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# TRAINING, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

*'It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy  
in creative expression and knowledge'*

*- Albert Einstein*

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# TRAINING, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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# Introduction to Issue 3(1)

by Elena Malyuga

Editor-in-Chief TLC

Welcome to Issue 3(1) of Training Language and Culture.

The first issue of 2019 will shed light on a number of engaging topics that will hit home with both language researchers and teachers. The underlying theme in our language section has to do primarily with style and everything it takes to make various institutional discourses productive, targeted and explicit.

In *Euphemisms in advertising discourse: Putting on a positive face and maintaining speech etiquette*, Elena Danilina, Ekaterina Kizyan and Daria Maksimova investigate advertising discourse in the context of a set of etiquette rules to be observed in compiling commercial and social ads. Making a clear distinction between the two, the study digs deep to make some practical observations concerning the functional orientation of English advertising texts intended as commercial vs socially-focused linguistic endeavour, to ultimately conclude that on both accounts euphemisms come into the picture as one of the prevailing stylistic devices used to both manipulate the audience and help observe the socially accepted standards of speech etiquette.

*Art discourse revisited: Linguocultural specifics of childhood-related art tokens* by Antonina Kharkovskaya, Ludmila Kuznetsova and Vasily Makhuha unravels a whole new dimension of art discourse by examining art tokens represented in the titles of paintings. This is a thorough study supported by a galore of illustrative examples as well as a comprehensive quantitative, linguistic and cultural analysis of childhood-related art tokens used by British and American artists in their titles. The study can be viewed as a further step in the analysis of minitexts (or small-format texts) – a topic picked up by Antonina Kharkovskaya in the inaugural issue of TLC.

On a related note, Elena Monakhova offers a study on *Cognitive and pragmatic approach to using stylistic devices in English literary discourse* to investigate this type of institutional discourse as ‘an interaction between the author and the reader designed to generate emotional response’. The article will be of interest to not only practitioners looking for the interpretations of stylistic functions in the framework of language and discourse studies, but also to scholars seeking to consider the diachronical perspective and the history and evolution of Stylistics as a branch of Applied Linguistics.

Language teaching methodology is covered by outstanding researchers who will offer a valuable insight into contemporary training and learning practices. Wayne Rimmer of Open University UK investigates *Questioning practice in the EFL classroom* to consider questioning as a key

teaching and learning activity with the quantity and quality of questions directly linked to language acquisition and a general positive learning experience. The study explores patterns of questions used by EFL teachers in a classroom environment to confirm that questioning is a major teaching technique appreciated by teachers for its pedagogical potential.

In *Cross-cultural pragmatic failure*, Peter McGee makes observations on failures in intercultural communication emerging due to pragmatically-driven misunderstandings. The study focuses on compliments, refusals and complaints as core pragmatic categories and offers examples and explanations of cultural misunderstandings that might come up in a relevant-themed conversation. The paper emphasises that the study of pragmatics needs a stronger focus in the teaching and learning of languages in teaching materials, in classroom practice and especially in computer-mediated communication, particularly through social media. The researcher stresses that more research needs to take place into not only what pragmatic failures in communication occur and why they happen

across cultures and language but also into how they can be repaired and mutual understanding restored.

Completing the issue is an outstanding research by Katrina Mayfield and Alex Krouglov, two highly accredited professionals considering the problem of interpreter-assisted interviewing of victims and witnesses in *Some aspects of the role of interpreters in investigative interviews*. The paper draws on empirical data to summarise police interpreters' experience and perceptions and single out the key issues and challenges in their interpreting practice.

Together with the reviews and the news from RUDN University, ICC and EUROLTA, the issue offers a variety of engaging perspectives on relevant issues.

TLC Editorial Board welcomes contributions in the form of articles, reviews and correspondence. Detailed information is available online at [rudn.tlcjournal.org](http://rudn.tlcjournal.org). Feel free to contact us at [info@tlcjournal.org](mailto:info@tlcjournal.org) or [info@icc-languages.eu](mailto:info@icc-languages.eu).

# Euphemisms in advertising discourse: Putting on a positive face and maintaining speech etiquette

by Elena A. Danilina, Ekaterina E. Kizyan and Daria S. Maksimova

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*The study describes advertising discourse as unique in terms of its manipulative potential and attempts to observe the way euphemistic units are used in English commercial and social advertising. The authors highlight the two key functions: a 'call-to-action' function of commercial ads and the 'raising awareness' function of social ads. The study relies on the theory of politeness and the concept of face suggested by Brown and Levinson to apply the same principles in the analysis of English advertising texts. The authors consider different categories of goods and end products in both commercial and social advertising discourse to identify the main goals and strategies behind euphemisation as a manipulating mechanism and a language tool allowing to observe the socially accepted standards of speech etiquette.*

**KEYWORDS:** advertising discourse, euphemism, politeness, speech etiquette, manipulation



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Manipulation of public opinion is part and parcel of contemporary media space. As the world grows ever more media-centric, the end product delivered to the consumer is often the result of extensive manipulative transformations, and so even though the key objective of publicist writing involves transmitting meaningful information, it never actually ends there, for this objective happens to be complemented by a subordinate goal – that of instilling certain views. Manipulating public opinion will require copious application of

various linguistic and stylistic means, and this is where euphemisation falls under the spotlight as one of the most efficient tools that helps distract the reader's attention through indirect nomination.

Euphemisms are units of secondary denomination used to mitigate unseemly or unpleasant information, or downplay the details that might be perceived as transgressing the rules of speech etiquette (Abbott, 2010). These 'surrogates', for lack of a better word, override spoken or written communication to clear it of linguistic units



bearing shameful or odious connotations.

Although euphemisms perform similar functions in various types of spoken and written interaction, some specific features of euphemisation can be singled out within different institutional discourses. This study is concerned with the way euphemisms operate in commercial and social advertising and aims to identify the key strategies behind euphemisation as a tool of manipulation and a means of observing socially accepted rules speech etiquette.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study relies on a sample obtained from commercial and social ads in the English language and uses the methods of linguistic observation, continuous sampling and statistical analysis as its key methodological premise.

## 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

To make observations on advertising discourse or euphemisation techniques, we will first need to properly define what the two phenomena in question actually stand for.

Van Dijk (1998) views discourse as a broad concept and singles out two approaches to its interpretation. On the one hand, discourse is a communicative event emerging amid temporal and contextual limitations and involving two parties (the speaker/writer and the listener/reader).

On the other hand, within a narrower context, it is the result of communicative action taking the shape of the spoken or written text. Van Dijk also suggests that language functions not only within the framework of discourse and its pragmatics, but also in response to multiple social factors, such as public opinion, social status of language users, etc.

The notion of advertising discourse is derived from the general concept of discourse. Advertising texts are intended to promote the values and attitudes of the consumer society, as well as a certain lifestyle or moral choice. In any case, they are always aimed at encouraging the recipient to take action (Sonesson, 2013).

The key distinguishing features of advertising discourse can be listed as follows:

- (1) it is guided by its own structure;
- (2) it bears speech restrictions;
- (3) it is determined by context.

All of which suggests that advertising discourse operates under a set of restrictions that need to be observed vigorously in order to ensure that the end product is as efficient as practically possible, and observing restrictions imposed on advertising texts will require a scrupulous choice of language means and stylistic devices, among which euphemisms are in a class of their own for they are indispensable when it comes to satisfying

censoring constraints.

The process of euphemisation has to do with the speaker's assessment of the subject matter being discussed, and the ultimate verdict will define whether this discussion will require indirect designation of objects and phenomena that might be associated with rudeness, indiscretion, harshness, indecency, etc. (Rawlings et al., 2017). This is a traditional function of euphemisms that defines their important role as markers of politeness applied to observe the standards of speech etiquette in advertising discourse.

Since the original purpose of advertising as a means of information transfer has been expanded, it has now evolved to incorporate a number of subtypes, including political, social, commercial, etc., all of which have shaped a specific sphere of communication.

Commercial advertising is designed to make a profit. In addition, it is supposed to promote sales or at least create a market for a product. This suggests that commercial advertising uses its own functional style combining etiquette forms of communication and various stylistic techniques to create public awareness, promote a product, disseminate information concerning the benefits of goods or services, and drive up the demand for these goods and services. To that end, commercial advertising makes use of a certain arsenal of

means and techniques organised into communicative strategies of manipulation.

Any kind of advertising is based on the text, which is designed to perform certain functions, such as:

- the communicative function (any advertising is essentially a message formulated so as to reach the recipient);
- the emotive function (advertising should trigger some feelings or create an aesthetic image);
- the regulatory function (advertising affects the mood and behavioural responses on the part of the consumer).

When the three key functions are fulfilled, the ultimate goal of selling the advertised product is more likely to be achieved.

In modern linguistics, there is no consensus regarding the definition of text as a concept. It is generally perceived as an integral linguistic construct operating on the macro (the broad interpretation of a text as a notion) and micro levels (text as a complex syntactic unity). A text is a reasonably complex statement about the reality, which is based on a judgment about objects and phenomena, about certain facts and situations. All the words in the text, all sentences included in the

*‘The process of euphemisation has to do with the speaker’s assessment of the subject matter being discussed, and the ultimate verdict will define whether this discussion will require indirect designation of objects and phenomena that might be associated with rudeness, indiscretion, harshness, indecency, etc.’*

text and the text itself are generally actualised and act as names and statements about specific subjects, facts and situations (Freitas, 2013).

An advertising text is commonly viewed as a specific result of media production and can be presented in any type and genre of media, i.e. a commercial video, a film, a newspaper ad, a poster, etc. It is also different from other types of text since it is created using media language. This is not quite a language in the literal meaning of this term, but rather a complex of means of expression, a set of material and intellectual values in the field of media (Keller & Halkier, 2014).

Like any text, a media text has its own structure, which components are directly interconnected. The structure of the media text depends on the

specifics of the publication or its pragmatic focus. Advertising texts always incorporate a subtext, which is more typical of social, rather than commercial, advertising (Leiss et al., 2013).

Any advertising text must exhibit the following qualities: (1) coherence and integrity; (2) consistency; (3) accuracy; (4) clarity; and (5) comprehensibility. It also bears some specific features, including popularity, visibility, expediency, relevance, contextual and intertextual congruency, and circulation.

*Popularity and visibility.* The information embedded in an advertising text is intended for the mass consciousness, and therefore in order to attract attention it needs to be ‘closer’ to the audience. Basically, any kind of text designed for a mass audience needs to incorporate something associated with the idea of shared interest, a point of contact between the message and its recipients. Commercial advertising make emphasis on situational relevance, i.e. it relies on specific life situations, while social advertising is mainly about the drama of the narrative, the conflict, and basically more far-reaching realia and circumstances.

*Expediency.* Advertising texts have their expiration date. In fact, they only operate in the present, because the media relies only on what matters at the moment. This is why advertising texts appeal to

the moment, the here and now, but also form the basis for subsequent decisions.

*Relevance.* One of the conditions for the viability of the texts that the media operates with is their compliance with the information needs of the audience, their expectations and interests, which is why it is imperative to comprehend both what the public actually wants and what it wishes to hear or read. An irrelevant text that insults feelings or violates the etiquette norms of communication will be considered a downright failure in the industry and will not be able to sell a product or service.

*Contextual congruency.* Advertising texts are read and perceived only within a specific context, in which communication takes place between the sender of information and its recipient.

*Intertextual congruency.* A message in mass communication is always a link in an endless chain of messages preceding and following it, a reference to other texts in a continuous cycle of citation.

*Circulation.* A text of mass communication is always reproduced through replication, for otherwise it will never be able to reach a mass audience and acquire the status of a mass product.

The above features explain the nature of the

advertising text and can be viewed as provisional attributes that classify a text as advertising material. The information in the advertising text is transmitted concisely in order to have a proper effect on the recipient and get attention. Although social and commercial advertising are considered different sub-types of marketing communications, their texts fulfil the same function – to call to action through emotional manipulation (Sivulka, 2011).

The language of media communication evolves from epoch to epoch and yet unfailingly bears a set of features that belong to this genre alone. Typically, advertising texts are designed to be read quickly, which is why they often deploy clichés and repetitive and recognisable vocabulary. To attract attention, these texts are filled with stylistically coloured words and make use of a variety of stylistic devices, among the most common of which are metaphors, metonymy, euphemisms, epithets and comparisons. These devices help create a positive emotional message and uphold etiquette standards, especially where it comes to the language being used to refer to hygienic and medical goods (Beasley & Danesi, 2010).

Speech etiquette is associated with certain rules of linguistic behaviour that should be adopted in a society. Etiquette in general is a set of rules of conduct governing the external manifestations of

*‘To attract attention, these texts are filled with stylistically coloured words and make use of a variety of stylistic devices, among the most common of which are metaphors, metonymy, euphemisms, epithets and comparisons’*

human relationships (dealing with others, forms of greetings, public conduct, manners and clothing). Etiquette is an integral part of the external culture expressed in a detailed system of etiquette norms and rules of courtesy, which includes the developed formulas of speech etiquette (Lambek, 2010). These can be generally accepted and expected phrases, rhetorical questions, polite forms of address, euphemisms, etc.

In today's market economy and the complex process of maintaining product competitive capacity, each brand seeks to occupy a certain niche and provide a sustainable market for their products. In the most general terms, commodities are classified into foods and non-foods, and the least challenging task is to advertise the so-called 'premium' products of both types, such as quality foodstuffs, textile, footwear, printed goods, etc. However, there is a category of products that are quite difficult to advertise. These include medical products made of latex and glues, cosmetics and

pharmaceutical drugs. These products are largely designed to address a problem and are often associated with a number of taboo words and symbols, which discussion violates socially established etiquette standards. This mainly concerns the products designed to eliminate cosmetic imperfections or alleviate the symptoms of a disease. To tackle this challenge, marketing experts and copywriters resort to euphemisation that allows to 'soften sharp corners' and adhere to etiquette norms adopted in a given consumer society (Hojati, 2012).

The theory of politeness suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987), with the concept of 'face' as its key category, considered politeness in the framework of everyday communication, and yet not much actually changes if the same principles are applied to study advertising discourse. Brown and Levinson distinguished between the two types of face as a public image of self:

- positive face, i.e. *'the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others executors'* ;
- negative face, i.e. *'the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others', or 'the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction. i.e. the freedom of action and freedom from imposition'* (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61-62).

Thus, a 'positive face' is a positive image of oneself in the eyes of society. The same applies to the above categories of goods. In advertising, the positive 'face' of a product must be adequately and positively perceived within a society.

According to the theory, the main task is to preserve and maintain a positive face and for this purpose a strategy of positive politeness is applied.

While positive politeness is aimed at minimising the threat to the positive perception of the advertised product, euphemisation of advertising rhetoric can be viewed as the main principle underlying this strategy.

#### 4. STUDY AND RESULTS

Some of the more representative cases of euphemisation in advertising texts can be found in advertising material promoting cosmetic and medical products. In particular, a rather extensive sample of euphemisms can be obtained by analysing advertising texts promoting anti-ageing goods and products combating exterior imperfections. Thus, the adjective *old* did not occur in the sample at all, despite it being the closest semantically relevant attribute of the very concept of ageing. Instead, euphemisms are used to preserve the positive face of the product and avoid any kind of hostile reaction on the part of the consumer, and most importantly women (Kaur et al., 2013). While socially accepted standards discourage any kind of overt reference to age, most brands tend to refrain from any such allusion.

For example, in their campaign to promote an anti-ageing cream, *Olay* used slogans such as *Give mature skin the extra care it deserves* (Figure 1), thus replacing the semantics of biological decay (*old*) with maturity, defined as '*the state of being mentally and emotionally well-developed, and therefore responsible*' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019).



Figure 1. 'Give mature skin the extra care it deserves' slogan. Copyright © Olay [olay.com](http://olay.com)

Another one of their slogans, *Join me in the battle against ageing* (Figure 2), is also emblematic as it balances out the potentially threatening semantics of *ageing* with the positive metaphorical implication of *battling*.



Figure 2. 'Join me in the battle against ageing' slogan. Copyright © Olay [olay.com](http://olay.com)

The same effect can be observed in advertising texts promoting goods designed to combat exterior imperfections. The slogan by *Clean and Clear* that runs, *Gently wash away skin worries*, is obviously formulated so as to avoid any open reference to the cosmetic problem faced by a large percentage of both women and men. Since rules of etiquette disapprove of any open talk about skin conditions, using any direct reference to *acne* or *acne rash* would clearly have effected product sales in a negative way.

A sensitive category of cosmetic goods are hygiene products. The subject of hygiene and bodily fluids is still a rather provocative one. In terms of etiquette considerations involved, the topic itself is not off-limits, and yet its open discussion is not

entirely welcomed (Keyes, 2010). For example, the topic of menstruation has always been considered taboo, but with social and ethical changes in the society, the attitude to this issue has changed. In many Muslim countries, however, any mention of goods related to personal hygiene during the menstrual cycle is unacceptable, and since on the physiological side this process is associated with something unpleasant and also causes physical discomfort, the direct name carries a negative implication and, accordingly, negative emotions. To avoid any negative interpretation, commercial advertising uses some well-established techniques.

For example, a slogan by *Tampax* runs, *Maybe these colors will distract you from the hell you are going through*. In this case, the semantics of *periods* is softened through metaphorical association of the menstrual flow with *hell*, which means that indirect nomination is introduced because society prefers to not speak overtly about this intimate biological process. Although *hell* cannot be viewed as in any way positive association, in this case it more or less captures the ironic connotation that might ring true with women which will ultimately help save the positive 'face' of the product. In the long run, this helps maintain the idea of common ground and suggest that the people (company) behind the campaign understand what women (the end consumer) are going through and what they are looking for in this kind of product. Other

*‘The subject of hygiene and bodily fluids is still a rather provocative one. In terms of etiquette considerations involved, the topic itself is not off-limits, and yet its open discussion is not entirely welcomed’*

euphemisms for the same concept include *these days*, *heavy-flow days*, etc.

Another taboo topic posing a challenge in advertising is contraception. Advertising standards allow a conscious violation of the laws governing the functioning of speech units; therefore, euphemisms are a common stylistic device used in promoting contraceptives.

Such ads often use words with a less pronounced ‘negative load’ or resort to indirect nomination of processes and objects by means of metonymy or word-play. For example, *Durex* introduced an ad for contraceptives – *Get it on* – that never mentioned the advertised item itself (condom), but simply referred to the product as *it* thus mitigating any potential threat to socially accepted etiquette norms. The most frequently occurring euphemisms included metaphors (*orange skin*), metonymy (*it*, *these*, *other*), word-play (*Roger Moore*), irony

(*hell*), and the like.

Unlike commercial advertising that seeks to promote goods and services, social advertising is about highlighting the norms of conduct and addressing global issues requiring public awareness. Before we proceed to consider the cases of euphemisation in social advertising, it is necessary to identify the features distinguishing it from its commercial counterpart.

Firstly, the main goal of social advertising is to draw public attention to a particular, often problematic, phenomenon of public life (Bloor & Bloor, 2013).

Secondly, social advertising is for the most part charitable in nature, meaning that a specific person, or company, or fund does not receive any apparent benefits by placing the social ad. Thus, while the effectiveness of commercial advertising is assessed on the basis of specific market indicators (the level of sales of a service or product), the efficiency of social advertising is assessed based on the level of public awareness about the problem in question (Gregory & Carroll, 2018).

Last but not least, social advertising aims at changing public attitude towards various social phenomena, which implies a different target audience for this kind of promotional campaigns.



Even more so, social advertising is not just about affecting a specific target audience, but is rather about making an impact on the entire society (Johnson, 2012).

In its essence, social advertising is designed to shock and manipulate by appealing to the feelings of fear and anxiety, as well as people's readiness to take action and make a change. Therefore, the basic terms such as *public service advertising* and *public service announcement* have recently found a synonymous term – *fear appeal advertising*, i.e. an advertisement containing an appeal to a feeling of fear, or an ad with a threat.

The common factor uniting commercial and social advertising is the focus towards promoting a particular product, maintaining interest in it. In the case of social advertising, the end 'product' is correlated with public awareness and potential (desirable) change in conduct and/or attitude towards the subject matter in question.

Social ads often purposefully use direct nominations for greater impact. Despite their negative connotation, lexical units such as *kill*, *victim*, *prostitute*, *death*, *black/white*, etc., are widely used in social advertising texts to enhance their suggestive potential.

Suggestion is essentially a process of manipulating the human psyche associated with a weakened

critical thinking in perceiving the suggested content, which does not require a detailed logical analysis or assessment. The manipulative part is enforced by triggering certain states or prompting certain actions. Suggestion is not about affecting the mind of the recipient, but rather about leveraging their feelings.

Any advertising has suggestive potential. Regardless of its type, recipients absorb the pragmatic message behind the suggested information on a subconscious level. In commercial advertising, this message is always associated with maintaining the positive image of the brand and making people purchase the goods (Hackley & Hackley, 2017).

Thus, by deploying its suggestive potential, social ads can affect the feelings and emotions of the target audience through the rational use of stylistic techniques and devices, including euphemisms, which are also encountered in social advertising texts as a most common way around negative language and undesirable connotations.

Social ads concerned with disability issues provide a good sample for the study of euphemisms. For example, *The American Disability Association* has created an ad that shows a stairway of a pedestrian tunnel ornamented with a picture of mountains and captured, *For some this is the Everest. Help build more facilities for disabled people* (Figure 3).

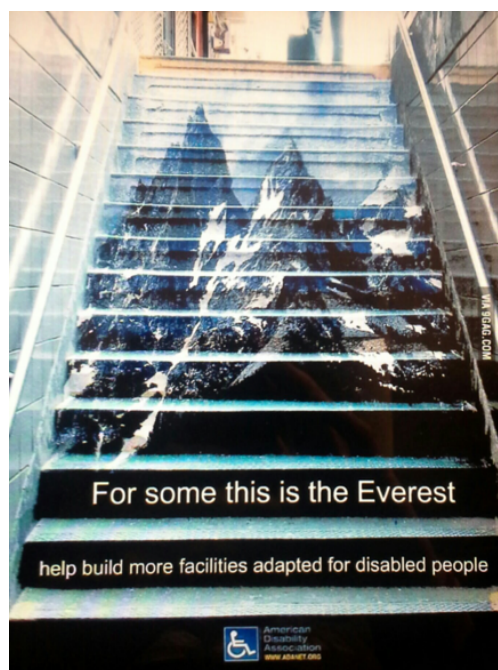


Figure 3. 'For some this is the Everest. Help build more facilities adapted for disabled people' slogan. Copyright © The American Disability Association [americandisabilityassociation.org](http://americandisabilityassociation.org)

Since the word *invalid* is taboo, English-speaking social advertising uses euphemisms such as *disabled*, *challenged*, *handicapped*, etc.

The problem of the living conditions for the poor is also addressed in social advertising. The charity organisation H.A.T. – *Helping All Transient* – encourages the audience to join them in helping low-income citizens. In their slogan, *Needy men, women and children don't need the shirt off your back – they just need a pair of shoes from your closet*, the concept of *poor people* is being replaced by the less on-the-nose *needy men, women and children*.

The theme of death is prevalent in social advertising, and although it largely resorts to direct nomination to bring up the concept of passing, euphemisation can still be found in some texts. For example, the social ad designed to raise awareness about dry drowning in children runs, *He said he was sleepy. But he was really slipping away*. To explain that a child may drown after having exited a body of water, the ad uses the euphemism *to slip away*, which not only makes the text more catchy, memorable and recognisable, but also softens the message making it less straightforward and more discreet.

*Children of parents who smoke, get to heaven earlier* (Figure 4) is a slogan by Child Health Foundation depicting a child with a halo of tobacco overhead. In this case, the direct nomination of *death* and *dying* is avoided by introducing the euphemistic *get to heaven*. Together with the halo symbol it also implies the idea of children viewed as angels, which ultimately adds to the resulting suggestive and persuasive effect. Notably, the strategy that involves using children or the general idea of childhood for suggestive reasons is a rather powerful tool exploited in social ads, and even where life-threatening circumstances are referred to through euphemisation, the resulting message ends up no less meaningful and effective.

The following examples are also helpful in

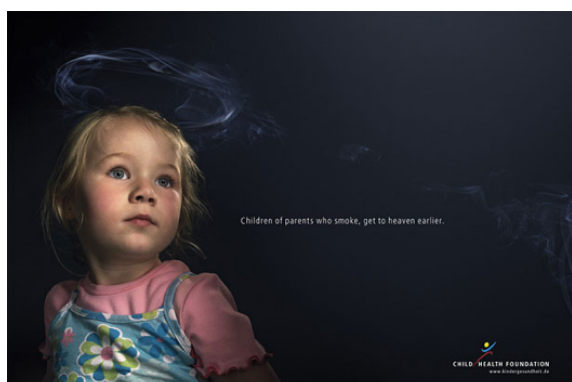


Figure 4. 'Children of parents who smoke, get to heaven earlier' slogan. Copyright © Child Health Foundation [kindergesundheit.de](http://kindergesundheit.de)



Figure 5. 'The faster you go, the faster you arrive THERE' slogan. Copyright © Romanian Road Police [politiaromana.ro](http://politiaromana.ro)

analysing the way the concept of death is euphemised in social advertising. The ad that reads, *One more in the bar. One more in the ground. If you think you're over the limit, you probably are*, reports that drunk driving is fraught with death. The advertisement uses the euphemistic phrase, *one more in the ground*, thus suggesting an association with being buried in the ground (lying in the grave).

*The faster you go, the faster you arrive THERE* (Figure 5) is the text of a social ad by Romanian Road Police addressing the problem of speeding.

The euphemistic connotation of *there* is supported by the image where the brake and gas pedals are supplemented by a third one shaped as a coffin. Thanks to a combination of verbal and visual components, the resulting message is made stronger and more comprehensible.

Another social ad by Ponle Freno reads, *Drive thinking what's the next bouquet you want to get. Let's keep working for a future with zero roadside bouquets* (Figure 6). The ad plays on the notion of death by using *roadside bouquet* as a euphemism for passing, because a bouquet on the road commonly symbolises the memory of those who died at that spot in a road accident. The idea is strengthened through visual representation where the flowers in a vase in a cosy apartment are contrasted with the flowers laid on the side of the road. The opposition is revealed by comparing positive and negative emotions caused by the same subject – a bunch of flowers – and the suggestive implication behind the message ends up even more prominent considering that *roadside bouquet* has come to have a metaphorical meaning of its own: *'A person who rides any two-wheeled motorised vehicle (scooter, motorcycle, etc.) without a helmet. The word comes from the*



Figure 6. 'Drive thinking what's the next bouquet you want to get. Let's keep working for a future with zero roadside bouquets' slogan. Copyright © Ponle Freno [compromiso.atresmedia.com/ponlefreno](http://compromiso.atresmedia.com/ponlefreno)

*flower arrangements placed on the side of the road where a deadly accident occurred'* (Urban Dictionary, 2019).

Since social advertising is intended to draw attention to public issues of importance, one of the subject matters it addresses concerns health problems. For example, a poster designed as part of an advertising campaign against anorexia depicts a physically exhausted girl looking in the mirror, whereas the reflection portrays a corpulent figure, which thus projects the girl's distorted vision of herself making her want to lose weight (Figure 7).



Figure 7. 'Help for people with eating disorders' slogan. Copyright © Ross Brown [rossbrownphotographer.com/thumbnail/conceptual/eating\\_disorder](http://rossbrownphotographer.com/thumbnail/conceptual/eating_disorder)

The poster is captured, *Help for people with eating disorders*, which means it avoids giving names of diseases (anorexia in this case) and 'softens the blow' by generalising the message and labelling the issue from a broader perspective – *eating disorder*.

In both commercial and social advertising, it is unacceptable to use the concept of sexual intercourse and contraceptives in direct nomination. In the following advertisement devoted to the problem of AIDS control, the verbal part of the message is subjected to euphemisation to observe the norms of speech etiquette: *Love life,*

*stop AIDS. No action without protection.* In this case, *action* is a replacement for *sexual intercourse*, while *protection* means *contraceptive*.

An observation that seemingly contradicts all of the above concerns the cases where language units associated with the detrimental realia and bearing negative connotations are purposefully left 'unmitigated' in order to draw attention to the problem at hand through appallingly straightforward rhetoric and intentional renunciation of euphemisms.

For example, the following social ad on alcohol abuse reads, *Every night, binge drinkers put themselves at risk getting into illegal taxis. Don't be a drinkhead. Think more. Drink less*, and clearly has no intention to lighten the message as it uses upfront language, such as *binge drinkers* and *drinkhead* to make the audience stop and reflect.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study offered evidence suggesting that while commercial and social advertising may use different language means to observe the standards of speech etiquette, their focus and functions remain the same as any linguistic choice is ultimately aimed at raising awareness and making the target audience reflect and change their behavioural patterns.

Since advertising discourse is inextricably linked

*'When used in commercial ads, euphemisation is largely a tool allowing to describe a product vividly and catchy while at the same time observing etiquette rules'*

with pragmatic and extralinguistic factors, it is at all times 'immersed' in real-life situations and reflects social realia, which is to a great extent achieved through stylistic devices and techniques being used.

The study has showed that euphemisms are a big part of both social and commercial advertising, although they do carry different messages. When used in commercial ads, euphemisation is largely a tool allowing to describe a product vividly and catchy while at the same time observing etiquette rules. When used in social ads, on the other hand, euphemisms help unveil some problematic social issues of public importance and make people reflect on them.

Whenever euphemisms are not used to mitigate negative connotations, the resulting straightforwardness is commonly a purposeful, intentional strategy designed to shock the target audience that do not expect a direct nomination of phenomena associated with diseases, disabilities, bodily functions, death, child abuse, etc.

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# Art discourse revisited: Linguocultural specifics of childhood-related art tokens

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*The paper explores the linguistic representation of concepts behind the titles of paintings produced by British and American artists depicting childhood-related scenes and characters. Sociolinguistic and linguocultural factors of titling are analysed along with the pragmatic and cognitive effect of art tokens used by British and American artists. The study singles out seven conceptual segments incorporating a number of nuclear and peripheral art tokens, which are in turn represented by concept-specific lexical units referring to the theme of childhood. Quantitative and semantic analyses of research data are implemented to suggest reasons for the uneven distribution of conceptual segments in terms of their representation in painting titles.*

**KEYWORDS:** art token, art discourse, concept, concept sphere, minitext, title



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Art discourse is one of the significant factors involved in the rearrangement of trends regulating the social perception of artistic values and the cognitive framing of the linguocultural matrix. Apart from everything else, it covers a wide range of verbal messages represented in the titles of paintings depicting children and their environment. The world of childhood can be considered mainstream in pictorial art and is attractive in many ways for it shows the essence of children within the context of the visual and verbal epoch-specific 'philosophy' of the artistic space. In terms of discourse analysis, conceptual

grouping of art titles requires rigorous registration of linguistic and linguocultural markers. In view of this, the present study aims to discover the linguocultural trends behind the titles of British and American paintings depicting the world of childhood, whereby such paintings are treated as minitexts comprising art tokens. The paper also suggests a linguistic interpretation of painting titles using professional discourse instruments.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Researchers currently take a keen interest in art discourse and the media of its linguistic manifestation. Art discourse is a voluminous

linguistic space demonstrating the versatility and complexity of social and cultural life in ways that seem both sufficient and varied. Linguistic research into art discourse encourages adequate recognition of cultural and national peculiarities of the corresponding historical period.

The distinguishing features of this type of discourse are closely aligned with the nature of art-related texts combining creative and communicative elements verbalising the field of fine art. Art texts are interpreted through visual perception and verbal manifestation, where the subject of the corresponding verbal discourse becomes the subject of metalinguistic interpretation as it verbalises the imaginative code (Helguera, 2011).

Painting titles embody the characteristic features of the analysed discursive space. Art tokens represent complete texts (English texts within the scope of the present study) rendering the object of discourse. Titles are also inseparably associated with the communicative space that displays the interaction between the locutionary source and the addressee. The emotional and informational elements obtained by the recipient as they interact with an art text containing art tokens is interpreted through a lens of individual sensory, cognitive and linguistic experience. As organised statements, titles of American and British paintings are pre-programmed to hold up against social, thematic and temporal boundaries of English-language art

discourse. In addition, the lexical manifestation of art tokens also depends on the location of execution, the historical period, subject-matter and genre peculiarities.

Analysing linguistic and structural manifestation of art tokens, we label them as small-format texts, or minitexts. Kharkovskaya et al. (2017) assert that the major typologically relevant property of small-format texts is that they contain '*a limited volume of words ... otherwise bearing typical features of all the classical standards of textuality*' (p. 63), meaning that they express maximum information formulated with minimal linguistic input. Minitexts are verbalised as a full-featured linguocultural phenomenon that can be observed in exquisite detail and comprises such essential characteristics as divisibility, intertextuality, special pragmatic functionality, formal and semantic self-sufficiency, thematic representation and completeness. These texts also have an apparent degree of information capacity, their cognitive background – the reason for their creation, the general conception and the result of its creation – realised in the form of special semantic space (Caro & Rodríguez, 2015). Beyond that, minitexts incorporate '*not only nominative but sufficient communicative-pragmatic potential*' (Ren, 2010, p. 82).

Art tokens fully line up with basic parameters of minitexts: painting titles tend to have limited visual design of a single grammatically and syntactically



*‘Art tokens fully line up with basic parameters of minitexts: painting titles tend to have limited visual design of a single grammatically and syntactically complete sentence or utterance bearing a full-featured meaning and drawing attention to the visual dimension of the painting’*

complete sentence or utterance bearing a full-featured meaning and drawing attention to the visual dimension of the painting.

Childhood-related art tokens present an autonomous yet non-isolated linguistic subsystem revealing general linguistic regularities. At the same time, this subsystem exhibits specific features attributable to extralinguistic factors. Whereas the semantic core of childhood-related art tokens bears referential, denotative and meaning-signifying elements, their peripheral segments incorporate etymological, cultural and connotative semantics. This is indicative of the complicated nature of the meaningful content of art tokens and the complimentary interaction of linguistic and cultural information contained within their semantics. The artist’s take on reality is reflected in the nominative paradigm that widens the pragmatic potential behind painting titles by

introducing the aesthetic perspective to the naming process. The aesthetic function is inextricably linked with the artistic value of paintings depicting children and objectively implies the possibility of perceiving the art tokens in question as small-format texts. With these reflections in mind, we can study small-format texts engaged in the linguistic manifestation of English art tokens through the linguo-synergetic array of tools applied by painters to communicate their artistic intentions.

### 3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study suggests a concept-based grouping of selected art texts found in the titles of British and American painters and representing the theme of childhood in its various manifestations. Since the theme appears sufficiently voluminous and poly-conceptual, the sample can be structured into thematically organised segments. Analysing the principle of thematic classification, Wang et al. (2014) suggest that while word classes uniting similar situations or common topics should be attributed to thematic groups, the general identifying sense is optional. In light of this, we assume that thematic grouping of art tokens related to childhood implies eliciting lexical units of common interpretation.

The multifunctional nature of art tokens incorporated in painting titles is considered via the lingua-synergetic approach in order to uncover the

specific ways in which nuclear and peripheral units interact to ultimately outline an entire concept-sphere representative of childhood-related topics referred to in paintings. The extrapolation of linguo-synergetic technologies regulating the meaningful load of art tokens represented by nuclear and peripheral linguocultural markers fosters the adjustment of various structural and semantic relations between the linguistic units being used as part of painting titles.

Despite its variability, the subject matter of childhood-related art tokens can be united into conceptually organised entities – the conceptual segments. However, the ongoing shift of nuclear and peripheral elements within the concept sphere provides a rationale to consider the boundaries of these segments to be open which fairly represents the evolutionary tendencies in art tokens' sociocultural and linguocultural space.

#### 4. STUDY AND RESULTS

The sample is represented by an approximately equal number of art tokens found in the works of British and American painters depicting scenes associated with childhood. Selected art tokens were classified in recognition of the basic concepts shaping their concept sphere as follows.

##### Gender

*The Oddie Children* by William Beechey; *Two Young Girls* by Charles James Lewis; *A Girl* by

Edward Thompson Davis; *The Naughty Boy* by Charles Trevor Garland; *Blue Boy* by Thomas Gainsborough; *The English Boy* by Ford Madox Brown; *His First Fence* by Arthur John Elsley; *His First Model* by George Bernard O'Neill; *The Cavendish Children* by Thomas Lawrence.

##### Personification

*Annie Louisa Robinson Swynnerton* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *Mrs Hicks, Mary, Rosa and Elgar* by George Elgar Hicks; *Portrait of Lord Frederick Beaucler* by William Beechey; *Clavering and Catherine Mary* by John Thomas Peele; *Miss Lily's Return from the Ball* by James Hayllar; *Miss Murray* by Thomas Lawrence; *Thomas and Martha Neate, with Tutor* by Joshua Reynolds.

##### Education and professional skills

*The Necklace-Maker* by Emily Farmer; *The Cockery Seller* by Myles Birket Foster; *The Young Customers* by Helen Allingham; *The Cherry Gatherers* Frederick Morgan; *A Young Flower Seller* by Sophie Anderson; *The Young Highlander* by John Thomas Peele; *The Young Artist* by Charles Spencelayh; *The Little Model* by Edgar Bundy.

##### Leisure

*Hide and Seek* by James Hayllar; *Playing at Schools* by Charles James Lewis; *The Swing* by Frederick Goodall; *The Next Dance* by George Goodwin Kilburne; *Playmates* by Edgar Bundy; *Castle in the Air* by Arthur John Elsley; *The Swing*

## *‘Thematic grouping of art tokens related to childhood implies eliciting lexical units of common interpretation’*

by Myles Birket Foster; *Time to Play* by John Charles Burton Barber; *Good Friends* by Frederick Morgan; *Old Playmates* by Briton Riviere.

### Family

*Little Sister* by Myles Birket Foster; *The Two Sisters* by James Sant; *The Little Mother* by Robert W. Wright; *Kissing Grandpa* by Edward Thompson; *A Brotherly Kiss* by Robert W. Wright; *An Afternoon with Grandma* by Edward Thompson Davis; *Reading for Grandmother* by James Hayllar.

### Space

*Over the Garden Wall* by Frederick Morgan; *In the Orchard* by Myles Birket Foster; *In the Orchard* by Dame Laura Knight; *In a Convent Garden* by George Dunlop Leslie; *The Enchanted Garden* by Harriette Sutcliffe; *Cottage Door, Park Lane, near Witley* by Helen Allingham.

### Time

*Sunny Hours* by Frederick Morgan; *The Minute* by John Everett Millais; *Christmas Greeting* by Charles Trevor Garland; *Good Night* by Arthur John Elsley; *A Quiet Moment* by Edward Thompson Davis; *Rosy Morning* by Sophie Anderson; *A Summer*

*Shower* by James Hayllar; *Happy Days* by Charles James Lewis; *A Pensive Moment* by Charles Sillem Lidderdale.

The process of grouping involved registering basic conceptual properties. The key feature of a concept lies in its identification with the terms *meaning* and *sense* where the meaning acts as the subject and the sense is the concept of the given subject, i.e. information with the help of which the subject transforms into a unit of the concept sphere. Sense is also defined as ‘a *common correlation of all phenomena relevant to the situation*’ (Van den Herik, 2017, p. 22). Meaning is formed within the boundaries of a specific situation and is determined by the verbal utterance and context. Unlike sense, meaning is not subjected to contextual or situational circumstances and is secondary in relation to sense. From this perspective, a concept correlates with the meaning on the grounds that it also correlates with national and cultural specifics of a given language.

To address the issue of plausibility, we suggest studying Table 1 below, representing the qualitative orientation and structuring of conceptual segments singled out in the sample (the results are provided in consideration of the quantitative data).

Having recorded the fundamental conceptual

Table 1

*The conceptual segments representing the 'childhood' concept sphere in art tokens of British and American painting titles*

CONCEPTUAL SEGMENT	REPRESENTATION (% of occurrence)
Gender	20%
• Feminine gender subgroup	• 8%
• Masculine gender subgroup	• 5%
• Mixed gender subgroup	• 7%
Leisure	19%
Education and professional skills	16%
Family	14%
Personification	13%
Time	11%
Space	7%

segments within the boundaries of the sample, the study first takes the analysis of the *gender* segment as an example. Gender presents a combination of basic characteristics determined by the society's cultural guidelines which identify social behaviour representative of men and women as well as interactions between them. Gender is constituted through a definite socialisation system, the division of labour, cultural norms accepted in the society, roles and stereotypes. It serves as an instrument that helps comprehend social processes (Oakley, 2016). Verbal representation of gender relies on the widespread social, cultural and linguistic stereotypes, norms, rules and customs (Corbett & Fedden, 2016, p. 497).

Approximately 20% of painting titles by British and American artists fall within the conceptual segment of *gender*. A number of cognitive layers within the segment can be singled out via a semantic analysis of lexical units, where the constituent parts of these lexical units united by a common conceptual segment are structured to parcel out sub-spheres, which in our case included the sub-spheres of the female subgroup, the male subgroup and mixed gender subgroup.

The female subgroup incorporates titles representing the theme of childhood with the nuclear token *girl/girls* within their naming patterns: *The Blind Girl* by John Everett Millais; *A*

*Gypsy Girl* by George Elgar Hicks; *Young Girl Fixing Her Hair* and *Foundling Girls* by Sophie Anderson; *Two Young Girls* and *The Little Hay Girl* by Charles James Lewis; *Portrait of a Young Girl* and *Portrait of a Girl* by William Beechey; *The Strawberry Girl* by Joshua Reynolds; *A Young Girl with her Doll* and *Two Young Girls* Charles James Lewis; *A Girl* by Edward Thompson Davis.

Tokens such as *she*, *her*, *princess* act as peripheral representative lexical items: *The Princes in the Tower* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *Sharing Her Lunch* and *Her Constant Care* by Frederick Morgan; *Forward She Started with a Happy Cry* by George Elgar Hicks; *The Little Baker with Her Two Assistants* by Charles Burton Barber; *An Autumn Princess* by Sophie Anderson; *Her New Brown Shoes* by Harriette Sutcliffe.

The female subgroup accounts for 8% of the *gender* conceptual segment entries in the sample and is the most representative of the three subgroups.

Following the same algorithm, tokens such as *boy/boys* were identified as the key representative lexical units of the male subgroup: *The Naughty Boy* by Charles Trevor Garland; *The English Boy* by Ford Madox Brown; *Woman Supporting a Boy on a Donkey by a Stream* by Charles Hunt; *Blue Boy* by Thomas Gainsborough; *Portrait of Sir Francis Ford's Children Giving a Coin to a Beggar Boy* by

William Beechey.

The close periphery incorporates tokens such as *he* and *his*: *His Turn Next* by Frederick Morgan; *His First Fence* by Arthur John Elsley; *True to His Colours* by Charles Spencelayh; *Off He Goes* by Charles Trevor Garland; *His Only Friend* by Briton Riviere; *His First Model* by George Bernard O'Neill. Lexical units representing the male subgroup symbolise masculine identity of depicted characters. Approximately 5% of childhood-related art tokens in the sample were classified as belonging to the male subgroup.

The mixed gender subgroup is represented by lexical units such as *child/children*: *The Child's Bath* by Arthur Fitzpatrick; *Dressing the Children* by Dame Laura Knight; *The Stolen Child* by Charles Hunt; *The Cavendish Children* by Thomas Lawrence; *Children in The Woods* by James Sant; *Children in A Cottage Interior* by Robert W. Wright; *The Child and the Star* by Alfred Fowler Patten; *Baby* by Arthur Boyd Houghton. The subgroup incorporates about 7% of painting titles falling within the *gender* category.

Thus, art tokens found in British and American painting titles depicting childhood are most frequently represented by lexical units referring to female characters. This might be because emotionality and attractiveness tend to be more vividly manifested in girls, which is why female

characters have always attracted and inspired artists, irrespective of their age. Painters depicting children, especially girls, pay close attention to their appearance and spontaneity of the situation. Children's images in fine art embody inexpressible uniqueness, secrecy and psychological logic.

The concept of gender is also linguistically manifested in painting titles rather distinctively through descriptive adjectives, complementing and scrutinising the characters' qualities, as in *young, little, small, good, frightened*, etc.: *Young Girls at the Beach* by Helen Allingham; *The Strawberry Girl* by Joshua Reynolds; *The Little Hay Girl* by Charles James Lewis; *Portrait of a Small Girl Standing with a Doll* by Charles Spencelayh; *The Stolen Child* by Charles Hunt; *Girls, Frightened by a Dog* by Edward Thompson Davis; *Portrait of a Young Girl* by George Dunlop Leslie; *The English Boy* by Ford Madox Brown.

*Location* is another frequently exploited association used by artists when giving titles to their paintings, and this is where a close correlation between the different concept segments can come into the spotlight, as in when nuclear and peripheral tokens referring to *space* are combined with *gender*-related tokens in a single title: *Young Girls at the Beach* by Helen Allingham; *Girl in Armchair* by Ruth Addinall; *Children in the Wood* by James Sant; *Children in Aa Cottage Interior* by Robert W. Wright; *Child*

*Among the Rocks* by Arthur Boyd Houghton; *Girls Picking Flowers by the Sea* by Dame Laura Knight; *Children Fishing at a Pool* by Edward Charles Williams.

Perhaps, quantitative precedence of the *gender* concept segment in the sample has to do, at least in part, with the importance attributed to sex roles and patterns in British and American societies, so that the painters resort to a specific 'language' of art to not only reveal artistic details of their works, but to indicate some socially acceptable and expected behaviour in boys and girls, men and women.

The minimal difference in the saturation of conceptual fields with lexical markers somehow affiliates the segments of gender and personalisation in the temporal perspective, as these were represented by a pretty much uniform set of personal names (such as *John, Polly, Robin, Minna, Lucy, Effie, Julie, Samuel, Timothy, Julian, Lionel, Alice*, etc.) through the centuries. These personal names were commonly found in the 18-20th centuries Britain and America and were reflected in the titles of paintings: *Alice in Wonderland* by George Dunlop Leslie; *Portrait of Julie* by James Sant; *Lucy* by Helen Allingham; *Double Portrait of The Brothers Bertram and John Leslie Horridge* by Charles Haigh-Wood.

The most popular female names in Britain and America in the 18-20th centuries were *Emily*,

## *‘Thematic grouping of art tokens related to childhood implies eliciting lexical units of common interpretation’*

*Sophie, Alice, Lucy, Maria and Mary.* Among the most frequent male names were *Oliver, Jack, Thomas, James, George and John.* In the framework of this study we have discovered that in titling their work, artists tended to resort to the most frequent names typical of their cultural tradition. This linguistic peculiarity characterises the painters’ aspiration to demonstrate the national flair not only by means of artistic mastery but also by virtue of language. Perhaps the reason for such a voluminous set of markers referring to *gender* and *personalisation* has to do with the general inclination of artists to underline their characters’ individual yet culture-specific traits.

The concept segment of *leisure* in painting titles is also crucial in representing the childhood perspective, essentially because it reflects children’s feelings and emotions manifested in the course of an activity, especially when they take a vivid interest in it. In the framework of this study, the *leisure* segment is actualised in 19% of the sample and is represented by the nuclear token *leisure*: *Leisure House* by Everett Millais; *Leisure Time* by Edward Thompson Davis; *Moments of Leisure* by James Sant. The peripheral tokens

include lexical items associated with games and entertainment, such as *play, friend, game, dance, concert* and their synonyms: *The Fairy Tale* by James Sant; *Hide and Seek* by James Hayllar; *Painting the Kite* by Robert W. Wright; *The Dropped Stitch* by Alfred Fowler Patten; *The Surprise* by Arthur Boyd Houghton; *Playing at Schools* by Charles James Lewis; *The Swing* by Frederick Goodall; *A Cottage Concert* by Charles Hunt. Other peripheral tokens include lexical items having to do with holidays and festivals, such as *Christmas, birthday, etc.*: *Birthday* by Arthur John Elsley; *Christmas Time* by Sophie Anderson. These are especially representative of the concept of *leisure* with children, as they commonly associate this kind of events with joy and mystery, positive emotions and magic. As for the far periphery, the idea of *leisure* is traced in tokens such as *walk, stroll* and their derivatives: *A Stroll Through the Village* by Robert W. Wright; *Ready for a Stroll* by George Bernard O’Neill; *A Walk in the Park* by Alan Maley; *Walking* by John Everett Millais; *Walk and Leisure* by Myles Birket Foster; *No Walk Today* by Sophie Anderson; *Ready for a Stroll* by George Bernard O’Neill.

The concept segment of *leisure* is often found to be interlaced with other segments, such as *time* (*Play Time* by Edgar Bundy; *Time To Play* by Charles Burton Barber; *Playtime* by Frederick Morgan; *Playtime* by John Thomas Peele), *space* (*Little Stage Fairy* by Alfred Fowler Patten; *A Cottage Concert*

by Charles Hunt; *Castle in the Air* by Arthur John Elsley; *Secret Place* by Charles Burton Barber) and *education and professional skills* (*The Nurse And The Concert* by Robert W. Wright; *Playing at Schools* by Charles James Lewis; *Playing at School* by Charles James Lewis).

*Leisure* is a rather voluminous segment as childhood is commonly associated with recreation and learning of the world through game and rest.

The conceptual segment of *education* is next in line and obviously correlates with school-related activity. Some markers of skills and competencies inherent in pre-school and school-age children are also to be observed within the concept under study. *Education*-related tokens cover 16% of the sample, its nuclear lexical items being *education*, *skills* and *school*. Notably, since spending time at school implies moral, physical, emotional and cognitive pressure exerted on children, artists often use the nuclear representative lexical unit *school* in their titles in combination with a number of other peripheral lexical units, which ultimately adds an 'extracurricular leisure' touch to the painting name, as in *out of school*, *off school*, *home from school*, etc.: *Home from School* by George Elgar Hicks; *Out of School* by Myles Birket Foster; *Off the School* by Charles Burton Barber; *Going Home from School* by James Hayllar. Thus, the *education* segment interacts with the *leisure* segment in terms of semantic manifestation which

attaches additional imagery and vast character to small-format texts in painting titles.

Turning to the *professional skills* conceptual segment, the study found it was mostly represented in the titles by tokens such as *seller*, *peddler*, *picker*, *gatherer* and the like: *The Crossing Sweeper* by William Powell Frith; *The Necklace-Maker* by Emily Farmer; *The Chine Peddler* by Myles Birket Foster; *The Cherry Gatherers* by Frederick Morgan; *A Young Flower Seller* by Sophie Anderson; *The Young Gardener* by George Dunlop Leslie; *The Young Customers* by Helen Allingham.

A simple semantic analysis reveals the simplicity behind children's domestic skills, for they are mostly depicted helping their parents gather fruits in the garden, picking and selling flowers or delivering goods.

The *family* conceptual segment accounts for 14% of the sample in this study and is obviously one of the central ones as it is inseparably connected with the process of growing up and upbringing. Its nuclear token is represented by the lexical unit *family*: *The Family Picnic* by Frederick Morgan; *Family* by John Thomas Peele; *George Clive and His Family with an Indian Maid* by Helen Allingham; *Family Introductions – The Young Family* by John Thomas Peele; *Family* by James Hayllar. Close periphery incorporates lexical units expressing family relations, such as *parents*, *father*,



*‘The ‘family’ conceptual segment accounts for 14% of the sample in this study and is obviously one of the central ones as it is inseparably connected with the process of growing up and upbringing’*

*mother, daughter, son, sister, brother, grandfather/grandpa, grandmother/grandma, grandchildren: Christ in the House of His Parents by John Everett Millais; Grandfather’s Favorites by Arthur John Elsley; Little Sister by Myles Birket Foster; Queen Alexandra with Grandchildren and Dogs by Frederick Morgan; Daughter by James Sant; The Little Mother by Robert W. Wright.*

These exemplary tokens highlight the idea of the family as an organised social group, whose members are connected through the common daily routine, mutual moral responsibility and socially expected physical and spiritual self-reproduction. Because a family begins with children, they are depicted as its integral and most valuable part.

The linguistic manifestation of the *family* segment is closely connected with linguistic units incorporated in the *personification* segment: *Christ in the House of His Parents* by John Everett Millais; *The Children of Sir Hussey Vivian at the Seaside* by

George Elgar Hicks; *Queen Alexandra with Grandchildren and Dogs* by Frederick Morgan; *Lady Cockburn and Her Three Eldest Sons* by Joshua Reynolds.

Although *family* is a highly important part of children’s lives, British and American artists avoid front-loading it into the thematic fields of painting titles, probably because they are primarily aspired to focus on personality which might go missing when other characters are involved.

The conceptual segment of *personification* covers 13% of the sample and uses proper names as its nuclear tokens: *The Coming Nelson* by Frederick Morgan; *Good Old Torry* by Charles Trevor Garland; *Julian Russel Story* by Alexander Mosses; *Kitty’s Breakfast* by Emily Farmer; *Annie Louisa Robinson Swynnerton* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *Portrait of Elizabeth Clara Bromley* by Ford Madox Brown. The fact that in making up titles artists tend to express their attitude towards the primary characters of the painting (children, in our case) is indicative in the abundant use of the adjective *little*, which not so much reflects the idea of size, but rather gives an endearing touch to the title: *Little Bobs* by Edgar Bundy; *Little Vera* by Sophie Anderson; *Little Emily* by Edgar Bundy; *Mary with Her Little Sister* by Alexander Mosses; *The Little Angels* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *Little Red Riding Hood* by James Sant. Metaphorical reference is clearly evidenced in the latter title and helps

provide a more vivid characterisation. If precise enough, a metaphor recreates an image encountered in prior experience and not just forms a certain impression, but actually predetermines the way the recipient perceives the object of depiction. Allusion is another common trope used in painting titles and acting as ‘*an indirect indicator of a certain historical, geographical, literary, mythological or biblical fact*’ (Cupchik, 2011, p. 175) and building on the recipient’s familiarity with this fact: *Forbidden Fruit* by John Thomas Peele; *Alice in Wonderland* by George Dunlop Leslie; *Ophelia* by James Sant.

As a side note, whenever the adjective *little* is not used in titles, this may be suggestive of the artist’s intention to underline the idea of children’s individuality without endowing them with the stereotyped semantics of small size or immaturity: *Annie Louisa Robinson Swynnerton* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *Minna* by Helen Allingham; *Millie Smith* by Ford Madox Brown; *Portrait of Lord Frederick Beaucler* by William Beechey.

The *time* conceptual segment which covers about 11% of the sample is represented by the lexical unit *time* as its nuclear token: *Tea Time Victorian* by Myles Birket Foster; *Bathtime* by Alice Mary Havers; *Dinner Time* by Robert W. Wright; *Storytime* by Charles Haigh-Wood; *Bath time* by Charles Spencelayh; *Tea-Time* by George Goodwin Kilburne; *Springtime in the Woods* by Charles

*‘By depicting a child within a definite timeframe, painters try to convey the immediate emotions associated with a particular situation and within fixed temporal boundaries’*

James Lewis; *An Anxious Time* by Frederick Daniel Hardy. Linguistic invariables such as *day, year, moment, afternoon, summer*, etc. can be viewed as peripheral tokens along with other units bearing synonymous meaning: *Midday Rest* by Frederick Morgan; *Sleeping* by John Everett Millais; *Christmas Greeting* by Charles Trevor Garland; *Golden Years* by Arthur John Elsley; *Loading the Cast for Market* by Myles Birket Foster; *A Quiet Moment* by Edward Thompson Davis.

For children, every temporal element (*day, week, month or year*) carries a certain degree of importance since their development unfolds continuously, systematically and eventfully. Therefore, *time* is an essential conceptual segment for artists, and painters in particular: by depicting a child within a definite timeframe, painters try to convey the immediate emotions associated with a particular situation and within fixed temporal boundaries. Irrespective of temporal characteristics, children can appreciate nature and rest, a period of idleness and the instructive process of cognition. The *time* segment is pretty

much understudied since painters more eagerly focus on the child's image rather than anything else.

The conceptual segment of *space* amounts to 7% of the sample and is represented by tokens such as *river, seaside, beach, brook* as well as lexical units possessing synonymous semantic meanings and indicating location: *A Day on the River* by Frederick Morgan; *Skipping in the Road* by Birket Foster; *On the Beach* by Dame Laura Knight. *Time*-related lexical units often transfer the idea of a domestic atmosphere and a recreational location thus reflecting children's dominating interests, including tokens such as *village, house, farm, cottage, home, garden, orchard*: *Over the Garden Wall* by Frederick Morgan; *In the Garden* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *The Village Oak* by Myles Birket Foster; *An Old House at West Tarring* by Helen Allingham; *Returning Home* by Charles Sillem Lidderdale.

Although home is the primary place for a child to reside, children are inquisitive by nature and are commonly interested in experiencing the world and discovering new places, which is why tokens such as *market, post office, park, gallery, hospital* are also part of the *space* conceptual segment: *Home from Market* by Edgar Bundy; *Chelsea Hospital* by Helen Allingham; *Visiting the Hall* by James Hayllar; *The General Post Office* by George Elgar Hicks; *In the Park* by James Sant; *At the*

*British Museum* by George Goodwin Kilburne; *Off Marketing* by Helen Allingham; *Returning from Market* by Charles Sillem Lidderdale.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study set out to establish basic conceptual focus of art tokens used in the titles of paintings by British and American artists depicting children and childhood. The sample was grouped based on the semantic analysis of representative lexical units incorporated in seven conceptual segments of *gender, leisure, education and professional skills, family, personification, time and space*.

Quantitative representation of the conceptual segments varies depending on artists' priorities and focus in depicting childhood-related realia, as well as their priorities in giving titles to their works. While *gender* and *leisure* were found to be the most commonly referred to segments, *time* and *space* were less evident.

The integral part of childhood-related art tokens is the cultural element that transfers morally, ethically and spiritually marked semantics revealed at the extralinguistic level. The morphological, lexical, grammatical and syntactic constructions demonstrate the established association bonds which involuntarily emerge upon deciphering the meaning behind painting titles. These associations serve as a foundation for unhindered comprehension and interpretation of the meaning behind the text.

In the British and American fine art heritage, painting titles exhibit structurally similar models typically represented by a single lexical unit, a phrase or a sentence. The study also found that in naming their paintings both British and American artists tend to resort to the most culturally-specific personal names. Depicting childhood-related themes, artists resort to a variety of conceptually

manifested lexis in their titles. The plenitude of perception is achieved not only by means of the most fundamental concepts, but through thematic variability as well. Resorting to the lexical units that illuminate a child's perspective, British and American artists expose a specific view of the world to illustrate the imaginative potential and brilliance behind childhood images.

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# Cognitive and pragmatic approach to using stylistic devices in English literary discourse

by Elena Monakhova

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*Modern linguistics does not treat language as an autonomous object of study, but takes an integrated approach to considering the way various factors affect the functioning of different linguistic phenomena within a discourse. Discourse analysis addresses spoken and written texts with regard to a situational context, cultural and historical background, ideological, social and psychological factors, as well as communicative, pragmatic and cognitive aims of the author, which in its turn determines the choice of language units. Literary discourse is an interaction between the author and the reader designed to generate emotional response. It relies on cultural, aesthetic and social values, background knowledge and worldview, beliefs, assumptions and feelings, and uses stylistic devices to produce the desired effect. This study gives evidence of the complex use of cognitive and pragmatic aspects in the analysis of stylistic devices in literary discourse. This approach makes it possible to analyse linguistic factors traditionally represented in linguo-stylistics, and consider extralinguistic parameters in order to better understand the way stylistic devices operate in the given type of discourse.*

**KEYWORDS:** *literary discourse, rhetoric, stylistic device, pragmatics, cognitive study*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The end of the 20th century saw a shift in scientific paradigms with the cognitive approach coming forward. At that point, linguists adopted the term 'discourse' to refer to written and spoken texts and their connections with extralinguistic factors (background knowledge, opinions, intentions, worldview, emotions, etc.). Discourse analysis has since then been used to approach texts as objects of reality rather than independent aesthetic artefacts, and consider the interactive relationship between spoken/written texts and listeners/readers.

Literary discourse is a verbal presentation of the author's perception of the world, whereby any language element explicitly or implicitly reveals the author's perspective and insight (Selden et al., 2016). While language means convey the author's intentions and conceptual information, they also appeal to an emotional response from the readers, as a piece of literary work is usually appreciated not because it is easy to comprehend, but because of the readers' emotive, evaluative and attitudinal response to it. Readers unravel meaning against the temporal, cultural and social context of their

own reality and approach texts with different sets of assumptions and experiences which will inevitably affect interpretation. Meaning is derived from a combination of factors, including the formal structure of the text and the contextual circumstances in which it is read. The meaning of a literary text is not always unwaveringly fixed, but is somewhat fluid as it cannot always be permanently pinned down through a process of analysis (Wolfreys et al., 2016). However, by looking at language one may construct stronger arguments about the meanings generated for particular kinds of audiences. Meaningful interpretation requires *stylistic analysis* that considers typical conversational scenarios, stylistic traits, and language means intertwined with the conversational situation, as well as the effect the writer/speaker wishes to have on the reader/listener (Carter, 2010). Linguistic techniques used to generate an additional or supplemental meaning, idea or feeling are called *stylistic devices*. Stylistic devices create imagery, put emphasis, clarify the meaning within a text to engage, entertain or capture readers' attention (Carillo, 2010).

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The paper uses the cognitive and discourse approaches to language study, as well as general methods of investigation such as systematic and structural analyses, literary, stylistic and philological approaches, formal logical and

comparative methods. The paper is premised on theoretical assumptions found in linguistic, stylistic, discourse and cognitive studies. The theoretical considerations are exemplified by works of fiction written by 20th century British and American authors. The data obtained were processed to formulate the key conclusions concerning the use of stylistic devices in English literary discourse.

## 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The ancient Greeks and Romans developed a system of linguistic techniques for aspiring public speakers. Whether the speech to be given was deliberative, judicial, or panegyric, one could learn much by studying the art of rhetoric and numerous devices or patterns of language which the speaker could use to enhance the meaning of their message.

The Sophists, for instance, taught their students to analyse poetry and define parts of speech, instructed them on argumentation techniques to make a weak argument stronger and a strong argument weaker. Aristotle wrote a treatise, *The Art of Rhetoric*, in which he established a system for comprehending and teaching rhetoric and favoured persuasion not only through reason alone, but through the use of persuasive language and techniques (Bakker, 2010).

The ancient Romans borrowed many of the

*‘Stylistic devices create imagery, put emphasis, clarify the meaning within a text to engage, entertain or capture readers’ attention’*

rhetorical elements introduced by the Greeks, and depended even more on stylistic flourishes and compelling metaphors rather than on logical reasoning as compared to their Greek counterparts. Quintilian and Cicero, whose writings on rhetoric guided schools on the subject well into the Renaissance, identified *Five Canons of Rhetoric* – invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery). Among the five virtues of style that make the speech compelling and absorbing to the listener, Quintilian mentioned ornateness that involves making speeches and texts interesting by using figures of speech and manipulating the sound and rhythm of words (Dominik & Hall, 2010).

Ancient theory on literary devices distinguished between tropes and figures of speech. While a trope was defined as a change in the meaning of a word, deviation from the literal meaning and its figurative use (metaphor, metonymy, personification, allegory, hyperbole, synecdoche, irony, etc.), a figure of speech was referred to as the change in a syntactic construction, deviation from the typical mechanics of a sentence, such as

the order, pattern, or arrangement of words (anaphora, antithesis, amplification, ellipsis, anacoluthon, amphibology, parallelism, inversion, pleonasm, etc.).

In the Middle Ages, rhetoric shifted from political to religious discourse. Catholic clerics were the intellectual centre of the society, theological works were the dominant form of literature, and Latin as the language of the Roman Catholic Church was a common language for Medieval writings. While medieval theorists essentially worked on the study of tropes and figures of speech, rhetoric also gave ground to the study of other aspects, such as grammar and logic. Figures were thought of purely as devices of ornamentation, and studying them, and rhetoric in general, was a matter of memorising technical terms and definitions (Enos, 2013). The most remarkable writings concerning tropes and figures were *On Figures and Tropes* by the Venerable Bede, *The Art of the Verse Maker* by Matthew of Vendome, *The New Poetics* by Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *The Art of Versifying* by Gervase of Melkley, *Parisian Poetics* by John Garland, and *Labyrinth* by Eberhard the German. Based on the rhetorical tradition of antiquity, medieval rhetoricians distinguished tropes and figures which they divided into figures of speech (meaning a figurative use of a word or a phrase) and figures of thought (which were used in oratory and considered to be rhetorical devices) (De Temmerman, 2010).

Gervase of Melkley made an attempt to classify figures and tropes and grouped them into figures of identity (e.g. anaphora, epiphora, gradation, aposiopesis, metonymy, hyperbole etc.), likeness (e.g. metaphor, simile, catachresis) and contrariety (e.g. antithesis). Geoffrey of Vinsauf referred to figures of speech and thought as 'easy ornaments' (*ornatus facilis*) because in this case words were used in their literary meanings, while tropes were termed 'difficult ornaments' (*ornatus difficilis*) as they required using other names to refer to objects (Kaufer & Butler, 2013).

The earliest Renaissance treatment of tropes and figures which was widely circulated in the late 15th century was Niccolò Perotti's treatise *De Figuris*, first printed in 1473. In *De Figures*, which came out in 1512, Flemish grammarian Johannes Despauterius described ninety-two figures. He defined a figure as a form of speech altered by a certain art, and divided them into *metaplasms* (the changes which poets make to observe the rules of metre), *schemes* (those of words and those of thought) and *tropes* (Mack, 2011).

Every theorist of that period developed work that had preceded them or elaborated their own classifications. Thus, Peter Schade in his *Tables of Schemes and Tropes* divided figures into figures of diction, locution, and construction. In *Epitome Troporum Ac Schematum*, Joannes Susenbrotus

### *'Renaissance and Early Modern period scholars attempted to categorise tropes and figures to help learners understand and remember them better'*

hugely expanded the number of figures, categorised tropes into tropes of words and tropes of discourse, and grouped figures into grammatical and rhetorical (Binkley, 2012). A major contribution to the study of tropes and figures was Omer Talon's *Rhetorica*, in which he reduces the number of tropes to four (metonymy, irony, metaphor, and synecdoche), but places poetic metre and prose rhythm alongside the tropes, thereby reducing the number of figures (Murphy et al., 2013).

Renaissance and Early Modern period scholars attempted to categorise tropes and figures to help learners understand and remember them better. However, none of these attempts was entirely successful. First of all, they were very conservative and copied or relied heavily on earlier writers. Moreover, they tended to introduce categories which included numerous and diverse figures. Subsequently, many scholars abandoned classification in favour of a long alphabetical list of literary devices (Herrick, 2017).

Leech (2014) believes that poetry comes from



intentional linguistic deviation which creates artistic beauty, and singles out eight types of deviation: lexical (invention of new words), grammatical deviation (disregard of grammar rules), phonological (shifts in sounds or pronunciation), graphological deviation (disregard of the rules of writing), semantic (figurative use of words), dialectical (borrowing features of socially or regionally defined dialects), deviation of register (using features of different registers), and historical period deviation (using archaic words) (Leech, 2016).

Galperin (1981) distinguished between expressive means (EM) and stylistic devices (SD). While EM are described as linguistic forms that have the potential to make utterances emphatic or expressive, SD are defined as literary models in which semantic and structural features are blended to represent generalised patterns. The subdivision of EM and SD proposed by Galperin (1981) is based on the level-oriented approach:

1) phonetic EM and SD (alliteration, assonance, paronomasia, onomatopoeia, rhythm, rhyme, graphon);

2) lexical EM and SD (metaphor, allusion, personification, allegory, irony, metonymy, synecdoche, pun, zeugma, tautology, epithet, oxymoron, antonomasia, simile, hyperbole, meiosis, litotes, periphrasis, euphemism);

3) syntactical EM and SD (gradation, bathos, enumeration, suspense, antithesis, parallel constructions, chiasmus, inversion, repetition, detachment, prolepsis, asyndeton, polysyndeton, ellipsis, aposiopesis, question-in-the-narrative, rhetorical question).

One of the more recent classifications of EM and SD was suggested by Skrebnev (2003) who distinguished between *paradigmatic stylistics* (stylistics of units) and *syntagmatic stylistics* (stylistics of sequence). Skrebnev (2003) explores the levels of language and regards all stylistically relevant phenomena level-wise within both paradigmatic and syntagmatic stylistics.

Paradigmatic stylistics incorporates paradigmatic phonetics, morphology, lexicology, syntax, and semantics, or semasiology, or semantics (one more level singled out by the scholar).

Stylistic devices were originally used to make a text or speech aesthetic and persuasive and are now used as a starting point in text interpretation helping understand the author's message, identify the key idea of the text, and define the author's attitude towards the subject of narration, the characters and their actions. Stylistic devices are always emotionally charged, incorporate a bulk of information and are multifunctional, i.e. they are used for different stylistic purposes: to create imagery or humorous effect, to emphasise, to clarify, to engage or entertain the reader, etc.

#### 4. STUDY AND RESULTS

Stylistics is about explaining how the meaning of a text was created through the writer's linguistic choices, and this process is more language-driven than text-oriented. Pinning down the meaning of a text is of less concern to contemporary scholars than it has been to scholars in the past, mainly because of the emerging theories concerning language interpretation.

This study attempts to demonstrate how modern standards of text interpretation have departed from the traditional stylistics in two significant ways. The first has to do with pragmatic research. It is now more frequently held that meaning is not stable or absolute, but depends on the process of interpretation by the reader or listener. Our interpretation of something we read can depend on many contextual factors, including our cultural background and immediate surroundings. Moreover, analytical models have incorporated contemporary linguistic theories concerned with the process of reading and interpretation. The second approach is inspired by various cognitive theories that render it possible to combine traditional stylistic text analysis with discussions concerning the cognitive structures and processes that underlie the production and reception of language. This combined method implies analysing formal features of literary texts and explaining possible interpretations by describing how the literary-linguistic information is

represented and processed in the human mind.

Pragmatics emerged as a response to scholars' attempts to comprehend human actions and thoughts through their speech. Pragmatics considers language as an instrument of interaction: what people mean when they use language and how they communicate and understand each other. Pragmatics deals with the intentional choice of language means that affects the recipient ultimately evoking certain feelings, ideas and behaviour (Ninio, 2018). Thus, pragmatic analysis of literary discourse implies analysing the functioning of language units in a text, as well as all the issues connected with the authors and readers and their interaction in literary communication. The aim of literary discourse is to affect the reader emotionally and aesthetically, which is achieved to a great extent by stylistic markedness and different forms of stylistic or other variations in a text.

The functioning of stylistic devices depends on the factors which are considered to be pragmatic constituents of any text as a means of communication: participants of communication, pragmatic intention, pragmatic content, pragmatic effect and pragmatic potential (Van Peer, 2016). Participants of literary discourse do not communicate face to face; but the writer's thoughts, feelings, beliefs and objectives, as those of the creator of the text, are expressed directly;

*‘The functioning of stylistic devices depends on the factors which are considered to be pragmatic constituents of any text as a means of communication: participants of communication, pragmatic intention, pragmatic content, pragmatic effect and pragmatic potential’*

the reader indirectly influences the content of the text, the choice of language units, etc. The goal is achieved if there is mutual understanding, feedback and harmony in communication. The pragmatic intention is the author’s desire to have a certain impact on the reader, which is manifested through the choice of language means and structural peculiarities of the text. Pragmatic content deals with specific conditions and means of meaning transfer, as well as the evaluative, modal and persuasive intentions of the author. Pragmatic effect is the reader’s perception of the text that emerges through decoding its pragmatic content and pragmatic intention. Pragmatic potential means the inherent possibilities of language units to convey the content of a text (Chapman & Clark, 2014).

Practical application of the above principles will

be illustrated through antithesis, a stylistic device which was highly valued by ancient rhetoricians. This device can hardly be considered purely stylistic, for its lexical components are as important as its syntactic construction. In literary discourse, together with other stylistic devices, it is used to achieve a certain pragmatic effect.

*‘I love her dearly, you know, but remember the old poem: ‘Love will fly if held too lightly, love will die if held too tightly’.*

(R. Bradbury)

The protagonist is eager to apply to an agency that produces people’s copies to take a break from his wife who is deeply in love with him. The semantic core of the opposition are the antonyms *lightly – tightly*. Both parts of the syntactic construction represent the cause-effect relationship with the components *lightly – tightly* as the grounds for opposition. They lead to the opposition of *fly* and *die*, which become antonyms in this context. The antithesis is implemented via parallel constructions and repetitions *Love will... if held too...* This utterance is an allusion to Alexander Pope’s *Love, free as air, at sight of human ties, spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies*. The protagonist speaks in proverbs thus attempting to disguise his immoral deed and make the reader take his side.

In literary discourse, antithesis is used to describe

events and characters, present somebody's point of view and beliefs, or oppose people, their feelings and ideas. Antithesis contrasts characters, situations, natural phenomena, reveals the irony and paradox of a situation.

Along with pragmatic factors that are characteristic to any type of discourse, Paducheva (1996) distinguished four pragmatic factors defining the way stylistic devices function in literary discourse.

1. *Position of the narrator and the observer.* Events can be presented by the author, or by the narrator, who can be one of the characters:

*'What I said wasn't a lie, exactly, although it wasn't exactly the truth, either'.*

(J. Safran Foer)

Or just an observer:

*'One of the commonest symptoms of wealth today is destructive neurosis; in his century, it was tranquil boredom'.*

(J. Fowles)

The utterances of narrating characters are commonly more emotional and personal and are used to ensure better comprehension of the character's inner world and their relations with other characters. Narrating observers, on the other hand, are generally more objective and detached.

*'In literary discourse, antithesis is used to describe events and characters, present somebody's point of view and beliefs, or oppose people, their feelings and ideas'*

2. *Perspective.* The perspectives of characters and the narrator commonly coincide. The perspective can be inner in relation to the events described, or outer, as of an onlooker. Sometimes the perspective can be very wide, covering a lot of space from the bird's-eye view description:

*'People were laughing, there were lines in front of the movie theaters, they were going to see comedies, the world is so big and small, in the same moment we were close and far'.*

(J. Safran Foer)

3. *Starting point.* Jose Ortega y Gasset indicated that the starting point for a person who learns the world around them is the person themselves. The I-perspective is the starting point to measure the notions of our conceptual system. If language units in a text indicate some physical space, the starting point will be the narrator/observer:

*'Things were happening around us, but nothing was happening between us'.*

(J. Safran Foer)

4. *Focus of attention.* People do not perceive reality homogeneously. Processing the information people get from the outside world, they focus on different objects singling them out among other things. The focus of situational components determines the choice of language means used to describe them. The most catching are unexpected elements that are given prominence in comparison with other factors. A person's emotional state is one more aspect affecting the choice of objects that get into the focus of attention, and the choice of language units for their description:

*'Even though Dad's coffin was empty, his closet was full.'*

(J. Safran Foer).

Along with other factors that define the way stylistic devices operate in literary discourse, it is possible to distinguish pragmatic factors resulting from the lexical and grammatical peculiarities of the device itself. The pragmatic potential of antithesis, for instance, is its capacity to convey contrasting information through the choice of opposing words, enhancing their contrast in a specific syntactical structure. From the lexical point of view, the device is based on the opposition of two antonyms or homogeneous parts of the sentence taken as opposed. From the syntactical point of view, it relies on parallel constructions and chiasmus. As a stylistic device, antithesis also has the form of a continuing

contradiction that lies within two or three consecutive sentences. The components of antithesis are linked by means of asyndeton or syndesis:

*'Every time I left our apartment to go searching for the lock, I became a little lighter, because I was getting closer to Dad. But I also became a little heavier, because I was getting farther from Mom.'*

(J. Safran Foer)

Both lexical and syntactical components play a critical part in conveying the meaning contained in antithesis (Baggaley, 2012). The information load depends on the possibility of a joint use of lexical components and their predictability. Therefore, antithesis contains the information at different levels. The first level comprises the cases of a high frequency of a combined component use, thereby the information at this level is easily interpreted. The wider the links between the elements, the broader and more contextually dependent the information, the more complicated is the process of its interpretation. The informative value of the first level suggests the only possible interpretation:

*'Sam had all the instincts, if none of the finances, of a swell.'*

(J. Fowles)

The meaning is derived from the context of the

sentence and does not require a wider perspective. Sam's life and work for the upper-class made him develop a habit of eating good food and using luxury things, though he could not afford them.

The informative value of the second level implies lesser probability of a joint use of components, and as a result, more alternatives for interpretation:

*'While their soul was climbing up to the sun of old European culture or old Indian thought, their passions were running horizontally, clutching at things.'*

(D.H. Lawrence).

A married couple are going to Europe for self-enrichment, where they conceive a passion for collecting things. The discrepancy between the intention and reality is depicted through the opposition of *soul* and *passion* which become occasional antonyms. It leads to the metaphoric opposition of the verbs describing movement *climbing up* – *running horizontally*, which reflects an eternal fight of spiritual impulses and human passions.

These verbs, which in the system of language are not an antonymous pair, are opposed in the structure of antithesis for better interpretation of the statement, which is also clarified by such components as *the sun of old European culture*, or *old Indian thought* and *clutching at things*.

The informative value of the third level demands a wider context for interpretation. These are the rarest and therefore the most interesting examples of antithesis. They are characterised by the discrepancy of components, illogical presentation of information, or some information gap that inspires the search for lacking information.

Cognitive conflict breeds cognitive interest. The reader can find the explanation to what is said in a wider context, either in the text itself, or even drawing conclusions from personal background and experience:

*'My God, Hester, you are eighty-odd thousand to the good, and a poor devil of a son to the bad'.*

(D.H. Lawrence)

The protagonist, a small boy, after learning that his family is under financial pressure, takes to gambling at horse races. He is quite successful and wins over eighty thousand pounds, but passes away because of the psychological stress. In this example, a neighbour describes how he sees the state of affairs for the boy's mother: she has money which is good, but her son has died which is bad. The core of the opposition is *to the good* – *to the bad* that sustains the opposition of *eighty-odd thousand* – *a poor devil of a son*. The colloquial *odd* and *a poor devil of a* make the sentence less tragic and make the reader pause to think if the boy's actions had any sense. Yet conclusions can be drawn only on reading the whole story.

The grammatical construction of antithesis is no less important. One of the features of antithesis is parallelism of its two parts, which makes the construction symmetrical, so that two elements of antithesis, though opposed, are perceived as equally significant (Harris, 2019). Parallelism puts to the forefront the words that bear artistic and emotional load. Lexical units which are not antonyms in the system of a language, become opposed and acquire new shades of meaning in the context of antithesis through parallel constructions. Parallelism creates rhythm and makes the reader focus on the conceptual links within the statement:

*'They were too proud and unforgiving to yield to one another, and much too haughty to yield to any outsider'.*

(D.H. Lawrence)

It is very uncommon for antithesis not to be based on the parallel arrangement of its constructions. In this case, the reader is challenged to discover links between semantic components which carry the main burden of opposition and find the ground for contrasting them:

*'But she would not submit to reason; to sentiment she might lie more'.*

(J. Fowles)

Among the different types of thinking (visual,

practical, exploring, etc.), scientists single out the linguo-creative thinking, which is a double-natured way of reasoning: on the one hand, it is involved in the heuristic process of outside world perception, while on the other hand, it is engaged in creating language (Carter, 2015). People use the existing units and subject them to changes and interpretations to represent new notions and links between them. Today, the focus has shifted from the language units that represent the result of the author's creative activity, to the mental processes in the mind of a person performing creative activity. Creative use of language units is therefore just an external manifestation of important processes taking place in human consciousness. Words and word combinations are formal indicators of deep-rooted concepts. People use readymade cognitive structures, or models, to name new objects, images and situations. Communication does not imply creating a totally new meaning, but rather presumes that those involved in interaction will employ the elements that already exist in their minds (Asoulin, 2013).

The main feature of a linguo-creative personality that can be observed in literary discourse is the capacity to use language means appropriately to trigger a certain reaction. Linguo-creative activity is revealed in the author's ability to introduce structural, semantic and stylistic changes to the existing language units to come up with the new images.

Cognitive phenomena are represented through lexical and syntactical means. Language means that are applied to present a new vision of something can be either newly created units, or existing ones that undergo changes or are being used figuratively.

There are certain limits to linguo-creative activity in a discourse; those which function in any discourse are referred to as *constant*, and those typical of a certain type of discourse are termed *variable*. Constant units stem from conventional language forms and meanings (e.g. antithesis is limited by the number of units that can be opposed). Variable units belong with a certain type of discourse and their interpretation pretty much depends on the recipient's linguo-creative skills.

Linguo-creative consciousness balances between similarities and discrepancies. Similarities are a background fixed in human consciousness that helps foreground discrepancies which reveal new features of objects, or describe them from a different angle:

*'The ferns looked greenly forgiving; but Mrs. Poultney was whitely the contrary'.*

(J. Fowles)

Literary discourse affects the reader when they perceive the text as a complex semiotic system that requires decoding by engaging verbal and

nonverbal, perceptive and cognitive experience. The use of stylistic devices triggers exploratory, emotional and evaluative activity on the part of the reader, makes the impression of an increased informative content of the text. One of the instruments employed in analysing discourse, including literary discourse, is a *concept*. This term is used to explain mental and psychological resources of consciousness and the informative structure that reflects a person's knowledge and experience. A concept is a multilevel phenomenon: it belongs simultaneously to logical and intuitive, individual and social, conscious and unconscious domains. At the same time, a concept is an open and dynamic system which triggers off a set of ideas, images, notions, associations, etc. that accompany words, actions and gestures. They evoke new meanings when they get into new contexts and enlarge a number of possible combinations and links.

Stylistic devices are used in literary discourse as manifestations of concepts. Antithesis, for example, represents concepts in their opposing meanings. It can portray the two extremes of a single concept, or oppose different concepts.

*'One knew the troops who had been in action. The ones who sang their way to death, the new recruits, were the dupes of the romance of war. But the others were dupes of the reality of war'.*

(J. Fowles)



The concept of *war* is revealed through the words *the troops, in action, death, recruits* and *war*. The narrator focuses on two types of people: recruits and experienced soldiers. They treat war differently thus opposing *romance* and *reality*. Yet all of them are referred to as ‘dupes’ by the narrator.

*‘I thought of her on Parnassus; I thought of her in Russell Square; things she said, she did, she was. And a great cloud of black guilt, knowledge of my atrocious selfishness, settles on me. All those bitter home truths she had flung at me, right from the beginning ... and still loved me; was so blind that she still loved me...In a way her death was the final act of blackmail; but the blackmailed should feel innocent, and I felt guilty. It was as if at this moment, when I most wanted to be clean, I had fallen into the deepest filth; free for the future yet most chained to the past’.*

(J. Fowles)

It is a part of a long, emotionally charged inner monologue which depicts the protagonist’s state of turmoil. The reader has to employ a wide range of background knowledge because the opposition *innocent – guilty* represents the opposition of the concepts *Innocence* and *Guilt*, which in their turn are constituents of a larger domain of *Justice*; the opposition *clean – filth* introduces concepts of *Cleanness* and *Filth* which metaphorically represent the domain of *Morals*; the opposition

*free – chained* represents the concepts of *Freedom* and *Confinement*; and *future – past* correlates with the concept of *Time*.

Whenever stylistic devices represent a single concept, they essentially bring one object to the fore and offer its detailed description. If, on the other hand, a stylistic device represents several concepts, it will make the scenario more informative by implementing a wide range of knowledge and giving a multifaceted description of an event or a phenomenon.

Stylistic devices in literary discourse reflect the affairs as observed by a character or the narrator. Conceptualisation can be presented in its *dynamic evolution* when different objects and phenomena interact during a short period of time; or as a *static event* when objects are placed relative to each other. Conceptualisation is similar in both cases; it is based on a situation which involves objects interacting (or remaining detached) within the boundaries of an indicated space.

*‘When the ultimate Mediterranean light fell on the world around me, I could see it was supremely beautiful; but when it touched me, I felt it was hostile. It seemed to corrode, not cleanse’.*

(J. Fowles)

In this case, antithesis conceptualises the situation where the character arrives in Greece; the

situation involves two objects (*I* and *light*) that interact with one another (*touched me*). The opposition *to corrode – to cleanse* helps accept the light as a participant in this scenario; readers have to rely on their background knowledge and life experience to compare the effect with corrosion and purification.

*'Sarah and Charles stood there, prey – if they had but known it – to precisely the same symptoms; admitted on the one hand, denied on the other; though the one who denied found himself unable to move away'.*

(J. Fowles)

The characters are mentioned early on in the sentence, the situation is static, and conceptualisation is introduced as an event that is being actually observed. Though there is no interaction between the characters, the readers somewhat feel like they are observing an awkward situation because of different reactions to the same event and the overwhelming emotional pressure.

Stylistic devices can conceptualise the situation that happened before. The narrator retells preceding events which have translated into the situation at hand:

*'Her father had forced her out of her class, but could not raise her to the next. To the young men of the one she had left she had become too select*

*to marry; to those of the one she aspired to, she remained too banal'.*

(J. Fowles)

Conceptualisation can employ information which is part of a person's experience or common knowledge. The narrator has a certain freedom to manipulate the concepts so that the situation can be perceived differently. For instance, some abstract phenomenon can be introduced as a physical object:

*'But in fact, his façade was sobriety, while theirs was drunkenness, exactly reverse of the true comparative state'.*

(J. Fowles)

While abstract nouns *sobriety – drunkenness* represent the key opposition, the keyword for the conceptualisation is *façade*. Relying on the background knowledge, the reader understands that the metaphoric use of the word *façade* implies external visual assessment of the situation, and focuses on words *sobriety* and *drunkenness* presented as physical objects.

The situation is conceptualised as follows: Charles behaved as a sober person, while his friends were laughing and shouting the way drunk people commonly do; but the state of events was the other way around, which is highlighted in the final part of the statement.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Contemporary research of linguo-stylistic phenomena demonstrates scholars' interest in stylistic devices as complex units interpreted by considering both linguistic and extralinguistic factors. Stylistic devices should be analysed using the elements of pragmatic and discourse analysis. Special attention should be paid to the pragmatic potential of stylistic devices which raises the possibility of a wider interpretation of semantic and structural components of stylistic units. The analysis of stylistic devices is not confined to the interpretation of their structure and semantic

components; they can be correlated with people's cognitive activity and background. Readers do not just perceive ideas presented in literary discourse explicitly; authors refer to their readers' background knowledge and experience to find new ways to conceptualise objects and situations. Using this approach, we can consider stylistic devices as complex units which involve linguistic factors, pragmatic constituents and abstract conceptual domains. It is a step forward from the intertextual analysis to discourse analysis which takes into account linguistic and extralinguistic factors.

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# Questioning practice in the EFL classroom

by Wayne Rimmer

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*Questioning has been identified in the literature as a key teaching and learning activity with the quantity and quality of questions directly linked to language acquisition and a general positive learning experience. The purpose of this empirical study was to explore patterns of questions used by EFL teachers in a classroom environment. Using an observation methodology, four teachers were observed in class and a transcript made of the questions they each asked their learners. The teachers were then asked to attempt a classification of the question types in order to gain an insight into the strategy from the perspective of teacher cognition. The results confirmed that questioning is a major teaching technique that is appreciated by teachers and manipulated for a variety of pedagogical purposes. Questions most valued by teachers as instrumental in achieving quality learning were those which guided learners to the pursuit of meaningful and motivating goals with a high degree of cognitive and linguistic challenge.*

**KEYWORDS:** *questioning, question, EFL, language acquisition, foreign language teaching methodology*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are innovations and fads aplenty in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) because without the fetters of external regulation, individual practitioners have remarkable freedom over the curriculum they deliver. On the one hand, this gives a creative license and flexibility which colleagues in mainstream education must envy (Drudy, 2008, p. 315). The downside is a lack of quality control and a very confusing picture of the instructional process. The prime example, and possibly source, of this discord is the central question of methodology. The communicative approach which is in vogue today, despite a weak empirical base (Rimmer, 2009, p. 6), is widely

challenged not least by an anti-method movement (cf. Meddings & Thornbury, 2009).

While commentators argue over the basics, teachers have to muddle through and do what they think is appropriate. Naturally, in these circumstances, what they 'do' often looks very different and there is little obvious coherence between different lessons and different teachers. Given this chaotic state of affairs, the search for universals across the EFL spectrum can be frustrating. What do teachers all do? One answer to the question is the question. Teachers ask a lot of questions in class, prompting the celebrated EFL teacher-trainer Ur (2012) to comment that

*'questioning is the most common and universally used activation technique in teaching'* (p. 228).

This is non-contentious but there is a danger in taking questioning for granted and assuming that because it is common it must be good for students and easy for teachers to apply. As Brualdi Timmins (1998) puts it, there cannot be bad answers, they are all part of a process of knowledge discovery, but there can be bad questions, i.e. ones poorly formulated or with little value. The role of questioning and factors which enhance or diminish its effectiveness are clearly of great significance.

The theoretical framework for the study is humanistic, a movement which conceives of second-language acquisition being maximised in an environment where personalisation and affect are high, leading to what Hancock (2010) calls 'intrinsic appeal'. A humanistic approach, as described in the seminal work on the subject in an EFL context (Stevick, 1982), embraces any methodology which values the learner's right to self-expression and opportunities for meaningful engagement. Questioning is fundamental in a humanistic approach because, as demonstrated in the handbook of Morgan and Rinvoluceri (2004), skilful questions eliminate barriers and inhibitions and initiate learners as full partners in the collaborative process of learning.

The purpose of this study is to explore patterns of

*'There is a danger in taking questioning for granted and assuming that because it is common it must be good for students and easy for teachers to apply'*

questions used by EFL teachers in a classroom environment. There are three aims: (1) to quantify and hence verify questioning as a core tool in the classroom; (2) to elicit from teachers a classification of their questions according to perceived pedagogical function; (3) to compare and interpret teachers' classifications. The first aim is the most obvious in the sense that when any mass phenomena occur, the counting of observations seems informative if not imperative. The emphasis on quantification has been criticised as a tendency to pursue measurement as a goal in itself, concomitant with the *'obsession [with a] medical mode of research'* (Goodwyn, 2010, p. 25). Thus, McCarthy and Carter (2001) take corpus linguistics to task for reducing studies to frequency lists and tables. However, the universal finding of any empirical work on teacher questioning shows that teachers ask a large number of questions, hundreds in a single lesson. For instance, Toni and Parse (2013) observed 322 questions in 135 minutes of teaching. No other classroom intervention could generate anything like this level of occurrences so the confirmation and

documentation of this fact is a valid research direction.

The second and third aims concern the more challenging issue of why questioning is so pervasive and how different patterns and motivations can be accounted for. This necessitates classifying the questions and interpreting them. As discussed in the Literature Review, such is the interest in questioning that categorisation schemes abound but with reliability and validity issues attached.

First, there is no generally-accepted framework that offers an off-the-shelf tool for research. Classification schemes tend to be criticised for being over-simplistic or so elaborate as to be unworkable outside, sometimes even within, their immediate context. Second, similar to the reservations over quantification, the search for the all-embracing framework often becomes more important than the data itself, as Lee (2006) warns in her literature review.

The problem of classification becomes apparent if one attempts what appears the straightforward task of classifying questions formally, i.e. by their syntax. Every schoolchild learns that a question is something which ends in a question mark but the examples of non-canonical questions, ones that are not fully-formed independent interrogative clauses (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p. 716), show

the category to be mixed:

*You hungry?* (a reduced clause)

*And what about Leeds?* (a phrase)

*Why?* (a single word)

*So you like the people around here?* (a declarative sentence)

*Tell me what time you're arriving again?*

(indeterminate between an imperative and an indirect question)

In speech and in absence of punctuation, the prime indicator of a question would be the intonation, albeit with a great deal of variation as to the pitch movement according to its pragmatic function (cf. Cruttenden, 2014, p. 294-286). Non-canonical questions are just as valid in the classroom as 'proper' interrogatives but they defy categorisation on grammatical grounds.

Of course, teachers do not use formal criteria for putting questions unless the actual language point is a specific interrogative construction or they feel they need to use a restricted range of language with a less proficient class. They select questions according to pedagogical goals and such is the rate of questioning that they must do this largely automatically and unconsciously. Even for the teacher most punctilious in their preparation, it would be impossible to script such a volume of prompts in advance. A categorisation scheme based on form would not reveal the motivation for

*‘The problem of classification becomes apparent if one attempts what appears the straightforward task of classifying questions formally, i.e. by their syntax’*

questions. Only lesson observation and a post-observation reflection process could link language to function through two sets of eyes, those of the researcher and the teacher. The former may be in a privileged position, the observer assuming the mantle of judge and expert, but it is the teacher as the instigator in the classroom process who holds the true key to the question of questions. For this reason, the teachers in the study were invited to present their own categorisations of their own questions and hold these up as points of departure for discussion and analysis.

The significance of the study is that questioning plays a major role in the classroom interaction process and ultimately learning, the goal of any educational process. Questioning is surely one of the strategies referred to in formulations of teacher expertise as in the section on ‘sustained enhanced practice’ in the *Standard for Chartered Teacher* in Scotland (The Scottish Government, 2009, p. 9). While the study does not deal with the relationship between questions and learning outcomes, there is prima facie a case that a deeper

understanding of the role of questions in the classroom puts teachers in a better position to exploit them as pedagogical tools. By way of transition to the next section, the literature on questioning is large but disconcertingly inconsistent in that a preoccupation with categorisation schemes is combined with a reaction against super-imposed frameworks with their limitations and presuppositions. This study highlights the data rather than classification issues so that the questions themselves become the focus.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

No studies dispute the primacy of questioning as a classroom technique. An impressive body of evidence is supplied via Hattie (2003) through the strategy of synthesising some half a million studies as part of an investigation of whether teachers make a difference. Amongst the numerous factors which impact learning, questioning has a high rating with an effect size of 0.41 (feedback tops the list). This massive data collection exercise would seem to include questioning as a repertoire available to ‘[e]xpert teachers ... proficient in creating optimal classroom climates for learning’ (Hattie, 2003, p. 7).

However, there are issues with a synthesis methodology which should make us cautious in welcoming Hattie’s findings as ‘proof’. Norris and Ortega (2007), who have almost pioneered



synthesis in studies of second language acquisition, acknowledge that the technical aspects of the exercise, the challenge of analysing vast data sets, can detract from the actual research aims.

With the development of ever more sophisticated techniques to deal with larger sets of data, the concern is that the methodology becomes a goal in itself. There are no grounds for saying that Hattie (2003) falls into this trap but the large-scale design does not allow any individual instances of data to be reported, in this context questions asked during lessons. Hattie has to be taken on trust and there is no recourse to the primary data.

Still, it is generally accepted in the literature that questioning is a universal and non-trivial classroom phenomenon, cf. Tsui's (2001) evaluation as part of an analysis of classroom interaction. As a negative example, Afitska (2016) reports on a project which involved observing science lessons. The weakest lessons with the poorest learning outcomes were the ones where teachers asked students no questions. The literature is chiefly concerned not with justifying questions – their value is self-evident – but categorising them. The most quoted study in an EFL context is Lynch (1991), which makes the distinction between 'display' and 'referential' questions that is still very much in currency (e.g. Ko, 2014) and is examined below.

It is posited that display questions are designed purely to elicit samples of target usage, to 'display' the language, and that the content of the response is largely irrelevant and ignored. Thompson (1997) provides a cringeworthy example:

Teacher: *What does your father do?*

Student 1: *Teacher.*

Teacher: *He's a teacher, good, what does your father do?*

Student 2: *My father dead.*

Teacher: *Good.*

The language point, presumably copula structures and occupations vocabulary, overrides any interest in the students' response. The choice of material used to illustrate, instances are seldom as harrowing as this, demonstrates the prevailing distaste for display questions. The teacher is depicted as unskilled and unfeeling, the questioning strategy as brusque and pointless.

In contrast, referential questions invite meaningful responses that demonstrate engagement. An example approach is taken from the Teacher's Guide to a popular EFL textbook series for teenagers.

*'Ask students if they ever tell lies. ... Ask students if there are any situations when it is OK to lie. Discuss interesting stories in class, helping with vocabulary as necessary'* (Hart, 2010, p. 70).

The first observation is that the content and language of the answers are not predictable, hence the direction to provide lexical support. Second, the topic is stimulating, even controversial in the staid world of EFL (cf. Thornbury's (2005) criticism of materials as bland and conservative), and could encourage teenagers to participate. Third, responses are invited rather than demanded from the group and individual students are not grilled as in the previous example. The atmosphere would be more relaxed and cooperative, attributes fundamental to the humanistic framework championed above. It is unfortunate that studies which adopt the display/referential dichotomy (e.g. Toni & Parse, 2013) show the former to predominate.

However, a good guys/bad guys conceptualisation of referential and display questions is challengeable. There are major problems in even this simple categorisation schema. The formulation of a question is but a poor guide to the linguistic and cognitive response that may be evoked. There is the wider consideration of the social-discoursal context for the question, one which is elusive to an outside observer unfamiliar to the dynamics of the classroom in focus. The most revealing example is the whole category of questions that fall under phatic communication (cf. Yule, 2006) in that they are interrogative in form but serve merely as social formulae with little or no expectations of a prolonged or informative response.

The classic example is *How are you?* Semantically, this is quite a searching question which could evoke a long account of a range of personal phenomena. However, the stock response is *Fine, thank you* or something similarly unrevealing. Indeed, a full answer, reacting to the question honestly, would seem strange in most cases. This is because the exchange enters the provenance of pragmatics, the difference between what it is possible to say and what it is customary to say. Answering *How are you?* as it were a genuine expression of interest would violate the key pragmatic maxim – respond as appropriate according to shared expectations of the speech event (Yule, 1996). Pragmatics acts as a spoiler when it comes to attempts to interpret questions according to their surface semantic meaning.

Clearly, the display/referential framework is flawed. Unfortunately, the search for more comprehensive classification schemes has met little success. For all their elaboration, there is inevitably overlap between categories and arbitrariness in determining the status of the questions within the chosen framework. As an example, Nunn (1999) constructs a tripartite classification which in terms of its data presentation draws on, although this is not explicitly acknowledged, the Birmingham school of discourse analysis laid out in Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). However, the basic distinction between question types is still obscure,

*‘However, the basic distinction between question types is still obscure, particularly the claim that questions fall into either a classroom or real-world context, the former reflecting the formal roles of teacher and students, the latter representing them as individuals within larger society’*

particularly the claim that questions fall into either a classroom or real-world context, the former reflecting the formal roles of teacher and students, the latter representing them as individuals within larger society. This turns out to be but a more sophisticated reiteration of the display/referential division, complicated by a dubious assumption that the classroom experience is extraneous to reality and interactions based purely on pedagogical concerns are ipso facto non-meaningful. Producing more and finer categories for question types complicates the analysis yet simplifies the issues.

In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that the work of Bloom (1956), described in Eber and Parker (2007), in developing a taxonomy of learning objectives by increasing cognitive load has not been embraced in the applied linguistics literature on teacher questioning. The original

formulation was of six levels progressing from *Knowledge*, recalling facts, to *Evaluation*, critiquing input according to multiple criteria. Aside from the reliability concerns in operationalising a multi-level system, there would seem a deeper theoretical objection specific to second-language learning. The developmental aspect of Bloom’s framework, students being put in a position to handle increased cognitive demands, is difficult to apply because we are so far from establishing an order of language acquisition despite the, partial, empirical research in this direction (e.g. Pienemann, 1998). The display/referential dichotomy for all its rudimentariness avoids such problems because it is a dichotomy, not a calibration. Bloom’s framework has been under-utilised because it is not seen to fit into the existing knowledge base of second-language acquisition.

To summarise this literature review, the significance of teacher questioning has not been disputed, so much of the attention has turned to how questions should be categorised, the discussion largely reacting to the traditional display/referential distinction.

This has prompted an alternative approach in this study, that of including teachers in the classification activity, practitioners being most cognisant of the complexities of the interaction in their own classrooms.

*‘The problem of classification becomes apparent if one attempts what appears the straightforward task of classifying questions formally, i.e. by their syntax’*

### 3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The data for this small-scale study, teachers’ questions, is relatively easy to collect given its volume in any teaching episode. The means is also readily suggested, namely observing lessons and recording the interaction. More problematic, as brought out in the previous section, is the analysis stage.

Four teachers were randomly chosen to participate in the study. Their nationalities and years of experience are in brackets: Annie (USA, 2), Bart (UK, 3), Curt (USA, 7) and Doris (Italy, 1). The names are pseudonyms. It was arranged to observe a 45-minute segment from an adult general English class of each teacher, the students ranging in proficiency from intermediate to advanced, and record and transcribe the interaction. The intermediate level was set as a minimum benchmark for proficiency because, below this, questions would need to be severely graded to be comprehensible. The teaching context was a UK language school. Following the class, the teachers agreed to discuss the lesson transcript.

Observation is by far the best way of inferring teaching practice: Partridge (2012) favours observation to self-reporting in this regard. The common caveat (e.g. Bell, 2010, p. 191) that the observer can impose their own values on the data remains valid, subjectivity is part of any study involving human interpretation, but is alleviated somewhat by the quantitative dimension of the data collection exercise. An analysis of the data is offered here but this is not the only and definitive account as long as the data remains on record for further attempts at interpretation or even studies in a new direction. Also, the observations are supported by interviews with the teachers concerned, a form of triangulation replicating Baker’s (2014) study into teacher cognition, and so there is the opportunity for the subjects to verify the data and supply insights.

A grounded approach was used to deal with the data. The typical environment for a grounded approach, ‘*small-scale projects using qualitative data for the studying of human interaction*’ (Denscombe, 2010, p. 106), applies to this study. More pertinently, the lack of confidence in constructing a reliable and valid categorisation scheme for teachers’ questions ruled out any type of pre-set framework.

Findings would have to come from the data. In particular, as teachers supplied the questions, their interpretation of their own contributions was

crucial. The purpose of the post-observation interviews was to construct a joint dialogue between the researcher/observer and the teacher/observed, one where there was unlikely to be a shared interpretation – values and perceptions differ – but which would be instrumental in unlocking the all-important issue of the motivation for questions.

In practice, this involved, uniquely in the literature, asking teachers to provide categories for their own questions in the post-lesson interviews. In a sense, this was unfair because the teachers, although informed of the study (see Appendix A for the information and consent form), were unprepared, and untrained, for an exercise of this type. Also, the observer was in a privileged position of being able to compare lessons in an expanded data set. However, the teachers' input was crucial to understanding the phenomenon under investigation. With questions so plentiful, there is the real danger of getting lost in the data and losing sight of the 'central core category' (Robson, 2011, p. 489) which grounded theory aims at, here a unifying pedagogical principle which underlines questioning practices. Collaboration with teachers facilitated the identification of patterns and trends.

In terms of ethical concerns, the asymmetrical relationship between teachers and a more informed researcher has been mentioned. As Floyd

and Arthur (2012) point out, relationships matter in insider-studies such as this one. Knowledge beyond the immediate confines of the project, in this context perhaps preconceptions of a teacher's expertise, may unwittingly be brought into play during the observation and reaffirmed or readjusted to the detriment of someone who is both subject and colleague.

Basic steps such as anonymity do not address these deeper issues, which to some extent remain unresolved despite formal mechanisms to safeguard participants (Appendix B contains the ethical approval form).

## **4. STUDY AND RESULTS**

### **4.1 Questions quantified and categorised by teachers**

Table 1 summarises the coded transcripts in Appendix C. The nomenclature of the categories is that of the teachers. Data from the four teachers is presented in turn. The Discussion section compares the data set and readdresses the research aims.

### **4.2. Annie**

Annie distinguished three categories. Open-ended, the most numerous, were questions which Annie felt enabled her learners to produce extended responses which maximised their language resources and degree of engagement with the content. Examples were:

Table 1

*Questions quantified and categorised by teachers*

TEACHER	LEVEL OF CLASS	TOTAL NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	CATEGORIES AND NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	
Annie	Upper-intermediate	103	Open-ended (Any other ideas?)	74
			Prompts (No?)	22
			Checking (Did you have any questions?)	7
Bart	Intermediate	99	Specific detail (Why should you be two-faced?)	51
			Clarification (Speculation, deduction and ..?)	41
			Correction (She has a glasses?)	4
			Conversational (Long day?)	3
Curt	Advanced	88	Conceptual (What do you think it means?)	74
			Sequencing (Ready?)	9
			Conversational (How's the weekend?)	5
Doris	Upper-intermediate	46	Eliciting ( <i>When do we use the past simple?</i> )	20
			Fillers ( <i>Can you read it please?</i> )	18
			Getting feedback ( <i>Do you all agree?</i> )	8

*How was your weekend?*

*What do we know about the goddess Venus?*

*Is that strange?*

The first of these could easily be taken for the kind of empty phatic communication discussed earlier.

Annie, however, defended this as a genuine enquiry and in class the learners did react

accordingly, telling some interesting anecdotes.

For Annie, questions like these were essential in building rapport with the students. She placed a high value on her relationship with individual learners, believing that this facilitated the learning process. The second question appears bizarre out of context. It was an ambitious lesson, the most cognitively challenging of the four observed, in

that the learners were required to comment on the aesthetic appeal of artwork, one piece featuring the pantheon. The use of the pronoun *we* is of note and Annie frequently used the first person in questions. Quizzed on this, she confessed that it was an unconscious trait but *'it put students less on the spot'*, presumably by stressing that the task was a shared one. Annie was conscious that such questions were demanding linguistically and content-wise so she found a way to reconcile this with her concern for learners' welfare.

As obvious in the third question, Annie's open-ended questions welcomed a variety of responses. In fact, Annie actively disliked questions with a narrow focus and *'tried not to use yes or no questions too often'*. She was constantly challenging her learners to evaluate the information, largely visual, before them, and express this in language which did justice to the topic. The way that Annie accepted different answers from the learners to the same question suggested that she wanted to develop learners' tolerance of plurality and divergence of opinion. This is a skill which needs developing in the English classroom because too often there is a preoccupation with 'right' and 'wrong' answers, fuelled by a huge literature on error analysis in second language acquisition (see Jones, 1998 for a survey). Accordingly, Annie never dismissed the content of a learner's contribution; she restricted her negative feedback to error correction.

For Annie, her other two categories, *Prompts* and *Checking* were very much subsidiary. Prompts often consisted of one-word vocabulary items like *Oboe?* and *News?* to either supply an unknown word or move the lesson on from a point of communication breakdown. Checking questions resembled traditional teacher-talk, for example, *'Did you do your homework [name]?'*, to get a fixed response. Even here though there are signs of Annie trying to personalise the questioning, for example the appeal to individual learners by name. Annie saw Prompts and Checking as largely functional and routine. They were transition points to the more purposeful open-ended questions.

#### 4.3 Bart

What Bart called *Specific Detail*, the dominant category, was similar to Annie's open-ended questions as he aimed to *'ask a lot of their opinions'* and *'draw out'*, rather than supply answers. The set below is illustrative. Bart was revising modals of deduction (*'It's Sunday, it must be her day off'*) by asking his learners to match photographs of people next to their speculative profession.

*What is the logic?*

*Why did you choose that particular person?*

*Is there anything about him that looks like an engineer?*

Bart's first question calls for the learners to

rationalise their decision. The learners struggle to find words for this so the second question is essentially a recast of the first. This does get a response but Bart is not wholly convinced by it so the third question asks for more detail. This is another task with no definitive answer, success is judged on how accurately and fluently learners argue their case. Bart often used this tactic of reengineering the same question in order to give learners every chance to produce a linguistically rich response. The learners quickly realised that hasty or sloppy responses would not satisfy their teacher.

Bart's second major category, *Clarification*, was concerned with form. Bart had high expectations of the learners' metalinguistic competence as illustrated below.

*Remind me, what are the different modal verbs?  
How do we make speculations?*

Many native speakers would struggle with this line of questioning. Obviously, Bart could have just given the language to the learners so it is interesting why he chose this tactic. Bart felt that he needed to make the grammar presentation more interactive, because '*otherwise they will zone out*'. Like Annie, he tried to soften the blow by how he put the questions. '*Remind me*' reassures the learners that they have previous knowledge and suggests that they are doing Bart a

favour by putting him out of his ignorance. The *Correction* category could also be seen as an example of mollification because it allows the learners to self-correct with the accompanying feeling of achievement.

There were only three instances in the *Conversational* category, for example, '*How are you, [name], by the way?*' However, Bart was expansive on the importance of these questions in his commentary. Again, like Annie, he believed that these were more than social formulae and that identifying with the learners was critical. Bart did not allow his learners to divulge as much as Annie's learners, he seemed conscious of an agenda for the lesson, and these questions have the air of fillers, note the '*by the way*'. Perhaps this stage of the lesson with its heavy concentration on form did not lend itself to conversational questions and their potential to sidetrack learners.

#### 4.4 Curt

Curt had the highest-level class and the *Conceptual* category, which makes up the vast majority of questions and reflects the responsibility of challenging very mature and capable learners. This was a vocabulary lesson involving fine semantic distinctions, for example *resilient* vs. *impervious*, and conceptual questions mainly elicited and checked definitions. '*What does it mean?*' occurs a full six times verbatim. Curt always asked for an explanation before he gave a



*‘The ‘Correction’ category could also be seen as an example of mollification because it allows the learners to self-correct with the accompanying feeling of achievement’*

definition. He was aware that this was *‘tough, they know it [a word] or they don’t’* but he considered this approach conducive to helping students organise their mental lexicon. Some items could take several rounds of questioning to clarify, for example *eligible* as in the collocation *eligible bachelor*.

*What’s an eligible bachelor?*

*You think it’s good?*

*Would he [example provided by a learner] be an eligible bachelor?*

*Does he have a girlfriend?*

*‘Eligible’ means ...?*

The first question probes a working definition. The second explores the connotations of the word. This led to an interesting discussion about the different social attitudes towards older single men and women. The third and fourth questions relate to a concrete example proffered by a learner. Finally, Curt asks for a fuller explanation informed by what has gone before. This is an example of very skilful instruction, the definition being teased out and

referenced to the learners’ own experiences.

#### 4.5 Doris

The least experienced teacher, Doris executed a lesson which was the closest to the communicative methodology currently most in favour (cf. the teaching manual of Harmer, 2007). There was a great deal more interaction between learners with Doris not directly involved beyond setting the task, hence the total number of questions asked was only half that of the other teachers. It is perhaps unsurprising that this lesson was the most ‘classic’ methodologically. Less time had elapsed after Doris’s training period and she had had less opportunity to form new habits.

*Eliciting* resembled Bart’s *Clarification* category in being form-focused. The elucidation technique and appeal to meta-language ring familiar.

*‘Has been sailing’ – what is it?*

*When do we use Past Perfect Simple?*

*When do we use Past Perfect Continuous?*

The difference was that Doris’s students were more proficient and she could cover more ground this way. It is instructive that the example Doris uses – *‘has been sailing’* – was an example from her textbook. Unlike Bart and, to a lesser extent, Curt, she did not take the learners’ output as a platform to build the language point. The extent of the learner interaction yielded a great deal of language

and content to fuel Doris's questions, if only out of natural curiosity, but Doris preferred to structure her questions around the text, literally playing it by the book.

Doris was anxious about technique so it is logical that *Fillers*, classroom management questions like 'What do you have to do?', were a large category. Curt's lesson with casual directions looked sloppy in contrast. Doris needed to know her learners were on task and questioning was a useful way of ensuring this. *Fillers* is an interesting term as it suggests little regard for this category, like Annie's *Prompts*. Doris explained that they were 'not really questions', more like softened imperatives. As Annie and Bart, Doris needed a way to make learners comfortable with taking on tasks.

The third category, *Getting Feedback* – e.g. 'What is the first one [name]?' – was similarly seen as minor, a mechanism for getting through routine parts of the lesson with minimum fuss. Doris had a strong sense of priorities and timing in the lesson observed. Some questions were worth more to the lesson than others, namely those which related most closely to the disambiguation of form.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Research aim 1

The first aim of the study was to quantify and hence verify questioning as a core tool in the classroom. The most basic finding was that

questioning was a well-utilised resource. All four teachers were surprised by how many questions they asked but they gave no indication that these lessons were untypical in this aspect. While they had misgivings about particular questions – Annie for example was sensitive about questions which were not well formed, such as 'Can we think of any other painting that have [sic] animals?' – no one felt the volume and pattern of questioning was inappropriate. Teachers were very familiar and comfortable with questioning, confirming the earlier reference to Ur (2012) on the centrality of teachers' questions in pedagogy.

### 5.2 Research aim 2

The second aim of the study was to elicit from teachers a classification of their questions according to perceived pedagogical function. The teachers were unprepared for the task of categorising their own questions but they were surprisingly confident in their judgments. They struggled sometimes to describe and delimit categories and there were always borderline cases with individual questions but there seemed to be an appreciation of questioning as a multilayered phenomenon with different questions playing a different role in the classroom and needing to be appraised separately.

It was left completely open as to what and how many categories teachers devised. Nobody, however, chose form as a criterion, for instance,

the distinction between yes-no questions (Curt, 'Do you like that one?') and *wh*-questions (Bart, 'What else do I need to be?') which is accentuated in pedagogical grammars, for example, Leech and Svartvik (2002). The teachers classified questions according to their function in the learning process. This meant that one category could contain a syntactical mix. A sequence from Bart's *Specific Detail* category demonstrates:

*Do you mean physically?*

*What sort of things do they need to be good at?*

*What knowledges?*

The first is a yes/no question, the second a *wh*-question, the third a fragment (there is no verb) fronted by a *wh*-element. For Bart, and this applies across all the teachers, the formal characteristics of questions were overridden by their common purpose in eliciting language and content.

### 5.3 Research aim 3

The third aim of this study was to compare and interpret teachers' classifications. Every teacher nominated a category which aimed at high learner engagement with the task and/or language and this category supplied the most questions individually and in toto. The nomenclature differed – *Open-ended* for Annie, *Specific detail* for Bart, *Conceptual* for Curt, *Eliciting* for Doris – but their function was essentially the same, namely to maximise learning opportunities through an

increased cognitive load. Consider this extract from Annie as the class discuss an abstract painting.

*What do you think that the apple means?*

*What do you think that apples usually mean?*

*What else do we think of with apples?*

The first question relates directly to the artwork. The second turns to art in general, requiring her learners to think beyond the immediate classroom context. The third is yet more challenging as the focus moves beyond the aesthetic (the class responded with biblical allusions). Annie signals this progression in complexity linguistically. The first two questions are almost identical syntactically with *think* complemented by a *that*-clause. In the third question, the pronoun changes (*we* not *you*), a gambit of Annie's commented on earlier, and *think* is complemented by a preposition *of* not a clause. Annie skilfully ramps up the challenge and uses linguistic clues to inform the learners of the new demands.

Not all the questioning of this ilk was so effective. There were examples of poorly-conceived questions (Curt, 'What's the danger of working in a bakery?'), leading to impoverished responses or just confusion, but the teachers all recognised a higher category which effectively represented a gold standard. The hallmarks of this category would seem to be a genuine information gap, learners needing to supply an answer in order to

*‘For Bart, and this applies across all the teachers, the formal characteristics of questions were overridden by their common purpose in eliciting language and content’*

complete the task; affect, learners relating to the content and wanting to express themselves; high cognitive demand, questions which require information to be processed at a deeper level; high language expectations, especially of the target language presented in the lesson.

Not every question in this putative super-category would tick all these boxes. For example, Doris’s and Curt’s questions concentrated more on language use to the detriment of a personalisation element; conversely, Annie often seemed to put language secondary to content. Nor should including every element be an ideal, for instance affect may be a subsidiary consideration in a primarily form-focused lesson such as Bart’s. The skill of the teacher resides in recognising these elements and combining them to optimal effect in the appropriate environment.

To revisit the display/referential distinction which so preoccupies the literature, the teachers did not envisage a binary system in their classifications. They did prefer what Bart called ‘real’ questions,

ones where the answer was not predetermined, but they used plenty of questions which seem mechanical, such as Curt, ‘What does ‘liable’ mean?’ However even these questions can be misleading taken out of context. Curt was not expecting pat definitions of words with questions like this, he was inviting the learners to supply competing semantic representations which they would sift through as a class and refine. The formulation of the question often had little relationship with the quality of the classroom interaction, tying into a point made by Lee (2006), that questions have minimal intrinsic value but only serve to construct learning spaces. Certainly, the display/referential dichotomy underrepresents the interplay between questioning and pedagogical context.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

External validity is always an issue in small-scale studies. The lesson objectives did seem to influence the questioning style, for example Annie’s skills-based lesson was always likely to generate a different set of questions compared to Doris’s form-focused lesson. A longitudinal study of different types of lessons with an enlarged pool of teachers would create a larger sample size and even out any disproportionalities.

The methodology could be considered maverick in asking teachers to categorise their own questions. A grounded approach to content analysis is

perfectly acceptable (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 340) but reliability is still important and it demands a lot of teachers to exercise an unfamiliar skill set even on familiar (i.e. their own) data. Eraut (1994) warns that practitioners may not be able to articulate knowledge, hence the problem of defining professionalism, and so a methodology which requires an extraordinary degree of reflection would seem risky and certainly difficult to reduplicate.

Ethically, the involvement of teachers is a positive direction as too often teachers are disenfranchised from research (the motivation for Freeman, 1998). On the negative side, an insider study creates conflicts of interest. Observing lessons reveals issues which are beyond the aims and terms of the study as negotiated and agreed on the consent form. For example, I saw examples of bad teaching practice but I felt constrained from commenting on these in the post-lesson interviews. This worked to the benefit of the research project but the detriment of the learners.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to explore the significance of EFL teachers' questions with insights grounded on data from lesson observations. It contributes to a considerable body of literature which has been dominated by the classification of questions through rejecting a priori categorisations in favour of an original approach which uses the teachers'

response to their own data as a starting point. The results confirm that questioning is a major teaching technique that is appreciated by teachers and manipulated for a variety of pedagogical purposes. Questions most valued by teachers as instrumental in achieving quality learning are those which guide learners to the pursuit of meaningful and motivating goals with a high degree of cognitive and linguistic challenge.

These findings are in line with the humanistic framework of this study. Questions allow learners to transcend the lesson as a conventionalised ritual that minimises genuine self-expression. To explain, in many ways, the language classroom is a sheltered and artificial environment compared to the outside world. The advantage of this is that the risk of communication breakdown is limited to frustration and embarrassment, the learners run no literal danger. However, the disadvantage of this cosy arrangement is that the classroom becomes an impersonal vehicle for communication with learners lacking the motivation for language use which comes from tasks which have real consequences. Questioning can bring tasks and language alive for learners so that the veil is temporarily lifted and they believe their contributions matter.

The final word should go with the learners for a study of teachers' questions is lopsided in that the learner half of the interaction is not credited.

Questions only work if they evoke quality responses with implications for acquisition. The full relationship between questions, answers and learning needs to be explored. 'Questioning practice' in the title is deliberate word play

because teachers can only improve their questioning technique if they look at the full context in which questions operate. Modifications to behaviour which do not take into account learner response are questionable.

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# Cross-cultural pragmatic failure

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*This paper explores the study of failures in intercultural communication due to misunderstandings in the linguistic field of pragmatics. It focuses on three areas of pragmatics; compliments, refusals and complaints and examines how cultural misunderstandings can arise in these areas with examples from different communities. The paper emphasises that the study of pragmatics needs a stronger focus in the teaching and learning of languages in teaching materials, in classroom practice and especially in computer-mediated communication, particularly through social media. The researcher stresses that more research needs to take place into not only what pragmatic failures in communication occur and why they happen across cultures and language but also into how they can be repaired and mutual understanding restored.*

**KEYWORDS:** pragmatics, intercultural communication, computer-mediated communication, social media, second language acquisition



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents an overview of the scholarly literature on the topic of cross-cultural pragmatic failure. The main body summarises very briefly the main topics, findings and methods used in these articles under three broad thematic headings. This is a common-sense grouping that has no theoretical significance but is simply intended to give structure to a field that is amorphous and very wide-ranging across many languages and cultures, and many different aspects of pragmatics. These three main headings were chosen simply by examining the titles of the articles collected on the main topic, and sorting them into what seemed to be three coherent areas of research.

The topics cover (a) the definition and categorisation of pragmatic failure, (b) the implications of cross-cultural pragmatic failure for second language acquisition, and (c) pragmatic failure in computer-mediated communication.

The conclusion provides a brief overview of the whole field and suggests a gap in the literature and an appropriate method for addressing this gap with new, empirical research.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There is some debate about how cross-cultural pragmatic failure should be defined. This arises partly because the core theory of pragmatics itself

has evolved considerably since the early days of speech acts and Gricean maxims, and scholars are continually revising what they understand by explicit and implicit meanings, propositions and implicatures.

One approach that has proved popular in recent years is the study of mental processing using high-technology brain imaging equipment. Holtgraves (2012) reports on experiments using split-screen imaging that the right hemisphere of the brain plays a crucial role in conversation processing. This is somewhat surprising, since the left hemisphere is where most other language activity takes place. By measuring the time that a person takes to process conversation data, researchers can work out whether just one or both hemispheres are involved.

Most researchers do not have access to the equipment needed for this very scientific approach to pragmatics, and indeed do not have the anatomical or medical knowledge to make sense of data produced in this way. Nevertheless, psychologists, teachers and other professionals still very often use tests and experiments to investigate issues around pragmatic failure, and the data that comes out of this then forms the basis for further theoretical research. A pre-test, post-test and control group methodology was used on Vietnamese learners learning the English pragmatics of constructive criticism, for example,

concluding that explicit teaching with explicit corrective feedback was more effective than implicit methods (Nguyen et al., 2012). Similar results with Arab learners of English were obtained through the use of a multiple-choice test with native English and Arabic-influenced formulations, since students preferred the latter and benefited from having the potential failure of such formulations pointed out to them (Al-Zubeiry, 2013).

A test was carried out in France, for example, comparing the processing of conventional expressions in French by 20 French native speakers, 20 long-stay Anglophone speakers and 20 short-stay Anglophone speakers (Edmonds, 2014). This method allows the researcher to home in on processing time, and the meanings that are attached to these conventional expressions, as compared with grammatical, but not conventional strings. Another study by Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) used two computer-delivered tasks, one an aural recognition task and the other an oral production task, designed to elicit conventional expressions from learners of English. Student performance in these tasks was correlated with three variables: language proficiency (based on a placement test), length of stay (measured in months) and intensity of interaction with native speakers (measured by self-report of weekly use). Interestingly, length of stay *'did not have a significant effect on either recognition or*

*‘Psychologists, teachers and other professionals still very often use tests and experiments to investigate issues around pragmatic failure, and the data that comes out of this then forms the basis for further theoretical research’*

production’ (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011, p. 347) but the other two variables did have a significant influence on the production of conventional expressions.

The implication of this research for knowledge about cross-cultural pragmatic failure is that failure is more likely when learners have lower proficiency and less interaction with native speakers, and that sending people to live abroad for a long period is not, in itself, enough to prevent cross-cultural pragmatic failure. People have to gain language proficiency (through instruction, for example) and also have intensive interaction with native speakers, in order to prevent cross-cultural pragmatic failure. They only gain competence with conventional expressions when they used them frequently in natural conversations with native speakers.

Further work by Bardovi-Harlig (2012) explores the more theoretical side of these findings in an

article on the importance of formulas, routines and conventional expressions in pragmatics research. She argues that a growing awareness of the use of formulas in conversation, coupled with an appreciation of the role played by different communities including native speaker, L2 speaker, indigenised and lingua franca communities, is leading to new investigations into questions of the particular and the universal in formula use, and the importance of community and community membership. Such research adds an interesting social and even political dimension to the whole issue of cross-cultural pragmatics, since it implies that what is considered pragmatic failure in one community might in fact be a much-cherished marker of belonging to a non-mainstream community that operates under different linguistic norms.

This shift of perspective towards studying English as a *lingua franca* suggests that the very notion of pragmatic failure may need to be re-defined to take account of increasing diversity in language use in the world today, and some much more heterogeneous methods of analysis and evaluation need to be developed also (Kaur, 2011; Maíz-Arévalo, 2014; Chen & Li, 2015). The concept of ‘translocal pragmatics’ (Verzella & Mara, 2015, p. 12) has been suggested as a useful starting point for examining this issue.

Categorisation of pragmatic failure often focuses

*'his shift of perspective towards studying English as a lingua franca suggests that the very notion of pragmatic failure may need to be re-defined to take account of increasing diversity in language use in the world today, and some much more heterogeneous methods of analysis and evaluation need to be developed also'*

on particular speech acts, which form the basis of empirical study, either through specially designed tests and experiments, or through analysis of naturally-occurring speech or using an in-depth interview method, followed up by transcription of the conversation and analysis of pragmatic failures in particular situations. The following paragraphs survey a few of these narrower studies under speech act headings, though these are examples only, since the literature on these speech acts is very large.

### **3. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

#### **3.1 Compliments**

An interesting perspective on cross cultural pragmatic failure in compliments comes from articles which analyse second language speech from the point of view of interlanguage, which

contains some faults but is a necessary step on the way to fluency. Yu (2011) examined the way compliments were formulated in naturally-occurring contexts involving Taiwanese and American speakers. The native Chinese speakers and native English speakers used very different linguistic strategies and options, suggesting that socio-cultural strategies from the L1 were translated into L2 behaviour.

#### **3.2 Refusals**

Refusals are interesting because they are potentially face-threatening speech acts which can have quite serious impact upon social relationships, and because they are usually presented using various formulaic expressions conveying different grades of politeness. The potential for failure is usually quite large. Allami and Naeimi (2011) examined refusals in 30 Persian-speaking EFL learners in Iran and 37 American English native speakers and concluded that *'refusing in an L2 is a complex task as it requires the acquisition of the sociocultural values of the target culture'* (p. 385). The American excuses for the refusal were more concrete, for example, and there was a positive correlation between proficiency and pragmatic transfer. Similar results, also with Persian-speaking EFL students, were obtained by Hashemian (2012), who noted that English native speakers used more adjuncts than Persian native speakers using English. A similar study involving British and

Omani interlocutors found that there were differences in the directness of refusal, and that these were related to the social status of the speakers (Umale, 2011).

A study by Bella (2011) with native and non-native speakers of Greek learning in relation to refusing invitations found that non-native speakers '*displayed an underdeveloped pragmatic ability in relation to mitigation devices, such as lexical/phrasal downgraders*' (p. 1718) and noted also that contextual factors such as the social and economic exclusion of some groups also affected pragmatic development. The importance of small talk and local conversational conventions was recognised in an interesting longitudinal study of immigrants to Australia, and explicit discussion of the features that the immigrants themselves noticed about Australian language use was the starting point for reflection and discussion (Yates & Major, 2015).

### 3.3 Complaints

A longitudinal study (Taguchi, 2011c) using case histories of Japanese college-level learners of English found that high-imposition speech acts were slower in developing than low-imposition speech acts, reflecting, no doubt, the greater importance placed on politeness strategies in Japanese society. Similar results are reported by Gallaher (2014) with reference to American English speakers, Russian speakers, and American English learners of Russian in relation to the

expression of complaints.

Finally, an important methodological issue raised by Yu (2011) is the fact that Chinese native speakers were much less likely to compliment others. This point suggests that there might be some methodological difficulties in researching pragmatic failure across cultures, since tests, experiments and interviews that are based on textbooks, or designed to elicit compliments, or any other speech acts with cross-cultural dimensions, will not produce good data on the frequency of compliment, or other speech act occurrence. Researchers would have to examine large volumes of naturally-occurring data, extract instances where compliments might be a possible response, and then analyse whether or not compliments were offered, and how speakers formulate their compliment (or non-compliment) utterances. This would be a very laborious and time-consuming exercise, but fortunately some researchers are able to use large databases of naturally-occurring cross-linguistic conversations.

These studies are very interesting as explorations of the most likely areas, topics and speech acts where pragmatic failure might arise, but they all have the disadvantage of dealing with just one language/culture pair at a time. This makes it difficult for researchers to gain an overview of the underlying theory behind pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication. Much of this

research has been conducted in educational settings, using quantitative, test-based methods to identify where pragmatic failures occur, and interviews with conversation analysis to explore these instances in more depth. Some concern has been expressed about the dependability of test-based research, due to the practical limitations of the research activities involved (Brown & Ahn, 2011, p. 198).

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Implications for second language teaching and learning

It is often argued that pragmatics tends to be overlooked in language teaching, and yet a proper study of what pragmatics is in terms of context and meeting truth conditions and an understanding of potential ambiguity are very important in helping students to avoid cross-cultural communication problems (Li, 2012). Traditionally, students and teachers tend to focus on grammatical awareness, and this means that general awareness of pragmatic violations (another word for pragmatic failures) is not very high. Bardovi-Harlig (2013) suggests that teachers need to design and evaluate specific tasks which simulate conversations to enable second language learners to develop pragmatic competence, to measure pragmatic development, to manage the interface between grammar, lexicon and pragmatics, and to consider the effect of the environment on pragmatic development. Taguchi (2011a; 2011b) agrees with

this assessment and notes that there is an increased awareness of cross-cultural issues because of post-structuralism and multiculturalism in many societies, and research is finally beginning to address the needs of students and teachers for classroom resources and strategies for explicit and incidental pragmatics learning. Alternatively, Ifantidou (2011) suggests that genre-specific exercises should be used to help students gain pragmatic competence in pragmatically inferred effects, and suggests the use of different text-types exemplifying irony, humour, contempt, respect favouring or incriminating attitudes.

Not everyone agrees with these proposals for additional teaching materials, however. Rose (2012) suggests that pragmatics teaching should be integrated with grammar teaching, and so there is no need for additional elements for pragmatics in language teaching. Moody (2014), for example, describes a method which avoids direct instructions on pragmatic successes and failures, and advocates instead the use of a corpus of authentic examples which learners of Japanese should study, so that understanding emerges as they develop more nuanced understandings and modify their knowledge base.

Yet another approach is proposed by Li (2012) who compared three different methods of teaching the pragmatics of making requests to Chinese students of English, namely input followed by

*‘Alternatively, Ifantidou (2011) suggests that genre-specific exercises should be used to help students gain pragmatic competence in pragmatically inferred effects, and suggests the use of different text-types exemplifying irony, humour, contempt, respect favouring or incriminating attitudes’*

meaningful output activities, implicit teaching through visual enhancement of the input and the provision of explicit metapragmatic information. Only the input/output approach produced durable effects, while the visual enhancement produced temporary effects and the explicit activities can sometimes hinder development.

There seems, then, to be no consensus on how teachers and learners should proceed if they wish to remedy the lack of pragmatics awareness in language teaching and prevent cross-cultural pragmatic failure. Several researchers who report on their professional teaching experience are beginning to investigate the potential for better coverage of cross-cultural pragmatics in language teaching. Nguyen (2011) examined some recently published English language textbooks designed for use in Vietnam, and reports on a lack of contextual

information to accompany dialogues spoken by native speakers of English. It seems that this is a potential source of cross-cultural pragmatic failure. The reason for this appears to lie in a narrow native-speaker-centric view of language, which does not take account of the role that English currently plays as a global language, spoken by many people as a second language. The implication here is that cross-cultural pragmatics can and should be taught through properly situated and authentic learning materials that are set in, and ideally produced by, people who live in peripheral regions outside the dominant, native-English-speaking countries.

A four-step pedagogical model for the teaching of pragmatics with online activities that can be used in the classroom is suggested by Félix-Brasdefer and Cohen (2012) as a way of addressing the lack of pragmatics coverage in language teaching. We must conclude that the analysis of textbooks and other learning materials is a fruitful area for research, and it has produced some interesting suggestions on how to prevent pragmatic failure through improved second language teaching methods. Furthermore, teachers are beginning to focus on the skills needed by hearers, and not just by speakers, when pragmatic failure occurs in cross cultural situations (Cruz, 2013, p. 23), and on the different opportunities that are offered for learning pragmatic competence abroad, in class and online (Taguchi, 2015, p. 3).

## 4.2 Cross-cultural pragmatic failure in computer-mediated communication

Finally, as computer-mediated communication extends its reach across the globe, it is perhaps understandable that researchers have started to explore the problem of cross-cultural pragmatic failure in various digital genres (Baumer & Van Rensburg, 2011). Eisenclas (2011) suggests that students should use online sources to supplement their formal language learning, because speech acts such as advice giving, for example, are plentiful there and very good examples for students to follow. A recent study into pragmatic failure in Greek-Cypriot student email requests to English language faculty members identified five problematic features: *'Significant directness (particularly in relation to requests for information), an absence of lexical/phrasal downgraders, an omission of greetings and closings and inappropriate or unacceptable forms of address'* (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011, p. 3193). Similar results were found in a study of the pragmatics of opening and closing sections in native English-speaking and non-native English-speaking students' emails in an American university context (Elsami, 2013, p. 71).

Some preliminary work has been done on social media and pragmatics, and this serves as a basis for theory and the selection of suitable methods (Chun, 2011). Recent relevant topics include work on multiliteracy in computer mediated

communication (Blattner & Fiori, 2011), and on the epistemic injustices such as negative stereotyping that can occur as a result of pragmatic failure in cross-cultural conversations in many different contexts (Cruz, 2014).

## 5. CONCLUSION

After this survey was completed, it became apparent that much of the focus in the research on this area was on defining what pragmatic failure is; how, when and why it occurs; and what the implications are for second language students and teachers. One study on cross-cultural issues in court interpreting suggests that *'interpreters are almost always unsure how to react and of what is expected of them'* (Hale, 2014, p. 321).

The very recent material on email and internet conversations reviewed in the previous section is interesting because it opens up a new field of research on a global, and yet easily accessible scale. It uses authentic data which is available in written form in vast quantities, thus solving some methodological difficulties in obtaining live conversations, and in some formats, such as message boards and blog posts, it also shows how people deal with the consequences of pragmatic failure. Very little of the literature surveyed above deals with recovery from pragmatic failure, and how people in authentic settings resolve the difficulties that it can produce in cross-cultural conversations.



This insight suggests that there is a gap in the existing literature on strategies for recovery from cross-cultural pragmatic failure. This would be a good topic for further research, particularly using message boards and/or blog posts on Facebook or some other social media platform. Failures could be identified, and then responses (if any) examined to see how often a recovery is attempted, or achieved, and how exactly this is done, for example involving the person who initiated the failure, the addressee(s), or some other member of the on-line community who acts as mediator, perhaps using correction or apology formulations. This topic takes in the dimension of community in English language usage, and fits well with current research trends on pragmatics across sub-cultures who all speak English but have differing proficiency levels, attitudes and culturally-specific usage. It would provide new data, and indeed the findings could be used as design criteria which could remedy some of the failings in conventional English language teaching methods and materials. Such a study would have to define some firm exclusionary parameters, however, because the

literature on cross-cultural pragmatic failure is expanding all the time, and it would be impossible to cover all speech acts, all language pairs, and even all internet-based media. A focus should shift to a clearly defined social media site, with a short time parameter (for example posts on one blog or forum for a year, or posts on several blogs in a week, or posts on one or more Facebook accounts over a defined period).

Suitable contextual information would also have to be researched, such as the values of the online community, its history, and the age, gender, and location of its members, as far as these details can be determined, since these are important factors in judging whether pragmatic failure has occurred or not, according to the rules of the community, as well as according to the norms of Standard English or any other external rules. The method that would be best suited to this study is a mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis, recording frequencies and strategies, and analysing the contextual factors that may have contributed to the failures, and to any attempts to repair them.

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# Some aspects of the role of interpreters in investigative interviews

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*The article presents and examines the results of an empirical research related to the role of interpreters in facilitating communication with non-English speaking victims and witnesses during police investigations and statement taking procedures in England and Wales. The research specifically addresses the issues and challenges encountered by experienced professional interpreters in their interpreting practice when dealing with victims and witnesses. The article also analyses the engagement of interpreters in formal training and the availability of guidance documents for interpreters assisting them in police investigative interviews and statement taking procedures. Research methodology is based on a survey designed specifically in order to obtain and analyse the collected empirical data based on the perception and experiences of police interpreters. A range of inconsistencies, issues and challenges are identified and analysed in this research leading to evidence-based conclusions regarding the most common and challenging issues for the interpreters.*

**KEYWORDS:** *investigative interview, interpreter, witness statement, impartiality, ImPLI*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The demand for interpreting services in police investigations has been growing steadily in the UK. For example, in Cambridgeshire, the number of foreign nationals in custody has risen to over 30% in recent years and the proportion of foreign nationals amongst victims and witnesses is also at the same level (Mayfield, 2014). Subsequently, one in four investigative interviews in Cambridgeshire is now conducted with the assistance of an interpreter (Mayfield & Vanterpool, 2016). Similar situation can be observed in other counties in the

UK, many countries of the European Union, the United States of America and Australia (Goodman-Delahunty & Silvasubramanian, 2013; Goodman-Delahunty, 2015).

The role of interpreters in investigative interviews has attracted the attention of many researchers. Some scholars argue that the role of interpreters is usually seen by service users, especially in legal sector, as a mere 'conduit', or a machine translating words (Böser, 2013), while others acknowledge the complexity of interpreting in

investigative interviews and apply the term 'interpreter-mediated' police interview when describing the engagement of interpreters (Gallai, 2013; Gallez & Maryns, 2014; Nakane, 2009; Salaets & Balogh, 2015).

However, the Improving Police and Legal Interpreting Project (ImPLI) established that regardless of common perception or assumptions many users in the police environment across Europe, including the UK, frequently expected that *'interpreters would provide explanations and clarification of culturally specific references (e.g. of a geographic nature) or forms of behaviour (e.g. on how to address a person) or that they would offer guidance on the appropriateness of procedure (e.g. gender matching of interpreter and interviewee)'* (ImPLI Project, 2012, p. 29) and many other issues.

Previous studies also demonstrated that interpreters de facto play a significant role in cross-cultural analysis when interpreting messages from one language into another. For example, Krouglov (1999) studied police interpreting in the context of linguistic discourse analysis and found that interpreters make pragmatic decisions during the act of interpreting and can omit or change colloquialism or obscene terminology that the interviewee used. While still interpreting accurately the meaning of messages, interpreters were observed altering expressions of hesitation

and affirmation which may change the level of politeness used in the investigative communication. Other researchers observed interpreting as a cultural act and focused on different interpreting strategies used to render the messages (Russell, 2000; Hale, 1997; Mulayim et al., 2014; Dando & Milne, 2009). Böser (2013) highlighted that in bilingual police interviews an interpreter can be an equal 'co-creator' in relation to the participants' *'orientation towards a series of organisational objectives'* (Böser, 2013, p. 114). Filipović (2007) analysed police interview materials of witness interviews and demonstrated that interpreters were required to perform linguistic and cross-cultural analyses in the act of interpreting. She concluded that a better understanding of the problematic differences between the languages and the habitual language-specific phrasing is needed during the interviewing of witnesses via interpreters (Filipović, 2007, p. 264). The study demonstrated the importance of using the expertise of police interpreters, as they act at the level of a forensic linguist.

The dynamics of investigative interviews inevitably changes when interpreters are involved. Some scholars apply the term *presence* when discussing various aspects of investigative interviews conducted with the assistance of interpreters (Nakane, 2009; Russell, 2002; Heydon, 2005). However, an interpreter is not just present, but plays an active role in removing language barriers

*‘However, an interpreter is not just present, but plays an active role in removing language barriers and assisting in effective communication between the interviewer and their interviewee’*

and assisting in effective communication between the interviewer and their interviewee. At the same time, the impact of the presence of an interpreter on the interaction dynamics and the power relationships is still being under-researched (Nakane, 2014). Russel (2002) noted that the traditional oppositional dyad of interviewer and suspect is transformed by the presence of an interpreter *‘into a triadic mixture of opposition, cooperation and shifting alignments’* (Russel, 2002, p. 116). However, no similar research was conducted to date to study the change in the dynamics of interpreter-assisted interviews of victims and witnesses. This field remains under-researched, and the reason for this might be the existing practices in police interviewing of victims and witnesses.

Law professionals and researchers increasingly acknowledge that interviewing victims and witnesses has a very high importance in investigations (Milne & Bull, 1999). Indeed, the first interview with witnesses of crime had

paramount and defining importance in the outcome of investigations. In an event where such an interview was not conducted appropriately, the whole investigation could fail (Milne & Shaw, 1999).

However, law-enforcement institutions are more concerned with interviewing suspects. For example, the initial training on how to conduct an investigative interview may take a week, and only two days are dedicated to interviewing victims and witnesses (Clarke & Milne, 2001; Milne & Bull, 2003).

In current police practice, an account of a victim or a witness is recorded by the interviewing investigator. When recorded by the police, the account of a victim or a witness is referred to as a *witness statement*. The actual interviews are not routinely recorded unless the victim or witness is classed as vulnerable, in which case more advanced interviewers or specialist officers would conduct video recorded interviews (Kebbell et al., 1999).

Fowler (2003) studied police practice in witness statement procedures when using interpreters at Greater Manchester Police and identified two main approaches and their numerous variations and concluded that officers do not have concrete guidance in relation to interpreter-assisted statement taking procedure.

Contrary to the myth that any bilingual can interpret, legal interpreting is a highly demanding professional field of expertise. Legal interpreting started evolving into a separate profession under a wider name of Public Service Interpreting (PSI), also known as Community Interpreting in response to the demand in the last few decades (Corsellis, 2008, D'Hayer, 2012; Hale, 2007; Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014; Mason, 2006).

Police interpreters are highly skilled professionals dealing with a variety of jargons, terminology, acronyms covering a number of subjects. They are supposed to overcome cultural taboos and natural hesitations and master equally balanced bilingual fluency in obscene terminology, colloquialisms and slang. Furthermore, in addition to learning police jargon interpreters need to understand policies, procedures, interviewing styles and develop tactics and a lot more in order to place the non-English speaking interviewee in as similar position as possible to an English-speaking person (Krouglov, 1999).

In the UK, qualified, experienced and security cleared interpreters may register with National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI), the regulator for PSI established in 1994 in order to ensure a minimum professional standard and compliance with a uniform code of conduct. Other professional bodies have also developed ethical guidelines for interpreters working in the

field, such as the Association of Police and Court Interpreters (APCI), the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL), the Institute of Interpreting and Translation (ITI) that have professional codes of conduct for their members. These codes are based on the same main principles incorporating competence, accuracy, truthfulness, impartiality, confidentiality, integrity, respect and professionalism.

However, the codes are not strictly prescriptive and usually can be described as a general professional guidance, although the principle of impartiality or neutrality is specifically emphasised in all of them. In legal interpreting, and in the context of investigative interviews, interpreters' impartiality becomes paramount for securing justice (ImPLi Project, 2012).

For this reason, interpreters declare their impartiality at the beginning of the assignment, strive to be as unobtrusive as possible, speak in the first grammatical person, and do not offer their personal opinion or advice, aiming at the highest level of accuracy in conveying each utterance from one language to another as part of a code of conduct.

Importantly, point 13 of the APCI Code of Practice specifically warns interpreters against taking witness statements instead of investigators, even if they are asked to do so:



*'Members shall not go to a witness' home or meet a witness elsewhere at the request of a police officer or anyone else to take a statement or for any other purpose unless accompanied by an officer in charge of the case or other police officer' (APCI, 2010).*

Furthermore, in their July 2016 newsletter, NRPSI published a reminder on their website directed to both registered interpreters and the services users:

*'Based on feedback that we are receiving, there seems to be some confusion about the role of interpreters in police interviews. The NRPSI's position is that the interpreter should assist the Police Officer in taking a statement: the interpreter should not take the statement themselves.*

*Different forces take different approaches to taking statements – the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (pp 233-234) details two options. Whichever approach is taken, however, it is clear that the interpreter should never be left alone with the interviewee or expected to take the statement, as this could affect their impartiality and conflict with the NRPSI Code of Conduct' (NRPSI, 2016).*

Taking into consideration previous studies in the field of police interpreting, the main focus of this research is to explore the way interpreters perceive their role in investigative interviews of non-English speaking victims and witnesses and the

*'However, the codes are not strictly prescriptive and usually can be described as a general professional guidance, although the principle of impartiality or neutrality is specifically emphasised in all of them'*

subsequent witness statement taking procedures. The research provides an analysis of collected empirical data that identify specific issues and challenges encountered by interpreters and develops our understanding of current practices and approaches in the field. As a result, the following working hypotheses have been generated and tested in this study:

- (1) police interpreters would have a range of issues specific to the interpreter-assisted interviews of victims/witnesses and the subsequent statement taking procedure;
- (2) police interpreters find interpreter-assisted investigative interviews of victims and witnesses more challenging than interviewing suspects.

Following the preliminary research and literature review in the field, the following research questions come into focus:

- (1) Do interpreters rely on any formal training and/or guidance documents when assisting in taking witness statements of non-English

speaking victims and witnesses?

- (2) What major challenges and issues do police interpreters face when assisting in taking a witness statement as part of interpreter-assisted investigative interviews?
- (3) How is the aspect of impartiality perceived by interpreters in the context of interpreter-assisted investigative interviews of victims and witnesses and the subsequent witness statement taking procedures?

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The quantitative data were obtained through questionnaires specifically designed to elicit relevant information from police interpreters in England and Wales. The target group for the study were qualified and experienced police interpreters who assisted investigators in interviewing victims and witnesses and taking statements. No parameters other than relevant professional experience were considered as being important for the validity of the data. Any other parameters, such as age, gender or background of the respondents were deemed irrelevant for the purposes of this study.

The questionnaire was designed taking into the account the objectives of the research and aimed at collecting the required information. The questionnaire had a combination of open-ended questions and questions with a list of ready-made options offered for selection. None of the

*'In the UK, qualified, experienced and security cleared interpreters may register with National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI), the regulator for PSI established in 1994 in order to ensure a minimum professional standard and compliance with a uniform code of conduct'*

questions were mandatory. Closed questions aimed at collecting some qualitative data, while open-ended questions aimed at collecting data for quantitative analysis. It was anticipated to obtain some thorough and meaningful responses to open-ended questions, for example option 'other' with a space for answers was provided in some questions in combination with three ready-made options in the form of statements prepared for selection (Hale & Napier, 2013). There was also a 'qualifying' question aimed at illustrating the relevant field experience of respondents, while all other questions served the purpose of eliciting data related to the research questions.

Initially, the designed questionnaires were piloted on a small group of interpreters. Four representatives in the population sample were carefully selected based on their significant field

experience. All selected interpreters were experienced in police, court and business interpreting and held Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) and/or Diploma in Police Interpreting (DPI) qualifications. In addition, two interpreters had an MA in Conference Interpreting. The participants were asked to note the time taken to fill in the questionnaire, identify any questions which were not clear, specify other areas for enhancement in the actual questions, and provide any relevant comments.

All four interpreters returned their completed questionnaires with related comments. Subsequently, there was a 100% questionnaires return rate. Based on the comments received, some questions were made shorter and clearer and some other questions were removed as they were perceived as similar by respondents.

The finalised survey questionnaire was transferred to administration onto an online survey platform. The survey link was circulated to all official Cambridgeshire Constabulary interpreters, approximately 250 fully qualified and security cleared interpreters, as well as circulated nationally through the closed professional interpreters' groups on social media.

The cover message accompanying the survey links explained the purpose, aims and potential benefits of the research project, and provided the

assurances in ethical approach to data processing and anonymity of the respondents. The recipients were asked to forward the survey link to their qualified colleagues.

The exact number of recipients is not known as the circulation was completed through the key contacts and social media groups. The survey gathered 90 responses from the interpreters. The data was collected from the online platform in the form of detailed reports and then processed manually.

### 3. STUDY AND RESULTS

The collected data and comments were analysed specifically ensuring that the comments made by individual respondents supported, explained or modified the answers from the list of ready-made options offered for selection. This approach helped establish variations and some particular attitudes or views on various aspects of the role of interpreters in interpreters-assisted interviews.

All 90 respondents confirmed having relevant experience by selecting one of the options with the numbers of the interpreter-assisted interviews of victims and witnesses completed to date. Figure 1 shows the experience as the data validity parameter.

The majority of respondents showed significant experience in providing interpreter-assisted

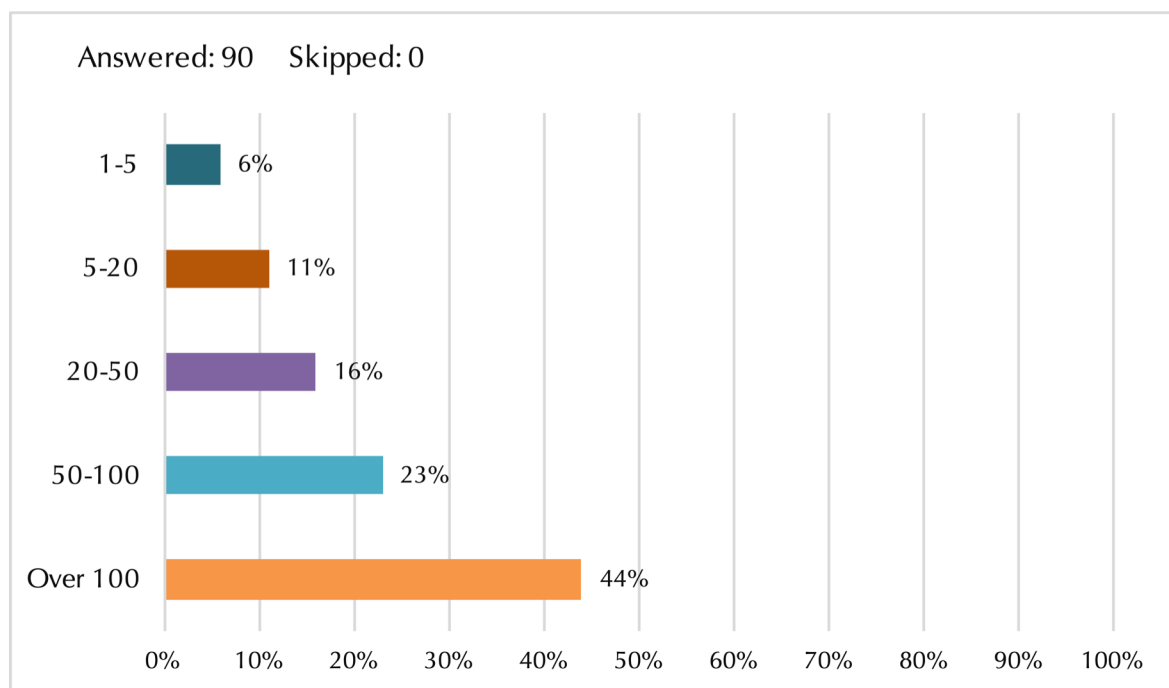


Figure 1. Responses reflecting respondents’ experience in interpreter-assisted investigative interviewing of victims/witnesses measured by the number of such interviews completed prior to the survey

interviews and were qualified for the participation in the survey with 77% (61 interpreters) having completed over 50 interviews of victims/witnesses. Almost half of interpreters exceeded the maximum mark of 100 interviews. It is, therefore, safe to accept that the data obtained during the survey is of high validity and reliability.

The survey questionnaire also asked interpreters as to how they viewed their role in the witness statement taking procedure. Figure 2 shows that only 6 interpreters supported the *statement taker* option. Contrary to the recent survey (Gentile, 2016), the *communication facilitator* option was the least popular with only 5% or 4 responses in

support. The most popular option was in support of the independency and impartiality aspect in the role of an interpreter. This option was selected by 88% of the interpreters.

This, however, leaves over 10% of interpreters not supporting the aspect of interpreters’ impartiality in the context of the investigative interview of victims and witnesses and the statement taking procedure.

Some respondents provided more details with 16 open-ended responses obtained. For example, INT#89 noted that *‘the role is somehow fluid in between all three mentioned above. It depends on*

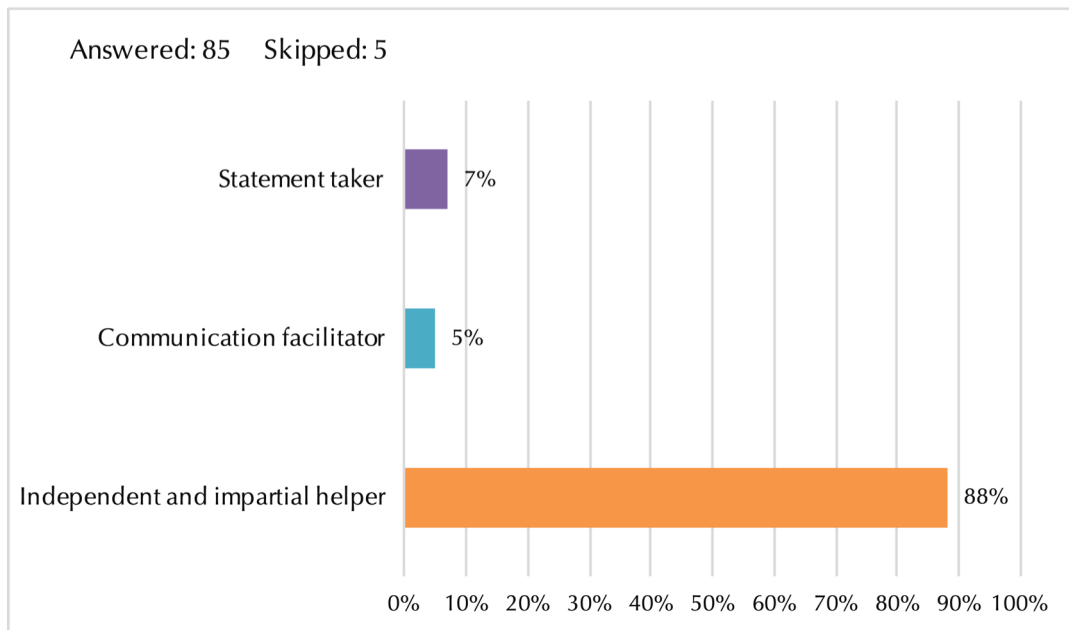


Figure 2. Responses reflecting respondents' perception of the role of interpreter in interpreter-assisted investigative interviewing of victims/witnesses and witness statement taking procedure

*the police officer, witness and the offence*'.

However, INT#69 perceived the role beyond the given narratives supporting the idea that an interpreter is a '*communication professional as well as a writer (to be able to write clearly and unambiguously is essential in this job...)*'.

Furthermore, open-ended responses revealed that some of the respondents perceived all three definitions to be correct. INT#12, INT#62, INT#63, INT#72 and INT#75 admitted that they were occasionally taking statements instead of the investigators. This practice appears to be in breach of the current Authorised Professional Practice Guidance. However, a number of interpreters

expressed concern that they were often asked to act as witness statement takers and required to do so without a presence of an investigator. This problem will be discussed further under the *Issues and Challenges* heading. However, it is important to note here that the respondents did not know what the rest of the questions in the survey would be. Subsequently, the fact that they decided to raise this issue under this heading can be indicative of the level of pressure interpreters are under when their role to interpret impartially is neither understood nor respected by investigators.

Based on the survey, it is appropriate to assume that the understanding of the role of an interpreter

in investigative interviews of victims and witnesses is not consistent and largely depends on the interpreters' individual views and beliefs. One in ten of interpreters do not support the impartiality aspect in interpreters' code of conduct. This lack of awareness or understanding poses a risk of interpreters taking on the role of investigators in breach of the professional code of conduct.

In reply to the question about any specific training interpreters had with regards to the witness-statement taking procedure in the context of interpreter-assisted interviews, 45% (40 responses) confirmed that they did not have any relevant training before their engagement in police interpreting assignments (Figure 3). Further analysis of the open-ended responses provided by the interpreters who chose the *yes* option showed

what training they deemed relevant, and 20 out of 46 respondents attributed their relevant training to Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) and Diploma in Police Interpreting (DPI) courses, 5 to Cambridgeshire Constabulary Continuous Professional Development (CPD) short courses, and 4 to some training with London Metropolitan Police. A number of professional bodies, universities and commercial agencies were mentioned by some respondents. However, interpreters were not specific as to what sort of training they had: most of them vaguely alluded to some training, own research and learning through working experience.

Additionally, 46 open-ended responses were obtained showing that interpreters can only rely on optional training courses in preparation to the

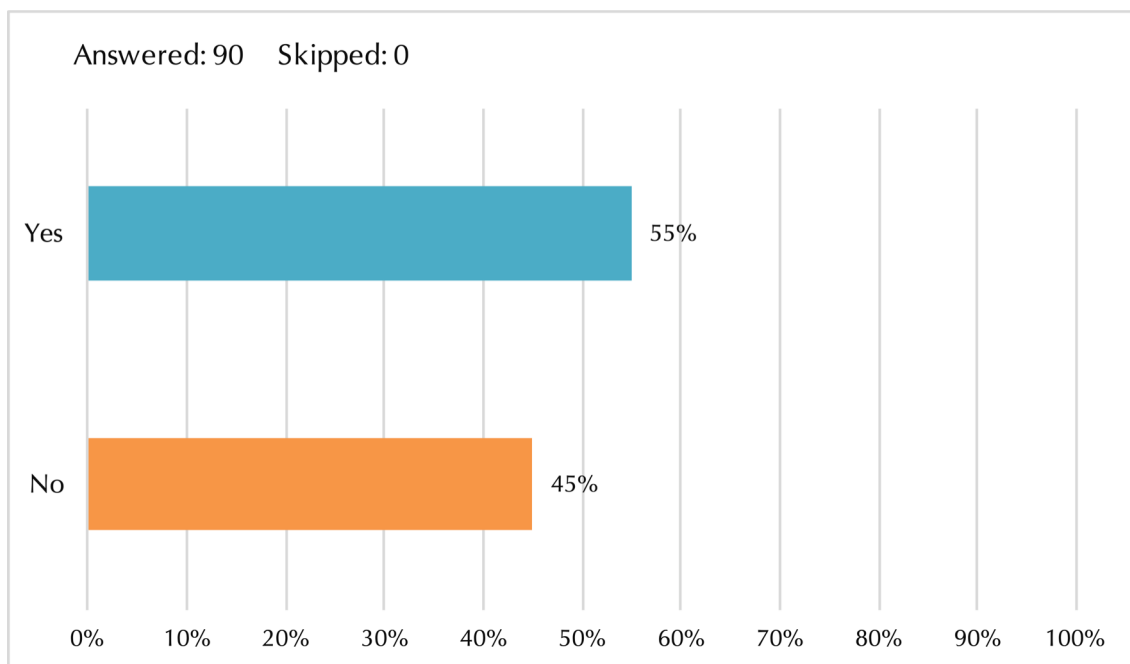


Figure 3. Responses related to the relevant training

DPSI and DPI qualification exams and occasional optional CPD sessions. Otherwise interpreters gain experience through practice which can be rather limited and one-sided.

In their replies about any guidance documents related to the investigative interpreter-assisted

victim and witness interviewing and statement taking procedures, 47% of respondents (42 interpreters) admitted that they were not aware of any relevant guidance documents whatsoever (Figure 4).

Furthermore, a number of respondents who

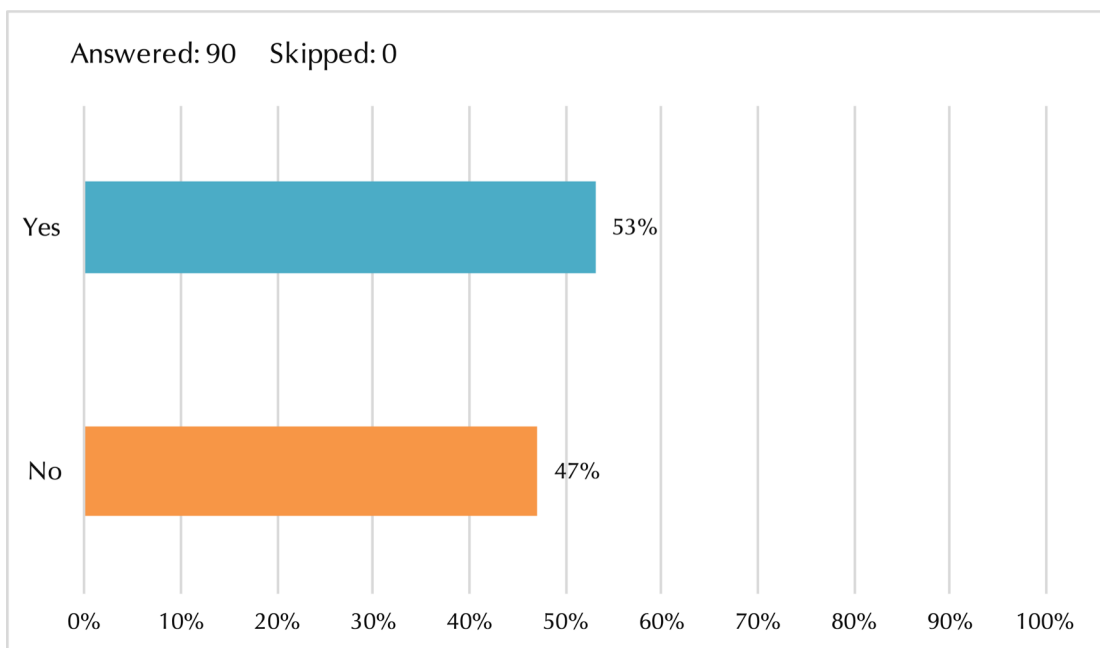


Figure 4. Responses related to the knowledge on any guidance documents

answered yes failed to specify any such documents in their open-ended responses (a total of 43 open-ended responses were obtained). Interpreters predominantly referred to the guidance provided by 'agencies' and 'clients', police forces, some police officers, or some courses. Courses, training, or conversations with police officers, however, cannot be classed as 'guidance documents', even if they provided a useful guidance. This piece of finding shows that a significant number of

interpreters who selected a yes option are in fact not aware of any guidance documents. INT#33, INT#59 and INT#71 referred to Cambridgeshire Constabulary Standard Operating Procedures. INT#42, INT#64, INT#68, INT#69, INT#79 and INT#81 referred to Metropolitan Police Guidance. Police and Criminal Act 1984 (PACE) was mentioned by six interpreters, INT#08, INT#31, INT#38, INT#42, INT#50 and INT#73. However, PACE is concerned with detaining persons and

does not govern police dealings with victims and witnesses (Clarke et al., 2011). Based on this survey, it is fair to suggest that one in two professional interpreters are unaware of any guidance documents related to taking statements and interviewing non-English speaking victims and witnesses.

Interpreters were asked if they experienced any issues or challenges in the course of the investigative interviewing of victims and witnesses and the subsequent statement taking procedures. Figure 5 shows that a positive response came from almost two third of interpreters, 69% of respondents (61 interpreter) answered yes in this

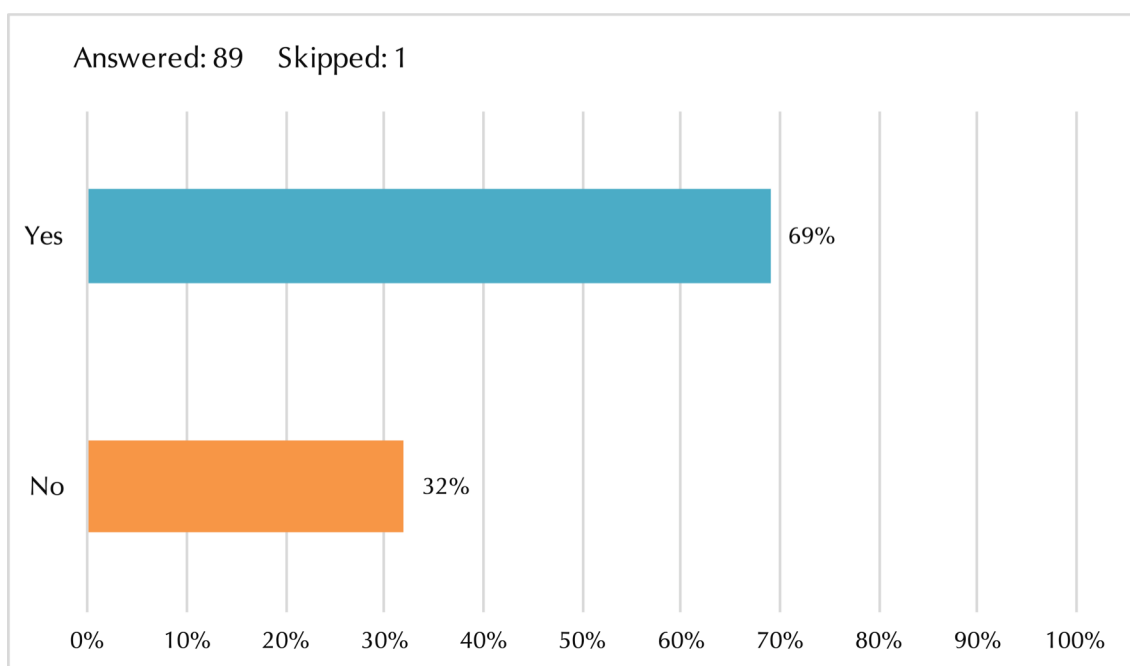


Figure 5. Responses to the question if interpreters experienced any issues or challenges in the course of the investigative interview of victims and witnesses and subsequent statement taking procedures

part of the questionnaire. Many respondents provided further comments covering challenges and issues they experienced in interpreting interviews of victims and witnesses. There were 57 open-ended responses in total and additionally three interpreters provided further details in their e-mails. The majority of the respondents raised the

issue of police officers being unaware of what the role of an interpreter was, and whether they are in the position to delegate some of their duties of interviewing non-English speaking victims and witnesses and taking statements to interpreters. Such practice of job delegation was reported by 36 interpreters, which is approximately 38% of the



respondents. Interpreters reported that the lack of any training led to confusion as to what the correct procedure was, for example, INT#82: *'I was left on my own with the witness to take the statement'*, or INT#86: *'Very often an interpreter is left to be in charge of the statement taking'*.

There were some interpreters who felt extremely uncomfortable when police officers asked them to take statements on their own or left them to wait for an officer alone in the same room with a victim or witness. Many interpreters stated that it was extremely challenging to refuse to act as an investigator explaining that such practice of delegating investigative responsibilities to an interpreter was unacceptable, e.g.:

INT#31: *'Occasionally, some police officers asked me to take the statement and some felt dissatisfied with me when I had explained my role and declined their request'*.

INT#14: *'Some police officers have asked me to be on my own in the room with the witness whilst taking the statement from the witness but I always told them that the police officer should be in the room and reminded them what the role of an interpreter is'*.

These and other responses showed that interpreters felt uncomfortable when asked to act outside their remit in breach of the professional code of

conduct. Many interpreters tried to raise the issue with police officers in charge of investigation, e.g.: INT#42: *'Occasionally expectation was that interpreter would be left alone with the witness to take statement. Officers accepted challenge but it always feels uncomfortable'*.

INT#78: *'I had a very bad experience the last time I took a witness statement. The police woman wanted to leave me to it, and after I tried to reason with her for a while, I had to tell her that I would not do the job'*.

Some respondents also reported situations when they faced the challenge of being coerced into taking a statement instead of an investigator. The example below illustrates the pressure interpreters are under in some regions in the UK: *'I politely explained to the officers that it was their duty to deal with the victim and take a statement, not mine. [The officer] then rolled his eyes and said: 'I asked for an interpreter who can do both oral and written!' I tried to explain further but both officers categorically refused to have anything to do with statement taking. It is my opinion that they deemed me incompetent as officers in [this region] always rely on interpreters to take statements for them'*. This and other interpreters' responses showed their awareness of the professional code of conduct, especially in the aspect of impartiality. Their responses clarified that they refused to act as investigators, even though some police officers

were hugely dissatisfied and threatened to make complaints. A few interpreters reported that they felt bullied and humiliated by investigating officers. However, some open-ended responses showed that in certain instances, interpreters took statements on their own in the absence of investigating officers. Their responses also confirmed that as a result of this the statements were of poor quality. INT#65, for example, reported as follows: *'Officers unaware that interpreters aren't statement takers; officers who did not care about the interpreter's personal statement and referencing exhibits resulting in angry calls/emails from Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)'*.

A few respondents assumed the role of investigators and described their experience of fulfilling the investigative role. For example, INT#69 provided the following comment: *'I feel better when I sit down with the witness and let them speak without stopping them and writing down notes. Then asking questions to clarify or get more details. Once I have the full picture of the incident in my head, I write better structured less ambiguous statements. This is something that I learned during my legal studies. Recalling an incident requires a lot of focus and concentration for a witness, so expecting interpreters to keep interrupting them to write it down during police interviews is not right. I believe that a legally trained interpreter can write a much better*

*statement than an officer speaking through an interpreter and, at the same time, expecting them to write down in their language'*.

INT#12, who to date assisted in conducting 50-100 interviews of victims/witnesses, noted that at the beginning of her career the statements she took were not detailed enough and since then she has improved and does not have any issues, another indication of an interpreter assuming the role of an investigator.

The other key finding in the area of issues and challenges showed the perception and concerns of interpreters that police officers at times did not seem to have much of the procedural knowledge, did not have relevant forms, had little knowledge of the correct exhibiting and labelling of witness statements and interpreters' personal statements. INT#33 commented on the investigators' lack of basic understanding of how to communicate effectively via an interpreter when the investigator referred to the interpreter rather than to the interviewee: *'An officer recently talked predominately to me, marginalising the victim'*. Further explanations were provided by INT#1: *'No regulations, no guidance, different PCs having different rules of statement taking; no set up procedure one and for all'*.

Another major finding was in interpreters' observations around police practices when dealing

*‘However, some open-ended responses showed that in certain instances, interpreters took statements on their own in the absence of investigating officers’*

with victims and witnesses. One interpreter sent an e-mail detailing issues and challenges from her experience. She provided an example of a 7-hour interview of a witness, who was not offered any food, refreshments or even a break: *‘It obviously also tests the interpreter’s resilience, particularly for rare languages when the interpreter has spent many hours travelling there and still has a similar return journey ahead’*.

A few issues in the key findings go beyond police officers’ awareness of the policies and the good practice guidance. For example, INT#11 highlighted *‘cultural differences’*, a very broad topic that although seriously under-researched, attracted attention of some scholars (Krouglov, 1999; Filipović, 2007, Hales & Filipović, 2016).

Linguistic challenges were also highlighted under the rubric of issues and challenges linked to police officers training and awareness or lacking of both by INT#62: *‘When victims are distressed, they may switch to a different language learned when they were small, which may not be the language you were called in for. British police officers accuse the*

*interpreter if the witness is incomprehensible for that reason, because British police officers do not comprehend the mind of a multicultural, multilingual person’*.

Language identification and challenges connected to witnesses’ limited fluency in additional languages were also mentioned by INT#62: *‘Some witnesses with different languages, e.g. Somalian, ask for a European language interpreter – Dutch if they have lived in the Netherlands – rather than their native language, to preserve their privacy within their own community, or because European languages command more respect than African or other languages. This can cause language problems’*.

Interpreters also highlighted the challenge of inappropriate working conditions for statement taking at some police stations and especially in people’s houses with the noise, young children, distractions and other family members influencing the interviewee.

INT#18 pointed out the issue of *‘going in chronological order’*. Although the context is not very clear, this issue can be connected to the challenge of writing the statement in chronological order, when a victim or witness recalls the events not chronologically. Fisher et al. (2011) report that witnesses do not tend to recall the events in chronological order and that the use of the

Cognitive Interviews (CI) techniques allow to retrieve memories in the reverse order.

Other interpreters raised concerns about having no access to a computer or a laptop when writing a witness statement. The convenience of having a tidy document and a logical and chronological statement is very obvious from a practical point of view, especially that currently interviews of victims and witnesses in Britain are not routinely video or audio recorded.

In summary, those who experienced issues and challenges suffered confusion and lack of clarity around the policies and procedures and the role of interpreters, especially in the aspect of impartiality. The responses indicated that interpreters suffered when police officers showed lack of any knowledge on how to communicate effectively via an interpreter. Lack of training lead to officers' hesitations to facilitate communication even when they were aware of the correct protocol.

Interpreters raised concerns that police officers often delegated or attempted to delegate fully or partially their responsibilities to interview non-English speaking victims and witnesses to interpreters. While most interpreters refused to act as investigators, a number of interpreters admitted that they were coerced into assuming the role of an investigator and that they did not hesitate to assume the investigative role and take statements.

Interpreters described in their free comments that they felt bullied, humiliated, and coerced to act as investigators. The respondents noted that the standard and quality of such statements can be questionable. Non-English speaking victims and witnesses were described as 'marginalised'.

Having received and analysed the data with regards to the issues and challenges, it was established that only 7% (6 responses) of interpreters reported that it was easier to deal with victims and witnesses. This is clearly a sign that interpreter-assisted interviews of victims and witnesses and the statement taking procedure pose significant challenges and difficulties. The results further revealed that indeed a third of the respondents, 33% (30 responses), found it easier to assist in interviewing suspects.

One of the working hypotheses of this study was that interpreters would find dealing with suspects less challenging. Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents, i.e. 60% (54 responses) reported no preferences whatsoever as to the category of the interviewees whether a suspect, a victim or a witness (Figure 6).

Thus, the main finding in this section confirms the hypothesis suggesting that practicing specialists would find the interpreter-assisted investigative interview of victims and witnesses more challenging than interviewing suspects.

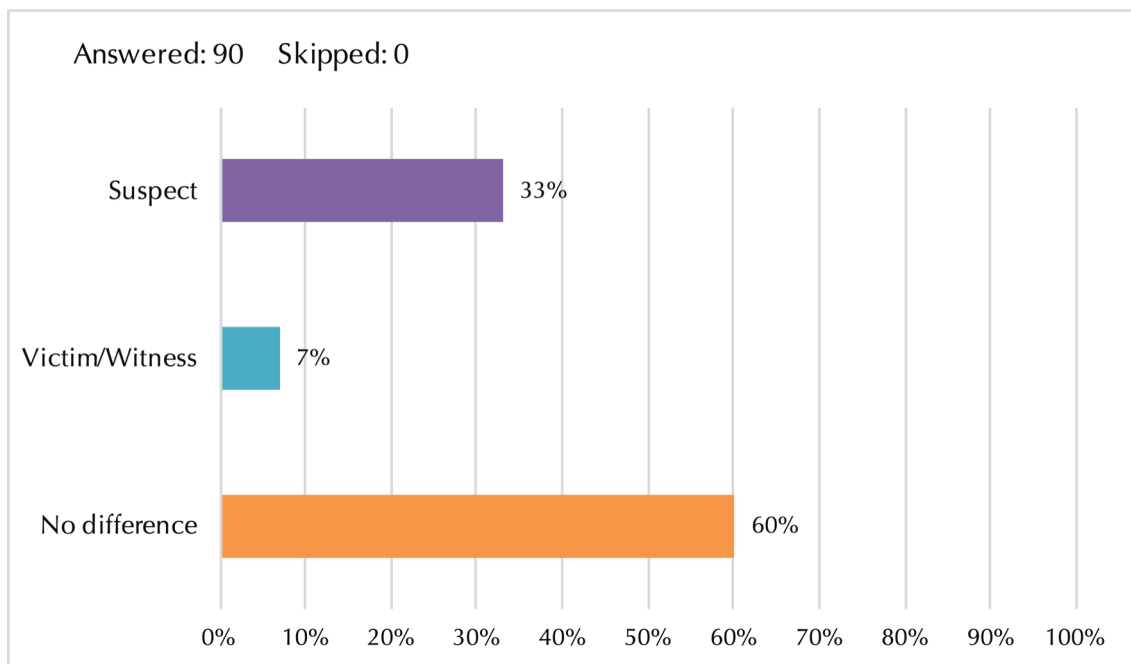


Figure 6. Responses related to respondents' preferences in the category of the interviewees: suspects, victims/witnesses or no significant difference?

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study confirmed the two hypotheses, i.e. (1) that interpreters have a range of issues specific to interpreter-assisted interviews of victims and witnesses and statement taking procedure, and (2) that interpreters find it easier to deal with suspects' interviews. The interpreters identified a range of challenges for both groups of interviews which included lack of awareness and knowledge regarding good practice guidance, absence of a national standard operations procedures protocol and lack of specific training.

Half of respondents in this study are not aware of any guidance documents and have not had any

training relevant to investigative interpreter-assisted interviews of victims and witnesses and statement taking procedures. Police interpreters rely mainly on learning through practical experience, which poses high risk of developing poor practice habits and inconsistency that inevitably affect non-English speaking victims and witnesses. Survey results suggest that interpreters' understanding of their role in investigative interviewing of victims and witnesses largely depends on their individual views and beliefs. Their perception and understanding of the impartiality principle vary significantly, while one in ten interpreters do not support or understand the aspect of impartiality in the code of conduct of

interpreters. This lack of awareness or understanding of the role of an interpreter poses a risk that interpreters may take on the role of investigators in breach of the professional code of conduct.

The respondents provided numerous comments and examples. Two thirds of interpreters experienced various issues and challenges in the course of investigative interviews of victims and witnesses and subsequent statement taking procedures. They reported some instances of confusion around the role of an interpreter during interviews and statement taking procedures, i.e. who should do what when taking statements of non-English speaking victims and witnesses.

The most common and challenging issues for the interpreters were when police officers fully or partially delegated their responsibilities to deal with non-English speaking victims and witnesses to interpreters. Interpreters sometimes felt bullied, humiliated, and coerced to act as investigators and felt that non-English speaking victims and witnesses were 'marginalised'. While most interpreters refused to act as investigators some gave in and took statements instead of investigators. The complexity of issues and the confusions around the role of interpreters in the investigative interviewing of victims and witnesses requires further study and analysis involving all participants in the interview and statement taking process.

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## Between turn and sequence: Turn-initial particles across languages (a review)

Original work by John Heritage and Marja-Leena Sorjonen (Eds.) published by John Benjamins 2018

Reviewed by Elena Malyuga

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The last two decades have witnessed a remarkable growth of interest in what are variously termed discourse markers or discourse particles. The greatest area of growth has centred on particles that occur in sentence-initial or turn-initial position, and this interest intersects with a long-standing focus in Conversation Analysis on turn-taking and turn-construction. This volume brings together conversation analytic studies of turn-initial particles in interactions in fourteen languages geographically widely distributed (Europe, America, Asia and Australia).

The contributions show the significance of turn-initial particles in three key areas of turn and sequence organisation: (1) the management of departures from expected next actions, (2) the projection of the speaker's epistemic stance, and (3) the management of overall activities implemented across sequences.

Functional, pragmatic and syntactic peculiarities of various discourse markers occurring in turn-initial positions have been studied across different languages and from a range of linguistic perspectives. In *Nu-Prefaced Responses in Russian Conversation* (Chapter 2 of the book), Galina Bolden analyses the way one of the most common Russian particles *nu* is used in responding actions and suggests that its key pragmatic function is to indicate the recipient's intention to '*in some way depart from the constraints set up by the question*'. The extent of departure, according to Bolden, can never be objectively measured, which is why it is always up to the recipient to estimate how proximate the answer ultimately is to the question.

This brings *nu* closer to the English *well* described as a general or formal sort of alert signalling a departure from the immediately preceding talk. In *Two Types of Trouble with Questions: A*

*Comparative Perspective on Turn-Initial Particles in Korean* (Chapter 4), Stephanie Kim considers turn-initial particles *kulssey* and *kulenikka* both translated as *well* in target sequential position and signalling that ‘*there is some trouble with the question*’. The author uses the Korean Corpus of Telephone Speech as well as personal collections of audiotaped telephone calls and videotaped face-to-face interactions to show how the two particles are employed in Korean to indicate different types of problems with the question being put. Thus, according to Kim, *kulssey* most commonly acts as an indicator of uncertainty, in which case it ‘*straightforwardly marks not knowing the information asked about in the question and does not problematise the question design*’. *Kulenikka*, on the other hand, contravenes the presuppositions embedded in the question and signals the recipient’s intention to reformulate these presuppositions in the forthcoming response. This is why *kulenikka* is most frequently found preceding extended turns, which makes the response much less straightforward.

The importance of considering particles’ positioning within a turn is highlighted in John Heritage’s *Turn-Initial Particles in English: The cases of ‘oh’ and ‘well’* (Chapter 6). The author explores how the functions of *oh* and *well* vary depending on their sequential position and argues that in order to establish their semantics in different contexts one will need to differentiate between the

‘core’ and ‘prototypical’ meanings of the items under analysis. Yet, as Heritage concludes, even the semantic component of these turn-initial particles ‘*may be less important than their procedural significance in sequences of actions, especially ... since much of the semantic content of these particles is specified in situ*’.

A study by Matylda Weidner, *Treating Something as Self-Evident: No-Prefaced Turns in Polish* (Chapter 8), explores sequential usage of the Polish turn-initial particle *no* in responsive actions and offers a layer-based description of its functioning in the Polish language. The author suggests that *no* operates on three levels – (1) signalling awareness of the information provided in the prior turn, (2) offering the recipient’s ‘my-side’ perspective, and (3) suggesting topic and/or activity shift.

Analysing the same particle *no* in its turn-initial position in Estonian, Leelo Keevallik offers a different perspective by incorporating the time-space dimension to the discussion in *Making Up One’s Mind in Second Position: Estonian No-Preface in Action Plans* (Chapter 11). The author acknowledges that *no* fulfils a function pretty much similar to extended evasive cues inasmuch as both operate as communicative ‘fillers’ that help stall the conversation, which is mostly helpful in cases where the recipient needs time to make up their mind. The key difference, however, is that

*no*-prefaces commonly carry additional semantics of 'showing that the speaker is currently making a transition to compliance, often after explicit negotiations'. These and numerous other valuable insights are discussed in the 15 chapters available in the edited book and cover the topic of *no*-prefaced turn-initial sequences across languages such as German, Danish, French, Swedish, Estonian, Mandarin, Finnish, Polish, Japanese, English, Garwa, Korean, Spanish and Russian.

Taken together, the papers demonstrate the crucial importance of the positioning of particles within turns and sequences for the projection and management of social actions, and for relationships between speakers. The volume will be of interest to linguists engaged in comparative and corpus studies and should definitely be viewed as a critical contribution to discourse analysis in terms of both theoretical insight and practical implications for further research.

# ICC News

by Michael Carrier

ICC Board Member

## **Teaching and Learning Languages in the Multilingual World: Policy and Practice**

We have seen a huge increase in the number and nature of technological ‘solutions’ to learning languages. With the movement of peoples across the world, learners are more diverse than ever before. ‘Clashes of culture’ are ever more present. The challenges facing language teachers are becoming more numerous and more varied. The range of languages not only that students want to learn but also that learners bring into the classroom is increasing and becoming more fluid. How well prepared are we? What is being taken into account in teacher training? What kinds of pre-service and in-service support do language teachers need?

This conference examines the challenges faced by teachers across a range of classroom environments. It offers reflections on planning, policy making and practical tips for those of us on the front line. It also examines how the training of teachers and the training of trainers can be developed if we are to adapt to the ever-changing needs of the language learning environment. Conference venue: Europäische Akademie Berlin (The European Academy Berlin). Conference dates: May 3-5, 2019. Register now at [icc-languages.eu/conferences/2019-berlin/registration](http://icc-languages.eu/conferences/2019-berlin/registration).

## **Full Scholarship for the Certificate in Contemporary Arabic Programme**

Sharek Centre, London, is offering one full scholarship for our Certificate in Contemporary Arabic Programme, starting on October 8th, 2018. The immersive Certificate in Contemporary Arabic is a fully experiential, contextualised and communicative programme providing an intensive Arabic language and cultural experience. It prepares students for a wide range of professional, social and academic challenges. It will enable you to communicate effectively in both formal and informal, spoken and written Arabic. The programme is based on our unique holistic approach to the Arabic language which focuses on Language Unity of Arabic varieties (formal/informal; spoken/written; standard/colloquial). The programme emphasises the communicative competences required for effective use of Arabic in a variety of Arabic speaking contexts. The application can be filled out online at [bit.ly/CertificateSurvey](http://bit.ly/CertificateSurvey).

## **ICC Membership Benefits**

ICC offers multiple benefits within the field of language learning, teaching and testing, such as networking with international partners, participation in EU projects, special rates for events, EUROLTA teacher training and accreditation, consultation and advice on curriculum development, validation and certification of skills, and much more.

Membership can consist of single institutes, groups of institutes and associate members. The rights and

duties of member organisations are laid out in the Statutes. Organisations interested in joining the ICC are requested to complete the Application Form and return the signed and stamped copy to the ICC Head Office. Membership of the ICC is granted by decision of the Executive Board subject to ratification by the General Assembly.

Membership is open to educational institutions, professional associations / organisations, producers and distributors of products and services in the field of language training and publishers. The ICC is currently building up a network of institutes of higher education (Universities of Applied Sciences and similar institutes).

Discuss with an ICC representative the opportunities available for your organisation by phone, Skype or in-situ visit. Detailed membership information is available at [icc-languages.eu/membership](http://icc-languages.eu/membership).

## EUROLTA News

by Myriam Fischer Callus

EUROLTA Co-ordinator

### What is the EUROLTA Certificate?

It is a certificate developed, issued and recognised by the ICC, a network of leading institutions of adult education in Europe and around the world. The EUROLTA Certificate is awarded to people who are professionals in the demanding field of teaching languages to adults. If you hold a

EUROLTA Certificate you have demonstrated that you have the knowledge and skills necessary to plan, teach and evaluate your language classes within your institutional context:

- you can adapt your institution's course programme to meet the collective and individual needs and preferences of your group;
- you can select and adapt from the teaching materials available;
- you command a wide range of teaching skills and techniques and you can apply these appropriately in your teaching context to the learning preferences of your learners and their cultural background;
- you are guided by a well-grounded understanding of language and language acquisition; in particular, you are familiar with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Teaching, Learning, Assessment (CEFR) and its model for describing communicative competence;
- you have also demonstrated a professional self-awareness that enables you to plan and achieve your further professional development.

### EUROLTA Benefits

For language teachers:

- practical and flexible training related to the trainee's own teaching context;
- a qualification open to teachers of all languages;
- portfolio-based assessment;

- programmes that are based on the principles of the Common European Framework of reference for Languages (Council of Europe);
- a learner-centred methodology based on reflection on one's own practice;
- an internationally recognised and monitored qualification.

For training institutions and language schools the scheme offers training and a qualification for teachers of languages without any other locally available scheme; internationally validated quality assurance with regard to teacher qualification.

### **What Makes the EUROLTA Certificate Different?**

EUROLTA is an internationally recognised teacher training program to train you to teach languages using up-to-date methodologies. You can take up the programme if you want to gain the skills and knowledge you need as a language teacher, become a more confident and more competent language teacher, and enhance your employment prospects. EUROLTA Certificate is designed for people with no or little language teaching experience and language teachers who feel they need to upgrade their practical skills. EUROLTA Diploma is designed for teachers with at least three years' teaching experience at different levels. EUROLTA is open to teachers of any language, recognises the different educational environments that professionals work in, and is based on sound educational principles that apply to all environments. Details are available at [icc-languages.eu](http://icc-languages.eu).

# RUDN University News

by Elena Malyuga

Editor-in-Chief TLC

### **Economic Faculty of RUDN University is Acknowledged for Outstanding Specialist Training**

*hh.ru* and *Career.ru* named the best Moscow-based faculties and universities in a span of 2017–2018. The Faculty of Economics of was recognised for its professionalism and the outstanding standards of training providing the labour market with highly qualified experts in Economics and Finance. The rating draws on graduates' CVs posted on *hh.ru* and *Career.ru* – the most popular Russian headhunting resources – and takes account of interview invitations, offered wage rates and employer surveys.

### **Vocational Training for Teachers**

The Teacher Development Interactive course offered by the Economic Faculty of RUDN University in Association with Pearson PLC will provide resource materials for teachers over a two-year period. TDI offers up-to-date instruction from world-leading ELT experts with effective learning tools and models creating a motivating and enriching learning experience. The trainers for the course are Professor of Linguistics, author of English language textbooks, lecturer in Foreign Languages Dpt of the Faculty of Economics Wayne Rimmer, and CSc in Linguistics, Associate Professor in Foreign Languages Dpt of the Faculty

of Economics Svetlana Popova.

### **Economic Faculty of RUDN University Welcomes AACSB Executive Vice President Timothy Mescon**

Executive Vice President and Chief Officer for Europe, the Middle East and Africa for AACSB International Timothy Mescon visited the Faculty of Economics in January to discuss the opportunities for cooperation. Mr Mescon met with Dean of the Faculty of Economics Yuri Moseykin, Acting Manager of the International School of Business Irina Gladysheva, MBA Programme Supervisor Natalia Sakharshuk and Head of language training programmes Elena Malyuga. The faculty is planning to join AACSB in order to further accredit its Economics and Management programmes.

The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, also known as AACSB International, is an American professional organisation founded in 1916 to provide accreditation to schools of business. Established early in the 20th century, the association has expanded to more than 100 countries around the world, helping business schools, students and businesses to succeed. The association has 3 international headquarters and offers over 95 professional development activities annually. According to the Financial Times, 96% of FT500 executives studied at an AACSB-accredited school.

### **RUDN University is Recognised for Its Strong Social Media Presence**

Experts of the Russian Social and Media Research Centre rated social media presence of the 21

universities participating in the 5-100 programme based on the Engagement Rate (ER) index. The rating assesses social media communications and university-user networking performance. The highest ER is provided by native posts, i.e. real stories from real people, such as an interview with a post-graduate student from Italy Antonella Selvitella who studies foreign language teaching methodology and dreams of coming up with new approaches to learning Italian. RUDN University Facebook user coverage exceeds 12 million people.

### **First Joint Programmes with Brazilian Universities in the Framework of the BRICS Network University**

RUDN University is introducing joint MA programmes with leading Brazilian universities – the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte and the Fluminense Federal University in Rio de Janeiro. The agreements are the first case of joint MA programmes of the BRICS Network University. The joint training of Russian and Brazilian students was initiated and organised by the Faculty of Economics and the Marketing Department of RUDN University.

### **RUDN University Enters the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2019**

QS World University Rankings by Subject 2019 were officially published earlier this year. RUDN University is represented in two subject rankings – Modern Languages (Top 200) and Linguistics (Top 300). Employers Recognition put the university over the top with 80 and 75.5 points awarded for

Linguistics and Modern Languages, respectively. Ranking results are available at [topuniversities.com/subject-rankings/2019](http://topuniversities.com/subject-rankings/2019).

### **GreenMetric World University Rankings 2018**

GreenMetric presented the 2018 rankings measuring universities' commitment to sustainable development and creating 'green' infrastructure. RUDN University was ranked 41st and is now one

of the top 50 world universities in *Environmental Education, Energy & Climate Change* and *Transport Policy*. This year, GreenMetric assessed 719 universities representing 81 countries. The rating assesses universities in terms of facilities convenience, transport policy, waste management programmes, the use of energy-efficient technology, water conservation, and education in the field of sustainable development.



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