camps agree that the earlier the age of L2 learning, the better for L2 pronunciation.

Participant B started learning English as an older child or adult, and has subsequently had twenty-four years of quality L2 input. Importantly, as this study is concerned with evidence of speech learning by comparing data from the inexperienced and experienced L2 learner, the L2 input has occurred during the maturational and early adult years, where the learner is potentially more receptive to perceptual learning and new phonetic category formation than in the later or advanced years of learning (Flege, 1995). Interestingly, Participant B did not select ‘bilingual’ as an option to self-describe L1 and L2 usage, and the terms ‘advanced’ and ‘experienced’ are used with consideration to the self-assessment.

Although Participant A had resided in the UK for some sixteen years at the time of testing, exposure to the L2 has been extremely limited and Participant A is considered an inexperienced learner, despite the length of stay in the UK. The relevance of this to the present study is that it is assumed that the predictions of PAM for the discriminatory ability of the inexperienced adult L2 learner in the perception of word-initial L2 consonant contrasts are applicable, and will subsequently provide the baseline for testing for evidence of speech learning in comparison to the experienced participant’s data.

Stimuli

Five L2 English obstruents were tested in three contrasting minimal pairs in L2 English: /p/ - /b/, /f/ - /v/, and /b/ - /v/. The tested phonemes are set out in Table 3 in English and Bengali (Ferguson and Chowdhury, 1960). The L2 English /p/ and /b/ phonemes are considered shared in the L1, although Bengali has a four-way contrast with aspirated and unaspirated contrasts as well as voiced and voiceless counterparts. The English /f/ and /v/ contrast is not shared in the L1, and the /b/ - /v/ contrast has both a shared and not shared phoneme between the L2 and the L1.

The target phonemes were tested in word-initial position of monosyllabic CVC words, such as ‘pin’ - ‘bin’.

Table 3: Comparison of tested phonemes in English and Bengali

		<i>Bilabial</i>		<i>labiodental</i>
<i>plosive</i>	Bengali	voiceless	p	p ^h
		voiced	b	b ^h
	English	voiceless	P	
		voiced	B	
<i>fricative</i>	Bengali	voiceless		
		voiced		
	English	voiceless	f	
		voiced	v	

Perception test materials, procedure and method of analysis

The stimulus material was designed to test the subjects' perception of contrasting word-initial obstruents in an AX word discrimination test. These tests have been used to test perception of non-native contrasts in a number of studies, including cross-linguistic studies (e.g. Best et al., 1988). The test is relatively straightforward and requires the individual to identify whether two phonetic tokens are the same (X is identical to A) or in some way different (X is not identical to A). An AX discrimination test was chosen in preference to an AXB type test because it requires less strain on the memory (Strange and Shafer, 2008), and is arguably more appropriate for inexperienced learners.

The stimuli consisted of a pre-recorded set of seventeen pairs of CVC monosyllabic words, with additional distractors and practice examples, in an approximate ratio of 2:1 for contrasting sounds over same-sound minimal pairs. The material contained only real words and only word-initial sounds were tested which were:

- i) shared in the L1 and L2 /p/ - /b/
- ii) not shared in the L1 and L2 /f/ - /v/
- iii) /b/ - /v/ one token shared and one token not shared in the L1 and L2.

The recorded perception test was presented in the following format:

Pre-recorded female English native speaker says 'number one' (delay 2 seconds). Male English native speaker says 'sip (delay 4 seconds) ship (delay 4 seconds). Female speaker says 'number two' (delay 2 seconds). Male speaker says 'pin (delay 4 seconds) 'pin'.

Answer sheet: Participants tick one of two columns 'Same' or 'Different'.

The inexperienced and experienced L2 English learners completed the perception test during one sitting. The data were analysed according to accurately perceived L2 contrasts, which were then calculated into a percentage.

Production test materials, procedure and method of analysis

The production test stimuli included the tokens from the perception test, presented in a random order as a list of words with distractors and examples to a total of 25 tokens. The test was delivered as an imitation or repetition procedure, and the learners were asked to repeat an auditory prompt of pre-recorded words, a procedure Bradlow, Pisoni, Arkahane-Yamada & Tohkura (1997) have used with both visual and auditory prompts. Visual prompts were not included in this test in an attempt to reduce deliberateness of speech. Similarly, only a short delay was given after the audio prompt in order to force a quick and unstudied response from the participants. The recording was put onto a personal sound system, and played through headphones. Subjects followed a 'listen and repeat' sequence and the production data was recorded onto a laptop. The procedure was as follows:

Pre-recorded male English native speaker says 'number one' (delay 1½ seconds). The male speaker says 'ship' (delay 10 seconds).

Production: The subject listens to the recording and repeats the word within the 10-second pause (utterance recorded).

The recorded speech production of the two participants was subsequently played to three adult native speakers of English: a primary school teacher, a university student and a secondary school teacher, who were asked to transcribe the words in an intelligibility judgement test, as exemplified in Table 4.

Table 4: Imitation production test - sample analysis of response data

Production Participant A	Transcriber 1	Transcriber 2	Transcriber 3	Analysis
fat	pan	an	Van	0
Production Participant B	Transcriber 1	Transcriber 2	Transcriber 3	Analysis
fat	fat	fat	Fat	1

Corroborative analysis of the correct representation of the target phoneme by all three transcribers was required in order to evidence accurate production of a phoneme. A percentage of accurately produced L2 target segments was then calculated as a production accuracy score for each contrasting segment, and a 70% accuracy rate was considered evidence of category formation³.

Predictions for evidence of speech learning

Predictions for the perceptual ability of the inexperienced learner

Table 5: Participant A - Predictions for perceptual discriminatory ability

	PAM TC Type: Two L2 sounds → Two L1 sounds = excellent discrimination
1. /p/ - /b/ contrast	L2 English /p/ assimilates to L1 Bengali /p/ L2 English /b/ assimilates to L1 Bengali /b/ = excellent discriminatory ability
	PAM UU Type: Two L2 sounds → No L1 sound = poor to excellent discrimination
2. /f/ - /v/ contrast	L2 English /f/ assimilates as poor example of L1 Bengali /p ^h / or /p/ L2 English /v/ assimilates as poor example of L1 Bengali /b ^h / or /b/ = good discriminatory ability. The L2 sounds are both assimilated within the L1 phonological space, but are uncategorisable within L1 categories.
	PAM UC Type: Two L2 sounds → a) one L2 sound to one L1 sound category, and b) one L2 sound uncategorised = very good discrimination
3. /b/ - /v/ contrast	L2 English /b/ assimilates to L1 Bengali /b/ L2 English /v/ assimilates to L1 Bengali /b/ or /b ^h / PAM = very good discriminatory ability Problem with uncategorised sounds, which closely resemble categorised sound in UC Type category. Revised prediction = poor discriminatory ability

The predictions for the perception of the target sounds by the inexperienced learner are made according to the PAM framework and are set out in Table 5. It is expected that the learner

³ A 70% criterion level for category formation was adopted for this study. See Lakshmanan and Selinker (2001) for a discussion on criterion levels in morpheme and feature acquisition.

will show excellent ability to discriminate between L2 /p/ - /b/, and good and poor discriminatory ability for /f/ - /v/ and /b/ - /v/ contrasts respectively.

The prediction for L2 English /f/ - /v/ contrast is predicted as good for the inexperienced learner because both L2 sounds are uncategorized, but they are equally phonetically poor examples relative to the nearest L1 categories of /p^h/ or /p/ and /b^h/ or /b/. However, although according to PAM, the learner should have very good discriminatory ability discerning between L2 English /b/ - /v/ contrast, this prediction is revised to poor discriminatory ability, following the study by Guion et al., (2000). In this study (Guion et al., 2000 p. 2721), the authors identify the potential for modification to PAM regarding the uncategorized - categorized UC Type category when the uncategorized sound (e.g. L2 English /v/ to L1 /b/ or /b^h/), is in close proximity to the categorized sound (e.g. L2 English /b/ to L1 /b/) within the phonological space. With this in mind, the inexperienced L1 Bengali learner of L2 English is predicted to have poor rather than excellent discriminatory ability of L2 /b/ - /v/ contrast.

Predictions for evidence of speech learning

Table 6: Predictions for Participant B and predictions for speech learning

L2 sounds	Predictions for Participant B	Predictions for evidence of speech learning between Participant A & B
1. L2 /p/ - /b/	L2 /p/ and L1 /p/ = good match L2 /b/ and L1 /b/ = good match	No evidence of learning predicted between subject A and B in perception or production, as both subjects should be able to perceive and produce the L2 contrast as also present in the L1.
2. L2 /f/ - /v/	New category formation is predicted to have occurred for L2 /f/ and L2 /v/ as ‘new’ sounds	Evidence of learning predicted between subject A and B, as subject B predicted to both perceive and produce L2 /f/ and /v/ more accurately and consistently than subject A.
3. L2 /b/ - /v/	New /v/ category and L2 /b/ and L1 /b/ = good match	Evidence of learning predicted between subject A and B, as subject B is predicted to outperform subject A in perception and production of L2 /b/ and /v/ contrast.

The predictions for the perception and production of the target sounds by the experienced learner are made according to the hypotheses of SLM, and in comparison to the expected discriminatory ability of the inexperienced learner. These are set out in Table 6. Evidence of

learning is predicted to occur in L2 consonants /f/ and /v/ which are not shared in the L1, and the experienced learner is expected to have created new categories for /f/ and /v/ phonemes, which is predicted to be reflected in significantly higher levels of accuracy in perception and production than the inexperienced learner.

Results and discussion

A combined set of results for both participants is set out in Table 7. Figure 1 illustrates the perception test, and Figure 2 the production test.

Table 7: Perception and production data

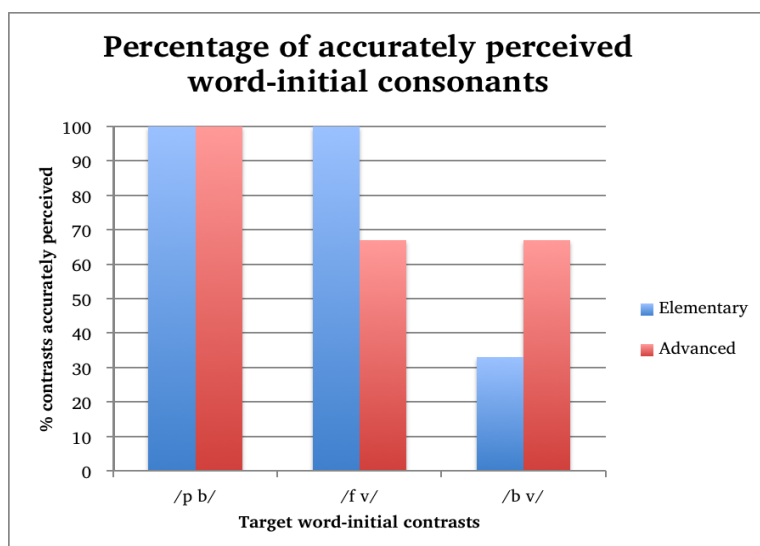
	Phoneme	Participant A %	Participant B %
Perception	/p/ - /b/	100	100
	/f/ - /v/	100	67
	/b/ - /v/	33	67
Production	/p/	40	80
	/b/	82	74
	/f/	50	83
	/v/	0	59

Both participants achieved 100% accuracy in discriminating between L2 English /p/ - /b/ contrast, as predicted according to both PAM and SLM. The ability of the inexperienced learner to discriminate between L2 English /f/ - /v/ contrast is higher than predicted, again achieving 100% accuracy. PAM predicts poor to excellent discriminatory ability for UU Type category assimilation, and the result here perhaps indicates that the perceived distance between the uncategorized L2 sounds and the L1 categories of the inexperienced learner was significantly less than anticipated in this study. It could be that the voicing distinction between L2 /f/ and /v/ was a sufficient phonetic distinction to promote excellent discriminatory ability, and that this result should therefore be considered commensurate with PAM UU Type assimilation predictions.

The inexperienced learner's perception of the L2 English /b/ - /v/ voiced - voiced contrast, where the learner shows evidence of lower perceptual ability, is in line with the

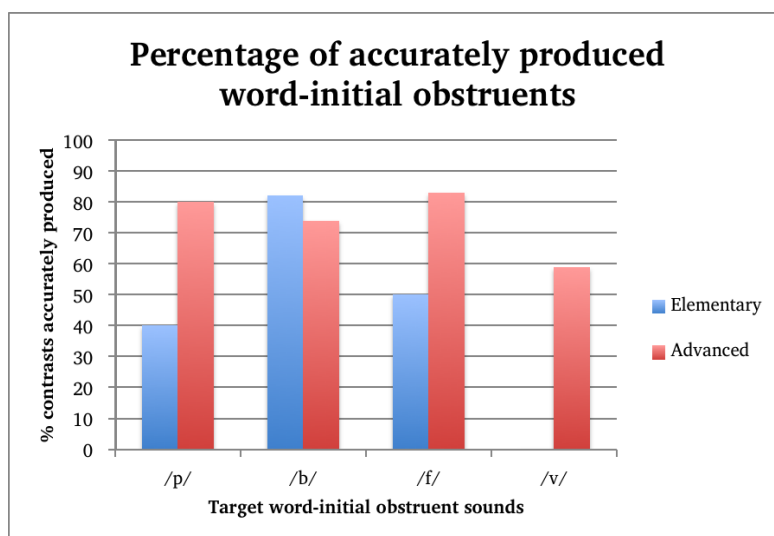
revised PAM prediction as discussed in Section 4.1. The poor discrimination of L2 /b/ - /v/ not only reflects the perceptual problems encountered when an uncategorized sound is in close proximity to an L2 sound which has been categorized within an L1 phonetic category, but also the effect phonetic similarity of two contrasting L2 phones (such as voicing) can have on the ability for inexperienced learners to discriminate between L2 contrasts which are not present in the L1. Interestingly, in evidence of perception preceding production, the inexperienced learner shows good production accuracy in producing L2 /f/, but is unable to produce target-like /v/ in any context (Figure 2). Furthermore, although the inexperienced learner's production score for evidence of /v/ was 0%, all three transcribers noted /b/ for every single instance that the inexperienced learner attempted to produce word-initial /v/.

Figure 1: Percentage of accurately perceived word-initial obstruents



It would appear that the predictions based on PAM provide an accurate indication of the inexperienced L2 English learner's ability at the initial stage of L2 learning to discriminate between contrasting L2 consonants /p/ - /b/, /f/ - /v/ and /b/ - /v/, which are shared and not shared in L1 Bengali, and provide a reliable baseline from which evidence of perceptual learning can be measured. Consistent with the predictions of SLM, analysis for evidence of speech learning between the experienced and inexperienced learner combines the perception and production data (Table 7), and the production results as presented separately in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Percentage of accurately produced word-initial obstruents



Focusing on the production of the two consonants /f/ and /v/, which are not shared between the L1 and L2, and assuming that a 70% accuracy in production is commensurate with category formation, it would appear that the experienced learner has created a new category for /f/, and is approaching a new category /v/. As the experienced learner has perception accuracy rates of 67% for both /f/ - /v/ and /b/ - /v/ contrasts, there is some but not total consistency in perception and production, and according to SLM, there is no reason to suspect that for this subject these categories will not continue to improve in accuracy with continued speech learning.

This is in sharp contrast to the data for Participant A, especially in terms of the lack of /v/ production in contrast to the comparative accuracy in the production of /f/ and the perception of the /f/ - /v/ contrast. The difference between Participant A and Participant B in production and perception of these sounds may be somewhat obscured by these comparative results. However, speech learning may not be linear and extrapolating between learners with yet different L2 experience may illuminate the development of new category formation. Still, there is no clear explanation as to why in production a new category for L2 /f/ would be more accurate than a new category for /v/. The experienced learner shows equal ability in perception of /f/ and /v/, and both categories are new and not 'similar' to L1 phonetic categories. The apparent emergence of /f/ before /v/ in category formation is perhaps not only relative to the two Bengali participants in this study (e.g. Jehma and Phoocharoensil [2014] cite similar evidence from Pattani-Malay learners of L2 English). It is possible that the

experienced learner shows evidence of bilingual merging (Flege, 1987), whereby the L1 and L2 sounds are perceptually combined into a single category, influencing perception and production of the L1 as well as the L2 when compared to that of a monolingual speaker. This requires further testing of the L1 alongside the L2, but merging would provide explanation for the lower accuracy rate of the experienced learner's perceptual data compared to the inexperienced learner for /f/ - /v/, and the comparable score for the /f/ - /v/ and /b/ - /v/ contrast (both 67% accuracy).

Much has been written on the acquisition of voiceless stops (Flege, 1995), and it is interesting to note that in the context of this study, Participant A has a low production accuracy rate for L2 /p/ compared to L2 /b/ (Figure 2), even though these phonemes are shared with the L1, and perception of /p/ - /b/ contrast is excellent. It should be remembered, however, that PAM does not make predictions regarding production. The higher accuracy rate of the experienced learner in the production of L2 voiceless stop /p/ compared to that of the inexperienced learner, is proposed to be evidence of speech learning, which was not anticipated in this study as both phonemes have counterparts shared in the L1. However, as noted in Table 3, Bengali has a four-way distinction between /p/, /p^h/, /b/ and /b^h/ compared to the two-way voiced - voiceless distinction in English /p/ - /b/. Ferguson and Chowdhury (1960) note that Bengali /p^h/ and /b^h/ are produced either as an aspirate; a stop followed by an aspirated release, or as a spirant, such as a fricative. The higher accuracy rates for the experienced learner in the production of L2 /p/ may arguably be evidence of quite fine phonetic speech learning taking place within a similar L1/L2 sound (Flege, 1987), which if tested against the /p/ sounds of an L1 Bengali monolingual speaker and learners with differing levels of L2 experience, may provide greater insight into merging and speech learning.

Conclusion

This experimental pilot study has arguably shown evidence of speech learning between an experienced and inexperienced native Bengali speaker in the perception and production of L2 English word-initial consonants. That is particularly L2 English voiceless stop /p/, which had not been predicted, and both voiceless and voiced fricatives not shared in the L1, /f/ and /v/. Further phonetic analysis of L2 production data in conjunction with L1 production of

nearest related phonemes might help to elucidate category formation and merging by the experienced learner in this study.

As an experimental design, this pilot aimed to test whether a simulated longitudinal study, drawing data from an adult inexperienced in the L2 and comparing it with a highly experienced L2 speaker from the same L1 background, could be used to ascertain whether L2 speech learning could occur over time by a process of extrapolation. The limitations of this study must be taken into account, especially the very small sample size of only two participants and the limited number of phonemes tested. However, it is tentatively suggested that the findings from this experimental pilot show that evidence of speech learning may potentially be extrapolated between learners with different L2 experience, but this must extend to larger subject groups with differing levels of experience to determine whether the development of speech learning accommodates a non-linear path of category formation and merging.

Regarding whether or not there should be a reconsideration of current classroom-based pronunciation teaching to include perception and speech learning alongside articulatory practice, this study can only contribute in terms of suggesting that more simulated longitudinal studies (with modification in light of the limitations from this study) are carried out to ascertain perceptual learning at different intervals of L2 development with differing L1 groups and phonemes. The evidence of speech learning in this experiment was after twenty-four years of naturalistic quality L2 input, and new category creation was not deemed complete. The application of perceptual learning in the classroom may be more feasible if patterns of speech learning can be extracted from differing stages of experience in the L2.

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A corpus-based investigation of the Given before New principle in Tanzanian English

Sondos Hassan Ibrahim

Northumbria University

Abstract

This paper investigates the information-packaging structures of Tanzanian English in order to evaluate the universality of the given before new (GBN) principle. Since Halliday (1967) observed that familiar information tends to precede new information, GBN has been accepted as a ‘linguistic truism’ (Birner & Ward, 2006 p. 291) and rarely challenged. However, recent cross-linguistic studies suggest that L2 learners of English prefer a new before given (NBG) structure (e.g. Park, 2011, p. 109), calling into question GBN’s universality. As a region where English largely functions as a second language, Tanzania is a worthy domain for further investigation of this kind. In this context, I analyse the personal columns category of the Tanzanian component of ICE-EA. I compare the frequency of GBN and NBG structures in this corpus category, evaluating the contexts in which these structures occur. My findings reveal that, although NBG is more prevalent in Tanzanian English than in standard British English, GBN remains a dominant feature in this English variety. The goal of this research is to use corpus-based methods to scrutinise the accuracy of this principle to describe non-standard varieties of English.

Key words: *Tanzanian English; Standard British English; Given Before New (GBN) principle; New Before Given (NBG) structure*

Introduction

This paper documents an investigation into the information-packaging structures of Tanzanian English, conducted using ICE-EA, which is the East-African component of the International Corpus of English. Compiled in the early 1990s, ICE-EA contains just over one million words of written and spoken language from Kenya and Tanzania; it is one of the only Tanzanian English language corpora in present circulation (Schmied & Hudson-Ettle, 1999). The recent emergence of new ICE-corpora has witnessed a surge of interest in grammatical variation across World Englishes, facilitating the scrutiny of generic assumptions about English syntax (Kortmann, 2006, p. 604).

One idea that has recently been challenged is the assumption that all varieties of English follow Michael Halliday's given before new principle (GBN). Though precise definitions of 'given' and 'new' differ, GBN broadly posits that, in discourse situations, familiar knowledge normally precedes unfamiliar information (Halliday, 1967, p.213). Though some grammarians such as Birner & Ward (2006) assert that GBN is a 'linguistic truism' of all languages (p. 291), recent studies have found that Polish, Korean and Swahili may prefer a new before given structure (NBG) (Mithun, 1992; Park, 2011; Vitale, 1981). The question that arises, then, is whether language contact has any impact on the packaging structure of English varieties.

In this context, I question the extent to which GBN is a feature of written Tanzanian English. Tanzania's sociolinguistic situation, where English (GBN) and Swahili (NBG) co-exist as joint official languages, marks out this variety for an investigation of this kind. Beginning with a brief review of the critical literature on GBN and on Tanzania's unique language context, I outline the design, challenges and results of the corpus experiment. Each clause from the 20,125 word Tanzanian personal columns subsection of ICE-EA is considered for the alternation between NBG and GBN structures. Deviations from GBN are analysed in particular detail in terms of the effect on intelligibility and journalistic style. Therefore, a consideration of GBN's prevalence in a non-standard English variety is here used as a vehicle to explore the pragmatic effects of this principle. The goal of this investigation is to use corpus-based methods to test my working hypothesis that Tanzanian English exhibits a reduced preference for GBN than standard British English due to Swahili/English contact. In so doing, this paper hopes to pave the way for further research into the impact of language contact on the ordering of information in texts.

Definitions and scope: What is ‘given’? What is ‘new’?

In the critical literature on information packaging, there is little theoretical consensus on the exact scope of the terms ‘given’ and ‘new’ (Halliday 1967, Ozón 2006). This section defines these terms for the purposes of the corpus-based study and highlights the results of major studies on GBN and NBG in English and other languages.

The earliest reference to information packaging came from Halliday who broadly defined given information as any knowledge which is judged to be retrievable by the hearer or addressee, either ‘situationally or anaphorically’ (Halliday, 1967, p. 204). Conversely, new information is defined as any unfamiliar content. This distinction is illustrated in the following examples:

- (1) Mary paid Peter so **he** bought himself **a chocolate bar**

G N

- (2) Sue was having a picnic. **The beer** was cold because that’s how **she** likes it.

N G

The use of the pronoun ‘he’ in (1) refers to the named individual Peter and would therefore be judged as anaphorically given. By contrast, ‘a chocolate bar’ constitutes previously unnamed information and is therefore syntactically new. ‘The beer’ is both situationally and anaphorically irretrievable and must, necessarily, be new. The principle of GBN states that English (like many other languages) is more likely to adopt a structure similar to (1) than (2)¹.

Whilst notional definitions of GBN and NBG remain uncontroversial, challenges arise when attempting to identify exact syntactic criteria for givenness and newness. The issue of scope remains problematic. Whilst Ozón’s (2006) and De Cuypere & Verbeke’s (2013) GBN investigations have been limited to a consideration of dative alternation in English (e.g. ‘I gave the book to Joe’ vs. ‘I gave Joe the book’), more experimental studies have worked with a significantly broader range of syntactic criteria. For instance, Di Tullio (2006) has named cleft-construction as examples of NBG clauses (p.483). By contrast, Sityaev’s (2000) corpus-

¹ Linguists disagree on the exact labels ascribed to givenness and newness, with some referring to ‘familiarity’ (Prince, 1981, p. 254) and others preferring ‘retrievability’ (Lambrecht, 1994, p. 84), however, these are relatively minor terminological differences.

based study distinguished between givenness and newness on the basis of different intonation patterns and word stress (p.285).

Returning to examples (1) and (2), some general features of GBN and NBG clauses can be observed. For instance, it is clear that the identification of information as given and new only applies to noun phrases (NPs) in non-canonical clauses (Birner & Ward, 2006, p. 291; Ozón, 2006). For this reason, the sentence ‘Sue was having a picnic’ cannot be analysed as GBN or NBG, as its ‘subject + predicate structure’ constitutes a canonical clause (Ward & Birner, 2002). As my 20,125 word corpus sample must be analysed manually, it is preferable to work with a broader set of criteria from givenness and newness. These criteria include (but are not limited to): clefting, personal and demonstrative pronouns and dative alternation. For reasons outlined above, my investigation must exclude all canonical clauses where the alternation between given and new information is non-existent.

It is only in the last decade that researchers have begun to use corpora to investigate the packaging structures of English language varieties, acknowledging GBN variation across World Englishes. However, neither Ozón’s (2006) study on GBN in British English, nor DeCuypere & Verbeke’s (2013) investigation on Indian English have offered an explanation for this phenomenon. The uniqueness of the present study lies in its foregrounding of language contact as a significant factor in influencing the word order of English language varieties. It is for this reason that my own study focuses on a variety of English that has emerged in close proximity to a known NBG language, Swahili.

Tanzania: Language Situation, Context and Genre

Just as there are various syntactic reasons to suggest that the NBG preference of Swahili has some effect on the structure of Tanzanian English, many sociolinguistic factors mark out this variety as interesting. In this section, I outline the sociolinguistic context of Tanzania, with a focus on the relationship between the country’s two official languages: Swahili and English. In section 3.2, I discuss the reasons behind my chosen corpus subsection: Tanzanian personal columns.

Tanzanian English and English in Tanzania

English first came to Tanzania shortly after World War One, when the country was divided into two regions: Zanzibar and Tanganyika (Kipacha, 2006, p. 502). Whilst these regions were British colonies until 1964, the British governors did not side-line Swahili, and the language continued to thrive in churches, schools and in public administration (Schmied, 2006, p. 190). Thus, Tanzanian English emerged in a different environment to other New Englishes in colonised countries (Platt et al., 1984, p. 17). Although the 1967 Tanzanian constitution explicitly names English and Swahili as joint official languages, their societal functions are very different. Marten (2006) points out that Swahili is the majority language of Tanzania's 36 million inhabitants (p.502), whilst Schmied (2006) has called it the country's 'true national language' (p.191). English, on the other hand, serves a largely public role and is a clear marker of an individual's education and social standing. Although Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda are often grouped together as 'East African Englishes', Tanzanians exhibit significantly reduced levels of English fluency in comparison to their Kenyan and Ugandan neighbours: just 5% of all Tanzanians identify as English language speakers (Schmied, 1991, p. 81). With this in mind, it would seem that the readership of the personal columns selected for my corpus study represents a very small (and privileged) section of Tanzanian society.

Attitudes towards English in Tanzania vary significantly, and recent studies have recognised that the relationship between English and Swahili is not a harmonious one (Rubanza, 1995). This is due, in part, to language teaching in Tanzanian schools. It is a bizarre feature of the education system that the language of instruction in primary schools is Swahili whilst secondary schools teach exclusively in English. Moreover, only 10% of primary school graduates proceed to secondary school and just 2% of these ever attend university (Rubanza, 1996, p. 84)². Many pro-Swahili campaigners have called for a change in these policies, arguing that Swahili and English should be taught together at all educational levels. It has been argued that the current system damagingly privileges English over Swahili, as its teaching at secondary and tertiary level is invariably reserved for the wealthiest children in society (Rubanza, 1996, p. 17)³. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that even for

² These startling statistics are broadly supported by evidence from the most recent Tanzanian Census (2012).

³ As of February 2015, the Tanzanian government has announced a radical change to these policies. For the first time in the country's history, Swahili will replace English as the sole medium of instruction in all Tanzanian primary and secondary schools. Although it is too early to review the effects of this policy change, the announcement sparked significant national and international debate (Global Voices Online, 2015).

those Tanzanians privileged with an English education, the preferred medium of communication in non-institutional settings will normally be Swahili (Marten, 2006).

Tanzanian Personal Columns

Although only a tiny section of Tanzanian society would willingly read an English newspaper, it is worth remembering that this figure is considerably greater than the number who would hold an informal conversation in English. Indeed, Schmied and Hudson-Ettle (2007) have pointed out that East African English newspapers carry significant linguistic influence over their readers (p.103). Personal columns are explicitly named in the ICE-EA manual as playing a prominent ‘social and linguistic role’ in Tanzanian society (Schmied & Hudson-Ettle, 1999, p. 18). From a social perspective, this is because the columnists are important public figures, exercising considerable influence in daily life. From a linguistic perspective, the significance lies in the frequent use of Swahili proverbs, which are very often left un-translated for the wide appeal of their readership. Unlike Kenya, which boasts eight daily English newspapers, Tanzania lays claim to just one: The Daily News (Schmied & Hudson-Ettle, p. 104).

The data for my experiment are all drawn from a single newspaper, allowing my investigation to confidently draw a conclusion about Tanzanian personal columns as a whole, without the need to consider a particular newspaper’s house-style.

Corpus Experiment

This theoretical and contextual outline has highlighted the importance of my research question. In questioning the extent to which GBN is a feature of Tanzanian English, I am researching a variety that has emerged in a sociolinguistic setting that might be expected to prefer the NBG structure of Swahili. There is a clear gap in research of this kind and ICE-EA seems to be an appropriate corpus with which to carry out this investigation. The present section outlines the methodology, reviews the data and analyses the results from the corpus experiment.

Experiment Design

In order to assess the extent to which GBN in Tanzanian English differs from British English, the methodology for this experiment draws heavily on Ozón's (2006) study using ICE-GB. In this instance, Ozón's findings are used as a baseline against which to measure deviations from British English in the Tanzanian English corpus. However, the specialist parsing and tagging software, ICE-CUP, that allowed Ozón to analyse language data from ICE-GB is not yet available for ICE-EA. Instead my own analysis is manual and therefore draws on a subcorpus approximately fifty times smaller than Ozón's (2006). The resulting experimental design implications are that Ozón's data for British English and my own for Tanzanian English are not strictly comparable. Nonetheless, these issues are somewhat mitigated by the broader definitions for 'givenness' discussed in section 2. Table 1 draws on definitions from the critical literature to outline the criteria for tagging a clause in the corpus as 'given'.

Table 1: Instructions for tagging a clause in the corpus as 'given'.

Tag as <i>Given</i>	Examples from ICE-EA
The personal pronouns <i>he</i> , <i>she</i> and <i>they</i> . Only where the referent has explicitly been mentioned by name previously.	Kibogovo...he transformed me into a chatterbox. (ICE-EA, W2E019T).
The personal pronouns <i>I</i> and <i>you</i> . Assume that <i>I</i> refers to the columnist, and is therefore situationally given. Likewise, assume that <i>you</i> is also situationally given and is referring to the reader. This does not apply to any quotations or idioms.	I have quarreled with my stove. (ICE-EA, W2E011T).
Repeated proper nouns, common nouns and other noun phrases.	This guy had foresight... this guy is going to make business. (ICE-EA, W2E012T).
The second part of a cleft construction. (i.e. the cleft part will always be tagged as 'new').	It's the teachers who will pay . (ICE-EA, W2E020T)

It was decided that the simplest means of representing given and new information was to work with a colour-coded system. All given data was marked in pink and all new information was marked in green. The benefit of this system was that it was easy to see at a glance whether any significant clumping of GBN structures tends to occur, aiding the qualitative analysis of results. Unclear clauses were marked in yellow, including those in which Swahili words or proverbs were used. Figure 1 shows a small sample of the colour-coded analysis. For reasons already outlined in section 2, canonical clauses were excluded from the analysis, except in the case of canonical clauses that included one of the personal pronouns mentioned in Table 1.

Figure 1: Sample colour-coded analysis, displaying given (green), new (pink) and unknown (yellow).

```

<X ></X></I>
W2E013T
<I> <h> <#/>Darubini </h>
<h> <#/><ca/>Magenzi' in our homes </h>
<#/>IN the process of pondering the issue which the writer intends to exchange views on with his
fans and critics, the title he initially opted for was - 'when wives become family breadwinners'.
<#/>Interest in the subject was spurred by reading a document containing research findings
on the pattern of income generation in Dabangan urban families, and its attendant social problems.
<#/>The smart social worker behind this project also happens to lecture at one of the nation's
high institutions of learning and used Dalia city as a case study.
<#/>Given that workers in government, parastatal institutions, and private companies constitute a
sizeable percentage of Dalia city's population, the researcher had to pay much attention to this
social group.
<#/>Among families visited during the research exercise was one of Mr Mashaka. <#/>He works
for the government as an office supervisor and earns about 8,000/- per month, a good salary by
Dabangan government remuneration standards.
<#/>You may as well note that Mashaka heads a family of eight people who include a wife and
six children.
<#/>According to findings of this research, Mashaka needs about 800/- a day to provide his
family with poor quality food, leaving requirements like clothing, school fees etc. unattended.
<#/>The first thing you are likely to think of in this case is that a family whose head earns 8,000/-
a month when his minimum food budget during this very span stands at 24,000,- must be
starving.
<#/>Surely, the family would be starving, had it not been for <ca/>Mama Zawadi's determined
plunge into the food industry. <#/>By the way, <ca/>Mama Zawadi is Mashaka's legal wife.
    
```

The next stage was to sort through this tagged sample in order to tabulate the number of GBN, NBG and unclear clauses in each 2,000-word text. The results were then reorganized, taking into account the topic of the column. Finally, the clauses were considered in terms of different types of GBN and NBG structure, in order to ascertain the preferred packaging structures of Tanzanian English and in this particular genre.

Exclusions

Idioms, Swahili words and column headlines presented a particular challenge in my analysis and were ultimately excluded from the final results. This section will outline the issues posed by these three categories and the challenges involved in tagging them.

Farsi (2013: 4) has noted that Swahili is a particularly idiom-rich language, so the presence of some Swahili proverbs or idiomatic expressions was unsurprising. Around forty translated Swahili proverbs were identified in the corpus sample, including the following examples that were repeated several times:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| (3) Fire is raging in this family. | (ICE-EA, W2E013T) |
| (4) Havens of peace. | (ICE-EA, W2E011T) |
| (5) His eyes betray untruthfulness. | (ICE-EA, W2E015T) |

Although it was possible to ascertain the meaning of these idioms from reference books, tagging them was not straightforward. In an example like (3), the clause seems to behave as an NBG structure with ‘this family’ referring to anaphorically given information and ‘fire’ being new. However, from an idiomatic perspective, it seemed to make more sense to take the entire idiom as one unit, replicating the trend in some corpus tagging systems to ditto-tag entire phrases (Denison, 2007).

The problem remained as to whether to treat this entire unit as given or new. Either choice would be problematic. Whilst it seems sensible to tag a unit as ‘given’ if it has not been mentioned before, it is important to consider the rationale behind a columnist’s choice to translate a popular Swahili proverb. By definition, an idiom is deducible not by an understanding of its individual parts but by a familiarity with its use as a whole. If given information is defined as anything which the speaker ‘assumes the addressee to know’, then it seems that idioms should always be tagged as ‘given’, particular those idioms which have been translated (see section 2). Ultimately, idioms seemed to occupy a fuzzy position in the corpus sample, necessitating their exclusion from the results.

Similar challenges arose when working with non-English lexis. Whilst ICE-corpora very often include non-English words, this poses a challenge to the tagging process. A significant number of Swahili words are included in the corpus-sample, as exemplified in (6) – (8). In keeping with ICE-EA conventions, Swahili words are italicised and tagged <ea/>.

These examples have been translated using the OED and Awde's (2000) Swahili-English dictionary.

- (6) we have a very quiet, <ea/>*staarabu* manner. (ICE-EA, W2E020T)

English: we have a very quiet, civilised manner.

- (7) here in the <ea/> *Babaangu* and <ea/> *Mamaangu* land.

(ICE-EA, W2E010T)

English: here in the father and motherland.

- (8) those chunks of <ea/> *ugali* and <ea/> *ubwabwu* dishes.

(ICE-EA, W2E100T)

English: those chunks of maize and porridge dishes.

It was difficult to determine whether these Swahili words should be treated as the absolute synonyms of their English counterparts. For instance, although it would be appealing to tag (7) as given following the mention of 'fatherland' a few lines earlier, this seems to be a slippery slope, potentially leading to every single synonym pair in the sample being tagged as given (e.g. raising the question as to whether 'allies' should be tagged as given because 'friends' has already been mentioned). As with idioms, it seemed more sensible to exclude Swahili words in the first phase of corpus analysis.

Column headlines were the last to be excluded. As the catchy, opening gambit of any newspaper column, a headline is rarely a full non-canonical clause. Issues arose when parts of the column made some reference to the headline in a way that could be interpreted as anaphorically given, although in general the knowledge was 'new'. Attention-grabbing headlines such as 'That parking business!' use deictic markers in such a way that they seem to refer to experiences with which the reader is called upon to empathise. It is possible to read these as situationally given but overall this seemed to complicate my analysis. Therefore, although headlines are a key part of my chosen genre, excluding headlines from the analysis seemed the most reasonable course of action.

The dataset

After taking into account the exclusions outlined in section 4.2, the 20,125-word corpus sample yielded around 1,036 distinct clauses. Having excluded all canonical clauses, I was left with 747 clauses to analyse. Thirty individual columns by seven columnists were

(10) **I** instructed **my brain**.

G **N**

= *situationally given*.

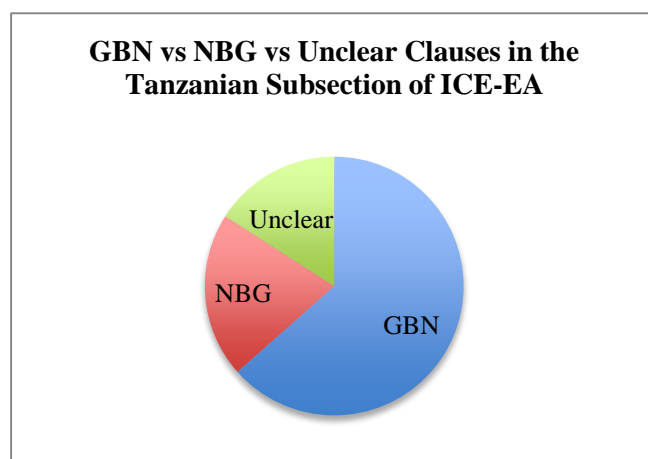
(ICE-EA, W2E0150T)

The results are displayed in Table 3, whilst Figure 2 graphically displays the proportion of GBN, NBG and unclear clauses from the first phase of the experiment. Figures are correct to 1 decimal place.

Table 3: Results from the analysis of the total 747 clauses.

GBN	NBG	Unclear
474	154	119
=63%	= 21%	=16%

Figure 2: Proportions of GBN, NBG and Unclear Clauses in the corpus sample



NBG structures accounted for over one-fifth of the corpus sample, as in the following example:

(11) Ugly creatures and silly they seem to me. (ICE-EA, W2E0150T)

In (11), taken from a column describing the alcohol consumption of government officials, ‘ugly creatures’ clearly places extra emphasis on the columnist’s judgement. The information could very easily be re-packaged with any of the following constructions:

(11a) They seem to be ugly and silly creatures to me

(11b) To me they seem to be ugly and silly creatures.

The original example (11) is by no means unintelligible, but it does seem to display a certain journalistic flourish. It would seem from this case that flouting the GBN principle does not result in unintelligibility but it does shift the focus of the clause.

A significant number of unclear cases arose in the corpus analysis, accounting for 16% of the total results. Many of these were the opening lines of the column, where deictic markers such as ‘this’ or ‘that’ seemed to indicate a sense of givenness, but the information was generally irretrievable, situationally and anaphorically. This is illustrated in the following use of the word ‘this’ as the opening of the column:

(12) **This** was supposed to be a secret between **me, I and myself** (ICE-EA, W2E011T)

Other unclear cases arose due to the journalistic tendency to replicate the colloquial style of general conversation.

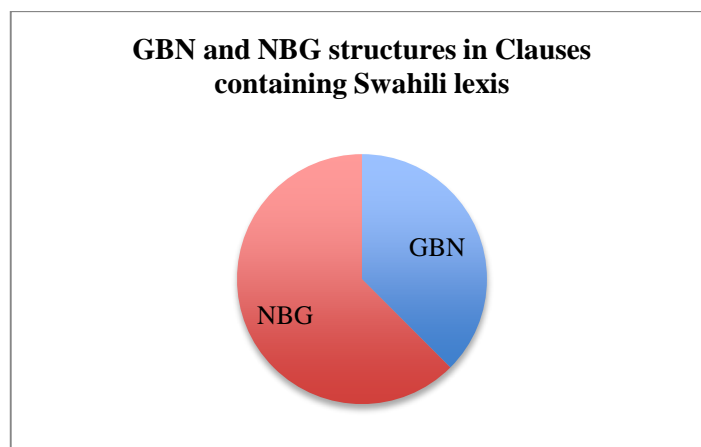
(13) Should **I** take it from **my country, my beloved country?** (ICE-EA, W2E012T)

Example (13) raises the problem of repetition. It is unclear whether ‘my beloved country’ should be treated as a separate unit from ‘my country’ or if they should all be tagged as the same noun phrase. This sentence is conversational in its tone and would not be out of place in a sample of spoken language. As with the examples of NBG constructions, cases of repetition do not result in unintelligibility but instead serve as a stylistic marker of the columnist’s journalistic aptitude and their confidence in manipulating conventional packaging structures.

Finding that GBN dominates Tanzanian English personal columns did not adequately address my research question. It was thus necessary to draw some comparison between Tanzanian English and British English to assess the extent to which Tanzanian English deviates from packaging norms. Taking into account methodological differences,

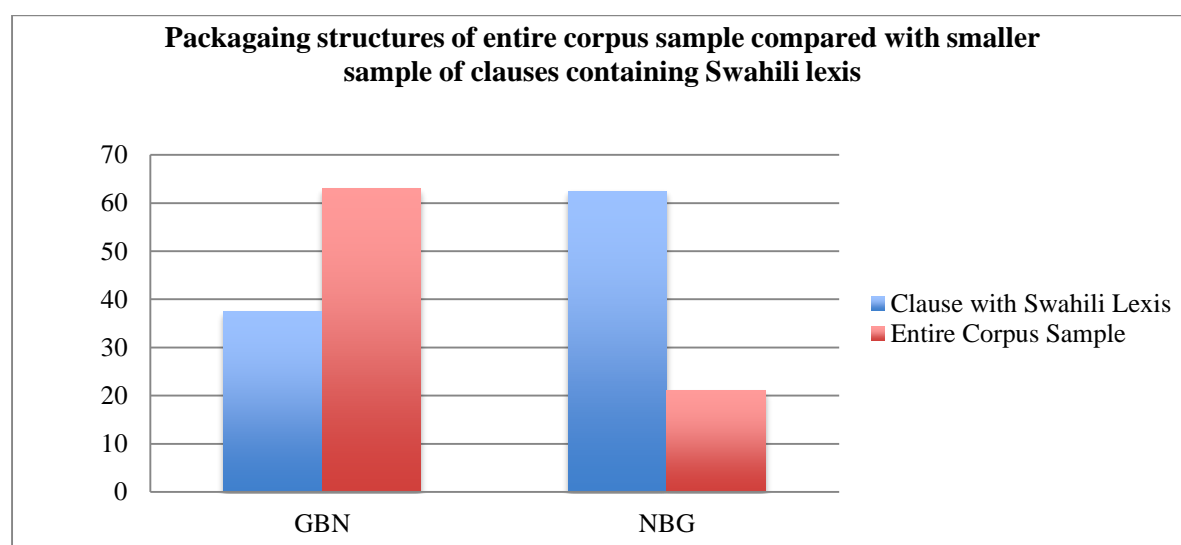
compares the packaging structures of the entire corpus sample to the results from the clauses containing just Swahili lexis.

Figure 4: Comparison of GBN and NBG structures in clauses containing Swahili lexis.



Given these significant differences, it is reasonable to suggest that language contact is at least partially responsible for the different packaging structures of Tanzanian English. However, it is impossible to conclusively prove whether other factors, such as the genre of personal columns and the high esteem of Swahili in Tanzanian society, also carry some influence.

Figure 5: Chart showing that NBG is significantly more prevalent in those clauses containing Swahili lexis.



Conclusions and future research

This paper began by questioning the extent to which GBN is a feature of written Tanzanian English. Generally, it would seem that GBN does dominate this variety supporting previous scholarship that has found that English varieties tend to prefer this packaging structure. On the question of whether Tanzanian English shows a reduced preference for GBN than British English, it would seem that the answer is a very tentative yes, but with some important caveats (see section 4.6). On the whole, I have argued that defining and delimiting the terms ‘given’ and ‘new’ so that they take into account shared, extra-linguistic knowledge as well as syntactic retrievability is essential. In this way, I prefer Quirk et al.’s (1985) use of the term ‘information processing’ as it places the onus on the addressee’s interpretation of knowledge; pragmatic considerations of how language is understood in context are key. In this case, working manually afforded me significant freedoms and allowed me to carefully refine the criteria for givenness and newness. Moreover, the challenging cases of idioms and headlines could be excluded with relative ease. On balance, the benefits of manual data analysis outweighed the difficulties.

My investigation has concluded that language contact has a significant part to play in influencing the reduced preference for GBN in Tanzanian English, although I concede that this may be one of many factors. Future researchers may wish to apply the framework outlined in this experiment to a corpus sample of a different English variety. There is also potential to work with a different written section of ICE-EA, perhaps Kenyan personal columns, to evaluate the role of social factors such as higher English fluency and better education on packaging structures. So, whilst GBN is certainly not ‘a linguistic truism’ of all languages, it would seem that, in the case of Tanzanian personal columns, it remains a dominant feature.

Caveats

This paper has outlined the methodological difficulties of working with an untagged corpus. Without computer software to automatically judge what is retrievable and irretrievable, remaining consistent in the analysis was very challenging. My work with Tanzanian personal columns shows that NBG constructions very often mark out a

columnist's stylistic confidence instead of a lack of English competence. Indeed, it is impossible to separate my results from an awareness of the journalistic tendency to flout standard grammatical rules. For instance, Weir (2009) has identified the prevalence of subject-dropping in headlines as one of many examples where newspapers, and other news sources, willingly break syntactic conventions. Indeed, it is possible that my results say less about language contact in Tanzania than they do about the packaging structures of newspaper columnists across English varieties. This poses a compelling counter-argument to my overall thesis. If Tanzanian personal columns show a reduced preference for GBN than British English, it could be suggested that the personal columns genre is the reason for this difference. However, taking into account the results shown in Figure 5, it would appear that Swahili lexis has a significant part to play in altering the packaging structures of a clause. Language contact seems to be a very likely explanation of these results.

In spite of this, it must be made clear that my results are not easily transferable to other genres of written Tanzanian English, especially those which are free from the grammatical idiosyncrasies of journalism. My study does not provide a solution to this challenge of applicability and future researchers in this area should be aware of the socio-pragmatic norms that govern their chosen text type before attempting to replicate a study of this kind.

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Name-calling in Greek YouTube comments

Maria Vasilaki

King's College London

Abstract

Recently, research in pragmatics has turned to the analysis of online impoliteness in light of the growing importance of computer-mediated communication and the prevalence of online aggression in such contexts. However, although name-calling and other impoliteness strategies have been examined in various languages, similar research in Greek is still scarce. Therefore, this paper focuses on the functions of name-calling in the comments' section of a Greek YouTube political video. Using Culpeper's framework for analysing impoliteness and Ljung's schema for the themes of name-calling (slightly modified to address this specific dataset), I examine the themes and the internal structure of name-calling constructions found in this context along with their creative aspect. Findings suggest that the themes of name-calling vary according to the (un)specificity of the addressee. It is also evident that the political orientation of the poster critically influences the name-calling choices. Regarding the internal structure of name-calling constructions, these share certain features with English name-calling, while also having idiosyncratic traits, the most important of which being the presence of the particle 're'. The study also confirms that, in online contexts, name-calling can easily be combined with other positive and negative impoliteness strategies and can be highly creative and original.

Key words: *Impoliteness; Name-calling; Political Discourse; Youtube; Computer-Mediated Communication.*

Introduction

Although politeness theories have long been part of pragmatics (e.g. Leech 1983 and Brown & Levinson 1987), only recently scholars have started showing interest in impoliteness phenomena (e.g. Culpeper, 1996, Bousfield, 2008). Impoliteness is now acknowledged as a separate section of pragmatics research and an autonomous area of language use meant to serve specific purposes. It is no longer considered a taboo that would better stay unexamined (Culpeper, 2011).

Lately, research has turned to impoliteness in online environments due to the growing impact of computer-mediated communication (CMC) on modern-day interactions and to the increased levels of impoliteness noted in online contexts. More specifically, researchers have investigated whether face-to-face impoliteness strategies are transferred online or whether new, medium-specific ways of ‘doing’ impoliteness are created. As shown by studies such as those by Locher (2010) and Lorenzo-Dus et al. (2011), offline ways of being impolite are creatively reproduced in various online platforms, while new impoliteness phenomena, such as flaming or trolling, have also developed.

The purpose of this paper is to examine name-calling in Greek YouTube comments through an analysis of the comments on a political video. I choose to focus on this area since online impoliteness, and specifically name-calling, have not received adequate attention in Greek linguistics.

The first part of this paper provides the necessary theoretical background on impoliteness. I present Culpeper’s and Ljung’s frameworks on impoliteness and swearing respectively, which are applied on the data. I also refer to the triggers of online impoliteness, specifically addressing impoliteness on YouTube, and to creativity in online impoliteness. Afterwards, I focus on data choice and collection, and on the methodology applied. This part is followed by the analysis, which is undertaken and is presented in two stages. Initially, I examine the themes, the forms and the internal structure of the instances of name-calling found in the dataset. I also look at the relationship between the chosen theme and the specificity of the addressee. Then I deal with the co-occurrence of name-calling with other impoliteness strategies and with online creativity in name-calling. The final section is devoted to the conclusions drawn from my analysis, while also containing suggestions for further studies in relevant areas.

Literature Review

Impoliteness

Various theories have dealt with politeness and the strategies used by interlocutors to maintain social harmony (Culpeper, 1996) and preserve face. The notion of 'face', defined by Goffman (1967, p.5) as "an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes", is separated by Brown and Levinson (1987) into positive and negative face. The former involves the need to feel accepted, included and liked, whereas the latter is related to the need to act without being imposed upon (Culpeper, 2009a). While Brown and Levinson focus on ways to minimize the danger to either the speaker's or the hearer's face when performing a Face Threatening Act (FTA), Culpeper (1996) suggests that, in certain cases, the speaker intends to damage the face of the hearer instead of preserving it. He therefore defines "genuine" impoliteness as

a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and/or beliefs about social organisation, including, in particular, how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviours are viewed negatively-considered impolite-when they conflict with how one expects them to be (...). Such behaviours always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence. Various factors can exacerbate how offensive an impolite behaviour is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behaviour to be strongly intentional or not (2011, p. 23).

Culpeper (1996) develops a framework for impoliteness, comprised of five superstrategies that could be considered the impoliteness counterparts of Brown and Levinson's strategies. Each one of these contains a number of output strategies. The first strategy is bald-on record impoliteness, where the FTA is performed clearly and directly. Then Culpeper distinguishes between positive impoliteness, involving strategies targeting the addressee's positive face¹, and negative impoliteness, which includes strategies meant to damage the negative face of the addressee². Sarcasm or mock politeness is the next strategy comprised in the model. In this case, although polite structures might be employed, the

¹ Ignore/snub the other, disassociate, use inappropriate identity markers, seek disagreement, call the other names, use taboo words

² Frighten/threaten, condescend/scorn/ ridicule, explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect, dismiss /silence the other.

hearer's true intention is to be impolite. The last strategy presented by Culpeper is the withholding of politeness, in which case politeness strategies are not used despite being expected.

This article focuses on positive impoliteness and, more specifically, on the substrategies of name-calling and use of taboo words. This specific focus is justified by the prevalence of positive impoliteness strategies in online contexts, such as YouTube, as noted by Lorenzo-Dus et al. (2011) and Blitvich (2010). Therefore, I wish to investigate whether this type of positive impoliteness prevails in Greek YouTube videos as well.

By name-calling, Culpeper (2011) refers to the use of 'derogatory nominations' or insults. He presents four subtypes of this strategy: the use of personalised negative vocatives, assertions, references and third person negative references in the hearing of the target (Culpeper, 2009b). The use of taboo words includes swearing and profane or abusive language (Culpeper, 1996). However, according to Ljung (2011), name-calling, including the use of epithets (evaluative words meant to express negative opinions), is a subcategory of swearing. Although Ljung (*ibid.*) focuses on expletive epithets (those epithets with a non-metaphorical sense that are used metaphorically when swearing) as swearwords, other studies (e.g. Hughes, 2006) include both expletives and non-expletives within the broader category of name-calling, and it is this broadened notion of name-calling is adopted here. According to Ljung, epithets, apart from performing various stand-alone functions (among which name-calling), can also be used as slot-fillers. In this case epithets function as adverbial/adjectival intensifiers of a main, stand-alone swearword. A common structure for English insults, as noted by Culpeper (2009b), is 'you-intensifier-vocative-you'.

Finally, Ljung (2011) elaborates on the various themes that are typically used in name-calling, in various languages. Among the main ones are the mother's theme (insults related to someone's mother), the sex-organ theme, the sexual activities theme (which for the purposes of this paper will also include Ljung's sodomy theme), the animal theme, and the filth theme.

Impoliteness in online communication

What triggers online impoliteness?

CMC is often considered to be one of the contexts where impoliteness thrives (Hardaker, 2010), and various reasons have been suggested to explain the prevalence of impoliteness. Firstly, it can be attributed to certain inherent features of CMC. In online

communication, there is lack of social contextual cues (cues-filtered-out approach), which are features related to the speaker's profile (e.g. age, gender, social/academic background) or to the conversation itself (paralinguistic and extralinguistic features). These could help define both the speaker's identity and the conversation's meaning, and could influence the general understanding of the hearer. In CMC, these traits are absent both from the side of the speaker and from the side of the addressee. Consequently, on the one hand, the speaker's belief that s/he remains anonymous and that his/her true offline identity cannot be traced, creates a loss of self, leading to de-individuation phenomena. Moreover, this anonymity can create a sense of freedom and impunity that liberates the speaker from the obligation to abide to politeness norms (Arendholz, 2013).

On the other hand, the lack of social contextual cues dissolves any sense of immediate audience. The other users are perceived as vague and distant and, as a result, the speaker's attention is usually on the message itself and not on the possible reactions or emotional stress that the words will enforce on the addressee (ibid). This increases the possibility for more insensitive, impolite remarks, leading to what Kiesler et al. (1984, p.1129) call "uninhibited verbal behaviour". Impoliteness is also fanned by the ever-changing and unstable nature of the audience in online environments. As the construction of a message is shaped by the specific audience to which it is addressed, the unspecificity and the anonymity of the audience can inhibit the use of politeness (Graham, 2007).

De-individuation and anonymity also have various other effects. The de-individuation process sets personal characteristics aside, meaning that the sense of belonging to a certain group or community is reinforced, leading to polarization. Polarization is a common trigger of impoliteness and can incite attacks on people's social face, directed mainly towards out-groups. Thus, apart from countering personal attacks, users tend to defend members of the group with which their affinity lies. (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011).

Regarding anonymity, its importance is reinforced by the power gap observed in CMC. As Culpeper (1996) states, in relationships where the participants are not equally powerful, the most powerful participant can be more explicitly impolite or can obstruct other participants from countering verbal attacks. When relationships are equal though, no participant can instantly gain the upper hand in the conversation. CMC is a characteristic example of such an equal relationship. Since any source that would guarantee the speaker power in the off-line world remains unknown, power in CMC can be acquired discursively.

The person who succeeds in imposing their views on the others controls the conversation (Dynel, 2012). A usual way to “p'wn”³ the other is by being impolite or abusive (Pihlaja, 2012).

Finally, according to Culpeper, the norms of politeness are negotiated and mutually agreed between the members of a specific community. As Mills (2005) mentions though, there are certain communities, such as those online, whose traits make impoliteness more normative than politeness. Therefore, when impolite behavior is common and expected, impolite remarks unacceptable in other contexts are not perceived as extremely impolite (Culpeper, 2011). However, even when expected, impolite behavior can still be recognized as such, as indicated by the fact that people on its receiving end tend to strike back, a sign that they have taken offence (Dynel, 2012).

Impoliteness on YouTube

The above mentioned causes for impoliteness can be identified in the online community of YouTube and, combined with the platform's idiosyncratic traits, they make it notorious for intense disagreements and widespread impolite remarks (Bou-Franch & Blitvitch, 2014). Firstly, anonymity, as described before, is reinforced in a YouTube context. Users are only known by a username, and can choose not to offer any personal information. Even if they do provide details about themselves, though, it is very easy to give false information or to create a fake profile (Dynel, 2012).

Additionally, YouTube is a community, where “netiquette” – or rules for politic online behavior (Yus 2011) – is not strictly adhered to. The YouTube community guidelines specifically call for respect of other users and their different opinions, and announce low tolerance to threats or abuses. However, these guidelines usually remain theoretical suggestions. The diverse topics featured in YouTube videos, as well as the diverse backgrounds of the comment section's users (Moor et al., 2010), usually lead to the rise of aggression and the development of hate speech. Furthermore, most YouTube sequences are polylogal and not dyadic, involving various users in a conversation (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011). This means that the responses are disassociated (Dynel, 2012), which can easily lead to misunderstandings and increased impoliteness.

³ In “netlingo” to 'pwn' means to dominate the conversation, to get the last word

Online impoliteness and creativity

Impoliteness is often underestimated linguistically. There is a common belief that impolite expressions are readily made, uninspired and depict a marginalized form of language (Culpeper, 2011). It is true that a large part of impoliteness, is formulaic. However, in certain contexts, an impolite expression can be highly creative and sophisticated.

Online contexts offer a great environment for creative impoliteness to thrive. The time lag between the messages in online contexts gives the user the necessary time to contemplate on their response (Arendholz, 2013). The absence of the pressure and the lack of spontaneity and, possibly, of the emotional distress related to face-to-face disagreements, allows the posters to fully exploit the possibilities offered by language. This creates non-conventional impolite expressions, such as those that will be analysed below.

Political context relevant to the analysis

Since the 2012 Greek elections, and in the light of the 2008 economic crisis, Greece has seen an unprecedented rise of the extreme-right party Golden Dawn (GD), which is currently the third most powerful party in the parliament (Ellinas, 2013). The far-right party is widely criticized for its extreme views and practices, while some of its prominent members have been accused for involvement in criminal activities. The heated debate between the supporters and condemners of GD revolves around the party's legal grounds and beliefs. The party's supporters are commonly perceived as people of low intellect within Greek society due to their support for such extreme world-views. This is due to the widespread belief among Greek voters, which is also supported by the media and the results of various surveys (Laskaratos, 2012), that GD's voters are people of low educational background. Such a conclusion is also supported by Lubber's et al. (2002) research about the profile of extreme-right voters throughout Europe.

Greek political debates are notorious for quickly *escalating* (Kakava, 2002), and since YouTube can be considered a forum for exchanges of political views (Blitvich, 2010), the aforementioned debate now also takes place in comments of YouTube videos related to GD. The high levels of impoliteness in online contexts (see 2.2.1 and 2.2.2) combined with the controversial issues raised in such videos means that comments are usually rife with impoliteness.

Data and Methods

The data were collected from the comment section of a YouTube video presenting a parliamentary speech of Ilias Kasidiaris, an MP of GD. Apart from the large number of impolite contributions found in the comments (see 2.3), this video was chosen due to its popularity as reflected in number of views, which ensured a wide range of participants. The reason for the video's popularity also impacted on its choice as a data source. This video was widespread and largely criticized in 2012 because it presents Ilias Kasidiaris attacking Evaggelos Venizelos, the president of PASOK, which was participating in the coalition governing the country. The attack is so intense that he even uses the words "Shut up", a silencer unacceptable for the context of a parliamentary debate. The mere content of the video is relevant to this paper, as it presents Ilias Kasidiaris using negative impoliteness. It was therefore hypothesized that a video which itself is highly impolite could provide data with increased impoliteness, which indeed proved to be the case.

In terms of methodology, I analysed a total of 40 instances of name-calling, found in a hundred comments from the comments' section, made within one year's time. The number of comments examined was large, since not all of them included positive impoliteness or epithets. After spotting the epithets, I translated them into English. In certain cases I offer two translations. The first one is the literal one, while the second is the one that would be used in English to express a similar insult. This is because not all languages have the same lexicalized insults, and a swearword of one language might be uncommon or even nonexistent in a different cultural context, or may be expressed in a completely different way (Ljung, 2011).

After translating the epithets, I proceeded to a double categorization. Firstly, I categorized them according to whether they are directed towards specific users or towards the people featured in the video (namely Ilias Kasidiaris, the speaker, and Evangelos Venizelos, the person to which the talk is addressed) or towards an unspecified addressee. This distinction is based on Dalton's (2013) observation that people can use epithets without an apparent trigger, or without referring to someone specifically. Since YouTube commentaries are visible to larger audiences, which do not comprise only the people actively participating in the conversation but also lurkers (see Goffman's 1981 distinction between ratified recipients and overhearing audiences), users can resort to uninstigated swearing (Dalton,

2013) in order to be provocative. This is done in the hope that someone will perceive the underlying insult as referring to them (i.e. will attribute intentionality) and will react, possibly inciting a flamewar, an extended online argument involving disagreement and verbal hostility (Perelmutter, 2011, p. 75).

Secondly, I categorized the epithets using Ljung's name-calling themes. However, I had to broaden the existing themes in the taxonomy (mother, sex-organ, sexual activities, animal, filth) to accommodate epithets related to the intellect, political beliefs and nationality themes, as well to what I called the vagrancy/barbarism theme. All of the aforementioned themes were present in the data.

Then I combined the two categorizations to show which themes are preferred when name-calling is directed towards a specified addressee and which are favored when the addressee stays unspecified. At the same time, I quantified the results to allow for more objective and generalizable conclusions. When quantifying, I grouped together all instances where a given theme is used, irrespective of whether it is featured in a stand-alone epithet or in a slot-filler. The quantified results will be presented in Table 1, in the next section, while a full list of all the epithets found in the dataset, categorised in terms of addressee's (un)specificity can be found in Appendix A.

Results and Discussion

Name-calling themes and (un)specificity of addressee

Of the nine themes of name-calling (see section 3), the first five are also included in Ljung's typology. Of the four not found, the three first (intellect, political beliefs, nationality) are probably absent because Ljung considers only expletive epithets in his taxonomy and not epithets in general. The last category not found in Ljung, the vagrancy/barbarism theme, has an extensive presence in the data (12.5%, as can be seen from the above table) and can be treated as an idiosyncratic theme of personalized negative vocatives in Greek. Since family and the sense of belonging are really important in a positive politeness community such as Greece (Sifianou, 1999), calling someone a vagrant, meaning that he is depleted of the morals provided to a person by his family, and that he has adopted a street culture, can be considered a severe insult. Barbarism is also related to the absence of the morals and norms of a modern community, and barbarism insults have similar connotations as those related to vagrancy.

However, barbarism insults could also be connected to the intellect theme, as calling someone a caveman is related to restricted mental abilities.

Table 14: Number of epithets (stand-alone epithets and slot-fillers) in the dataset

	Specified Addressee	Unspecified Addressee	Total	%
The mother theme	2	0	2	5
The sexual organ theme	1	1	2	5
The sexual activities theme	5	0	5	12.5
The animal theme	5	1	6	15
The filth theme	0	2	2	5
The intellect/severity theme	4	4	8	20
The political beliefs theme	3	3	6	15
The nationality theme	2	2	4	10
The vagrancy/barbarism theme	4	1	5	12.5
	26 or 65%	14 or 35%	40	

When the addressee is known, the most common insults (stand-alone epithets and slot-fillers) originate from the animal and sexual activities themes (5 instances each), closely followed by the vagrancy/barbarism and the intellect/severity themes (4 instances each).

However, it is more interesting to examine the themes featured in insulting unspecified addressees. When the addressee remains unspecified, epithets (stand-alone epithets and slot-fillers) used in name-calling are mainly aggregated from the intellect theme (4 instances), followed by the political beliefs theme (3 instances) and the nationality and filth themes (2 instances each).

The extensive presence of the political beliefs theme can be easily explained if we consider the lack of individuality discussed in 2.2. In cases of swearing not directed to a specified addressee, the speaker has seemingly no reason to be impolite, and cannot easily resort to swearing which attacks a specific trait of the unknown interlocutor (Bou-Franch, 2014). Insults coming from the mother theme and the sex organ theme, for instance, are more

personal, and certainly more taboo (Ljung, 2011). They are to be more expected either when addressing a certain person, or when countering impoliteness. On the other hand, insults that are related to one's political beliefs can be used without a specific trigger and without a specified addressee. The insult in this case is directed towards the social, and not the personal face of participants. It is their belonging to a group that triggers the impolite attack, as their group identity is rejected/criticized by the poster. Moreover, in this case, the insult is not restricted to those actively participating in the conversation. It is directed to all those that share the extreme ideologies of the person featured in the video, to all the "fascists" in general. Vocatives related to fascism are the most typical realisation of the political beliefs theme in the data.

The occurrence of the intellect theme is related to the political beliefs theme. All of the occurrences of the intellect theme are generally addressed from anti-fascists to whoever may support the same political views as Ilias Kasidiaris. The commenters therefore seem to associate low intellect with low educational background and to consider restricted mental abilities as the only sound explanation for supporting racist and ethnicist ideologies (see 2.3). Thus, it is expected that the anti-fascist comments coincide with name-calling targeted to the addressee's lack of intelligence. Moreover, the anti-fascist discourse that extreme-right voters are a social pariah and a shame to the nation is depicted in the occurrences of the filth theme and the nationality theme, that are also used by anti-fascist posters.

It is striking that in my data set, those supporting the extreme-right do not generally refer to unspecified addressees. There is only one stand-alone epithet used by extreme-right posters for unspecified addressing, featuring the sexual organ theme (cunts⁴). Therefore extreme-right voters seem to prefer personalized impoliteness and not attacks to group identities. On the one hand, this can be attributed to the fact that the whole spectrum of Greek political parties (and consequently their supporters) are opposed to GD, therefore it is hard for extreme-right voters to figure out in which political group their critics belong, so as to attack their social/group face. On the other hand, the preference for personalised insults might be related to the background of GD supporters, where a macho culture and a tendency for personally targeting those opposed to the party is prevalent (Ellinas, 2013).

Finally, it should be underlined that the aforementioned themes of intellect and political beliefs are also common (4 and 3 instances respectively) when the addressee is specified. We

⁴ mounia

can therefore conclude that the political orientation and the subsequent criticisms of voters' intellect are the preferred way of the 'antifascist' posters to be impolite in the context of this political video, irrespectively of whether the direction of the comment is neutral or not. These two themes account for 15% and 20% of the total name-calling used, respectively.

Forms and internal structure of name-calling constructions

Regarding the forms of name-calling, there are two categories in the data that coincide with Culpeper's (2009b) structures for English: personalized negative vocatives and assertions. The third category found, rhetorical questions including an insult (e.g. "are you a wanker?"⁵), although not included in Culpeper's (2011) schema, can be related to his challenging/unpalatable questions. The speaker implies that the answer to the question is positive (the question equals an affirmative), however the addressee would never give a positive answer or any direct answer whatsoever (in the data such questions are either countered with another type of impoliteness or ignored) as this would seriously damage his face.

Similarly, some comments are to be made about the structure of each category. Regarding personalized negative vocatives, there are three possible structures. Firstly, we can have a standalone epithet. I should mention at this point that, in Greek, augmentatives (e.g. *poust-ara-* you big fag) and diminutives (e.g. *Ellin-akia-* little Greeks) are attached to the word, usually as a suffix. Such suffixes are common when the epithet is used by itself, the former to maximize the insult and the second one to harm the negative face of the addressee along with the positive one, by belittling him.

Secondly, the epithet can be enhanced by an intensifier. The intensifiers found in the data are mainly epithets themselves, coming from the intellect (brainless⁶), the political beliefs (neonazist⁷) or the nationality themes (Greek-hating⁸). There is also one case where the adjective "big"⁹ is used as an augmentative, separated from the word.

Lastly, there is a structure idiosyncratic in Greek, where we find the interjection "re", combined with an epithet. In the dataset "re" is the most common particle initiating a name-

⁵ eisai malakas?

⁶ anegkefaloi

⁷ neonazistika

⁸ anthelliniko

⁹ megalo

calling construction and is preferred by the interlocutors. "Re" is the shortened form of "more", used to call someone an idiot in Ancient Greek. Initially "re" was considered an insult in modern Greek too. However, it gradually lost its impolite connotations and became a term of endearment (Ntiliou, 2010). When combined with negative vocatives, though, it re-acquires a negative sense (though not its initial one) and mainly functions to identify the insult (in English it would equal the use of *you* in a structure like "you asshole").

Coming to rhetorical questions and assertions, they both use the verb "to be" in the second person, singular or plural (*eisai/eiste*-you are), followed by the epithet. The difference is in the use of the question or the affirmative form respectively (e.g. "are you a fag?/you are traitors of the nation"¹⁰).

Name-calling and other strategies

A close look at the data makes clear that the positive impoliteness strategy of name-calling is combined with other strategies, both positive and negative as well as with sarcasm, to enhance the effect on the addressee (Bousfield, 2008). Impoliteness strategies are combined both in the immediate co-text of a vocative and in the wider context.

When considering the immediate co-text, we find in the data the vocative "dear ethnicist"¹¹ and the assertion "you are a big sheep *my brother*"¹². In both cases the epithet is combined with a positive politeness marker, indicating respect/liking and closeness/brotherhood respectively. However, it is clear that these identity markers are inappropriate in this context and therefore the politeness here is mock politeness or sarcasm (Culpeper, 1996).

The combination of impoliteness strategies in a wider context can be illustrated via the following comment by the user *kostasmr* in response to the user *HYGROPYR*, which, due to length restrictions, is presented here directly translated into English (for the original Greek comment see Appendix B).

I hope God won't let me see you guys being in power. I saw what you did in Auschwitz and Dachau. Go kill yourself goat! How dare you reply to Julie P?. Cow!

¹⁰ *eisai poustis?/eiste ethnoprodotos*

¹¹ "agapite" *ethnikisti*

¹² *eisai megalo provato "aderfe mou"*

Firstly, we note that the use of two personalised negative vocatives, both featuring the animal theme (goat, cow). This theme is often used when addressing women, as part of the sexist discourses objectifying females (Talbot, 2010). The second animal vocative is closing the comment. The first one is combined with a negative politeness strategy, an unfriendly suggestion/ ill-wish, and a rather extreme one (go kill yourself). Moreover, in the beginning of the comment, the poster disassociates himself from the addressee (positive impoliteness), and in the second sentence he explicitly associates the supporters of GD with a negative aspect (negative impoliteness), namely with Hitler and Nazi practices. Additionally, certain more general observations on online impoliteness are relevant when analyzing this comment. Firstly, this comment is part of a ‘flame-war’, where various posters get involved and take sides defending one or another user (here, kostasmr defends the user Julie P., who had earlier posted an anti-GD comment, by replying to HYGROPYR, her attacker.) A typical characteristic of flaming, a specific realization of online impoliteness, is its tendency to escalate, both within various users’ responses and within the same response (Perelmutter, 2011). In this comment, the impoliteness strategies used become more numerous and much more intense towards the end of the comment (even name-calling escalates, with two animal insults close to each other).

Impoliteness and linguistic creativity

In the data there are instances of complex and rare swear words that one would not expect to find in a Greek offline disagreement (brainless barbarians¹³ neonazist sediments¹⁴, caveman¹⁵). Additionally, there are expressions that, apart from being verbally creatively, are also complicated syntactically. A good example is the structure "*malakismeno katsiki pou milas ellinika*" (wanking Greek-speaking goat), which in Greek includes a noun, a determiner/intensifier, and a subordinate relative clause that completes the insult. Such a complex and uncommon term of address coincides with what Culpeper (2011) calls pattern reform.

At this point, I should note that linguistic creativity online can also be related to intentionality (ibid). Since it is rather unlikely such complicated forms to occur without

¹³ anegkefaloi troglodites

¹⁴ neonazistika kathizimata

¹⁵ anthrope ton spilaion

previous thinking and design, it is also unlikely that people can be unintentionally impolite in CMC, acting on impulse.

Conclusions

One of the main findings of this research is that Ljung's taxonomy for the themes of name-calling, although partially suitable for the present analysis, had to be expanded to fully account for name-calling in Greek YouTube. The addition of the vagrancy/barbarism theme is very important, since it seems to be idiosyncratic to Greek society, depicting its moral values. The addition of the intellect, political beliefs and nationality themes appears to be necessary in the context of YouTube postings related to the far-right, as these themes make up 45% of the name-calling found and are mainly used by the anti-fascist posters to belittle the mental abilities of the fascist posters and condemn their ideology. In total, the four themes added to Ljung's taxonomy account for 57.5% of all name-calling instances in the dataset.

Additionally, the analysis showed that personalized negative vocatives were very common in the data, and proved to be the type of impoliteness most easily combined with other strategies. It is typical for Greek posters to start or to finish a post with an epithet to address a certain user, and to continue their comment with other positive or negative impoliteness strategies.

On the other hand, it is essential to point out that personalized negative vocatives are often used independently (35% of the comments examined involved unspecified addressing), without referring to someone in particular, to express the posters' general disapproval of anyone opposed to their beliefs. It is indicative that, with the exception of one comment, all the comments with unspecified addresses were directed towards the "fascist" posters and were attacking their intellect, as a possible cause for their political beliefs.

Finally, regarding the types of name-calling, instances of rhetorical questions containing insults, which are a special way to impolitely address another user, should be highlighted. Coming to the internal structure of name-calling constructions, the most interesting findings are again based on the vocatives. I should underline the use of "re" and of diminutives and augmentatives attached to the epithet to intensify the insult. The nature of Greek, an inflectional language, allows speakers to use features such as suffixes to enhance the structures of impoliteness in ways not always possible in other languages.

Impoliteness in Greek online environments is a rather unexplored area. The limited scope of this paper does not allow for large-scale generalizations and further research should be undertaken to explore relevant areas. Firstly, impoliteness studies would benefit from an examination of name-calling in other videos with political content, or in other categories of Greek YouTube videos known for intense hostility, such as football-related videos. Moreover, it would be interesting to investigate how epithets as terms of address are used in other CMC platforms. Finally, one could look at other impoliteness strategies apart from name-calling in various Greek platforms.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Epithets and slot-fillers found in the dataset (according to theme and specificity of addressee)

Note: The categorization is based on the theme of the epithets with a stand-alone function. In the cases where there is also an epithet functioning as an intensifier/slot-filler, the theme of the intensifier is included in the parenthesis, and the whole construction is placed in the category where the stand-alone epithet belongs.

	Specified addressee	Unspecified addressee
The mother theme	bastarde Venizele- you bastard Venizelos	
	mammothrefto-mama's boy	
The sexual organ theme	Archida- Full of balls	mounia- cunts
	re malaka Kasidiari-you wanker/asshole Kasidiaris	
The sexual activities theme	eisai poustis?- are you a fag? poustara- you big fag	
	eisai malakas?- are you an asshole/wanker? malakismeno(the sexual activities theme) katsiki pou milas ellinika(the nationality theme)- wanking greek-speaking goat	
	gida-goat	
The animal theme	vodi-ox/ cow	
	eisai megalo provato aderfe mou- you are a big sheep my brother	
	anthelliniko(the nationality theme) skouliki-you Greek-hating worm	
The filth theme		oloi eseis ta neonazistika (political beliefs theme) kathizimata-all you neonazist sediments
		skoupidia- scum
	aliti- tramp	anegkefaloi (intellect theme) troglodites-brainless troglodytes/barbarians
The vagrancy/barbarism theme	trampouke- hooligan	
	vre anthrope ton spilaion-you caveman/neatherdal	

	re tsoglane- you tramp	
The intellect/severity theme	re anidee- you ignorant	re vlakes-you idiots
	vlima- you git	chaivania- you dumbasses
	re karagkiozako- you clown	
	re exipnokia- you smartass	
The political beliefs theme	komatoskilo- faithful like a dog to the political parties	fasistes-fascists
	re fanatismene- you fanatic	zoa (animal theme) fasistaria- you beastly fascists
	agapite ethnikisti- dear ethnicist	
The nationality theme		kammena (intellect theme) Ellinakia- destroyed Greeks
		eiste ethnoprodores- you are traitors of the nation

Appendix B-Comment included in section 4.3

[koskamr](#)

Prin apo 2 mines

[se apantisi ston christi HYGROPYR](#)

Na min me axiosei o Theos oute emena na do esas sta pragmata.. Giati eida kai sto Dachau kai sto Auschwitz ti kanate. Ante autoktona gida exeis kai to thrasos na kaneis reply stin Julie P. Vodi.

Translation:

koskamr

Two months ago

in reply to user HYGROPYR

I hope God won't let me see you guys being in power. I saw what you did in Dachau and Auschwitz. Go kill yourself goat! How dare you reply to Julie P?. Cow!

Authors

Emilie Riguel is a Ph.D. student in English linguistics at the University Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3. Her research focuses on phrasal verbs: usage, acquisition (L1 & L2), and teaching. For her, the mastery of phrasal verbs proves to be a perilous exercise, hence their under-representation in the discourse of foreign learners. Thus her research aims to understand how young English-speaking children acquire and identify phrasal verbs and to construct a new method in order to facilitate efficient learning of phrasal verbs by non-native speakers of English.

Muna Alshehri is a PhD student in Linguistics at Lancaster University. Her PhD research examines the role of frequency of exposure, elaboration and individual differences in the incidental vocabulary learning of young EFL learners from listening input. She has also worked as an English teacher and lecturer in schools and colleges in Saudi Arabia.

Jacqueline Ingham is a PhD student at the University of Sheffield, where she also received her MA in Applied Linguistics with TESOL in 2012. Prior to beginning the Masters and PhD programme, Jacqueline worked as an EFL instructor and managed a language school. During this time she developed an interest in second language acquisition, particularly regarding the acquisition of speech sounds and how the phonology of a second or other language is acquired.

Sondos Ibrahim is a PhD student in Linguistics at Northumbria University in Newcastle. Her research brings together cognitive linguistics and the medical humanities to investigate the cross-cultural metaphors of pain and pain management in the clinical environment. Prior to moving to Northumbria, Sondos completed her undergraduate and masters' degrees at University College London (UCL), where she developed a special interest in World Englishes, corpus linguistics and lexical semantics.

Maria Vasilaki is a PhD student in Linguistics at King's College London. Her research revolves around impoliteness in Greek Youtube and Facebook comments about political videos and posts. Her research interests include politeness and impoliteness, critical

discourse analysis – especially focusing on the analysis of right and extreme-right discourse – and gender and language. She holds two Master's degrees with Honours, one in Discourse Studies from Lancaster University, and one in Contemporary Media from the University of Wolverhampton.

Editors

Margarita Calderón López recently graduated as with a PhD in Linguistics from Lancaster University. Her academic research focused on writing assessment and literacy practices of young children. She is currently working as a research assistant in The Centre for Advanced Research in Education (CIAE), in Chile.

Hilda Hidalgo Avilés is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics at Lancaster University. She also holds an MPhil in Applied Linguistics from University of Essex, and an M. Ed. From Universidad La Salle. She is a full-time lecturer and researcher at University of Hidalgo, Mexico. Her research interests include academic literacies and discourse studies.

Alexander David Pask-Hughes is a PhD student in Linguistics at Lancaster University, and holds an MA in Critical Discourse, Culture and Communication from the University of Birmingham. His research draws on critical discourse studies and focusses upon the ways in which people use social media platforms in order to reflexively discuss and challenge the language of politicians and political institutions in the context of reforms to welfare in the UK.

Carolina Pérez Arredondo is a PhD candidate in Linguistics at Lancaster University. She also holds an MA in Discourse Studies from the same educational institution. Her research is centred on the representation of motive and accountability of the Chilean student movement in the national media. Nevertheless, her research interests also include discourse studies in general, particularly different manifestations of racism and discrimination in Latin America.

