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# Horizons Are Being Expanded: Contemporary Research in Linguistics and Methodology of English

## Introduction to *Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies*

The members of the Editorial Board are happy about the increasing number of linguists and methodologists who want to present their findings and information about their research in *Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies*. Volume 3 No. 1, which was issued in 2016, offered six papers in the section devoted to linguistics and methodology. The same section of this year's Volume 4 includes fourteen papers. Referring to the introductory text of last year's issue, which came up with the idea of expanding horizons, we can proudly claim that these horizons mentioned last year are really being successfully expanded.

The research presented in the first paper was motivated by findings in which the abilities of self-assessment and self-reflection are considered to be quite essential in the teaching profession. To find out how teacher trainees assess some of their own teacher competences, the academic members of the Institute of Foreign Languages at the Faculty of Education of Palacký University in Olomouc designed a questionnaire, and distributed it twice to the same group of teacher trainees. Blanka Babická, Josef Nevařil and Zuzana Sassiková reveal the levels of the students' self-confidence about their communicative, linguistic and linguodidactic competences after their first pre-service teaching practice, and they also observe the changes in the self-assessment after the same students' second pre-service teaching practice.

The current hybridization trends result not only in enrichment of individual languages but also in excessive borrowings and language and cultural interference. This issue of mixing and convergence of languages is presented in the paper by Ingrid Cibíková, and is tackled also from the perspective of sociolinguistics and codification. Examples of hybrid languages and hybrid dialects are given in the text, reasons for inappropriate use of borrowings are looked for. The necessity of careful national language policy is stressed, mainly in connection with preventing communication, cultural and ethical problems.

An interesting way of doing research into the potential of the portfolio was applied at the University of Pardubice. Monika Černá's paper presents findings about using a portfolio as a tool supporting student teachers' autonomy in pronunciation learning. With a moderate control by the university tutors, the students manifested quite a high level of autonomy and innovation in utilising technologies. However, the research revealed two facts which are quite challenging for teacher trainers. One of them is that not all students are able to set a specific goal to pursue autonomously, the other fact is that a potential benefit from cooperative learning and peer feedback was completely ignored by the students.

A case study focusing on the importance of prosody is presented in the fourth paper, the author of which is Gabriela Gumanová. The link between discourse and intonation was analysed when using a selected part of speech (a natural monologue by a Californian blogger) taken from youtube.com domain. The author herself strongly calls for and suggests further investigations. Applying varied theories, she successfully presents the importance of prosodic features and their contribution to the meaning.

The fifth paper, written by Christoph Haase, discusses general practices in academic writing with the focus on differences in personal references. The advice given by academic writing manuals is

compared with reality. Some quite interesting and unexpected findings were made when texts from various academic and scientific spheres were analysed.

The next paper discusses the academic writing from the point of teaching it. Two senior lecturers from University of London, Stella Harvey and Paul Stocks, present a very interesting case study focusing on the issue of benefits resulting from applying a reflective journal in the process of learning how to write essays in English. The text will be definitely appreciated by teachers of English – they can learn not only about a way of teaching academic writing but they will also find useful recommendations applicable in tutorials given in this sphere.

Zuzana Hrdličková focuses on Business English and the importance of knowing idiomatic expressions and phrases used in this field. The author analysed several course books of Business English used by university students. This analysis revealed that Business English is highly idiomatic and that a higher level of fluency and accuracy cannot be reached without a sufficient knowledge of idioms used in this sphere.

The main issue of the eighth paper written by Monika Hřebačková is intercultural communicative competence and the necessity to include training in this competence into curricula of courses given by HE institutions. The text presents the research into the ways how students of four universities located in four European countries communicated through English as a lingua franca within a project applying topic-based modules and task-based activities.

Petra Jesenská was motivated by Roald Dahl's centenary and Oxford Roald Dahl Dictionary (published in 2016). She analyses Dahl's specific, creative and fabulous language. Nonce words and Dahl's potential words are discussed, as well as Dahl's ways of word formation and his motivation for creating proper and common nouns.

The main topic of the paper written by Vladimíra Ježdíková are neologisms (with the focus on compounds), their development and their incorporation into the latest updates of two on-line accessible dictionaries (Oxford English Dictionary and Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Various ways of compound classifications are presented; the author reveals different approaches of the dictionaries to the selection of new entries to be included in updates.

A research project investigating aspects of reading competence and reading experience was realized at the University of Hradec Kralove by Pavla Machová and Olga Vraštilová. Two factors were investigated by the researchers – L1 reading experience and habits, and L2 proficiency. Quite interesting facts were revealed, and the resulting conclusion was made: university students have to be systematically and comprehensively supported because their academic reading skills need developing.

Semantic descriptors, their concept, purpose and limitations are analysed by Václav Řeřicha. His paper does not ignore the historical perspective and the pedagogical aspect of semantic metalanguages. The importance and the necessity of lexically appropriate teaching materials is stressed.

The potential of graphic novels, which combine images and text and which are becoming more and more popular, is analysed by Veronika Szombatová. The author mentions the issue of the decoding process, and presents possible ways of using the genre within the classroom. The author's goal is to create a booklet aimed at working with graphic novels and at increasing secondary students' reading literacy. She makes the reader familiar with her research on which the intended booklet will be based.

Petra Trávníčková, the author of the last paper of the linguistic and methodological section, analysed a corpus compiled from various message boards devoted to "women's" topics. The

aim of this analysis was to reveal typical features of on-line communications realized by Internet communities. Positive politeness strategies, in-group markers and joking are the most frequently applied phenomena enabling the general spirit of mutuality and solidarity.

The above given review of the texts presented in the linguistic and methodological section of the latest issue of *Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies* clearly shows that this journal is a good platform for experts in linguistics and methodology of English. The findings and opinions published in the journal are not only of a high informative value. They are also inspiring, motivating and challenging for professionals involved in contemporary research into English.

*Věra Tauchmanová*







## Future English Teachers' Self-assessment: Teacher Trainees' Confidence in Their Own Teacher Competences

*Abstract: The paper focuses on specific professional competences of future teachers of English and their ability to self-assess. The main aim of the study is to find out how teacher trainees, future English teachers, assess different aspects of their own teacher competences. Another aim is to specify to what extent the future teachers' self-assessment differs after their first and second teaching practices. Three specific competences were selected for this particular study, communicative, linguistic and linguodidactic. The analysis is based on the data gathered in two questionnaire surveys among future teachers of English.*

### Introduction

According to Richards, one of the crucial aspects of the teaching profession is teachers' ability to "engage in critical and reflective review of their own practices throughout their teaching career" (6). Self-evaluation and reflection are thus among the abilities that need to be supported and developed in future teachers from the very beginning of their teacher training.

The importance of reflection, as well as teachers' knowledge, beliefs and ideas about teaching, has been widely recognized and referred to as teacher cognition (e.g. Borg 81–109, Carter 291–310, Freeman 1–13, Richardson 102–19, Verloop et al. 441–61).

In order to, eventually, become good language teachers, "teacher trainees need to... be able to critically assess their knowledge" (Majzub 196). Furthermore, Cindrić et al. consider critical reflection one "of the most relevant learning outcomes of ELT methodology courses" (118).

Teacher training at the English section of the Institute of Foreign Languages at the Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic strives to prepare future English teachers for their profession not only by providing a solid theoretical background, but also by arranging for as much pre-service teaching practice as possible, thus facilitating valuable self-reflection.

### Study

On the basis of the classification of Hanušová (27), language teachers' competences can be divided into up to five competences; namely communicative, linguistic, sociocultural and intercultural, literary, and linguodidactic competence. Upon studying this division further, it can be argued that linguistic, sociocultural and intercultural, as well as literary competence can all be understood as components of the communicative competence (Council of Europe 108). However, in this paper, linguistic and communicative competences are treated separately.

For the purposes of the study, three teacher competences were selected and defined:

- 1) Communicative competence — the competence that allows a teacher to communicate in the target language, i.e. to use the language meaningfully in everyday situations to understand the meaning of a message (receptive skills) and to convey the meaning of a message (productive skills).
- 2) Linguistic competence — the knowledge and understanding of the target language as a system, i.e. the knowledge and understanding of the content of linguistic disciplines such as morphology, syntax, lexicology, etc.
- 3) Linguodidactic competence — the knowledge of the language and language teaching and the ability to apply these in classes to develop the required learner competences.

The main aim of the study was to find out and characterize how teacher trainees, future English teachers, view and evaluate different aspects of their own teacher competences. A further aim of this particular study was to ascertain to what extent the future teachers' self-assessment differs after their first (three-week) teaching practice and second (four-week) teaching practice.

## Survey

In order to obtain the required data a questionnaire was designed and distributed among teacher trainees.

The respondents were Master's degree students of the Lower Secondary School Teacher Training in English Language study programme at the Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc. The same group of students was asked to fill in the questionnaire after completing their first teaching practice in the first year of their studies (spring 2016) and then once again after completing their second teaching practice in the second year of their studies (autumn 2016). The time period between the two surveys was approximately eight months.

The questionnaire consisted of 40 "can do" statements, which the respondents evaluated on a scale from 1 (not confident) to 5 (highly confident). The statements were grouped into three sections related to the three specific professional competences defined above. The statements in the communicative and linguodidactic sections were further divided into subsections concerning four language skills and sociolinguistic/sociocultural competence. Statements relevant for the research were taken and adapted from two sources; selected descriptors for the C1 level of proficiency from Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 110–30) and methodology descriptors from European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (Newby et al. 20–29) were used. For the full version of the questionnaire see Sassiková et al. ("Gaining Specific Competences" 41–42), where the results of the survey among a different group of students are discussed.

The first questionnaire survey was completed by 42 students, the second one by 34 students. The second teaching practice was completed in the autumn by fewer students for various reasons, for example their Erasmus study stays abroad.

## Results

First, the survey results gathered after the students' second teaching practice are discussed below. Then a comparison between the data from the first and second questionnaire survey is performed on the basis of a statistical analysis.

### 1) Communicative competence

Overall, it seems that the students are very confident about their communicative competence. Most of the ratings ranged from 3 to 5 and a rating of 4 and 5 was chosen by more than 50 per cent of the respondents for all the statements in this section. The average rating for the components of communicative competence is comparable, with listening and sociolinguistic appropriateness being evaluated the highest (see Table 1 below).

	Speaking	Writing	Listening	Reading	Sociol. app.
Average rating	3.75	3.84	3.93	3.84	3.91

Table 1: Communicative competence—average rating

As far as individual statements are concerned, it appears that the students are most certain about their ability to spell correctly when writing; the statement below was evaluated with a rating of 4 or 5 by 30 respondents (89 per cent, see Table 2).

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	0	1	3	23	7
Percentage	0%	3%	9%	68%	21%

Table 2: Writing: When writing I can spell accurately, apart from occasional slips of the pen.

It might not be surprising that the students, having attended university for more than four years, are also highly confident about their skill of listening to lectures (see Table 3).

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	0	0	4	16	14
Percentage	0%	0%	12%	47%	41%

Table 3: Listening—I can understand lectures, talks, and reports in my field of professional or academic interest.

Regarding sociolinguistic appropriateness, the students reflected very positively on their ability to express themselves politely (see Table 4).

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	0	0	5	24	5
Percentage	0%	0%	15%	71%	15%

Table 4: Sociolinguistic appropriateness—I can express myself confidently, clearly, and politely in a formal or informal register appropriate to the situation and person(s) concerned.

Although, overall, the students assessed themselves best in listening (see the average rating above), understanding slang and idiomatic usage appears to be the most problematic as it received the lowest self-assessment score, in comparison to the other statements, with 35 per cent in the middle (a rating of 3) and 12 per cent giving a rating of 2 (see Table 5 below).

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	0	4	12	11	4
Percentage	0%	12%	35%	32%	21%

Table 5: Listening—Without much effort I can understand films which contain a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage.

## 2) Linguistic competence

In general, the students had a tendency to assess themselves as average regarding most of the statements evaluating their linguistic competence (a rating of 3). In comparison to the results

concerning communicative competence, there were also more students who chose a rating of 1 or 2, although these were still in the minority. However, the average rating in this section, 3.56, is above average. Moreover, in seven out of the total of 12 statements more than half of the respondents assessed their competence as either 4 or 5 on the scale.

As can be seen in Table 6, the students seem most confident about their ability to classify word classes (altogether 83 per cent of the students chose a rating of 4 or 5).

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	1	1	4	20	8
Percentage	3%	3%	12%	59%	24%

Table 6: Linguistic competence—I can classify word classes and their grammatical categories.

The students showed the lowest self-confidence when it came to their awareness of colloquial and idiomatic expressions (see Table 7).

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	1	3	19	10	1
Percentage	3%	9%	56%	29%	3%

Table 7: Linguistic competence—I can recognize a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts.

### 3) Linguodidactic competence

Similarly to the results in the communicative competence section of the questionnaire, the students mostly assessed their linguodidactic competence in the middle and at the higher end of the scale, from 3 to 5. However, the answers tend to be rather around the average point of 3 and there are four statements (out of 15) for which ratings of 4 and 5 were chosen by less than 50 per cent of the respondents (see also the discussion below).

The average rating in each of the sections is lower in comparison to the self-assessment of communicative competence and rather similar to the result in the linguistic competence part of the questionnaire (see Table 8).

	Teaching speaking	Teaching writing	Teaching listening	Teaching reading	Teaching sociocultural competence
Average rating	3.71	3.46	3.55	3.67	3.71

Table 8: Linguodidactic competence—average rating

The students gave themselves the best assessment for two aspects of linguodidactic competence relating to teaching speaking, i.e. the ability to choose proper activities to develop learners' fluency and activities focussing on connecting grammar and vocabulary input with communication practice (see Tables 9 and 10).

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	0	1	6	17	10
Percentage	0%	3%	18%	50%	29%

Table 9: Teaching speaking—I can select a range of meaningful speaking activities to develop fluency (discussion, role play, problem solving etc.)

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	0	3	5	18	8
Percentage	0%	9%	15%	53%	24%

Table 10: Teaching speaking—I can plan activities which link grammar and vocabulary with communication.

On the other hand, the students seem considerably less sure about their ability to teach pronunciation (see Table 11).

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	2	5	15	12	0
Percentage	6%	15%	44%	35%	0%

Table 11: Teaching speaking—I can select a variety of techniques to make learners aware and help them to use stress, rhythm, and intonation.

The lowest self-assessment seems to be connected with teaching writing and producing texts, with only a total of 29 per cent of the respondents ranking their ability with a rating of 4 or 5 (see Table 12). These results also correspond with the fact that the teaching writing section as a whole has the lowest average ranking (see Table 8 above).

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	0	6	18	9	1
Percentage	0%	18%	53%	26%	3%

Table 12: Teaching writing—I can use a variety of techniques to help learners to develop awareness of the structure, coherence, and cohesion of a text and produce texts accordingly.

Although the students are quite confident about their own communicative competence regarding listening skills (see Table 1 above), they are less sure when it comes to teaching listening, specifically, using pronunciation and vocabulary to decode meaning. Both these statements were assessed as 4 or 5 on the scale by less than 50 per cent of the students altogether (see Tables 13 and 14). From the results in Table 13 and in Table 11 above, it might be concluded that the students feel quite unsure how to tackle features of pronunciation in their lessons; possibly, the matter is not treated explicitly enough in the methodology courses.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	0	3	18	11	2
Percentage	0%	9%	53%	32%	6%

Table 13: Teaching listening—I can design and select different activities which help learners to recognize and interpret typical features of spoken language (tone of voice, intonation, style of speaking, etc.).

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	0	4	14	12	4
Percentage	0%	12%	41%	35%	12%

Table 14: Teaching listening—I can help learners to apply strategies to cope with difficult or unknown vocabulary when listening.

### Statistical analysis

The results of the questionnaire survey after the students' first compulsory teaching practice are dealt with in detail in Sassiková et al. ("Self-assessment of Specific Competences" 889–96). The focus of this article is to compare the results of the questionnaire survey completed by the students after their first and, subsequently, second teaching practice and to identify any differences in their self-assessment of the selected specific competences.

#### 1) Statistical analysis of the individual statements

The answers to each of the statements gathered in the first and the second survey were examined individually using a chi-square test for independence to ascertain whether there is a difference in the distribution of the answers from the first and the second survey. The following null ( $H_0$ ) and alternative ( $H_A$ ) hypotheses were formulated for the data regarding each statement in the questionnaire:

$H_0$ : The frequency of the answers to the given statement in the first and the second survey is independent.

$H_A$ : The frequency of the answers to the given statement in the first and the second survey is not independent.

For all the statements in the questionnaire, the null hypothesis was accepted at the 0.05 significance level. In other words, the frequency of the answers in the first and the second survey did not show any significant dependence, and there were no significant differences in the distribution of the answers as gathered in the first and in the second survey. We can therefore state that the students' self-assessment did not undergo any major change between the two teaching practices.

Nevertheless, the data was examined further. The responses to the statements that seemed to display a noteworthy shift in the self-assessment to a positive rating concerning the first and the second survey were grouped together—ratings of 1, 2, and 3 in one group and ratings of 4 and 5 in a second one. These results were again examined by using a chi-square test for independence.

For two of the statements (see Tables 15 and 16 below and, for comparison, Tables 2 and 9 above) the alternative hypothesis was accepted at the 0.05 significance level. We can therefore conclude that the frequencies of the answers in the first and the second survey are dependent and there is a significant change towards positive self-assessment in these particular areas.

Rating	1+2+3	4+5
Number of students—first survey	15	27
Number of students—second survey	4	30

Table 15: Writing: When writing I can spell accurately, apart from occasional slips of the pen. (answers grouped together)

Rating	1+2+3	4+5
Number of students—first survey	21	21
Number of students—second survey	7	27

Table 16: Teaching speaking—I can select a range of meaningful speaking activities to develop fluency (discussion, role play, problem solving, etc.). (answers grouped together)

## 2) Statistical analysis of the three competences

After each statement had been analyzed individually, a t-test was calculated to determine whether the two sets of data (first and second surveys) describing the respondents' overall evaluation of the three competences were significantly different. For each competence, the overall ratings, as well as the arithmetic means of the ratings (average rating), after the first and the second teaching practice were compared. Regarding the three competences, the following null ( $H_0$ ) and alternative ( $H_A$ ) hypotheses were formulated:

$H_0$ : The arithmetic means of the ratings related to the given competence in the first and the second survey are similar.

$H_A$ : The arithmetic means of the ratings related to the given competence in the first and the second survey are different.

Similarly to the analysis of the individual statements, the arithmetic means of the ratings related to the communicative and linguistic competences do not display any significant differences, i.e. the null hypotheses were accepted at the 0.05 significance level. The students' reflection on their communicative and linguistic competence after their second teaching practice is therefore relatively comparable to how they evaluated them after their first teaching practice.

When it comes to the linguodidactic competence, however, the alternative hypothesis can be accepted at the 0.05 significance level; i.e. the arithmetic mean of the ratings related to the linguodidactic competence is significantly higher in the second survey.

As the self-assessment of the linguodidactic competence seemed to show notably higher rankings in some of the five components, each of these was analyzed independently. For each component, all the statements were calculated together and the ratings put into two groups—a low or neutral rating (a rating of 1, 2, or 3) and a high rating (a rating of 4 or 5). As can be seen from Tables 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 below, there seems to be a rather obvious tendency towards a higher rating in each component after the second survey.

Rating	1+2+3	4+5
Number of students—first survey	75	93
Number of students—second survey	47	89

Table 17: Teaching speaking—overall evaluation (answers grouped together).

Rating	1+2+3	4+5
Number of students—first survey	72	53
Number of students—second survey	53	49

Table 18: Teaching writing—overall evaluation (answers grouped together).

Rating	1+2+3	4+5
Number of students—first survey	67	59
Number of students—second survey	49	53

Table 19: Teaching listening—overall evaluation (answers grouped together).

Rating	1+2+3	4+5
Number of students—first survey	66	60
Number of students—second survey	41	61

Table 20: Teaching reading—overall evaluation (answers grouped together).

Rating	1+2+3	4+5
Number of students—first survey	40	44
Number of students—second survey	27	41

Table 21: Teaching sociocultural competence—overall evaluation (answers grouped together).

Once again, a chi-square test for independence was calculated to see whether the students' evaluation of the components of their linguodidactic competence exhibited any significant change. The following null ( $H_0$ ) and alternative ( $H_A$ ) hypotheses were formulated:

$H_0$ : The frequency of the answers to the given group of statements in the first and the second survey is independent.

$H_A$ : The frequency of the answers to the given group of statements in the first and the second survey is not independent.

Although the alternative hypothesis could not be accepted at the 0.05 significance level for any of the components, it was accepted at the 0.10 significance level for teaching speaking (see Table 17) and for teaching reading (see Table 20). We can therefore claim that a positive tendency, even though not very significant, is present and especially in their reflection on their abilities and skills concerning teaching speaking and reading the students acknowledge fairly considerable progress in a positive direction.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, after completing both compulsory teaching practices, the students seem more confident in their abilities and tend to view their own competences in a more positive light. Although the change is relatively small, it is obvious, especially regarding the aspects of linguodidactic competence. The time lapse between the surveys was comparably short; therefore, a more significant change seems unrealistic. Another factor that might have influenced the results is the lower number of students who took part in the second questionnaire survey. In addition, to gain more general results,

a more extensive survey would be necessary, combined with, for example, class observations, to compare the students' self-assessment with teacher or mentor assessment of their competences.

All in all, the fact that teacher trainees gain more self-confidence in their abilities within a short period of time should be seen as promising and potentially beneficial in their future teaching careers.

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## Hybrid Language, Hybridization Trends and Hybrid Identity

*Abstract: The paper discusses the hybridization trends and connection between hybrid language and hybrid identity. Hybrid language, hybridization trends and hybrid identity are controversial terms in Sociolinguistics. Hybridization can cause communication, cultural and ethical problems or can be an economical solution or can be a threat for national languages in the future. According to special literature these processes, on the one hand, enrich language but, on the other hand, they interfere with language, culture and identity. Extreme overborrowings and hybrids are result of globalization, migration, multiculturalism, power, prestige, human behaviour and illiteracy. The examples in the world and Slovakia have proved the fact that the linguistic hybridity is intertwined with language users' problems and hybrid identity. Loanblends, hybrid language and hybrid identity are not widely attested yet.*

### Introduction

There have been numerous researches in individual languages seeking explanation of language users' behaviour and identifying causes and effects of this sociolinguistic phenomenon. The concepts, terms and related issues have been studied from different perspectives and subfields of linguistics and boundary disciplines (sociolinguistics, sociology, historical linguistics, semantics, stylistics, applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, semiotics, translation, terminology, political linguistics). Summarizing of a historical development of sociolinguistic terminology has confirmed the designations of the concept: loanword, lexical borrowing, incorporating word, substratum interference/imposition (Thomason & Kaufman 1988), copying (Johanson 2002), transfer (Clyne 2004), encounter (Thorne), anglicism, internacionalism, globalism, slang, jargon, sociolect, idiolect, varieties, style-shifting, argot, code mixing, mixed language, contact language, fusion language, hybrid talk, hybrid language and related hybrid identity.

According to special literature these processes, on the one hand, especially borrowing enrich language but, on the other hand (excessive borrowing), interfere with language, culture and identity. In this paper overborrowing and hybrids has been studied. When two languages come into contact, words may be borrowed from one language (English) to another (many European languages) for example (*Internet, spam, franchising, marketing, selfie, pub, party, meeting, subway(...)*) or mixed (*presscentrum (...)*) or after adaptation resulted in hybrids (*byť in, bankujte s nami, v prípade Brexitu, rezidentský poplatok(...)*).

### 1. Development of hybrid language and theoretical considerations

The phenomenon of hybrid languages and hybridisation started to be the case of the many countries in the world in the past and nowadays the case of most small languages of Europe including Slovak language. Human language behaviour, ethics, language literacy and language/terminology culture has an important role in the selection procedure of the user of language. The phenomenon of hybrids in contemporary Europe probably started with the use of simple and easy remembering informal language used in formal situation by young generation (overborrowing and slang partly regarded as creative language) which is still rejected by the older generation and understood as a lack of language education and terminology illiteracy. Problematic are mainly codified languages. An uneasy situation started to be in formal Slovak codified language, for example in terminology in

the case of different and developing designations or equivalent of one concept. Many language users are not able to form a designation for a new concept, because they do not know term formation principles and methods. That is why the young language users nearly almost select borrowing (core/duplicate/prestige borrowings) instead of the native word (term) which have the same or similar meaning or it is used in specific context instead of the choice of term formation in national language. And more the preference for native language is recommended by terminology standard ISO 704 as a principle for term formation. In spite of the fact that context is the text which illustrates concept or use of designations (STN ISO 1087-1 18) and give an indication of the appropriateness of a term in a particular linguistic environment (Cabre 223) the current language users definitely select borrowing or create hybrid language. That is why the quality terminology database has been highly recommended for terminology intermediators. So the terminology synonyms are terms which differ from the entry term by context, usage and sometimes subject field, (Sager 151), thanks to which users can carry out cross-searches even between variants and synonyms in different languages. This would help users to consult a database multidirectionally and it would also enable translators to detect and get information on the correct equivalent for any given term presented as variant or synonym in the database (Thelen and Steurs 17).

Following still developing definitions have proved the fact of hybrid communication at the 21st century of human and language development and the historical development of sociolinguistic terminology too. Hybrid texts and hybrid communication is the result of language user behaviour and language change.

*Loanwords* are opposed to native words, i.e. words “which we can take back to the earliest known stages of language” (Lehmann 212, cited in Haspelmath 2009). Haspelmath defines *loanword (or lexical borrowing)* as a word that at some point in the history of a language entered its lexicon as a result of borrowing (or transfer, or copying) (Haspelmath 36). He also states that probably no language in the world is entirely devoid of loanwords (Ibid 55). In his work he uses borrowing in common sense, and the two types of borrowing, depending on whether the borrowers are native speakers or non-native speakers, are called adoption or imposition (following Van Coetsem 1988, Winford 2006). Explanation of reasons for borrowings has lead scientists to some typologies of borrowings: *core borrowing, cultural borrowing, therapeutic borrowing, internal borrowing, nonce borrowing, reborrowing*. According to Myers-Scotton’s work *core borrowings* are words that duplicate elements the recipient language already has in its word store and *cultural borrowings* are words that fill gaps in the recipient language word store, they stand for objects or concepts new to the language’s culture (Myers-Scotton 212-215). Haspelmath classifies *cultural borrowing* (borrowing of new words along with new concepts), *core borrowing* (borrowing for reasons of prestige) and *therapeutic borrowing* (borrowing for therapeutic reasons, when the original word became unavailable). Two subcases of these are: borrowing due to word taboo and borrowing for reasons of homonymy avoidance (Haspelmath 50).

*Loanblends* are hybrid borrowings which consist of partly borrowed material and partly native material. Loanblends are not widely attested (Haspelmath 39).

*Code-mixing* refers to hybridization in a shorter and fixed exchange rather than an active movement from one language to another in a discourse. It suggests that the speaker is mixing up codes indiscriminately, perhaps because of incompetence, whereas code switching refers to a more active manipulation of the symbolic and social meanings of a language choice (Holmes 36).

Bilingual speakers often alternate between the two languages in the same discourse, sometimes even within the same sentence or the same word. This *Code-switching* does not mean that there is a mixed code, but speakers produce mixed utterances using elements from both codes. Thus, code-

switching is not a kind of contact-induced language change, but rather a kind of contact-induced speech behaviour (Haspelmath 40).

Code-switching and code-mixing involves mixing languages in speech, but borrowing involves mixing the systems themselves, because an item is borrowed from one language to become part of the other. (Hudson 55)

Mixed languages are in-group languages, usually with their grammatical structure taken from one language and their lexicon from another, e.g., Maltese (Arabic with heavy borrowings from Italian and English) or Media Lengua (Quechua and Spanish) (Mesthrie 20). Thomason states that *mixed language* is one whose lexicon and grammar do not derive primarily from the same source language (Thomason 158). Mechthild (2004) examines the use of multiple languages and hybrid forms in a study of multilingual advertising in Lira Town, Uganda. Mechthild explains that the layering of language in advertising offers a way to assess the communicative, social, and emotional functions of language (cited in: Ball 222). In some linguists' usage, creoles and pidgins are types of mixed languages, whereas in others' usage, creoles and pidgins are merely among the kinds of language that might become full-fledged mixed languages (source Wikipedia online).

The processes of code-mixing and code-switching are distinctive markers of the multilinguals' creativity in New Englishes. Mixing entails hybridization - using words or larger units from local languages in the stream of discourse in English. Code-switching involves changing from one language to another (e.g., English to Swahili), (Mesthrie 522).

Other terms used for mixed languages are *split languages* (Myers-Scotton), *stable mixed languages* (Matras), *bilingual mixed languages* (Thomason), *intertwined* (Bakker, for a specific type), *converted* (Bakker), *syncretic* (Dimmendaal) and *hybrid languages*.

It is possible and visible that the meaning of the concept has sometimes been slightly changed. Many mentioned concepts are hybrids and hybrid could be superordinate concept. And more, for example, code mixing emphasizes hybridization. The designations and terminology has started to be more precise, accurate, less metaphorical. The continuously developing terms refer to language change, language behaviour and hybridization of language and reflects the barriers in communication.

Sociolinguists started to identify hybrid identity. Smith defines *hybrid identity* forms as merged elements of two or more cultures which create a new cultural identity. She states that *hybridity* has become one way to re-create and re-vision a local community, while incorporating elements of outside groups, and global culture. The hybrid might allow the globe to unite in its differences: to be a truly multicultural society that is able to recognize and reconcile diversity.

In the case of language, it is hybrid language and hybrid informal communication at the beginning of the hybridization process and later in formal communication. There is no satisfactory term for the phenomenon of language-mixing. Whinnom coined terms as primary, secondary and tertiary hybridization. According to Whinnom, primary hybridization is something as "breaking up of a species-language into races (incipient species)/dialects", while secondary hybridization is "the interbreeding of distinct species" closely connected with bilingualism and second language acquisition; and tertiary hybridization is explained as a common language (lingua franca) by speakers who do not share the same first language (Whinnom 1971). The term hybrid language is not well spread or even unknown, it refers to a language reality combining two elements and creating a new unit frequently holding a negative connotation. So the definition of hybrid language is unavailable that is why we try to define it:

*Hybrid language (hybrid terminology) is a contact language mixing and convergence through*

*conscious language behaviour and language change, jumping from one linguistic, cultural and conceptual system to another within target language and communication. Hybrid is a breaking rule language and a new manner of speaking.*

*Note: the mixture is gradually assimilated or unassimilated in spoken and written communication, firstly in informal speech, then in standard language (Cibiková 2016).*

As all the above mentioned terms are still under the consideration of different scientists with their different attitudes to the study of the contacts among different linguistic systems, it seems that probably they are the cases of hybrid language which grows from borrowing, overborrowing through code mixing to hybridization.

## **2. Examples of hybrid languages in the world**

The mixing and convergence of languages is common problem in many countries in the world when the outcome is hybrid language and hybrid identity, for example: Sheng language, Philippines hybrid language, hybrid dialect in London-MLE, hybrid language in Manchester and so on.

### **The Case of Sheng language:**

Mokaya Bosire describes hybrid languages in Kenya based on his visit to Nairobi and doing a pilot fieldwork in Kenya in 2005 in his paper. Mazrui (1995) has stated that the foundation of Sheng lies at the traditional code switching between Swahili and English (hence the term sh-eng) while others credit Sheng to the demand for a lingua franca in the colonial period during the beginnings of urbanization in the country. Sheng has become the basic urban vernacular for the youth in Kenya today. Kenyans are not only bilingual, but also multilingual. Code-switching scenarios are diversified and include switches between two or more languages, for instance, between Swahili and Ekegusii, Swahili and English, English and Ekegusii, the code-switching that involves switches between either other Kenyan languages and Swahili or English. Swahili-English code switching is considered fairly neutral, and even natural. Sheng exhibits a synthesis of diverse elements from different languages that point to a composite linguistic and sociocultural nature. Her description of Sheng as a hybrid language captures the inherent duality of the product, both its linguistic and a cultural mixture. The hybrid languages of Africa are contact outcomes that evolved at the time when African communities were coming to terms with the colonial and postcolonial situation that included rapid urbanization and a bringing together different ethnic communities and cultures. The youth are caught up in this transition; they are children of two worlds and want a way to express this new 'ethnicity'. Sheng is a way to break away from the old fraternities and give them a global urban ethnicity. Forging these links creates a desire for new peers, new forms of dress, socialization, behavior, manner of speaking and language (Bosire 2006).

Sheng and code-switching, slang and hybrid language:

Mazrui confirms the connection between slang and code switching. Mokaya Bosire confirms hybrid language and hybrid identity, too. Sheng is slang, based primarily on Swahili-English code switching with elements from Swahili and English (Mazrui 176).

### **Philippines hybridity:**

Garvida exemplifies Philippines as a hybridized society (identity) and many people want to keep the dual cultural standard. They want to maintain the dominance of power languages: English and Spanish but following their complex identities manifesting openly the hybridity of their identity as Filipino, Hispanic and Anglophone (Garvida 2012).

### **Hybrid dialect in London, MLE:**

Paul Kerswill, the professor of sociolinguistics at York University, identified the “new cockney” *hybrid dialect* - Multicultural London English (MLE) which combines youth slang with a different pronunciation. Originally it was nicknamed Jafaican—fake Jamaican—but current position of scientists is that it is a dialect that been influenced by West Indian, South Asian, Cockney and Estuary English. Rap artists, such as Dizzee Rascal and Hackney, actor Idris Elba have helped to popularize the dialect in the UK. It is the slang that gives it a Caribbean or American feel and its use in British hip-hop adds to this impression too.

### **Hybrid language in Manchester:**

Variants of MLE have also emerged in multicultural cities such as Birmingham and Manchester. Manchester is the third most ethnically diverse city in the world (after Paris and New York). Yaron Matras, Professor of linguistics at Manchester University, claims that having such a multilingual population was of enormous benefit to the city's economy, opening the doorway to business links with hundreds of countries worldwide. Now known for its culture, engineering and sports industries Manchester is the fastest growing city in the UK. An astonishing 200 languages are spoken by a population of less than half a million, making the northern city known for Coronation Street and club music more multicultural than London. Long lasting immigration to the city means that dozens of rare languages are spoken there, including such as Nahuatl, the ancient language of the Aztecs, Zulu, from South Africa, or Dari, from Afghanistan (The Daily Mail online articles, 2013).

### **Today English also borrows from other languages**

In terms of hybridization we need to point out that probably the most hybrid languages are English and Spanish. As one of the global, international and business languages, English was influenced from several points of view in its history. The fact that loanwords have been entering almost every language has proved by the British library. The 20th century loanwords have been published by the British Library. These words entered the English language over the course of the century of culture contact and power and they relate to things like food, sports, music and popular culture. For example: politics and conflict (1927 *apartheid*—Afrikaans; 1960 *tsatsiki*—Turkish; 1952 *wok*—Cantonese; 1958 *doner kebab*—Turkish), sport terms (1921 *slalom*—Norwegian; 1955 *karate*—Japanese), popular culture (1915 *yo-yo*—Philippines; 1924 *anorak*—Greenland eskimo; 1947 *bikini* - Marshall Islands; 1957 *lego*—Danish; 1997 *tamagotchi*—Japanese) (The British library online).

Philip Durkin, the deputy chief editor of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and the author of *Borrowed Words: A History of Loanwords in English*, when interviewed in the BBC news magazine, pointed to some surprising trends. Though English is currently borrowing some words from other languages, they usually are of a worldwide range, but the number of newly borrowed words finding their way into the shared international vocabulary is on a long downward trend. The reason for this is the success of English as an international language of science, business, and many other fields. Today the balance is tipping much more towards English as a donor of new words (*Internet, computer, cell phone, meeting, business*) rather than a borrower. On the contrary, new borrowings into English today tend to cluster much more closely in a few subject areas. Names of food, plants, animals, and other features of the natural world are borrowed as part of peoples' travelling into different parts of the world. Borrowings affecting other areas of the vocabulary typically follow the pathways of power and prestige between languages. Haruko Yamaguchi chuckles when she hears her English speaking colleagues enthusing over the Japanese bento box with its separate

compartments for different items, while Japanese people are now often calling the same thing a lunchbox (BBC News Magazine 2014).

### 3. Hybridization trends in Europe

Contemporary Europe, not only Britain but many other countries of Europe are culturally diverse and ethnic diversity influences establishing of a new hybrid language and hybrid identity. Also there are some loanwords which are the part of shared international vocabulary: Brexit, Grexit, Frexit.

English language with its position of lingua franca and worldliness influences establishing of a new European hybrid languages. Overborrowing and language mixing are also the features of many European languages under the pressure of English vocabulary bringing into play the question of so called *coolism*, *linguistic prostitutes* and *linguistic imperialism* (Franglais, Chinglish, Spanglish, Slovglish(...)) Other examples can be found in the world 'Engrish', a Japanese term for English-Japan language hybrid; 'Chinglish' as an English-Chinese language hybrid, or 'Denglish' thus English-German language hybrid. It is expected that not only globalisation and future migration could bring another hybrid linguistic environment.

### Examples of development of hybrid language in Slovakia

Our research started in 2016 with the collection of hybrids in Slovak mainstream magazines, advertisements, an observation of everyday speech of Slovak and university students. A huge number of them are lexical hybrids, some of them syntactic, grammatical and semantic ones. Slovakia is under the continuing power of English language and especially young generation borrow too much and create hybrid communication and hybrid language. Then hybrid communication consists of plentiful loanwords and loanblends which are usually the part of Slovak sentences or hybrid texts, for example:

- *Majte pekný deň* instead of *Prajem/želám Vám pekný deň*, a faithful translation from English, *milujem tvoje vlasy* instead of *páčia sa mi tvoje vlasy*,

- *vidíme sa*, probably calque from English *See you later*

- *nie je to moja šálka kávy* instead of Slovak idiom *nie je to moja parketa*

- *rezidentské parkovanie* v Košiciach,

- *presscentrum* in Government Office of the Slovak republic,

- *facooltná streda*, *UCM nightrun*,

- *univerzitný teambuilding* in university environment,

- in the Slovak bank: *zamestnanec back offisu*,

- *komunikujte prostredníctvom outfitu* instead of existing Slovak equivalent *oblečenie*,

- *ten rozvrh je crazy*,

- experimental hybrid language: *True Štúr* as a designation of the film, on the occasion of 200th anniversary of the birth of *Ludovít Štúr*, a codifier of the contemporary form of the Slovak literary language. The film "True Štúr" of the author's trio *Marián Provondarčík, Michal Baláž a Zuzana Šajgalíková* combines a feature of documentary and animated film. *Michal Baláž*, the director said: "I like genre mixing, different hybrids and blends, and I feel that it is just experimental with such projects that are a bit deviant, the medium itself and the language is developing".

- hybrid texts: *Celovečerný film Cooltúra vzniká v koprodukcii so Slovenskou televíziou*. Aj naša kultúra môže byť *cool*.

- *franchising, leasing*, finance terms used in hybrid specialised texts,

- duplicate borrowing:

- crowdfunding or crowdfinancing—Slovak equivalent - *davové financovanie, davová podpora*, Marmeláda je pôvodný slovenský crowdfundingový portál. Available at: [www.marmelada.sk/projekt/cooltura](http://www.marmelada.sk/projekt/cooltura)

- *next customer* - in Slovak shop Coop



- Coolism among young people: *cooltura* in culture,
- *oolovky dňa*, in marketing,
- your' s cool vzdelávacie a rekvalifikačné centrum v Trnave...



#### 4. Reasons for hybridization

The language hybridization is result of migration, tax for globalism, multiculturalism, power, prestige, ethics, intermediarity, language change and language behavior. The use of informal language in formal situation by young generation (overborrowing and slang partly regarded as creative language) which is still rejected by the older generation and undersood as a lack of language education and terminology illiteracy. Hybrid language can be created by using loan words, inappropriate or failure in translation and mixing codes.

Problematic are mainly codified languages. An uneasy situation started to be in formal Slovak codified language, for example in terminology in the case of different and developing designations or equivalent of one concept. Many language users are not able to form a designation for a new concept, because they do not know term formation principles and methods. That is why the young language users nearly almost select borrowing (core/duplicate/prestige borrowings) instead of the native word (term) which have the same or similar meaning or it is used in specific context instead of the choice of term formation in national language. The fundamental are attributes of exoticism, obsession of English words, obsession of mixing languages, using loanwords, loanblends in informal and also in formal communication. It is considered as a deformation and loss of language sense, an absence of language/terminology literacy, a language unculture and pushing formal communication to use informal language by young generation (language of Youth or lower class). Some linguists in Europe are talking about the *linguistic prostitutes*.

According to our research the fundamental attributes of current hybrid language in Europe are attributes of exoticism, conscious and playful mixing languages to be personally charming and showing "good education and creativity", attribute of pushing formal communication into informal one, (language of young generation, language of lower class, slang, hybrids usage), linguistic economy, non-existing national terminology, terminological illiteracy and terminology non-culture, problems of meanings of a new concepts, barriers in communication especially of old generation. This also confirms Labov in 1999: "the result of any change in language is a loss of comprehension and in this sense it involves a disturbance of the form/meaning relationship, and people affected by the change no longer signal meaning in the same way as others not affected" (Labov 9).

Also Slovene linguist Komar claims that "the most frequently enumerated reasons for hybridization are commercial benefits, worldliness, and inability or laziness to find an appropriate mothertongue term. Hybridity has become one way to recreate and revision a local community, while incorporating elements of outside groups, such as the global culture. A hybrid identity forms when elements of two or more cultures are merged and thereby create a new cultural identity" (Komar 83).

#### Conclusion

All of the mentioned words and terms are opposed to native ones which according to terminological standard must have preference for word formation or term formation in national languages. Not keeping these principles leads to terminology inconsistency and hybrid language. The problem is that nobody let the users know (linguists, legislation) that "borrowing is an accepted form of term formation but native language expressions should be given preference over direct loans" (ISO 704). In Slovakia and many countries in Europe all of the following terms are used in practice: loanwords, loanblends and hybrids are very common in everyday usage in general and special language in nearly the entire subject fields, in formal and informal communication. Hybrid texts and hybrid communication is the result of this language behaviour and language change.

Loanblends, overborrowing, hybrids, hybrid communication and hybrid identity are results of

migration, globalism, multiculturalism, power, prestige, ethics, intermediarity, language change and language behaviour. The selection and process of adaptation and assimilation depends on language users not linguists and terminologists. But the prescription depends on researchers, lawmakers and specialists. The linguists fulfil the descriptive function and the function of supervision, not prescriptive function. Many words emerging in language practice used especially in informal communication are not the part of standard language and dictionaries at the end. In official communication one should strive to use standard language teaching at school. Because the authorities, parents and teachers are the right people for explanation of usage, the appropriate choice of variant in formal and informal language situation. The examples discussed in the article have proved the fact that the linguistic hybridity is intertwined with hybrid identity. Hybridization can cause barriers in language, communication, cultural and ethical problems or may be an economical solution or can be a threat for national languages in the future.

The perspective and urgent solution could be lifelong language learning and continuous terminology education according to International standards recommendations. Exclusively the national governments are responsible for national language policy.

But in spite of the fact, that borrowing is a natural process there are some other questions to be dealt with in the near future: Why is borrowing and hybridization needed? (There is the strong argument that all languages have enough means of expressions to create expressions of their own resources). The question of purism, prestige of donor language, advantages and disadvantages of these processes, overborrowing, preference for native language (recommended by terminology standards), adaptation processes, sociopolitical environment, language literacy, language culture, cultural consequences of globalization and migration, effects of hybridity upon identity and culture, replacement of loan words or hybrids by native expressions supported by legislation, limits to linguistic hybridity, the issue of discrimination of the elderly, language policy and planning, language prescription versus language description and so on.

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## Autonomy in Learning English Pronunciation: the Role of Portfolios

The article discusses portfolio-based autonomous learning of English pronunciation in the context of initial English language teacher education in the Czech Republic. More specifically, it introduces one possible conceptualisation of the portfolio as it was used at the University of Pardubice. This particular implementation reflects the socio-constructivist paradigm and also the reflective practitioner model of the teacher. Portfolios were deployed as a tool to strengthen coherence and integration among courses and, especially, to promote autonomy in the development of student teachers' English pronunciation. During a one-semester course they were expected to collect evidence documenting their autonomous learning, i.e. the learning tasks which they accomplished in order to improve selected aspects of their pronunciation. The content analysis of the portfolios revealed that the student teachers targeted both segmental and suprasegmental features of English pronunciation through a considerable variety of tasks. Moreover, the analysis revealed a critical lack of autonomy, especially in relation to goal-setting and feedback strategies. In conclusion, the study acknowledged the potential of the portfolio to enhance autonomous learning of English pronunciation and also suggested possible changes in subsequent implementations of this tool.

### Introduction

This article focuses on pronunciation, an important aspect of English, which, however, is marginalised both in the research and in English language teaching and learning (Pištora 131). In the context of initial teacher education, its importance is paramount since teachers are expected to have a knowledge base for teaching pronunciation and also “a high degree of intelligibility in the local pronunciation standard (e.g. British, American, or another regional variety of English)” and to “provide an appropriate, inspirational model for their students” (Brinton 248). Nevertheless, research results revealed that Czech teacher trainees, first-year university students at B2 level, “experienced numerous difficulties in the production of selected pronunciation features” (Ivanová 236). Referring to the outcomes of the conducted research, the article discusses the potential of an intervention, i.e. a portfolio, which was implemented to enhance teacher trainees' autonomous pronunciation learning.

### 1. Rationale

#### 1.1 Issues in learning English pronunciation

Pronunciation standards have been discussed recently, which reflects increasing globalisation and the richness of the contexts in which English is used as a medium of communication. Rather than native-like pronunciation, intelligibility has become a generally accepted standard learners should aim for (Thornbury 170), since in the second language environment it is not a key issue “whether the interlocutors are speaking a standard variety of English but rather whether their pronunciation is *intelligible* for the effective exchange of ideas and information” (Brinton 251). The concept of intelligibility, however, is not easy to implement in classroom instruction; according to Pištora, teachers' uncertainty about the concept leads to avoiding pronunciation teaching or to focusing on segmentals (134). Some even find it ideologically biased, such as Rajagopalan,

who claims that the arbitrary role of the native speaker is implicit in the concept and proposes its reconceptualisation (468). In spite of the trends towards accepting local pronunciation norms, there are many learners, Brinton asserts, who “do aspire to native speaker models” (251). This finding is consistent with the results of surveys conducted in the Czech context among university students (Černá and Sheorey) and among student teachers of the English language (Černá et al. “Pronunciation”). Although for most students achieving a native-like pronunciation is an unrealistic goal, they set it themselves – the learners’ active role in determining the target accent is one of the conclusions which pronunciation specialists agree on (Brinton 251). Furthermore, such students do not necessarily have to aspire to reach a native-like level but they may refer to a native speaker norm in the process of learning, thus following the distinction made by Hewings (13) – the native speaker model is not used as a ‘target’ but a ‘point of reference’.

The question regarding the norm in pronunciation learning is inevitable. It is impossible for teachers and learners to (self-) assess the outcomes of learning without having a clearly defined norm to refer to. Furthermore, assessment and feedback are necessary to destabilise interlanguage and prevent fossilisation, i.e. they are prerequisites for an individual’s development. It may seem redundant to emphasise the importance of feedback in (language) learning, but the opposite is true. Goh and Burns argue that without appropriate feedback in speaking activities learners may become increasingly fluent through their involvement in group work, but their language does not necessarily increase in accuracy (18–19).

Considering the implications for initial English language teacher education, they are multiple. Firstly, developing all aspects of student teachers’ phonological competence should be included in the curriculum of the English language teacher education.

The phonological competence involves a knowledge of, and skill in the perception and production of

- the sound-units (*phonemes*) of the language and their realisation in particular contexts (*allophones*);
- the phonetic features which distinguish phonemes (*distinctive features*, e.g. voicing, rounding, nasality, plosion);
- the phonetic composition of words (*syllable structure*, the sequence of phonemes, word stress, word tones);
- sentence phonetics (*prosody*): sentence stress and rhythm, intonation;
- phonetic reduction: vowel reduction, strong and weak forms, assimilation, elision. (Council of Europe 116-117).

Furthermore, there should be institutional consensus regarding the pronunciation standard so that student teachers receive consistent feedback—Received Pronunciation (a variety of English historically associated with the British Broadcasting Corporation) and General American remain the two major native-speaker target models according to pronunciation specialists (Brinton 251).

Secondly, teacher trainees should learn to plan a pronunciation-oriented lesson, which involves considering learner needs especially in relation to the aims, the subject matter, teaching methods, techniques and strategies (including ways of providing feedback), and teaching aids. Reflecting on their own experience of learning English pronunciation may improve their ability to employ appropriate methodologies for addressing pronunciation in the classroom.

Lastly, student teachers should be aware of their attitudes to and beliefs about learning English pronunciation, including their own. Negative attitudes or perceiving pronunciation as an unimportant

aspect of English may have a negative influence on student teachers' willingness to work on their pronunciation and their developing professional philosophies.

## 1.2 Learner autonomy

This article discusses teacher trainees' learning of English pronunciation. They are advanced adult learners with diverse pronunciation needs, not all of which can be or should be accommodated in lessons at the university. Therefore, student teachers are expected to learn autonomously.

The concept of learner autonomy is introduced first. Holec, who defined it as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (3), provided the foundational definition of learner autonomy. To take charge of one's own learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning. Building on the definition by Holec, an autonomous language learner is capable of: (a) determining the objectives; (b) defining the contents and progressions; (c) selecting the methods and techniques to be used; (d) monitoring the procedure of acquisition, and (e) evaluating what has been acquired (3).

Sinclair (7–17) further elaborated the concept; she emphasised the importance of the willingness of learners to become responsible for their learning. She quotes Little, who claims that learner autonomy "presupposes a positive attitude to the purpose, content and process of learning" (Little in Sinclair 7). A change of attitude is the first step towards procedures referred to as "learner training" or "learning to learn".

Regarding the perceptions of learner autonomy, the 1990s witnessed a remarkable shift, since "more and more national curricula came to include learner autonomy as a key goal" (Little 14). In the Czech educational context, this happened a decade later, when the curricular reform implemented a new system of curricular documents, i.e. *Framework Educational Programmes* for pre-primary, basic, and upper-secondary education. Consequently, key competencies were introduced as the general aim of education, including English language education. Learner autonomy, included in learning and problem-solving competencies (MŠMT 10–11), has become a valued goal. Thus, if teachers are supposed to educate autonomous learners at schools, they should become autonomous themselves. This is best accomplished through experiential learning. Therefore, reflecting the change of educational aims, initial teacher education should implement pedagogies which are embedded in constructivist theories of learning, because those theories underlie the concept of learner autonomy (Little 16). Little suggests that in contexts of formal learning we should try to facilitate learners' construction of knowledge by "adopting pedagogical procedures that are exploratory, interpretative and participatory" (20). He further maintains that such procedures allow learners to assume new discourse roles, through which they are drawn into reflection on the content and process of their learning (*ibid.*). Consequently, portfolios were chosen as a procedure that meets the criteria formulated above.

## 1.3 Portfolio

Considering a number of definitions, Pišová claims that there is a consensus in the relevant literature that a portfolio is "a set of materials/documents/artefacts, which is structured, selective, representative, and comprehensible to the audience" (40). The remaining features depend on the theoretical background which underlies a certain implementation of the portfolio in a unique context. Theoretical underpinnings relevant to this article are discussed in the next paragraph.

As regards this particular use of portfolios in initial teacher education at the University of Pardubice, it reflects the socio-constructivist paradigm and the model of the teacher as a reflective

practitioner. Apart from recognising its potential for deep reflection, there are other theoretical foundations which inform the implementation. We agree with Shulman, who proposes that one of the main assets of a portfolio is that it is embedded in the content of education (31–32) and through materials/documents/artefacts, the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge is manifested. Furthermore, our conceptualisation of a portfolio utilises its potential to integrate courses—tight coherence and integration among courses is considered one of the critically important cornerstones in teacher education (Darling-Hammond 549). On top of that, because of its characteristics (Little 20), a portfolio is seen as a pedagogical procedure which is likely to develop autonomy in learners.

In conclusion, a portfolio was implemented as a “developmental portfolio” (Pišová 42), which means that the process of creating the portfolio was more important than the final product.

## 2. The Study

The present study investigates the implementation of a portfolio as a tool supporting student teachers' autonomy in pronunciation learning, as well as the integration of courses in teacher education at the University of Pardubice. Portfolios were deployed in the second semester of the bachelor's study programme with the purpose of integrating three courses in the communicative and linguistic module, more specifically the *Language Development II* course (development of all aspects of communicative competence), *Speaking Skills II* course (focusing on monologic production and spoken interaction), and *Phonetics and Phonology* course (focusing on both theory and practice). Furthermore, it was used to enhance the students' autonomy, reflecting their diverse needs in pronunciation learning, which were diagnosed in the preceding semester.

Formally, creating a portfolio was a requirement for the *Speaking Skills II* course. The level of the university tutors' control over the process was moderate; the tutors exercised their control through assigning a set of structured tasks, which were compulsory. Through doing that, the tutors modelled possible techniques suitable for pronunciation learning. The tutors specified the type of task to do, e.g. imitation, telling a story, describing pictures and actions, or teaching a mini-lesson, rather than specific content to cover. Particular tasks were assigned to encourage the students to ask for and provide peer feedback, e.g. a study party. When documenting their progress, the students produced their own audio or video recordings. In spite of a certain level of control, the students' choice of aims and content or cooperation patterns was often unrestricted.

Furthermore, the students were obliged to work on their pronunciation autonomously. Every student went through the diagnostic process in the first semester; thus, at the beginning of the second semester, they could rely on the following sources of information: (a) the tutors' feedback which they received during and after the *Language Development I* course; (b) the tutors' feedback on their initial recording; (c) their self-assessment of their initial recording. Presumably, entering the second semester, the student teachers should be well aware of their needs in pronunciation development. In addition to engaging in mandatory tasks, the students were responsible for optional activities, i.e. for their own decisions regarding what to learn, when to learn, and how to learn and get feedback. In the course of the semester, they were expected to maintain autonomous learning but the number of optional tasks was not specified. Apart from collecting evidence on the learning process, the portfolio enabled the student teachers to reflect on it. An interview conducted at the end of the semester provided the student teachers with space to verbalise the experience and to self-evaluate and formulate action points for further learning.

## 2.1 Research Aims

The aim of the study is to answer the following questions:

1. What types of tasks did the student teachers use to improve their pronunciation?
2. Did they pursue clearly defined goals?
3. What specific pronunciation features did they focus on?
4. Did the student teachers receive feedback on their task performance?
5. What was the source of the feedback?

## 2.2 Research sample

The respondents in the study were all the students in the English for Education study programme at the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy of the University of Pardubice who entered the second semester of their studies in spring 2011. Out of the 34 students, ten students were male, 24 female.

## 2.3 Research methodology

In order to answer the research questions, content analysis was selected as an appropriate method; a learning task was taken as the meaningful unit of analysis (Gavora 118).

Learner autonomy was operationalised through goal-setting, choice of tasks, and feedback strategies. The student teachers' portfolios were examined from the points of view of goal-orientedness and specificity. Each task was rated either as goal-oriented (G), if an expected outcome was obvious, or without a clear goal orientation (nG). Similarly, tasks with a specific pronunciation-related focus (S) were distinguished from those developing more complex abilities (nS), e.g. an ability to sustain a monologue. The tasks which targeted other aspects of English, e.g. translation or writing, were marked as irrelevant. Moreover, the researchers also investigated whether the student teachers sought feedback on their task performance and what the sources of feedback were. Two researchers conducted the content analysis; the level of agreement was 82 per cent, which they considered satisfactory. Partial results were presented in the context of a larger project; the presentation put the emphasis on reporting the results of the assessment of the student teachers' pronunciation (Černá et al. "Implementation").

## 2.4 Results and discussion

The portfolios of the 34 student teachers contained 345 optional tasks, which were subjected to analysis. The number of tasks the student teachers documented ranged from seven to 18 tasks per student (mean=10.2).

Regarding the types of tasks, there were differences among individual respondents. While some of them tended to repeat the same or a similar task with different content, others engaged in a variety of tasks. The number of different types of activities ranged from three to ten (mean=6.1). Nevertheless, the variation is remarkable if one considers the whole cohort (see Table 1). Apart from the types of tasks which the tutors modelled (see Table 1, types of tasks in italics), the respondents accomplished a range of tasks building on different modes of learning, e.g. exchanging voice e-mails with a native speaker or paired reading with a native speaker model. The tasks targeted reception, production, or a combination of reception and production of speech or selected pronunciation features. Moreover, specific types of tasks appeared in the portfolios, reflecting individual respondents' needs (e.g. reliance on IPA; teaching somebody to facilitate their own understanding of the feature).

Table 1

Portfolio analysis: types of tasks by focus

Focus	Type of task
Reception	Contrasting and comparing minimal pairs Watching TV series, videos, films Listening to songs Listening tests
Production	Reading aloud without a model <i>Telling a story</i> <i>Describing a picture</i> <i>Describing action</i> <i>Speaking about a selected topic for a period of time</i> Singing songs Rapping Rehearsing (e.g. difficult words) before a presentation Rehearsing before an interview
Reception & production	<i>Listening to and imitating audio/video NS input</i> Listening to and imitating tongue twisters Listening to and imitating limericks/poems Reading aloud after an NS model Paired reading with an NS model Interacting face-to-face with non-NSs Interacting face-to-face with NSs Interacting with NSs via Skype Interacting with NSs via voice e-mail
Other	Transcribing words using IPA <i>Teaching pronunciation (explanation, modelling, feedback)</i>

A closer look at the types of tasks which the respondents performed to improve their pronunciation implies that the role of ICT in the autonomous learning of English pronunciation is substantial. The internet functioned as a source of native speaker input for all the reception-oriented tasks, as well as for those combining reception and production, i.e. listen-and-imitate types of task. The internet also facilitated the student teachers' access to audio books upon which they built their learning tasks (e.g. reading after/with a native speaker model). Reading aloud tasks represented the respondents' preferred choice, though the tutors had not modelled this type of task in the course. Such tasks require orthographic competence for action, which is a different target. The respondents might have been influenced by their experience as school learners, since reading aloud is an activity that is widely used in English lessons.

Using the internet as a source of content is self-evident. More importantly, the student teachers exploited the interactive potential of ICT: (a) they searched for specialist websites which enabled them

to record their own speech and get feedback on their performance; (b) they interacted with native speakers of English, which substituted for a lack of opportunities to communicate face-to-face; (c) they interacted via voice e-mail, through which they also obtained feedback.

In conclusion, the student teachers manifested a considerable level of autonomy in learning English pronunciation through utilising a variety of tasks, the majority of which were dependent on the use of ICT.

As concerns goal-orientedness and specificity, the results show (see Figure 1) that 37 per cent of the tasks were goal-oriented and at the same time focused on specific pronunciation features (G+S); this category includes activities such as, for example, practising production of dental fricatives (/ð/, /θ/) in fluent speech using a web-based application. The highest proportion of the tasks (45%) did not pursue a clearly defined goal and at the same time did not focus on specific aspects of pronunciation, e.g. non-specified reading aloud or watching TV series. The remaining 15 per cent of the tasks were either irrelevant because they focused on other aspects of English (12%) or lacked either goal-orientedness (1%) or specificity (5%).

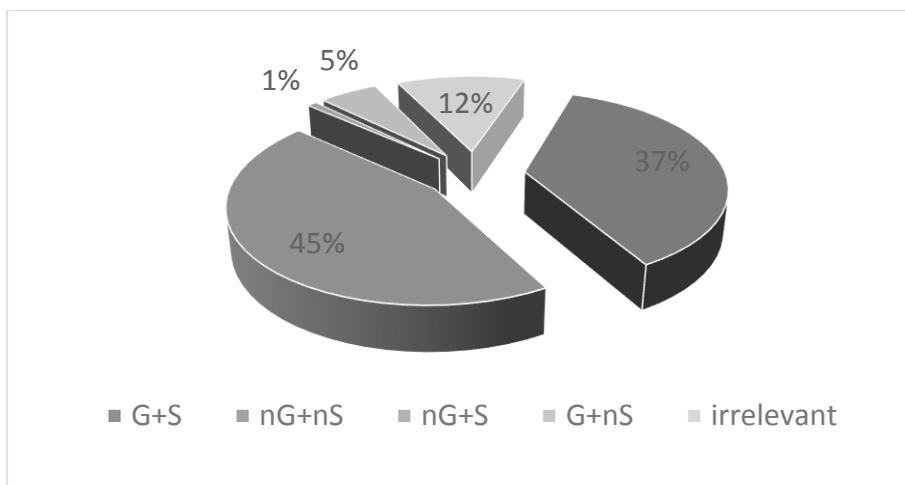


Figure 1. Types of tasks by goal-orientedness and specificity

Since the ability to state the aim of learning is one of the characteristics of an autonomous learner, only the goal-oriented tasks focusing on specific pronunciation features will be analysed.

The results suggest that not all the student teachers were able to set a goal and choose the focus of the task properly. The analysis revealed that 127 tasks (37% G+S tasks) were accomplished by 85 per cent of the respondents, i.e. by 28 out of the 34 student teachers. Each of them completed one to nine G+S tasks (mean=4.7; median 4.5).

Regarding specificity, the tasks targeted both segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation features; they were aimed at either reception or production of those features or at the combination of both processes. Out of 127 tasks, 54 per cent focused on segmental features, 34 per cent on suprasegmental features, and 12 per cent on the pronunciation of particular words which the student teachers perceived as difficult. The results reveal the student teachers' prevailing focus on individual

sounds rather than on prosody. This may reflect their own perceptions of their English pronunciation problems. Interestingly, the list of features corresponds to those that were identified as potentially problematic for Czech learners of English as a result of the differences between the phonological and phonetic systems of English and Czech (Černá et al., “Pronunciation”). Moreover, student teachers may attach higher importance to the segmental features compared to prosody. This is consistent with the findings presented by Pištora (136), who reported a massive preponderance of segmental features in his survey among Czech teachers and student teachers of English.

Figure 2 below summarises which individual sounds were targeted by the student teachers. Obviously, the respondents frequently set voiced and voiceless dental fricatives (/ð/, /θ/) as a goal of their autonomous learning. Since these sounds do not have phonological equivalents in standard Czech, the student teachers probably considered them difficult and felt a need to practise them. This was confirmed by the assessment of the respondents’ recordings, which revealed that the two sounds, especially the voiced one, represented a major problem of the respondents (Černá et al., “Implementation”). Contrary to that, faulty realisation of some other individual sounds was not reflected in the student teachers’ set goals; for example, incorrect pronunciation of the ash /æ/, velar nasal /ŋ/, and voiced endings prevailed (ibid.) but the student teachers’ focus on those features was minimal—ten tasks altogether (see Figure 2). Conversely, there were features, e.g. the bilabial approximant /w/, which were pronounced correctly (ibid.) but still selected as a learning goal.

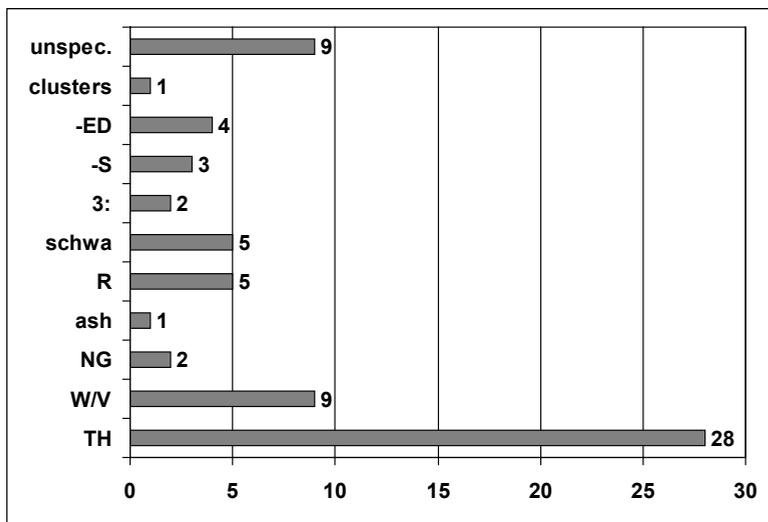


Figure 2. Segmental pronunciation features targeted by the student teachers

The results indicate that the student teachers’ ability to set a specific goal to pursue autonomously is critical. Though about a third of tasks were goal-oriented and specific, further analysis uncovered a discrepancy between the student teachers’ pronunciation needs and their set goals. The reasons may be multiple: (a) a low level of the student teachers’ awareness of their pronunciation needs in spite of the tutors’ interventions (integration among courses through portfolios, audio recording, continuous feedback, self-assessment, modelling learning techniques); (b) the student teachers’

lack of experience of goal-setting; (c) difficulty in matching the content and the aim; (d) the student teachers' reluctance to take charge of their pronunciation learning. A variety of reasons undoubtedly apply to individual student teachers; some respondents reflected on them in the interviews, but this does not, however, lie within the focus of the study.

Apart from setting a specific goal and choosing a relevant task to achieve the goal, autonomous learners should also be able to evaluate the outcomes of the learning process. Therefore, getting feedback is essential. All the tasks in the student teachers' portfolios were investigated from the point of view of feedback. The analysis pointed out that only 20 per cent of the tasks included a way of providing feedback.

Sources of feedback are presented in Figure 3. Audio recording (58 occurrences) is a dominant source which is relevant to pronunciation learning. Other sources of feedback were not exploited much, although some of them were at hand, for example, peer feedback. It is obvious that the availability of ICT, including mobile technologies, increases the opportunities to get feedback on one's own performance. Nevertheless, in this particular case only some student teachers used specialised software which compared their speech with a model and highlighted incorrect pronunciation. Furthermore, one respondent used video recording. Surprisingly, the student teachers did not ask their peers for feedback, though the tutors encouraged them to engage in cooperative learning to benefit from peer feedback. This may be related to the respondents' preference for the native speaker pronunciation model (Černá et al., "Pronunciation"), as a result of which they do not consider their peers to be a reliable source of feedback on their pronunciation.

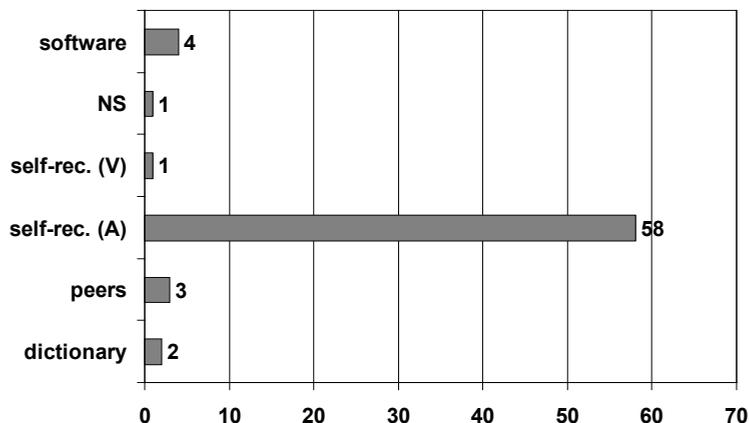


Figure 3. Sources of feedback in autonomous learning

## Conclusion

The research results may be summarised as follows. (1) The student teachers used a variety of learning tasks to improve their pronunciation. The analysis showed that ICT enhanced their learning considerably; not only did the student teachers use the internet as a source of content (videos, audio recordings of all kinds, learning tasks), but they also built on the interactive potential of ICT. (2) Goal-setting appeared to be a major issue; only 37 per cent of the tasks headed towards a defined goal.

Furthermore, when those tasks were analysed, a considerable discrepancy appeared between diagnosed learner needs and learning tasks—the student teachers focused on certain features which were not problematic at all or neglected faulty pronunciation of some others. (3) Regarding specific pronunciation features, in the tasks that were analysed, a focus on segmental features prevailed (54%), voiced and voiceless dental fricatives (/ð/, /θ/) being the most frequently practised individual sounds. (4) Getting feedback was a key issue as well; only 20 per cent of the tasks included feedback strategies. (5) It may be viewed positively that some of the strategies were quite innovative, for example, using specialised software. In general, the student teachers primarily used various technologies rather than peer feedback.

It is obvious from the results that there were individual differences in the levels of autonomy among the student teachers. Overall, it may be concluded that the level of autonomy was quite high in terms of methods and techniques; the student teachers were able to plan and execute various tasks. Nevertheless, they mostly failed to define the goals of their learning and evaluate their progress, which is impossible without feedback.

Determining one's targets is a critical aspect of becoming an autonomous learner. If learners do not know where they are heading, their choice of methods, techniques, and feedback strategies may be irrelevant. Consequently, the learning experience as a whole may be perceived as ineffective or even demotivating if the target and subsequent decisions are not in alignment.

The results imply possible recommendations to improve the implementation of the portfolio. First, in the diagnostic phase preceding the procedure, student teachers should also become aware of their attitudes to learning English pronunciation. Possible negative attitudes, i.e. barriers to improvement, might be challenged in courses. Second, an explicit focus on aims and feedback strategies in courses may improve student teachers' ability to set their personal goals of learning English pronunciation and evaluate the outcomes of their learning. Lastly, in the course of implementation it is desirable to use strategies promoting interpersonal interaction, such as organising monthly sessions in which student teachers engage in portfolio-based reflection on their learning process.

In conclusion, portfolios turned out to be a powerful intervention in the student teachers' professional development because of their potential to interrelate the focus on pronunciation with the development of learner autonomy. The article discusses a specific example of a procedure leading to the development of learner autonomy, which has been declared a key goal of education, but its "realisation (...) remains elusive" (Little 15).

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## The Importance of Prosody in Discourse Meaning Interpretation (A Case Study)

*Abstract: The present paper's aim is to draw an opposition between the discourse meaning resulting from syntagmatic relations within tone units and intonational meaning resulting from tunes, by means of which the importance of intonation in discourse meaning and discourse structuring is being stressed. An analysis presented herein is based on a single case study of the selected part of random speech with the features of a non-standard variety. The interpretation of data is based on the theory on discourse intonation, tunes, discourse segment purposes, sentence stress and pauses and on the way all the above mentioned contribute to the overall discourse purpose and so to the meaning of the discourse. The paper demonstrates intonation to be the core feature to be analysed when decoding the meaning of any spoken discourse while depicting the discrepancies in meaning resulting from syntagmatic relations only and from tune contours only and stressing the two meanings to be complementary.*

### 1. Introduction

Prior to the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, intonation was a phenomenon commonly ascribed a range of meaning, yet such descriptions lacked proper theoretical background and definition, as Ladd (9-12) points out the nature of the phenomenon as employed by scholars such as Kenneth L. Pike to be rather "impressionistic". After the establishment of Conversational Analysis as a scientific field in the 1960s, prosody became of primary focus while interpreting the meaning of utterances, their tonal structure and the relative influence the tones have on each other and so the way they structure discourse. The field of Discourse Intonation (DI) was pioneered by David Brazil between the 1970s and 1980s. In his *A Communicative Value of Intonation*, he argued the importance of intonation in discourse study, Brazil laid its fundamental principles and demonstrated its application mainly in teacher training and classroom pronunciation. However, elaborating on Brazil's core concepts of intonational discourse, discourse intonation has become an area of interest of many linguists and mapping between intonation and its semantico-pragmatic impact on discourse contributed to DI's being precisely described rather than only highly intuitive (Hirschberg, Pierrehumbert 136).

Intonation, being a natural part of spoken discourse, affects such discourse. The link between discourse and intonation results mainly from interlocutors' ability to encode and decode the message by means of tones, however, the recent research on intonation-syntax interface proved intonation being not only a significant element in discourse structuring but also an important source of information for speech synthesis and processing (Venditti, Hirschberg 1-6, Brazil 1-2, Wang, Hirschberg 285-89). The starting assumption of discourse intonation is that "on the basis of the overall presentation of the tone unit, (interlocutors can) recognise that it carries a number of distinctive intonation characteristics and differentiate it from otherwise similar tone units having other characteristics" (Brazil 3), which is also crucial for the present paper.

The current approach to the discourse structure employs a tripartite view consisting of a linguistic structure, attentional structure and intentional structure focusing on discourse segment purposes, as proposed by Grosz and Sidner (in Hirschberg and Pierrehumbert 136). Current DI analysis operates within the theoretical framework proposed by Brazil in *The Communicative Value of Intonation*

employing namely the terms and principles of *tone unit, prominence, tone and the pitch sequence*.

As a working framework, the intentional structure of Grosz and Sidner's model is being adopted (as further developed by Hirschberg, Litman, Pierrehumbert and Ward, while employing the relation as resulting from their equation of discourse segment purposes (DSPs) and as described in greater detail later herein), along with the key Brazil's principles of tone unit, tones and prominence as well as the theory of sentence stress as defined by traditional phonological theory (as distinguishing stressed and unstressed elements of a sentence) is taken into consideration. In order to stress the way the tones contribute to the structuring of discourse, it is mandatory to employ the above-mentioned theories at the same time and so for the purposes of this paper these theories serve as complementary rather than exclusive and so the cross-field approach employed herein is imperative.

### **1.1. Tone unit, tone, prominence**

The present research applies the notion of tone unit as defined by Brazil (5) and which is an equivalent for Halliday's tone group (qtd in Laver 494), Laver's intonational phrase, intonation unit or Brazil's breath group (5), all functioning as synonymous labels (though for the purposes of the present research the notion of tone unit is employed). Overlaid features of a segment are of speaker's choice and therefore contributing to the intended meaning. For an analysis presented herein, employing of Pierrehumbert's system of intonational description is of core importance. Pierrehumbert describes intonational contour as a combination of high (H) and low (L) tones while both may have slightly different characteristics depending on their position. Pierrehumbert proposes an intonational phrase to have one or more pitch accents (Pierrehumbert 64-235), while Brazil (6-20) suggests that tone unit as analysed by DI shall contain no more than two prominent elements. Therefore, for the purposes of segmentation of the selected discourse a DI approach is employed later herein, however, the analysis itself requires tones within a tone unit to be defined as prominent (\*) or boundary (%), as proposed by Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg (271-308). A tone unit can be understood as a sequence of pitch accents, phrase accents, and boundary tone and they can be identified by pausing or phrase syllable lengthening (Pierrehumbert, Hirschberg 277-78).

### **1.2. Sentence stress**

A case study presented herein suggests the way the tonal organization and variation of non-standard variety contributes to the discourse meaning on the level of intonation. The importance of the theory of sentence stress (see Introduction) dwells in the content words being more prominent than grammar words. Brazil (25-27) points out some intonational choices made by a speaker being communicatively insignificant, yet he also argues that every choice of paradigmatic nature resulting from the speakers' preferences is worth analysing. Especially because such a choice triggers other choices contributing to the overall meaning of a discourse. Thus, every intonational choice made by a speaker may be considered intentional.

### **1.3. Intentional structure and dimensions of meaning**

The identification of DSPs and the relations between them contributing to the intentionality of discourse structure requires breaking the discourse down into smaller units, in our case into tone units. Speakers suggest such a discourse segmentation by manipulating the pitch range or lowering tones (Pierrehumbert, Hirschberg 140-41, Brazil 6), and in some non-standard varieties even by rising tones. These terminal tendencies may suggest a number of dimensions of meaning as the increased pitch range from one tone unit to another can signal various degrees of topic change while the

minor final lowering may suggest the continuity of the topic and the major final lowering suggests the completeness of a topic (Pierrehumbert, Hirschberg 139, qtd Silverman in Hirschberg, Litman, Pierrehumbert and Ward 637). Analysis of the meaning and the way tone units are structured is also determined by chain reactions which Brazil (3-5) describes as a choice of the tone within the tone unit being reflected elsewhere in the same tone unit or in any other tone unit within the discourse in question while contributing to the overall meaning. Therefore, for the present paper DSPs are of equal importance as tone combination. While all DSPs within a discourse have to contribute to the overall discourse purpose (DP), DSPs are also related to each other and can have relations of both cataphoric and anaphoric nature, therefore, DSP1 can satisfy the meaning of DSP2 (DSP2 dominates DSP1 and so the dominance hierarchy of the meaning is considered) or DSP1's meaning must be at least temporarily satisfied by DSP2 (which is understood as satisfaction-precedence) (Hirschberg, Litman, Pierrehumbert and Ward 636-37, Hirschberg, Pierrehumbert 136).

In terms of the combination of the main tones as discussed above into one tune (being understood as a combination of H and L tones), Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg (283-88) suggest several dimensions of meaning as structured with tones. The most prominent of them are the tone combinations of declaratives (H\*LL%) which can represent the finality or the completeness of an utterance and the tone combination typical for interrogative contour (L\*HH%). It is assumed that the interpretation of the tune meaning is more accurate when acknowledging for the context rather than when analysing the tune on its own and so, for example, the L\*+H LH%'s meaning may differ in various contexts (Pierrehumbert, Hirschberg 284, Pierrehumbert, Ward 747-75), as discussed later herein.

## 2. Methods

The present paper attempts to briefly stress the discourse structuring in non-standard pronunciation variant of American English, while focusing on the pitch range, accent placement and tone as contributing to attentional and intentional structure and so to stress the possible dimensions of meaning being conveyed by tunes. Especially due to this fact, the present research draws on the theory from various disciplines. The findings emerge from the case study of a selected part of speech of an anonymous female blogger, a native speaker of English living in California, US since 2010. The speech sample is a monologue commenting on newly bought clothes. It's imperative to stress the fact that not all pitch-choices have a communicative value, however, for the purposes of interpretation, it may be necessary to question the speaker's choice (Brazil 1-2), interpret it in relation to eliminated possibilities and only after then one should comment on a meaning of such pitch-choice.

As based on the above discussed theoretical framework, the speech chosen from youtube.com domain, in a form of a part of a natural monologue by a Californian blogger in her twenties, was segmented into tone units based on the empirical reasoning of the author while acknowledging for theoretical resources discussed earlier herein. Tone units were later on instrumentally analysed by means of PRAAT software for speech processing with the focus on particular tunes and prominent words which were also identified as the core discourse segments. Tone units were annotated following the model of Pierrehumbert's system (64-235) of L and H tones. "Stress within the phrase is affected by considerations of information structure (Pierrehumbert, Hirschberg 272). The choice of prominent words in the selected discourse by the speaker was then analysed and interpreted in accordance with the DSPs relation theory of Pierrehumbert, Hirschberg, Litman, Pierrehumbert and Ward (636), and evaluated in a way they contribute to the discourse structure. Particular tone units were then assigned meaning as based on the syntagmatic relations (without taking into consideration paralinguistic). The main part of the analysis presented herein incorporates the above identifications into the

interpretation of intonational contribution to the discourse meaning while creating an opposition by means of which the importance of intonation within the discourse is being stressed.

The data described later herein were analysed as based on three different theories; theory on the content and grammar words, theory on the discourse structure as based on intonation and theory on the tune units stretching over the prominent parts of tone units in order to elaborate on the DSPs' relations in greater detail and to draw on the possible paradigm into which such relations may result.

### **3. Results**

The following chunk of speech was analysed within the theory of the working framework presented above herein. So my next outfit is, for like when you're at the beach or the pool it's very very casual this is the shirt it looks kinda big but it's supposed to be I got it in a size up so that it would be really slouchy over like a bright bikini top that would be so cute and then I got just a pair of jean-shorts and then I got some jewellery to go with that just to dec it out cause it's very casual outfit

The data were then segmented into tone units (Appendix 1) and transcribed in greater detail in accordance with the transcription rules as proposed by Du Bois, Cumming, Schuetze-Coburn, and Paolino (1992), and for further analysis the tone units were annotated with the basic tune structure on prominent segments, so to allow more detailed and more precise analysis. Prominent words within each tone unit are in capital letters to enable an analysis of the choice of the speaker made in opposition to any other hypothetical choice. The interpretation of results is divided into several logical sections, each covering for the investigation of one matter only, namely the meaning of tone units, the overall DP, the relation between DSPs and possible tune patterns occurrence and the overall structure of the discourse topics as presented by suprasegmental means.

#### **3.1. The meaning of tone units, the overall DP and the intonational relation between DSPs**

In order to comment on the intonational structure of the discourse and on its possible patterns, it is necessary to comment on the meaning of the selected discourse based on the linguistic features (the selection of words, their organization within the utterance and the organization of sentences and relations they may represent). The purpose of this subchapter is not an exhaustive interpretation of the tone units' meaning in relation to the discourse purpose but rather an immediate meaning as empirically recognized by the author in order to create an opposition of such a meaning and intonational features representing such a meaning.

The part of speech analysed in greater detail in Appendix 1 suggests that the overall DP is to provide information about the certain state of things while the type of the discourse seems to be a description. In this particular case, the speaker is describing an item (outfit), as the core topic (To) of the discourse, while elaborating on To by means of sub-topics and then by elaborating on them. The overall DP, the description of an item, is broken into three more sub-DPs by means of breaking the item in question into several smaller parts. The total number of sub-topics in this particular discourse is three (the shirt, the jean-shorts, the jewellery), while the speaker elaborates on each sub-topic by means of more detailed description or by giving an opinion. In line 1, the speaker introduces the overall topic, which is an item and in lines 2, 3, 4 she offers her audience a utilization of To (an item) introduced in line 1 and then in line 5, the speaker returns to the description of the To by commenting on To characteristics. By utilizing the nature of To to be segmented into smaller units, the speaker introduces the first sub-topic (T1) in line 6, consequently elaborating on T1 by commenting on T1's characteristics in line 7, by justifying the characteristics of T1 in the following line and by reasoning its characteristics and offering the variation in utilization of T1 in lines 8, 9 and 10 and then by commenting on variation

(line 12) provided in line 11. The following two lines (13 and 14) introduce the two new sub-topics, T2 (jean-shorts) and T3 (jewellery), while only the utilization of T3 within To is provided. Line 16 does not only justify the utilization of T3 but also, in this particular selection, provides for the logical ending of the discourse by returning to To.

The following subchapter employs the interpretation of the meaning as discussed in greater detail in this subchapter and creates its opposition with intonational features representing such meaning.

### **3.2. Prosodic remarks on the discourse structure**

This subchapter deals with the prosodic features of the selected discourse and its main aim is to briefly comment on the way they contribute to the meaning. This subchapter's focus is primarily on pauses, DSPs, as defined earlier herein, and tune contours while creating an opposition between the meaning identified in the previous chapter based only on the written discourse and the meaning as shaped by the prosodic features.

The present discourse, being a transcript of an impromptu speech, is a carrier of the features of such a speech and the most visible in the transcript are pauses. Even though pauses may convey various meaning, the speaker whose speech is being analysed herein uses them for introducing new concepts to the discourse. The main reason for such a choice of new topic introduction may be the nature of impromptu speech itself. An interesting fact is that the pauses at the beginning of each tone unit are preceded by H%, while the terminal tendency of the tone units introduced by pauses (lines 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 14) is both, H% and L%. As Hirschberg and Ward (754) suggest that one of the possible interpretations of the LL% sequence is the completeness of an utterance while any other variation may suggest otherwise. The possible meaning of particular tone combinations is discussed later herein.

Another interesting phenomenon occurring within the discourse was instrumentally identified in lines 11 and 15. The speakers pitch range for F0 was on average approximately 250 Hz (the average for women speakers of European languages is 220Hz (Laver, 451)), however, in the above-mentioned lines it exceeded 300 Hz and the purpose of the both of these lines was identified as "giving opinion" which is a new aspect to be introduced into otherwise descriptive speech. Therefore, this particular phenomenon may be the intentional signal of the speaker for a temporary shift in the type of discourse. By making the particular tone unit prominent at the very beginning, the speaker suggests that such a change in the discourse is not permanent, yet whatever follows this articulatory change is important for the DP. From this point of view, this intentional pitch manipulation can be considered as an element of both, attentional and intentional structuring of the discourse.

An intentional choice of DSPs the speaker makes also contributes to the overall DP, especially because prominent words in analysed tone units are not always content words and so it is not entirely possible to draw the discourse meaning as based only on these words. However, when analysing the grammar words which the speaker made prominent, it is assumed that in all cases these words are being prominent for the intentional discourse manipulation purpose which should provide the speaker with some time to plan another tone unit. In many cases, DSPs are of satisfaction-precedence nature, for example, the meaning of the prominent words in lines 7 and 8 is temporarily satisfied by prominent word in line 9 (size up) and so filling in the meaning gap based on the prominent grammar words between lines 6 and 9. Moreover, Hirschberg et al (636) claim, that hierarchical and satisfaction-precedence relationships may be signalled by boundary tones and the tune unit in lines 8 and 11 suggest so (both representing H\* LH% tune structure), as far as these two tone units have DSs (discourse segments) which are satisfied by the means of the DSs in lines 9 and 12.

Another function of DSs was that their features triggered the tunes (see Appendix 1) as almost every pitch accent tone was within the acoustic borders of a prominent word. The analysed discourse shows some intonational patterns regarding tune units, namely H\*LL% (most commonly occurring—6 occurrences), H\* LH% (the second most commonly occurring—4 occurrences), H\* HH% (2 occurrences), L\* HH%, H\*+L HL% and H\*+L HH% (all with 1 occurrence). The occurrence of the tunes with bitonal pitch accents is rather low in the observed utterances. Chart 1 below shows such occurrence and the meaning of the discussed tonal organizations is discussed later in this subchapter.

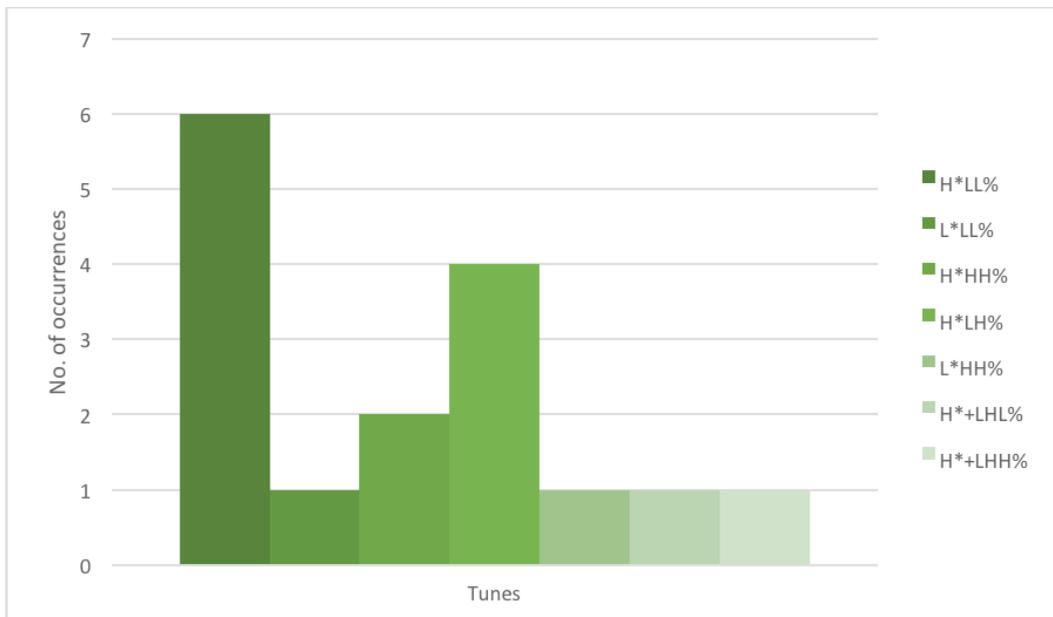


Chart 1 The occurrence of tunes within observed utterances

The basic theory of the tune structure suggests that H\* LL% represents declaratives mainly, however, it may also convey different meaning over different contexts and one of the claims to be applied here is that this particular tune structure encrypts the propositions mutually shared by interlocutors in the discourse (Hirschberg, Ward 751-57). When analysing the present discourse meaning conveyed by this particular tune, it differs significantly from what is proposed by syntagmatic relations analysis among tone unit segments interpreted earlier herein and so the interpretation of this H\* LL% in the context of this discourse covers for several dimension of meaning. When analysing the intonational meaning of this tune in relation to syntagmatic structure of the tone unit, this particular tune seems to be rather an intentional choice of the speaker for statements which are shared with her audience (or obvious ones) while, in contrast, those introduced as the author's opinion seem to have rising tendency over the tone unit and so to result in sequences of HH% or LH% phrase accents and boundary tones. Probably the most interesting opposition arising from the distinction between intonation and syntagmatic relations within tone units is represented by line 10. Syntagmatic relation of this particular tone unit suggest

that the speaker is just commenting on the possible utilization of one of the feature of an item in question, yet the tune organization L\* HH% is in theory related to yes/no interrogatives and so such phonological behaviour may be an intentional choice attempting to get the speaker's audience think about their own view on this particular issue. As to the very last tone unit terminating with H%, it is necessary to mention the selected discourse being a chunk of much longer speech, therefore, though it seems to represent the completeness of a topic with a rising tone, the speaker continues speaking and so it does not require any interpretation of this tune in relation to the proposition of the completeness of the topic.

From all the above mentioned it seems that some tone combinations may be flouted by speakers in order to achieve an intentional effect of the discourse, for example applying H% or HH% combination on declaratives in order to emphasise the utterance.

#### **4. Discussion**

The interpretation of the results in the previous chapter partially fulfilled the aims of the paper and stressed the importance of intonation when structuring the discourse meaning by creating an opposition between tune contours and meaning as identified by syntagmatic relations within tone units. The paper also attempted to acknowledge for the prosodic features other than tune which can be considered to be the limitation for this research as the attention was paid to several features at the same time while each of this features deserves an analysis on its own when considering the discourse structure. Therefore, even though the results interpreted in the previous chapter suggest the importance of intonation in the interpretation of discourse meaning and also the importance of prosodic features when structuring such a discourse (as proved by DSPs), the following areas are suggested for further research in order to achieve results which could be generalized.

- In order to avoid too broad descriptions and to present more specific results, investigation of each prosodic feature separately in greater detail is suggested.
- It is also suggested to enlarge the data so their interpretation would reflect the current state of the issue of the relation between intonation and discourse meaning and structuring more precisely.
- It is strongly suggested to investigate the meaning conveyed by tunes in a standard variety of a language and then in non-standard accent. The comparison of the two would be beneficial for establishing tunes' meaning to be accent universal or accent specific phenomenon and would contribute to the already identified dimensions of meaning.

#### **Conclusion**

The present's paper aim was to stress the opposition between intonation and discourse structure and meaning while employing the working framework of tune system, DSPs, syntagmatic relations and prosodic phenomena. The present paper's result interpretation elaborated on several theories related to discourse intonation, the tune system, sentence stress and discourse segment purposes. Although the data were limited, the opposition between intonational meaning and syntagmatic relations seems to be of the core importance when analysing the meaning of discourse. Though the paper tackles the issue only briefly, its findings offer various viewpoints on discourse meaning analysis and also raises questions to be answered in order to contribute to the theory of discourse intonation.

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Appendix 1: The intonational contours and the meaning of the tone units based on syntagmatic relations (last pitch accent, phrase accent and boundary tone)

	H* L-L%	
1.	Sl:so my next OUTFIT I=S	introducing the overall topic (To)
	L*L-L-L%	
	..for LIKE	providing more information about To
	H* H-H%	
	when you're at the BEACH	elaborating on the given information
	H* H-H%	
	or the POOL	elaborating on the given information
	H* L-H%	
5.	..it's very very CASUAL	providing more information about To
	H* L-L%	
	(.0.10) this is THE SHIRT	introducing sub-topic number 1 (T1)
	H* L-L%	
	(.0.36) it looks KINDA big	providing more information about T1
	H*L-H%	
	but it's supposed TOBE	elaborating on the given information in T1
	H* L-L%	
	I got it in THE SIZEUP	elaborating on the given information in T1
	L*H-H%	
10.	so that it would be realy SLOUCHY	providing more information about T1
	H* L-H%	
	(.0.61) over like a bright BIKINI TOP	elaborating on the given information in line 10
	H*+L H-L%	
	that would be SO CUTE	elaborating on the statement in line 11
	H* L-L%	
	and then I got just a pair of JEAN-SHORTS	introducing sub-topic number 2 (T2)
	H*+L H-H%	
	(.1.0) and then I got SOME jewellery to go with THAT	introducing sub-topic number 3 (T3)
	H* L-L%	
15.	JUST to dec it OUT	elaborating on T3

## Representation of Self and Authorial Presence in Academic Writing: A Look at Natural Science Texts

*Abstract: This contribution assesses the representation of the self (or: selves i.e. the authors) in texts of different natural-science disciplines and tries to establish distributional features in the different disciplinary cultures, especially between the physical sciences and the biosciences. The representation of the self is also to differing degrees manifest in text types like research articles (RAs) in comparison to popular science treatments. In EAP (for: English for Academic Purposes) style guides, advice is administered how to keep the author out of the text, for example by using the passive voice (see Wallwork 2016). But the question remains whether the actual publishing practice reflects this. However, this can be investigated empirically. For this end, this contribution queries a mid-size parallel corpus of academic texts in order to investigate distribution differences in natural science texts. The corpus (called SPACE for Specialized and Academic Corpus of English) has been compiled to address genre differences in a parallel structure. The contribution discusses general practices in academic writing, defines self-mention classes which provide a number of categories of authorial presence representations and examines data obtained from standard corpora in comparison to those queried from the custom-made SPACE corpus. As a result, disciplinary and genre boundaries can be established with lexico-statistic means.*

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Academic writing: The case of the missing author

While in most corpus investigations in academic language the authors as identifiable individuals are of no interest, the sociodemographic data of age, status, and gender can be relevant when linguistic questions such as identity construction are explored. Sanderson (2008) acknowledges this by stating that academic writing is “a register lacking in personal involvement and explicit references to authorial or reader identity” (Sanderson 57). The natural sciences seek objectivity and the authors seem only conduits of these truths (i.e. natural laws which exist independently of their observers or experimenters), but the case is different in the humanities where the role of interpretation is more substantial and more dependent on the individual. Scientific investigation, on the other hand, is founded in criteria like *objectivity, repeatability and verifiability (and in the best of cases falsifiability)* so that in principle the identity of an author should not matter to the outcome of an experiment, always given that the conditions are kept constant.

Apart from the academic import, the question should be raised, what does “author” mean? Today’s research practice is not carried out by solo investigators, instead, research papers are increasingly and often massively collaborative with large teams of researchers all contributing to the scientific investigation. The authors come from different institutions with L1 and L2 English and no priority is given to native speakers. What this means in practice is amply demonstrated by the current world record of authorship which was set by a 33-page physics paper that lists 5,154 authors (Castelvecchi 2015). Therefore, the identity of the individual can hardly matter in a case like this. This situation is also reflected in the advice given by style guides and academic writing manuals that regulate how and to what extent the author may appear in the finished text. Wallwork, in a recent guidebook (2016) suggests the following steps:

- a) Check your journal's style – first person or passive
- b) Ensure you use the right tenses to differentiate your work from others, particularly when your journal prohibits the use of *we*
- c) For journals that allow personal forms, use *we* to distinguish yourself from other authors
- d) When you describe your methodology or a procedure that you have followed, it is perfectly acceptable to use *we* or the passive, or a mixture of the two.
- e) Ensure that readers understand what you mean when you write *the authors*

(from: Wallwork xi)

For this study, therefore the research question is not even completely uncontroversial, given that the author should have low visibility: Across research disciplines and registers, do defining distributional features, i.e. recurring patterns of inclusion as statistically frequent collocations or apparent text-building strategies of the representation of the self exist?

A number of linguistic devices are responsible for personal and interpersonal reference, such as the authors writing about themselves but also the authors in regards to the readership and research community. The simplest means is the personal pronoun but its use, especially of the use the *we* is fluid. The use of personal pronouns can be appended by looking at adjoining metacomments like *In the following, we attempt* and by 'subjective' verbs depending on the author like *It can be concluded that* (cf. Breivega, Dahl & Fløttum 222). For this reason, we will suggest a classification of the distributional features and attempt an empirical analysis based on a mid-size corpus.

## 1.2. Identity construction in natural sciences

If the natural sciences devote themselves to the task of uncovering the laws of nature then the authors and originators of the research are not creators of these laws. The role of the authors is more one of being conduits of these laws and their writing should be as objective as possible. The strive for objectivity in academic writing tries to reflect the axiom that academic writing "simply reflects indisputable 'facts' which have been proved by replicable empirical investigation" (Harwood 1208). Even though individuals with all their human characteristics carry out the research, the repeatability criterion of science assumes that, should all conditions be kept equal, the results should also be the same. However, one of the conditions is the scientist. In modern practice, the situation in the following graph is common (Fig. 1):

In approaches that call themselves 'Critical' EAP studies, the author becomes somewhat reappraised as an individual with agency, and, primarily, interests. In this way, academic discourse is a 'construct of the society of the author' and society itself becomes a co-author of academic "truths". It seems unlikely that this assumption will be popular with research scientists. But authors are not completely free in the way they choose to address or not address themselves as they also have to meet the demands of the text type. This was captured best in the 'genre' approach in the wake of Swales 1993. Here, linguistic devices are responsible for personal and interpersonal reference and authors are writing about themselves but also the authors in regards to the readership and research community. The genre requirements therefore establish tacit rules also about expected personal and interpersonal references. The identity of the authors is constructed by the simplest linguistic means, first person pronouns. The tacit rules for example regulate the occurrence of the personal reference in different parts of the text, i.e. what is acceptable in the conclusion part may not be acceptable in the abstract.

# An ultraviolet–optical flare from the tidal disruption of a helium–rich stellar core

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The flare of radiation from the tidal disruption and accretion of a star can be used as a marker for supermassive black holes that otherwise lie dormant and undetected in the centres of distant galaxies<sup>1</sup>. Previous candidate flares<sup>2–4</sup> have had declining light curves in good agreement with expectations, but with poor constraints on the time of disruption and the type of star disrupted, because the rising emission was not observed. Recently, two ‘relativistic’ candidate tidal disruption events were discovered, each of whose extreme X-ray luminosity and synchrotron radio emission were interpreted as the onset of emission from a relativistic jet<sup>5–10</sup>. Here we report a luminous ultraviolet–optical flare from the nuclear region of an inactive galaxy at a redshift of 0.1696. The observed continuum is cooler than expected for a simple accreting debris disk, but the well-sampled rise and decay of the light curve follow the predicted mass accretion rate and can be modelled to determine the time of disruption to an accuracy of two days. The black hole has a mass of about two million solar masses, modulo a factor dependent on the mass and radius of the star disrupted. On the basis of the spectroscopic signature of ionized helium from the unbound debris, we determine that the disrupted star was a helium-rich stellar core.

When the pericentre of a star’s orbit ( $R_p$ ) passes within the tidal disruption radius of a massive black hole,  $R_T \approx R_*(M_{\text{BH}}/M_*)^{1/2}$  (where  $R_*$  is the stellar radius,  $M_{\text{BH}}$  is the black-hole mass and  $M_*$  is the stellar mass), tidal forces overcome the binding energy of the star, which breaks up with roughly half of the stellar debris remaining bound to the black hole and the rest being ejected at high velocity<sup>1</sup>. For black holes above a critical mass,  $M_{\text{crit}} \approx 10^8 r_*^{3/2} m_*^{-1/2} M_\odot$  (where  $r_* = R_*/R_\odot$ ,  $m_* = M_*/M_\odot$ ,  $R_\odot$  is the solar radius and  $M_\odot$  is the solar mass), the star becomes trapped within the event horizon of the black hole before being disrupted. The mass accretion rate ( $\dot{M}$ ) in a tidal disruption event can be calculated directly from the orbital return times of the bound debris<sup>11,12</sup>. For the simplest case, of a star of uniform density, this yields  $\dot{M} \approx (2/3)(fM_*/t_{\text{min}})(t/t_{\text{min}})^{-5/3}$ , where  $f$  is the fraction of the star accreted and  $t_{\text{min}}$  is the orbital period of the most tightly bound

on 2010 July 12.31 UT and its subsequent decay until 2011 September 1.24 UT (Supplementary Table 1). PS1-10jh was discovered independently as a transient, near-ultraviolet (NUV) source at the  $2\sigma$  level by the Galaxy Evolution Explorer<sup>15</sup> (GALEX) Time Domain Survey (TDS) on 2010 June 17.68 UT within  $2.5 \pm 3.0$  arcsec of the PS1 location, and was detected in ten more epochs of TDS observations between then and 2011 June 10.68 UT (Supplementary Table 2). No source is detected in a coaddition of all the TDS epochs in 2009, with a  $3\sigma$  upper limit of  $>25.6$  mag implying a peak amplitude of variability in the NUV of  $>6.4$  mag. See Supplementary Information for details on the PS1 and GALEX photometry.

PS1-10jh is coincident with the centre of a galaxy within the  $3\sigma$  positional uncertainty (0.036 arcsec; Supplementary Information), with rest-frame u-, g-, r-, i- and z-band photometry from the Sloan Digital Sky Survey<sup>16</sup> and K-band photometry from the UK Infrared Telescope Infrared Sky Survey<sup>17</sup> fitted with a galaxy template<sup>18</sup> with  $M_{\text{stars}} = (3.6 \pm 0.2) \times 10^9 M_\odot$  and  $M_r = -18.7$  mag, where  $M_{\text{stars}}$  is the galaxy stellar mass and  $M_r$  is the absolute r-band magnitude. The mass of the central black hole as determined indirectly from locally established scaling relations<sup>19</sup> is  $4^{+2}_{-1} \times 10^6 M_\odot$ . We obtained five epochs of optical spectroscopy at the location of PS1-10jh between 2010 June 16.33 and 2011 September 4.23 UT with the 6.5-m MMT (Supplementary Table 3). The continua in the spectra are well modelled by the combination of a galaxy host at redshift  $z = 0.1696$  (luminosity distance, 816 Mpc) with a stellar population with an age of 1.4–5.0 Gyr, depending on the chosen metallicity, and a fading hot blackbody component with temperature  $T_{\text{BB}} \approx 3 \times 10^4$  K (Fig. 1).

The spectra show no narrow emission lines that would be indicative of star formation or an active galactic nucleus (AGN). We obtained a 10-ks, 0.2–10-keV X-ray observation, using the Chandra X-ray Observatory, at the location of PS1-10jh on 2011 May 22.96 UT, and detected no source above the background with a  $3\sigma$  upper limit of  $L_X(0.2\text{--}10\text{ keV}) < 5.8 \times 10^{41} \text{ ergs}^{-1}$  for an unobscured AGN spectrum. The X-ray faintness and extreme NUV variability amplitude

Fig. 1 Multiple-individual authorship in the physical sciences (DOI: 10.1038/nature10990)

## 2. Personal reference: Diversity of usage

### 2.1 The first person

First person pronouns appear as singulars and plurals but in the natural sciences the use of the singular is actively discouraged. Moreover, first person singular avoidance can be attested in different research traditions and cultures but it would have no application except for the solo researcher. It can be found occasionally in arcane mathematics RAs but it is rare in other natural sciences. Biber and Gray note that: “(f)requencies for the first person singular pronoun / continue to be low up to the present time” (Biber & Gray 17). A long-term view shows the rise of the plural in fig. 2:

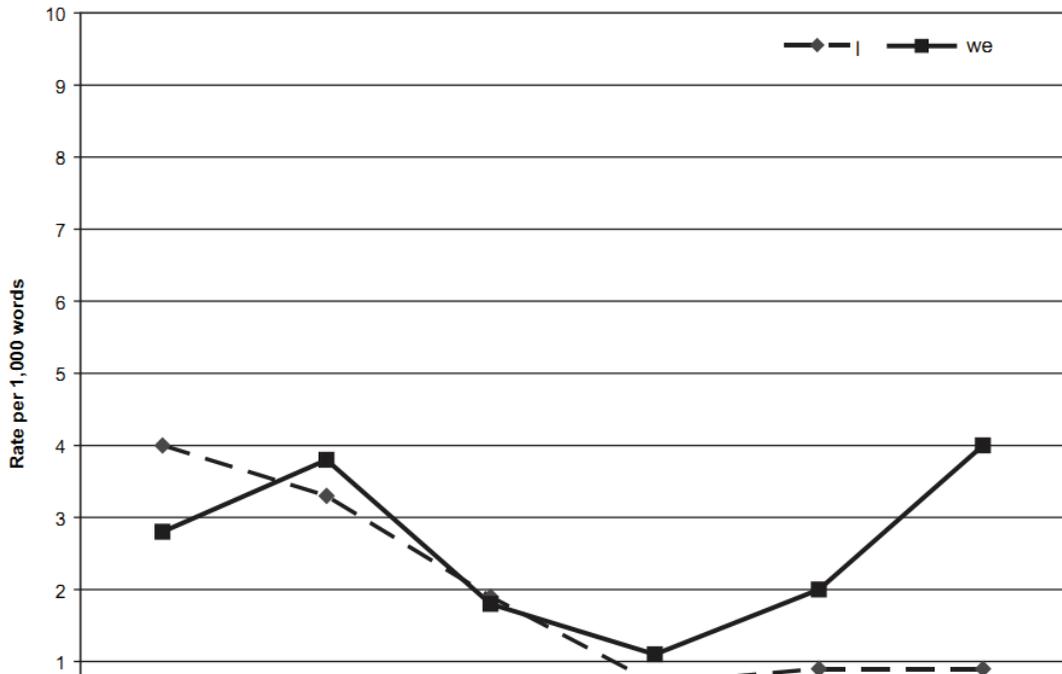


Fig. 2 First person pronoun use – sg. and pl. (Biber & Gray 17)

The use of the *we* in the following sample from the SPACE corpus (described in §3) is diverse even though it comes from the same RA (corpus code 0057PN):

- a) *regime, we either grafted material directly or we treated parts of the animal cap blastulae*
- b) *(Fig. 6 B–D). In another series of experiments, we divided the cellular portion of partial blastula*
- c) *specific antibody 12-101 (28) (data not shown), we confirmed that the GFP cells that integrated*
- d) *host muscle were in fact muscle. In conclusion, we see that both the differentiation and growth of*
- e) *conclusions can be drawn from our results. First, we have gained information about the genetic*
- f) *partially cleaved nuclear transplant embryos, as we have done here, we can conclude that*

Obviously, the referring antecedents of the *we* are not identical in every case. While it refers to the authors/researchers in a, b and f, in describing experimental procedures, c and e are slightly different as they assume the same thought process for the protagonists (*we confirmed* and *we have gained information*). Similar, but different again is d: *we see* is a more inclusive variant as it invites the reader to make the same conclusion. In fact, it entails that the reader does follow the authors into the conclusion. The difference to c and e is subtle but it is present. The diversification of use of even the same lexical item (in fact, its entire lemma with *we*, *our* and *us*) can lead to a better grasp of the pragmatic demands the use of these items, especially of inclusive and exclusive *we*. Approaches to this can be found in Harwood (2005a) who claims that personal pronouns are used in order to:

- a) help the writer organize the text and guide the reader through the argument
- b) state personal opinions and knowledge claims
- c) recount experimental procedure and methodology
- d) acknowledge funding bodies, institutions, and individuals that contributed to the study

Further, the authorial presence in RAs is characterized by the degree of involvement which creates a continuum of authority.

## 2.2 Degree of involvement

In this study, the authorial presence was investigated in a parallel corpus that collects texts from two different registers, the academic-scientific register and the popular-science register. This has ramifications for the use of the personal reference. A popular-science author is an outsider to the actual research carried out by scientists (who then publish their findings in RAs, monographs etc.) The academic-science authors frequently decrease their own degree of involvement and blur responsibility by using *we*, even when they have acted as a solo researcher. In order to decrease responsibility even further, *we* becomes inclusive because the reader is complicit in the study. Functions of this mediated degree of involvement are manifold. They can be found more as an appeal as in *therefore we have to agree with X that* or they can be ambiguous as in *We will return to this argument in the conclusion*. In the latter case, it is only assumed that the reader will take this journey too. This "(simulated) involvement will hopefully make the reader more receptive to the writer's claims for rhetorical effect" (Harwood 2005a 346). In any case, the degree of involvement depends on the rhetorical role that is assumed by the authors. Starfield and Ravelli identify the following stages on a continuum of authority (adapted from Starfield & Ravelli 231):

- a) guide or architect – to structure the discourse and state a purpose
- b) methodological – to explain what the researchers did or considered doing in the research process
- c) opinion holder – *I think/believe/assume*
- d) as originator" – the first person appears as a claim maker

A caveat offered here on Starfield and Ravelli's stages may be that the difference between an opinion holder and a claim maker are again graded and can be very subtle, for example whenever claims are modified with modal auxiliaries.

## 3. Data

### 3.1 The corpus

The SPACE corpus (an acronym for corpus of Specialized and Popular ACademic English) was compiled in order to empirically investigate genre and register phenomena in two natural sciences, physics and biosciences) by following a parallel approach. The last version of SPACE (December 2014) has a size of ca. 1.5 million words and the sciences concerned have a subdivision of the physical sciences into micro—and macroscopic physics with quantum and particle physics on the micro-end and cosmology on the macro-end. The biological sciences likewise concern micro—and molecular phenomena with the descriptors biochemistry, molecular biology (genetics) and microbiology. The overall structure of the corpus is a double-binary structure: All academic texts are juxtaposed with an equal number of popular-academic texts. The sub-corpora can be seen in table 1:

Table 1 SPACE domains and word counts

sub-corpus	descriptors	word count
arXiv	physics, astrophysics, quantum mechanics	809,320
New Scientist – physics	physics, astrophysics, computer science, quantum mechanics	203,470
Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (PNAS)	biochemistry, genetics, genetic engineering, microbiology	267,105
New Scientist - biosciences	biochemistry, genetics, genetic engineering, microbiology	30,499
Public Library of Science – Medicine (PLoS)	medicine, virology, clinical psychology, public health	217,254
New Scientist – medicine	medicine, virology, clinical psychology, public health	17,050
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,544,149</b>

The academic RAs have been compiled from pre-print servers for quick access such as arXiv.org and PNAS while all popular-science texts come from the UK-based magazine New Scientist. In general, the popular-science authors write a simplified summary of an original RA that is accessible to non-specialists, under use of a number of typical linguistic features like lexical despecialization, more use of active voice and by replacing causation with temporal sequence to enable laypersons to follow the scientific argumentation. In practice, the popular-science articles are much shorter and are given catchy titles. A few examples of parallel corpus samples can be seen in Table 2. Given is an original RA and its length, followed by its popular-science variant.

Table 2 Selected SPACE parallel corpus samples

subcorpus	word count	title
arXiv	5,768	Indeterminate-length quantum coding
New Scientist	468	The ultimate computer
arXiv	3,852	Quantum phase transitions and the breakdown of classical General Relativity
New Scientist	2,134	What lies beneath
arXiv	2,226	The disruption of stellar clusters containing massive Black Holes near the galactic center
New Scientist	162	Star shepherds
PNAS	2,338	Spirochete and protist symbionts of a termite ( <i>Mastotermes electrodominicus</i> ) in Miocene amber
New Scientist	128	Tiny fossil has guts

### 3.2 Use of we examples

According to Harwood's (Harwood 2005a) classification (§2.1) we can now try and apply the classes to actual findings in the corpus. The samples are in each case given together with their corpus code.

0020AX **We** here describe the mechanism of leptogenesis on the flat manifold consisting of the scalar fields  $\tilde{L}, H_u, H_d$ , say AD-flatons. (The scalar fields associated with the flat potential are intrinsic in supersymmetric models, which are named flatons (9). Here, **we** consider such fields as participants in leptogenesis/baryogenesis a la Affleck-Dine.)

The use of *we* here is exclusive, it corresponds to Harwood's type (a) to situate the argumentation and guide the reader through the text.

0003AX Third, in looking at the detailed measurements of  $\alpha P$  as a function of time using ODP, **we** found an anomalous oscillatory annual term, smaller in size than the anomalous acceleration (13). As mentioned in Section IVG, and as will be discussed in detail in Section IXC, **we** wanted to make sure this annual term was not an artifact of **our** computational method.

In the above segment, the authorial presence is in the past, the use of *we* is literal and exclusive, the responsibility taken is complete and unmitigated. The segment is typical for type (c) above, recounting experimental procedures and ways of obtaining data.

A fitting example for (d) is as follows:

0023AX ISCAP gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Ohrstrom Foundation. **We** thank Glenn Starkman and Edward Baltz for helpful conversations.

Examples of this type are usually short, relegated to the final section of an RA and they do not typically appear in all research papers. Especially in pre-print publications, they are often missing as the official 'stamp of approval' via peer-review is still to be gained. In the following section the approach will be taken to generate baseline data of the overall distribution of the entire inflectional paradigm of the first person, in number and case.

### 3.3 First person usage distribution

The overall view on the raw query hits in the SPACE corpus reveals a drastic imbalance between the singular and pluralic use of the first person. While the raw data for now does not regard the differing sample sizes (all popular-science texts are shorter than their academic scientific counterparts), the within-sub-corpus comparison is already illuminating (Table 3).

Table 3 SPACE first person pronouns and possessives  $f_{raw}$

subcorpus	<i>I</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>our</i>	<i>us</i>
AcPhys	40	3	5	1567	185	540
AcBio	14	2	9	564	39	232
PopPhys	30	6	3	117	38	65
PopBio	19	2	0	46	2	26
total	103	13	17	2294	264	863

Further, a disciplinary difference can be attested by comparing the academic texts from physics (AcPhys) and the biosciences (AcBio) which are of comparable length. It indicates at first glance that the more abstract discipline (physics) is also the more personal.

In comparison, in Harwood & Hadley's 2004 study, a 325,000 word corpus from the disciplines of economics, computer science and physics was queried. While the occurrences of the first person singular approximated zero in computer science and physics, economics showed at least 3-4 cases per 1,000 words. The following table addresses the frequency in the SPACE corpus per 1 million words.

Table 4 SPACE first person pronouns and possessives f per 106 words

subcorpus	<i>I</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>our</i>	<i>us</i>
AcPhys	138.47	10.39	17.31	5,424.74	640.44	1,869.40
AcBio	29.66	4.24	19.07	1,195.06	82.64	491.59
PopPhys	782.90	156.58	78.29	3,053.32	991.68	1,696.29
PopBio	610.44	64.26	0.00	1,477.91	64.26	835.34
total	164.72	20.79	27.19	3,668.71	422.21	1,380.16

The Harwood & Hadley study found at least 6 uses of the first person plural per 1,000 words in the computer science sub-corpus of their data set and 7 uses in their physics sub-corpus. This indicates an overall differentiated disciplinary distribution of the uses which can be examined on a larger scale in MICUSP, the Michigan Corpus of Upper-Intermediate Student Papers. As can be seen below, the proportions of use for the first person (all numbers) diverges widely.

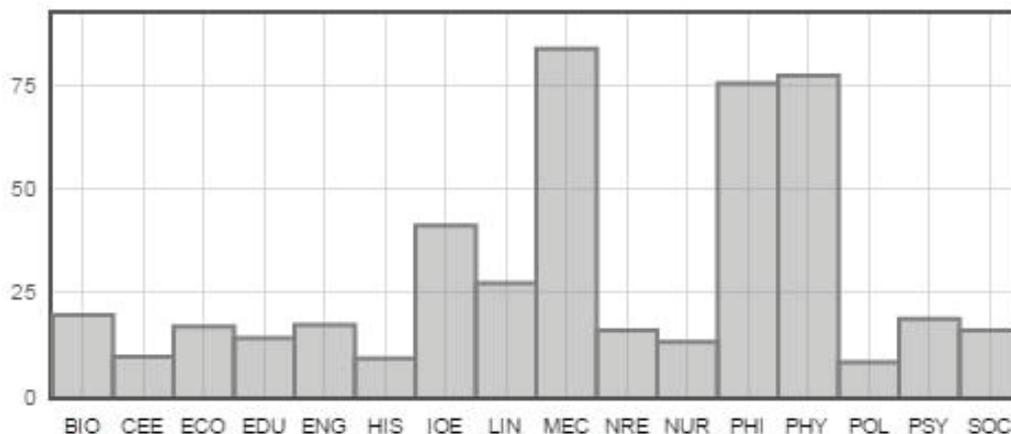


Fig. 10 MICUSP 1<sup>st</sup> Person plural reference per 10k words

The comparative data in Fig. 10 was retrieved from the MICUSP interface (<http://micusp.elicorpora.info/>) and plots the frequency per 10,000 words for a wide spectrum of disciplines. Surprisingly but in a solid confirmation of the data from the SPACE corpus, the assumingly highly abstract and therefore depersonalized discipline of physics (PHY in the graph) ranks second only to mechanical engineering (MEC) and followed closely by philosophy (PHI). The biosciences (BIO) occupy one of the lowest ranks. These findings run contrary to expectation and likely demand nontrivial and non-monocausal explanations. Although the physical sciences are occupied with the phenomena most removed from experience (on the cosmological or quantum level) and the biosciences in principle concern aspects of life (although frequently in its molecular or microscopic, hence for an individual unobservable form), biosciences show an overwhelmingly high degree of lexical sophistication (see Haase 2017fc.) in which the argumentation often rests in correct application of terminology. The physical sciences are highly procedural when it comes to experimentation and the lexical diversity is lower. However, this can only be a partial explanation.

### 3.4 Inter-corpora comparison and personal reference classification

After obtaining data from different corpora and taken into consideration the work of other researchers in EAP, we can have a bird's-eye perspective on the disciplines at large. It seems obvious that the discipline of physics is stably characterized by values of the use of the first person plural at around 7,000 to 8,000 times per 1 million words, as evidenced by the SPACE corpus and MICUSP but also in the Harwood & Hadley 2004 study. A difference here is that not all papers collected in MICUSP are RAs. Further, the biosciences are markedly lower, in both, SPACE and MICUSP coming it at around one quarter of the physics values.

Table 5 First person-PL corpora comparison (*f* per 10<sup>6</sup> words)

Discipline	SPACE	MICUSP	Harwood/Hadley	Sanderson
Physics	7,934	7,711	7,000	
Bioscience	1,770	1,954		
computer science			6,000	
Philosophy		7,535	12,322	15,000
History		914		1,100

High values for philosophy overall were obtained from three comparable data sets although for MICUSP the values are more in the physics range while Harwood & Hadley as well as the Sanderson 2008 study both rank philosophy above 10,000 occurrences per 1 mio words. Finally, and not surprisingly, authors seem to have only very minor personal agency in a field like history, with occurrences at around 1,000 per 1 mio words. MICUSP and Sanderson 2008 agree here.

To take the analysis a step further it may be revealing to focus on the differentiated use of the personal reference in their different functions. As explained in §2.1, the roles of the authorial presence are diversified. For this study, four types were defined, relating to the classes established by Harwood 2005b. They are given as follows:

- a) help the writer organize the text and guide the reader through the argument  
**Type A, Meta-textual reference**
- b) state personal opinions and knowledge claims  
**Type B, Propensity reference**
- c) recount experimental procedure and methodology  
**Type C, Methodological reference**
- d) acknowledge funding bodies, institutions, and individuals that contributed to the study  
**Type D, Organisational reference**

As there is no automatized way to identify the four types, a representative sample from the SPACE corpus was investigated. For this end, bigrams, i.e. two-word clusters that included the personal reference were generated for the entire corpus. For each sub-corpus, the defined types were assigned to the sample. The data are summarized in the following table (table 6) and the adjoining graph (Fig. 11):

Table 6 SPACE bigrams and classification

	Type A metatextual	Type B propensity	Type C methodological	Type D organizational
AcPhys	10	12	28	4
AcBio	5	16	28	5
PopPhys	18	16	18	1
PopBio	25	9	6	0

High values overall appear for procedural references which seems plausible in empirical fields like physics and biosciences as they rely on observation and experimentation (type C). Value judgments such as in data interpretation or inferences and conclusions (collected in type B), also occur with considerable frequency.

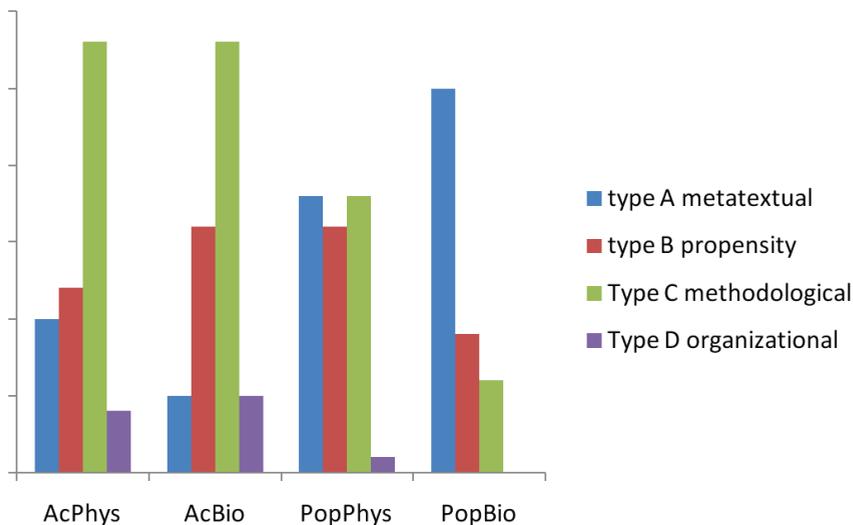


Fig. 11 SPACE First Person-PL Bigram ratios and classes

Outliers in the data are obviously the few occurrences of reader guidance (type A) for academic bioscience, which shows somewhat a disregard for the reader. This impression is also evidenced by the dense and highly terminological style of academic bioscience (see Haase 2014). As expected, the popular-science authors have few reasons to express gratitude to funders or collaborators, thus this type (type D) hardly occurs. Overall, this diversification allows a more refined look at the functions and roles of the authorial presence in RAs and popular-science writing.

## Conclusion

In evaluation of the obtained and discussed data, the following conclusions can be drawn: Research disciplines and registers show marked differences in personal references. This is a consequence of the approach to objectivity but it comes as a surprise that the most 'exact' science, physics, dominates

over the biosciences by a factor of 4, as evidenced by data from two corpora, SPACE and MICUSP. As an epiphenomenal finding, philosophy ranks highest as the most personal discipline (Harwood 2005b, Sanderson 2008). Further, all natural sciences show an extremely low indication of the use of the first person singular: Popular science authors appear in their texts as a first person singular (SPACE-Corpus) by a factor of 13 for popular physics and by a factor of 7 for the popular biosciences. This large amount of occurrences, however, is diversified and the 'educational' approach of popular science writing is reflected in a high proportion of metatextual personal references, rather than direct, participating references. On the other hand, experimental and methodological descriptions dominate personal references in both academic sciences. Overall, the authorial presence in science texts is real and can be attested but it takes a differentiated perspective on disciplines and registers to see a text-type specific signature of its use.

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## Making the Transition: Reflection, Ownership and Agency in Academic Writing

*Abstract: English academic discourse is commonly characterised as objective and depersonalised. Yet at the centre of each student essay is an embodied subject who brings their own histories, affective responses and agency to their writing. This dimension may easily be overlooked in process-based approaches to teaching essay writing. We considered whether foregrounding the subjective aspects of writing implicit in a standard essay might encourage students to engage more meaningfully with the task and develop a stronger authorial voice. Hence, a reflective journal was designed to enhance essay writing for students studying on an international pre-master's programme at Goldsmiths, University of London. The reflective journal is intended as a "transitional space" (Winnicott 2005) between the student writer and the essay task, allowing the subjective dimension in the writing process to be made visible, even if this would ultimately be effaced in the final essay. This paper will report on the context, rationale and experience of using this reflective journal, illustrated with a case study showing one student's progress from the personal to the critical.*

### Introduction

The context for this paper is Goldsmiths, University of London, an institution with a predominantly arts, humanities and social sciences faculty base. Its student cohort, as is commonly the case today in higher education in the UK, is very international; according to the Goldsmiths website, there are students from 114 different countries currently studying there. Many programmes, particularly at Master's level, even have a majority of students who do not have English as a first language. Hence, English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) has a vital role to play in preparing international students for their future studies at Goldsmiths or other UK HE institutions.

Among a range of ESAP preparatory programmes delivered by Goldsmiths' English Language Centre is a Pre-master's Graduate Diploma. For this programme, as in all our teaching, there is a strong emphasis on researched discursive essay writing, since this is the main form of assessment on most Goldsmiths' degree programmes. The pedagogical approach used for the teaching of essay writing on the Graduate Diploma is a *process-based* one, whereby students are guided over several weeks through the various stages of researching, planning, drafting and editing an essay, scaffolded with advice from a personal tutor. Nevertheless, despite this structured guidance, our students often lack confidence in their essay writing, which is where student journals may be of benefit. Thomas and Armstrong (59) argue that giving students the opportunity to reflect on their essay writing, such as through writing a journal, has the potential to be transformational, allowing them to move from novice to confident writer. Hence, this paper focuses on a reflective journal we have developed with the aim of enhancing our students' engagement in the essay writing process. Our theoretical framework is inspired by Academic Literacies' focus on writing as social practice and emphasis on student writer identities (e.g. Lea and Street 1998, Ivanič 1998, Lillis 2001, Lillis and Scott 2007). Specifically, it is inspired by Academic Literacies scholar Phyllis Creme's collaboration with creative writing teacher Celia Hunt and their engagement with theories of the British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott concerning transitional phenomena and playing, which they deploy as a means of rethinking the writer-text relationship in academic writing in order to foster "a 'creative criticality', a reflexive objectivity that

evolves from engagement and connectedness rather than alienation and fear” (Creme 276). The paper will outline the rationale and design of the reflective journal, and then consider one case study.

### **The reflective journal as an intermediate area**

An area of confusion and anxiety we frequently observe among both home and international students concerns the notion of academic *argument* as opposed to *personal opinion*, and the related issue of what is widely referred to as “critical thinking”. When in an academic writing class it is explained that an essay requires substantial reading and engagement with academic sources which must be cited according to conventions, a student might ask, “Why can’t I just write what I think?” But equally they may be baffled when instructed to “find their own way” of answering an essay title or to “position themselves”. In other words, they struggle in articulating an authorial presence in their writing, what Ivanič calls a “self as author” which “concerns the writer’s ‘voice’ in the sense of the writer’s position, opinions and beliefs” (26).

Yet Ivanič’s emphasis on student writer identity contrasts markedly with advice that may be found in guidelines regarding the “objective” quality of academic discourse and the need to avoid the “personal”. Such advice tends to focus on raising awareness of stylistic features such as the use of personal pronouns or the passive voice without any deeper unpacking of the discourse that would shed light on the constructedness of this objectivity and acknowledge the presence of an embodied author. This oversight, we would contend, is liable to contribute to the mystification around notions of argument. One UK university website, for example, advises: “Academic writing should very often be objective, with a lack of personal commitment, and being subjective may weaken your argument and lay you open to disagreement or criticism.” There is something self-contradictory in telling students to develop their own argument while instructing them to avoid personal commitment. It is hardly surprising that they are often confused.

Academic writing may be characterised as abstract and depersonalised; Coffin and Donohue (2014) use the felicitous term *decontextualised*. Yet whatever the linguistic realisations of this decontextualised quality, academic writing is inevitably situated in a context at the heart of which is an embodied subject with their own perspectives on the world, whose affective experience in the act of writing may be easily overlooked. As Creme comments:

We are so concerned with getting our students to develop a critical distance that we forget how, in order to get there, they also have to engage and be committed, to allow a relationship to grow between themselves as learner and her object of study. (276)

Our aim in producing a reflective journal was precisely to foster the growth of this relationship, helping students develop a greater sense of agency in approaching an essay assignment and developing a stronger sense of self as author.

While pondering this issue, we were reminded of a student who described her frustration when, during a tutorial to discuss an essay assignment, she was told by her tutor: “I don’t know where you’re going to take it.” This statement succinctly captures the relationship between the embodied subject *you*, the student writer, and *it*, the writing task, foregrounding the potentially fertile zone between them. Drawing on Winnicott’s terminology, this zone may be described as an *intermediate area* between subject and object: “an intermediate area of *experiencing*, to which inner reality and external life both contribute (...) between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived” (Winnicott 3-4). This constitutes a *transitional space* where new associations and perspectives may occur. Perhaps this

zone between is the locus of what Ivanič calls “the creative at the heart of the academic” (quoted in Tomic 62). Indeed, creativity is closely tied up with Winnicott’s concept of *playing*. Playing for Winnicott is fundamentally *doing*; it is an engaged activity taking place in the *potential space* between subject and the external world, where one is free to be creative. It is also a means of taking control of objects in the external world. This kind of creativity is a universal property connected with how an individual approaches the external world: “It belongs to being alive.” (91). Applying Winnicott’s ideas to learning in the academy, Creme and Hunt comment:

(...) creativity comes from a playful approach that allows the person to shift from the rational to other ways of thinking and relating, to play with ideas and “voices”, and generally to engage fully in an activity without the anxiety that so often accompanies (...) academic study. (156)

Creme further elaborates:

(...) “the creativity of life” is a transitional process where the individual feels empowered to make and re-make their life. The learner participates in their own learning in a holistic way. (273)

### **Design and use of the reflective journal**

The reflective journal developed for use with our Graduate Diploma Pathways students was envisaged as an intermediate area mediating their subjective, lived experience and the decontextualised discourse of the essay. In doing so, our aims were not particularly subversive or experimental; we were not seeking to unsettle the generic norms of the conventional essay. Rather, we wanted to challenge the apparent disjunction between the subject and object, and approach essay writing as a creative act, understanding creativity not in terms of artistic genius or radical originality, but as something more akin to Winnicott’s inclusive concept of creative living, which might enable students to make new connections and see things in a new way. Hence, the ambition was to foster a greater sense of confidence that they could exercise agency in taking the essay where they wanted to take it within the constraints of the task, and engage in the knowledge-making process of essay writing in a meaningful way.

The task in question is related to a two-term lecture strand that forms part of the Graduate Diploma programme entitled Critical Moments in Western Thought, which introduces key philosophies of Western modernity and postmodernity. It is a researched essay of 1500-2000 words set in the Spring term, i.e. the second term of the Graduate Diploma, and is completed over about six weeks, closely scaffolded by tutorial support. There is a choice of nine titles related to the lecture content. It is assessed on the final completed essay rather than a portfolio, and contributes to the coursework requirement of the Graduate Diploma programme. The reflective journal, first piloted in 2015, is completed at key points in the essay writing process: first, in the initial stages when students have received the essay titles and are beginning to explore their title of choice and establish a research base; secondly when they submit a plan of their essay and thirdly when they submit a first draft. Besides some tick-box questions asking students to evaluate their work in progress, it includes questions asking them to consider the following: their affective responses to the essay, both the topic and the task itself; connections they can make between the topic and their other knowledge and experience; choices available to them within the constraints of the title. They also write a brief reflection after their tutorials at each key stage. Such is the integral role of the student-tutor dialogue to the use of the reflective journal that it can be said that it is the combination of the two that constitutes an intermediate area with transformative potential. It

is also important to note that the reflective journal did not form part of the assessment. It functioned as an occluded writing practice (Thomas and Armstrong 2016) which, although not wholly private since it was shared with a personal tutor, was not subject to evaluation. To do so would risk inhibiting the student's freedom to "play". As with Winnicott's famous transitional object, the journal was not an end in itself.

A number of students in our cohort took what, following Foucault and Deleuze, might be referred to as a "tool-box" approach to the theories under study, using them as a means of exploring a specific context of the student's choice.

A theory is exactly like a box of tools. (...) It must be useful. It must function. And not for itself. (208)

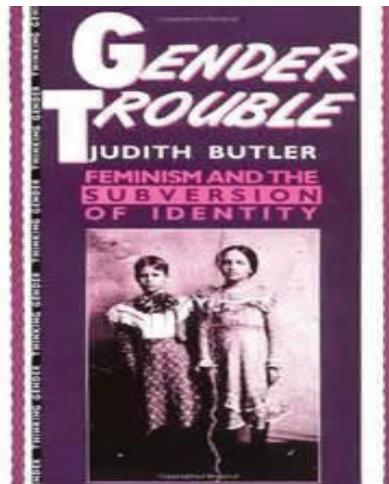
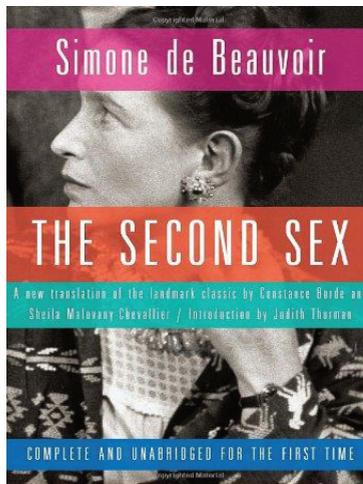
This was the approach taken by the student who features in our case study below.

### Case study

Our case study refers to a female Graduate Diploma student. So far on the programme she had achieved satisfactory grades without producing any truly outstanding work. From the list of titles, she opted to write the essay on gender theory as follows:

*Compare and contrast de Beauvoir's and Butler's views on gender.*

This title calls upon the student to engage critically with different waves of feminist thought. The answer would need to explain and contrast the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir, author of the *Second Sex*, published in 1949, with Judith Butler's re-evaluation of gender identity in *Gender Trouble*, published in 1990. Both authors have been highly influential and these works arguably inaugurated so-called second and third wave feminism respectively. However, these thinkers are often perceived as having complex ideas and use of language, so that some students may find engaging with and critiquing them daunting. Butler, in particular, has a reputation for being difficult to read.



Part of the rationale for asking students more personalised questions in the reflective journal was to help them to overcome any trepidation and find a “way in” to the theory. The journal begins by asking *Which essay title have you chosen?* The next question then encourages them to make connections between the topic and their personal interests and feelings:

*Why did you choose this title? Explain what you find interesting about it.*

In response, the student in our case study wrote the following:

I am playing in a band in London. Also, I used to play in rock bands in Japan. I have been thinking about that the female population in music industry is much less than male (in the UK, male = 67.8 per cent / female = 32.3 per cent) This industry is still dominated by men. Also, in my experience, I sometimes felt uncomfortable when I was on stage and after I finished my performance, by some audience's behaviour.

The student identifies herself as a rock musician. She had joined a band with three men, playing in small venues across London. She was therefore already in a minority of one, and was concerned at the wider gender imbalance across the music industry. We were interested to note her personal interest and identification with the topic at this early stage.

*I am playing in a band in London(...) I have been thinking that that female population in music industry is much less than male(...)*

*Also, in my experience, I sometimes felt uncomfortable when I was onstage and after I finished my performance, by some audiences behavior.*

This subjective response continued in her responses to the next questions:

*What do you already know about this topic? Can you connect it to anything else you have read or thought about?*

*Because I am a woman who is playing in a rock band. Thus, I am very interested in gender roles in music. This is why I chose this essay title.*

In these comments, the first person *I* is used repeatedly, and the focus is on the student's personal response. The next question in the reflective journal focused specifically on the affective dimension of the title:

*At this point, what are your feelings about the topic? Write at least three adjectives to describe your impressions, then explain your feelings in more detail.*

The student wrote the following:

*Curious: I am a woman. So, I want to know how women in the past thought gender roles.*

Scary: I do not have any knowledge about Beauvoir and Butler. So, I am worried that I can write their comparison properly.

Difficult: As I mentioned above, I do not know well about them. However, when I researched about Beauvoir's thinking, my first impression of it was 'difficult'. So, I think it will be harder and harder, when I will start to write this essay.

Here, the second and third adjectives, *scary* and *difficult*, reflect the challenging nature of the essay task, and similar words were used by several other students from the same group. However, it seems significant that *curious* was the first response, indicating that the student was motivated to find out something for herself, and to understand more clearly notions of gender roles and identities. Moreover, the student has identified a personal stake in this issue ("I am a woman"), and she states "I want to know", which might act as a counterpoint to the fear highlighted by the other adjectives.

The next questions in the reflective journal asked about students' endeavours to establish a research base for their essay, and require them to comment on their choices:

*Which sources have you found so far? Why did you choose them? What do you think of them?*

To which the student in our case study wrote:

*The lost women of rock Music* –Reddington, H.

*The Sex Revolts* –Reynolds, S.

*Gender in the music Industry* –Leonard, M.

All of them strongly relate to gender, sex and feminism in rock music. I just skimmed them, but they are really interesting and writing about what I want to know!

Once again, there is a clear expression of personal interest and motivation ("they are really interesting"; "I want to know") and there is also a sense that the essay is not about some dry or abstract theory. Rather, it relates to the student's own life experience and is therefore meaningful. This personal motivation to *find out* can encourage the student to take ownership and control of their learning in the creative and holistic manner advocated by Creme.

On the other hand, regarding the sources the student has found, the key thinkers mentioned in the essay title, Beauvoir and Butler, are conspicuous by their absence. This points to the risk that a student may become so preoccupied with their own personal interests that they veer off in their own direction and fail to address the heart of the question. In this instance, this potential pitfall was noticed by the student's personal tutor when reading the reflective journal, and the student's attention was drawn to it in the next tutorial meeting. The reflective journal also asks students to comment on what is discussed in tutorials, and the comment made by our case study student reveals that she has taken good note of the tutor's advice:

*What did your tutor tell you? Was there anything surprising or unexpected? Did it change the way feel about the essay?*

My main part of essay is comparison & contrast of Beauvoir and Butler's view. Don't forget this!

Below are two extracts from the introduction to the finished essay: it can be seen that the student has now found academic sources to explain, theorise and account for what she has already felt in her personal life.

'A woman playing a rock instrument is breaking the gender code' (Baytan, 1997:43). This quote indicates that women who play rock music is not along with the notion of gender, rock music should be played by men.

(...) Furthermore, women face objectification and exploitation because of their gender, perhaps because of the stereotypical views of them as 'sexual commodities' (McClary, 191:151). This essay will analyse women's gender roles in rock music from Butler's and Beauvoir's views, especially their views of the notion of gender in our culture.

When the student's initial journal reflections are juxtaposed with what she eventually wrote in the essay, it can be seen that, while the focus of the content remains similar, there has been a significant shift from the explicitly subjective, contextualised comments towards a recognisably decontextualised academic style.

Journal entry	Final essay
<p>I am playing in a band in London(...) I have been thinking that that female population in music industry is much less than male.</p> <p>Also, in my experience, I sometimes felt uncomfortable when I was onstage and after I finished my performance, by some audiences behavior.</p>	<p>'A woman playing a rock instrument is breaking the gender code' (Baytan, 1997:43). This quote indicates that women who play rock music is not along with the notion of gender, rock music should be played by men.</p> <p>Furthermore, women face objectification and exploitation because of their gender, perhaps because of the stereotypical views of them as 'sexual commodities' (McClary, 191:151).</p>
<p>Focus on actions and mental processes Focus on affect "I felt uncomfortable" Subjective lived experience: I mentioned four times Monoglossic (student's voice alone)</p>	<p>Impersonal Subject shift from first to third person Theorisation of social phenomena Heteroglossic (brings in the voices of others)</p>

In the final essay, the personal feelings and interest voiced in the journal have become invisible. Arguably however, asking the student to write the reflective journal and encouraging her to focus on these feelings at the outset provided her with the impetus to argue a strong case in the finished work. The personal response to the essay title could be thought of as a *subconscious* of the text, or its back story. Thus, there is a subjective history to the essay which has been displaced, but whose influence can still be discerned in the argument.

A closer examination of the language choices in the two sets of extracts shows how this displacement is produced. The journal entry uses the first person pronoun / four times. It focuses on the student's own context—her real-life experiences and the feelings and responses these provoke. These are not considered in any wider theoretical context, so that the only voice we hear is the student's own, making the journal entry monoglossic. In contrast, the finished essay uses the third person to evoke in more objective terms "A woman playing a rock instrument (...)" There is a corresponding move to a discussion of wider social phenomena regarding gender issues, which is now informed by the words of others, creating a multi-voiced (heteroglossic) text which follows academic conventions for citing source materials. The final essay also uses other linguistic forms common in English academic discourse such as nominalisation, longer sentences with subordinate clauses, and cohesive devices. These features continue through the essay, and can be seen in the following extracts from the conclusion:

From Beauvoir and Butler's perspective of gender, gender is not what we are born with and have inherent in our bodies(...) However, by using term for female musicians in rock music 'women in rock', they should not categorise themselves as a specific gender.

(...)Nevertheless, if female musicians attempt to cope with this difficulty, they must continue to make music which they want to make and play any instruments which they choose, and dress how they see as appropriate, without any value judgements from others. By doing so, people's perspective for female musicians can be changed, and they might be purely judged as not 'female musicians', but 'musicians'.

Here, the student offers a critical analysis of an aspect of the social world (i.e. gendered identities) using an analytical framework based on the ideas of Beauvoir and Butler, the key theorists mentioned in the essay title. She takes due account of them, but her own voice is never lost. The conclusion is, therefore, her own, confidently argued point of view.

## **Conclusion**

Regarding the use of the reflective journal in the case study, firstly it can be said that the student produced a significantly better piece of work than she had managed previously without using a journal. The final essay was awarded a distinction, a higher grade than she had gained before, and there was a noticeable improvement in her engagement with theory and ability to take a critical stance towards the essay topic.

This marked improvement in this student's writing appears to bear out Thomas and Armstrong's notion of the transformative potential of writing journals, and the intermediate area provided by the reflective journal did indeed help our case study student move towards a more expert-like writer identity. The journal's initial focus on the lived experience and the affective was motivating in this case, in so far as it created a desire to learn and understand more deeply. This motivation arguably encouraged the student to engage with complex theory—as it was the theory that would help her "to know". The reflective journal together with the tutorials, did indeed provide an intermediate area where the student could safely play with feelings and ideas. As we saw, she did not get everything right the first time round, for example when she became so focused on her personal interests that she risked ignoring the key theorists; however the finished essay manages to remain informed by the student's own feelings, while still discussing them with critical distance. This actually enhanced

criticality in the essay, the student being able to “own” her argument and maintain a clear authorial voice.

As explained, the reflective journal, although read by a personal tutor, was a personal document for students’ own use and benefit, and was not evaluated. This occluded, unjudged nature of the journal may have given the subject of our case study the space and confidence to think aloud, reflect and experiment with the essay topic, until she had worked out her own stance and how she wanted to approach the essay. The structured questions in the journal, which were addressed at important stages in the essay writing process, acted as scaffolding to aid the student in her journal reflections and in the wider task of writing the essay.

This paper has focused on a single case study of a student who successfully engaged with the reflective journal. Regarding the entire student cohort that year, the picture was more mixed; some students wrote a lot, some used the journal erratically, while others made little use of it. Subsequently, the journal has been more embedded into the academic writing class in order to bring greater clarity to its purpose and to make it more integral to the writing process. This means, for example, that some of the reflective writing is done in class time, and more students are making effective use of the journal. One tutor mentioned that the journals seemed to be helping students to be more successful in applying the skills they had been practising in writing classes to their essays. A final and important benefit that tutors emphasised is the improved communications with their students. The comments written in the reflective journal have provided a focus for tutorials and resulted in more productive discussions. We are monitoring the impact of the reflective journal and looking at embedding it further into our teaching of academic writing in the future.

Finally, in terms of our wider conclusions, we have been encouraged by our use of the reflective journal and believe that the foregrounding of the subjective from the outset may help promote greater engagement with the essay topic. It may also provide students with a pathway to a deeper, more critical engagement with theoretical concepts, and a more confident authorial voice in their academic writing.

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## Idiomatic Expressions in the Context of Business English

*Abstract: The metaphorical use of a word is more common today than its literal use. In the language of business, idioms and metaphors are frequently used with reference to the domains of sport, race, war, battle, gambling, time, journey, and others. To some extent, different Business English course books cover the most important areas of management, production, marketing, finance and macroeconomics. The upper-intermediate level student of English of the University of Economics in Bratislava who needs to understand and talk about the key concepts in business and economics uses the Market Leader Business English Course Book. He/she has to distinguish, at least, between academic and journalistic styles as well as their genres and should switch between different ways of speaking and writing in business communication. Also, it is important to choose the right words depending on whether the context is formal or informal. The paper aims to present a corpus of 319 idioms in the self-help book Ideational Idioms in Business English Communication for the independent user (B2)—the proficient user (C2). A regular occurrence of idioms in twelve units of the Market Leader was the main impetus for building this corpus, explaining their meanings and thus helping the student use them with greater confidence.*

Idioms are little sparks of life and energy in our speech; they are like those substances called vitamins which make our food nourishing and wholesome; diction deprived of idiom ... soon becomes tasteless, dull, insipid. (Smith 276-77)

### Introduction

Transitioning from being a successful secondary school student to being a quality university student can be difficult. The student has to adjust to different learning cultures and to accept that university study is different. He/she has to learn to work with academic and journalistic texts in order to analyse them and get information independently. Thinking with flexibility, depth, awareness and understanding are some of the core building blocks that make university education 'higher'.

Words are the basis of how the user of English, as the writer or speaker, is judged by a reader or listener. Business English is especially related to international trade. When the person is involved in international business, he/she often communicates with native or non-native speakers and continuously encounters Business English idioms. Native speakers often use idioms in business communication because they do not modify their vocabulary to help their business partner. Naturally, the non-native speaker of English who wishes to speak fluently or write clearly must master business terms and idioms. Therefore, it is a good idea to learn some of the expressions in order not to be at a disadvantage when doing business internationally. It is believed that the university student will find the self-help book, written by the author, an invaluable aid to doing so.

### 1. A review of works on idioms

Research shows that conventionalized multiword expressions and the lexis itself have been relatively neglected in language studies. This neglect can be ascribed to the vocabulary being viewed as the non-generative component. It is mainly evident in respect of the functions of idioms and kindred expressions (Fernando 1996, Kvetko 2006). However, scholars such as Cowie (1998), Moon (1998), Strässler (1982), Fernando (1996), Kavka and Zybert (2004), and Kvetko (2006) point

out that idiomatology was examined closely by scholars from the former Soviet Union as early as in the 1920s, and then later in the 1950s and 1970s. Russian phraseological theory, in the form it developed from the late 1940s to the 1960s, was first mediated to non-Russian speaking scholars by Klappenbach (1968), Weinreich (1969), Arnold (1973), and Lipka (1974). Many Russian linguists and their works also influenced the research of phraseology in other countries. Although their works are appreciated by some linguists from the West (Weinreich 1969, Makkai 1973, Cowie 1990), in principle, they are not known or mentioned enough (Kvetko 1996). The most significant Russian linguists were Vinogradov, Bakhtin (1952-53), Smirniťskij (1965), Amosova (1963), Kunin (1970, 1972, 1984, 1986), and others.

Fernando (1996) offers a systematic review of works on idioms and idiomaticity which covers two slightly different aspects of the field. The linguists such as Makkai (1972), Weinreich (1969), Fraser (1970), Cowie and Mackin (1975), Cowie, Mackin, and McCaig (1983), and Stráßler (1982) focus on lexically and grammatically regular idioms, and Roberts (1944), Smith (1925), Jespersen (1924), and Fillmore et al. (1988) focus on the idiosyncrasies of English. Cowie et al. (1975, 1983) deal with both types of idiomatic expressions. (Hrdlićková 2015).

As for the Czech linguists, it is necessary to mention Čermák's (2007) work comprehensive volume and first full collection of his selected papers from the field of Czech general idiomatics and phraseology. Another Czech linguist who can be considered as one of the Czechoslovak pioneers in the field of idiomatology is Kavka. His study of idioms and idiomaticity is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to this field.

The collection and description of phraseology in Slovakia has a relatively long tradition. In the 1950s, in the field of phraseology attention was more systematically focused on theoretical issues. Those who dealt with the issue of phraseology were Mlacek, Kučerová, Smiešková, Ivanová-Šulingová, Mihál, Lapárová, Škultéty, Kollár, Miko, Budovićová, Ďurčo, Habovštiaková, Furdík and others (Kvetko 1996). English phraseology is often mentioned in connection with the translation of the Anglo-Saxon literature (Mihál 1955), the issues of phrasal verbs and their occurrence in the professional text (Kolesárová 1980, Hećková 1980, Užáková 1985), using verbal phraseological units in practice (Böhmerová, Trebatická 1984), some issues of the confrontation, frequency and translation of phraseological units (Kvetko 1984, 1985, 1994, 1995), and others. In addition, first specialized phraseological dictionaries, dealing with translation of English idioms, are issued (Kvetko 1984, 1991). He also deals with phraseology (1996, 2006) where he investigates English and Slovak idioms by means of comparative analysis. A less extensive collection of idioms can be found in a dictionary by Grycová (1997). Nowadays, the dictionary by Fronek and Mokrání (2006) is of high importance. It is an updated and expanded Slovak version of Fronek's dictionary (1991). Both authors focus their attention on collocations, idioms and phrasal verbs. Ološtiak (2011) in his study investigates the relationship of phraseological motivation towards other types of lexical motivation. Bilá (2015) and Bilá and Kačmárová (2015) deal with multiword expressions such as collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms, formulas and clichés.

## **2. Teaching Business English**

The globalization tendency and constantly growing e-commerce (any transaction completed over a computer-mediated network involving the transfer of ownership or rights to use goods and services) and e-business (involving the transaction based e-commerce businesses and those who run traditionally but cater to online activities as well) have stressed the need for English as the universal language of business communication worldwide. As a consequence of this trend, Business English courses are offered by many universities all over the world.

Business English is a particular type of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Nevertheless, Ellis and Johnson (1994, In Němcová 2011) claim that Business English differs from other varieties of ESP in that it is often a mix of specific content (relating to a particular job area/industry), and general content (relating to general ability to communicate more effectively). Similarly, Donna (2000) states that Business English has much in common with General EFL, but in many ways is very different since the objectives of a Business English course may be quite significantly different from those of a General English course. Aims always relate to students' work; sometimes this means generalised business skills (e.g. giving presentations), and sometimes something much more technical or academic (if the students' work is highly specialised). For this reason Business English is not a methodically defined category of special English. Likewise, there is no unified description of the syllabus, even though many course books offer a generally-accepted set of functions, structures and vocabulary.

Within Business English courses the student has to work with written discourse and consequently produces spoken or written discourse. Bargiela-Chiappini (2009) describes business discourse as a process of talk and writing between individuals whose main work activities and interests are in the domain of business and who come together for the purpose of doing business. Business discourse is defined as contextual, intertextual, self-reflexive and self-critical founded on the twin notions of discourse—as situated action and of language as work. Baranov and Dobrovoľskij (1996) state that the discourse of business communication is usually viewed as deprived of emotional coloration. In their view, it is assumed that business discourse should be direct and literal, and that idiomatic expressions are seldom used there. However, it is hard to depict completely emotionless discourse and idiomatization is the tool that helps conceal emotions in business discourse. "Therefore the idiomatization of business discourse happens as a result of stereotypical tough process in this area. Speech figurality of a subject, wishing to express his feeling not directly makes the recipient think logically and more intensely in order to understand the meaning." (Baranov and Dobrovoľskij 51, In Korkin 2015). They both claim that in this case idiomatization in business discourse suggests more complicated approach to expressing specific content and thus making the process of understanding harder.

In addition, when teaching Business English, the multicultural aspects need to be taken into consideration. Businesspeople often make contact with their business partners who come from different cultural backgrounds. As a result, there is a need for internationally accepted way of communication. Business English focuses on formulaic language used in practical situations such as recommending, negotiating, giving presentations, and the like.

### **3. Ideational idioms**

Functionalists, e.g. Halliday, tend to regard language primarily as a societal phenomenon, explain linguistic universals as deriving from the universality of the uses in which language is put in human societies, they are inclined to explain children's acquisition of language in terms of the development of the child's communicative needs and abilities in society, and study language in relation to its societal function (Leech 1983).

Halliday's (1970, 1973, 1985) three language functions include: the *ideational function*—language functions as a means of conveying and interpreting experience of the world, the *interpersonal function*—language functions as an expression of one's attitudes and an influence upon the attitudes and behavior of the hearer, and the *textual function*—language functions as a means of constructing a text, i.e. a spoken or written instantiation of language (Leech 1983). Halliday uses the term 'ideational' to designate the macro-function of language realized through the clause and concerned with

articulating the speaker's or writer's experience of the world: participants, actions, and processes, the attributes of the participants and the circumstances associated with actions and processes, i.e. transitivity.

His three language functions can conveniently be applied to a component of a language, in this case a component of the vocabulary, namely *idioms*. They have the potential of appearing anywhere and everywhere, and are marked as occurring in mature written or spoken discourse. The abundance of such expressions in English makes the recognition of an 'idiom principle', strongly realized in idioms, weakly in collocations, very useful as an explanation of the way an important part of vocabulary works (Fernando 1996).

Idioms are informal, colourful and fascinating language. They add not only flavour and additional features to the English language including deeper and wider meaning but also a lot of confusion since their intended meanings are not aligned with their literal meanings. Fernando (1996) describes 'idiom' as a combination of two or more words whose structure is firmly fixed and whose meaning is difficult to determine. She adopts the term 'ideational' to describe the function performed by ideational idioms. In her view, 'ideational idioms' "convey impressionistic representations of aspects of the physical, social, and emotional worlds of a language community" (Fernando 252). Idioms of this type contribute to the subject matter or the content of a discourse and, what is more, enable the language user to talk about the world not only in an impressionistic way, but also in imagist, metaphorical terms.

For the research, Fernando's (1996) classification of idioms has been chosen. According to her, ideational idioms are realized by units *smaller than the clause*: a) *nominals* (e.g. a fair-weather, a piece of cake/piss), b) *verbals* (e.g. make off with, shoot the breeze), c) *adjectivals* (e.g. tall, dark and handsome, tried and trusted), and d) *adverbials* (e.g. face to face, in hot water). These units function as parts of clauses. Ideational idioms can also be *clauses themselves* (e.g. Barking dogs seldom bite., Like father, like son.) (Hrdličková 2015).

#### **4. Research methodology**

The main aim of the present study is to present the corpus of idioms included in the self-help book *Ideational Idioms in Business English Communication*, written by the author. The source of data for the analysis is composed of five Business English course books and a workbook, namely *Market Leader Upper Intermediate* (MLUI), *Market Leader Upper Intermediate Practice File* (MLUI), *Market Leader Intermediate* (MLI), *First Insights into Business* (FIIB), *English for Business Studies* (EFBS), and *Business Result* (BR). The *Market Leader Upper-Intermediate* is the main course book under investigation. The others are also included since some of them were or have been used at the University.

The *Market Leader* presents these units: 1 Communication, 2 International marketing, 3 Building relationships, 4 Success, 5 Job satisfaction, 6 Risk, 7 Management styles, 8 Team building, 9 Raising finance, 10 Customer service, 11 Risk management, and 12 Mergers and acquisitions. The self-help book follows the same structure as the *Market Leader* and apart from ideational idioms it also presents basic business terms, in many cases with their idiomatic equivalents, regarding these topics and popular texts.

On the basis of the above presented information, discourse analysis is applied; both quantitative and qualitative analyses are carried out. The aim of the quantitative analysis is to establish the frequency of occurrence of ideational idioms. Subsequently, the qualitative analysis identifies frequently used phrase patterns, clause patterns and clauses themselves. Finally, the course books are compared and research findings are evaluated.

## 5. Results and discussion

The following research shows the enormous structural variety of English idioms frequently used in the above-mentioned course books.

Table 1 Nominals

Nominal	Nominal	Nominal
<b>a ballpark figure</b>	fringe benefits	the other side of the coin (2x)
a buzz word	give and take (2x)	peace and quiet
the carrot and stick	a golden handshake	the pros and cons (2x)
a cat and mouse game	the golden rule	a quick fix
cold cash	hard cash	a rat race
common sense	the hard sell	<b>red tape</b>
a course of action	hustle and bustle of	a rip-off
a dead end	a high-flyer	a running battle with
deep pockets	<b>the last straw</b>	a loan shark
doom and gloom	a level playing field	<b>small talk</b>
easy money	the lion's share of	a spin doctor
esprit de corps	a lucky break	a sticking point
a fall from grace	no hard and fast rules	(the) team spirit
a fat cat	the nouveau riche	a tête à tête
a feather in sb's cap	the nuts and bolts	a turning point

Table 1 shows that some nominals are used twice in different contexts. Idioms in bold are included in a list of the most common business idioms in American English on the webpage [businessenglishresources.com](http://businessenglishresources.com). Of course, there are many other business idioms of different phrase or clause patterns that will be shown (in bold) in the following tables.

Table 2 Adjectivals

<b>Adjectival</b>	<b>Adjectival</b>	<b>Adjectival</b>
bread-and-butter	hands-on	<b>state-of-the-art</b> (3x)
cutting-edge	hard and fast	tailor-made for
eye-catching (2x)	laissez-faire	top-of-the-range
face-to-face (9x)	soft-sell	tried and trusted
fast-track		

These adjectivals come from different phrase or clause patterns, e.g. bread and butter (n + n non-rev), a fast track (NP), laissez-faire (NP), at/on the cutting edge (PrepP), face to face (Comp/A (NP)), the soft sell (NP), be tailor-made (Verb + Comp), and catch sb's eye (Verb + Direct Object) (Cowie 1993). In addition, it is interesting to see what adjectivals repeatedly occur in the course books.

Table 3 Adverbials

Adverbial	Adverbial	Adverbial
all the same	face to face (4x)	<b>off the top of sb's head</b> (2x)
as a matter of fact	for one reason or another	on no account
at cross-purposes (3x)	for the sake of <i>sth</i>	on the one hand ... on the other hand (5x)
at all costs	from time to time (2x)	on <i>sb's</i> own (2x)
at length	a great deal	<b>round the clock</b>
at long last	in black and white	straight from the horse's mouth
back and forth	in excess of <i>sth</i> (2x)	to the letter
big time	in the long run (2x)	to no avail
by and large	in the long term	under <i>sb's</i> nose
by trial and error	in the wake of <i>sth</i>	with a view to doing <i>sth</i>
<b>by word of mouth</b>	no matter what	under <i>sb's</i> breath
(the) chances are (that)		

It can be said that adverbials, after verbals and nominals, are the third frequently used type of idioms in the business discourse.

Table 4 Verbals

Verbal	Verbal	Verbal
air <i>sb's</i> views	get a kick out of <i>sth</i>	know a thing or two about
be a dab hand	<b>get down to business</b>	know <i>sth</i> inside out
be all talk and no action	get on <i>sb's</i> nerves	learn <i>sb's</i> lesson
be at a loss for words	get on top of <i>sb</i>	lose face
not be the end of the world	get the picture (2x)	lose sight of <i>sth</i>
be half the battle	get straight to the point	make the best use of <i>sth</i>
be <b>in the black</b>	get there	make a go of <i>sth</i>
be in the doldrums	get to the bottom of <i>sth</i>	make a point of
be in the know	get to grips with <i>sth</i>	make <i>sb's</i> fortune
be <b>in the red</b>	get the wrong end of the stick	make <i>sb's</i> mark
be like talking to a brick wall	give <i>sb</i> a buzz	make <i>sb's</i> point
be <b>on the ball</b>	give <i>sb</i> carte blanche	make up <i>sb's</i> mind (2x)
be on the blink (2x)	give <i>sb</i> the low-down (2x)	move the goalposts
be on the line	not give <i>sth</i> a second thought	the odds are stacked against <i>sb</i>
be on the same wavelength	go bust (2x)	pass the buck
be on the warpath	go the distance	pave the way for <i>sth</i>
be out for blood	<b>go the extra mile</b>	pay lip service to <i>sth</i>
be out of line	go head to head with <i>sb</i>	pay over the odds
be out of the picture	go over <i>sb's</i> head	play a practical joke
be out of the question	go sour	play <i>sb's</i> cards right (2x)
be plain sailing	have a finger in every pie	pull <i>sb's</i> weight

be thin on the ground	have a say	put it <b>in a nutshell</b> (2x)
be touch-and-go whether	have an open mind about	put <i>sb's</i> cards on the table
be up in arms about	have <i>sth</i> in mind (4x)	put <i>sb</i> back on track (2x)
be up to <i>sth</i>	have <i>sth</i> on <i>sb's</i> hands	put <i>sb</i> in the picture
bear fruit	have <i>sth</i> on <i>sb's</i> mind	put <i>sth</i> on hold
bear the brunt of <i>sth</i>	have second thoughts about	put <i>yourself</i> into <i>sb's</i> shoes
bear <i>sth</i> in mind (4x)	have a will of <i>sb's</i> own	slip <i>sb's</i> mind
beat about the bush (3x)	hedge <i>sb's</i> bets (3x)	speak <i>sb's</i> mind
break bread with <i>sb</i>	it makes no odds	spring to mind
bring out the best in <i>sb</i>	keep an eye on <i>sb</i>	stand on <i>sb's</i> own feet
can't make head nor/or tail of <i>sth</i> (2x)	keep an open mind (2x)	stick to <i>sb's</i> guns
change <i>sb's</i> mind (3x)	keep in touch with (3x)	take a back seat to <i>sth</i>
come to mind (3x)	keep <i>sb</i> at arm's length	take <i>sb's</i> point
come up trumps	keep <i>sb's</i> ear to the ground	take their toll
cook up a storm	keep <i>sb's</i> head down	talk business
count the cost	keep <i>sb</i> <b>in the loop</b> (3x)	<b>think outside the box</b> (2x)
do battle with <i>sb</i> about <i>sth</i>	keep <i>sth</i> in mind	throw good money after bad
draw the line	keep <i>sb</i> posted	tie the knot
drop a hint	keep <i>sb</i> up to date	tread on <i>sb's</i> toes
the end justifies the means	keep track of <i>sth</i>	turn the page
fall short of <i>sth</i>	keep <i>yourself</i> to <i>yourself</i>	when the going gets tough
fight a losing battle	kiss goodbye to <i>sth</i>	wine and dine <i>sb</i>
find <i>sb's</i> feet		

On the webpage [talktocanada.com](http://talktocanada.com), Anderson introduces a list of 52 most common business idioms from the New York Times, e.g. think out of the box, give and take, in the office loop, in the black, in the red, on the right track, on the ball, and so forth. According to him, mastering these business idioms will made one's Business English spectacular.

Table 5 Clauses

Clause	Clause
Beggars can't be choosers.	Lend your money and lose a friend.
Better luck next time!	Money is (no) object.
The customer is always right.	Money talks.
Don't <b>put all your eggs in one basket</b> .	Practice makes perfect.
Good heavens!	Prevention is better than cure.
He who pays the piper calls the tune.	Time will tell.
I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine.	When in Rome, do as the Romans do. (2x)
It's a small world.	You must be joking!

It is quite surprising that also clauses themselves (Fernando 1996) are frequently used in business discourse. Apart from good heavens, money is no object, and you must be joking, the others are proverbs.

Table 6 Overall results—Idioms in the course books

Idiom	MLUI	MLI	EFBS	BR	FIIB	Total
Nominals	35	1	6	—	3	45
Adjectivals	9	1	—	—	3	13
Adverbials	28	—	5	1	—	34
Verbals	112	3	12	2	1	130
Clauses	13	—	1	2	—	16
Total	197	5	24	5	7	238

Overall results clearly demonstrate the highest frequency of idioms in the *Market Leader*.

The following tables show ideational idioms from introductory texts, explaining basic business terms concerning the twelve topics, and popular texts in the *Ideational Idioms in Business English Communication*. It is necessary to say that idioms are used in both academic and journalistic styles. Similarly, as in the first part of the study, ideational idioms in bold are frequently used business idioms.

Table 7 Nominals in academic and popular texts

Nominal	Nominal	Nominal
a battle cry	a course of action (3x)	the pros and cons
a big gun	the end of the world	a quick fix (2x)
<b>the big picture</b> (4x)	an ice-breaker	a quid pro quo
the bottom line (2x)	lock, stock, and barrel	(the) rank and file
a bright spark	the movers and shakers	rose-tinted glasses
a call to arms	the new kid on the block	seed money
a change for the better	part and parcel of <i>sth</i> (2x)	a shining example
a clean slate	a pipe dream	<b>small talk</b> (2x)
common ground	a play on words	the status quo (2x)
common sense		

Table 8 Adjectivals in academic and popular texts

Adjectival	Adjectival	Adjectival
bottom-line	half-hearted	a priori
crystal clear	hands-on	roller-coaster
day-to-day (2x)	long-term (5x)	short-term (3x)
down-to-earth	in question	spur-of-the-moment
face-to-face (7x)	laissez-faire	tit-for-tat
fly-by-night	one-to-one	<b>word-of-mouth</b> (2x)

The adjectivals come from phrase patterns such as on the spur of the moment (A (PrepP)), crystal clear (Comp (AdjP)), in the long/short term (A (PrepP)), tit for tat (n + n non-rev), and so on, and they function as adjuncts (A) or components (Comp) (Cowie 1993).

Table 9 Adverbials in academic and popular texts

Adverbial	Adverbial	Adverbial
and so on/and so forth	a great deal of <i>sth</i> (2x)	on the other hand (6x)
at the end of the day	here and now	on top of <i>sth</i>
at <i>sb</i> 's fingertips	in other words (4x)	once upon a time
at large	in <i>sb</i> 's own backyard	per capita
down the road	in <i>sb</i> 's own right	to name a few (2x)
first and foremost	in vain	whether <i>sb</i> likes it or not
for the sake of <i>sth</i>		

The following adverbials function as disjuncts, adjuncts or conjuncts, e.g. like it or not (Disj), once upon a time (A), and in other words (Conj (PrepP)).

Table 10 Verbals in academic and popular texts

Verbal	Verbal	Verbal
be at odds with	get there	play games
be in a tight spot	go overboard	pop the question
be on the line	gum up the works	rub elbows with <i>sb</i>
bear fruit	<b>sb's hands are tied</b>	run the gamut from <i>sth</i>
call the shots	<b>keep sb's eye on the ball</b>	run the risk (of <i>sth</i> ) (2x)
the chances are	keep <i>sth</i> under wraps	second-guess <i>sb</i>
come in all shapes and sizes	keep <i>sb</i> up to date	sink or swim
come to mind	lay eyes on <i>sb</i>	stack the deck
come <i>sb</i> 's way	learn the hard way	start from scratch
fall foul of <i>sth</i>	make it <i>sb</i> 's business to do <i>sth</i>	turn the tables on <i>sb</i>
fall short (of <i>sth</i> )	make a move	take risks
fly in the face of <i>sth</i>	make a point of (2x)	take steps (3x)
<b>get <i>sth</i> off the ground</b>	make a quick buck	take <i>sth</i> with a grain of salt
get <i>sth</i> right (2x)	move the goalposts	throw <i>sb</i> in at the deep end
get <i>sth</i> wrong	paint a clear/rosy picture of <i>sth</i> (3x)	wreak havoc

Verbals are the most frequently used type of idioms not only in the course books but also in both academic and popular texts.

Table 11 Clauses in academic and popular texts

Clause	Clause
The customer is always right.	Look before you leap.
Don't <b>put all your eggs in one basket.</b>	Practice makes perfect.
From the frying pan into the fire.	There is no room for doubt.
The grass is not always greener.	When in Rome ...

Table 11 also shows short versions of idioms. Native speakers often use them rather than using the whole expressions, e.g. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence., When in Roman do as the Romans do.

Table 12 Overall results—Idioms in academic and popular texts

Idioms in academic and popular texts	Total
Nominals	28
Adjectivals	18
Adverbials	20
Verbals	45
Clauses	8
Total	119

The overall results in Table 6 and Table 12 demonstrate 357 ideational idioms. All of them represent the corpus of idioms occurring in five Business English course books, as well as introductory academic texts and popular texts in *Ideational Idioms in Business English Communication*. Čermák (2007) states that the text rich in the occurrence of idioms nowadays is the one in which there is one idiom per 80–120 words on average. Regarding this small study, it can be said that the texts under investigation are highly idiomatic because the frequency of occurrence is greater than the above-mentioned average.

### Conclusion

Research has shown that idioms are very often used in business discourse. If the businessperson does not understand them, he/she may get lost in conversation. According to Kavka and Zybert (2004), one challenging issue worth following is that idioms can be studied as a source of language change. It is wonderful if one is able to use idioms as packages of information and express him/herself economically or use them to ensure cohesion and make the semantic unity of a discourse explicit. Business English idioms may be the best way for the student to achieve a higher level of fluency and accuracy.

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## Intercultural Communicative Competence and the Global Competition Phenomenon

*Abstract: Due to increased globalization and changing labour market needs, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been receiving significant attention in higher education (HE). This paper addresses the theoretical and practical questions connected with the changing goals and approaches in HE, focusing primarily on the role of language, intercultural learning and teaching in economies where the interconnectedness of people is increasing. Building on the theoretical background of international and intercultural communication, considering English as a lingua franca, taking into account the employers' requirements, the quality and effectiveness of education, and the desire to better the performance, this article assesses the rationale behind the acquisition of intercultural language competence in pursuit of purposeful ICC development. It also considers the challenges and opportunities in the field of international project cooperation, while identifying shifts in teaching approaches and language curricula in HE.*

### Introduction

Over the past decade, the way people work and learn has been changing under the influence of technology, political socio-economic developments and the rapidly increasing interconnectedness of society world. This continues to create diverse ways of interpreting the surrounding environment as well as relationships with other people. People have to face new challenges in the contact zone between cultures especially in terms of religion, conflict resolutions, communication styles, migration, and sustainability. Cultures, which regulate life and identity (Jandt 6-34), do not respect political and geographical borders and this creates a need to recognize and handle behavioural patterns and stress arising from various unfamiliar settings. In addressing these social challenges, some new trends have arisen from the increasingly global labour market with an inevitable impact on education.

### Key Concepts

The term "English as a lingua franca" (ELF) has emerged as a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different mother tongues. Since only about one out of every four English users in the world is a native speaker (Crystal 2003), most ELF interactions take place between "non-native" English speakers. When English is chosen as a means of communication among people from different primary language backgrounds, across lingua-cultural boundaries, the preferred term is "English as a lingua franca" (Seidlhofer 133-58), although the terms "English as a medium of intercultural communication" (Meierkord 1996), and "English as an international language" (Jenkins 2000, Medgyes 8), are also used.

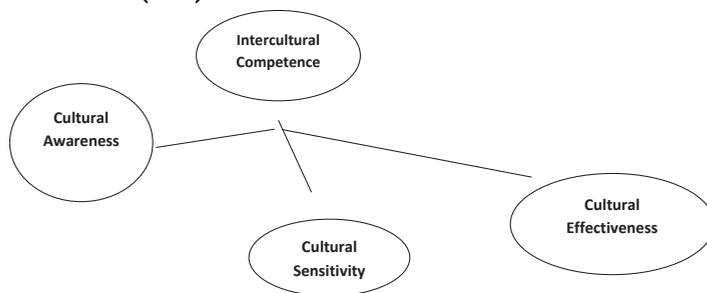
Communicating through English has been seen as opening the door to the global labour market and better jobs. At the same time, English stopped being the carrier of essentially one culture but "that of cultural heritage of all those individuals and communities who use English in their everyday lives, each user giving it a distinct identity of their own" (Medgyes 3). With reference to Byram's work and the Common European Framework, effective intercultural communicators have the ability to perform appropriately in various contexts complementing the competencies and skills defined as intercultural communicative competence and specified as follows: recognizing the influence of one's own

culture and the way one views themselves and others, knowing how to relate and interpret meaning, developing critical awareness, knowing how to discover cultural information and knowing how to relativize the values, attitudes and beliefs of others.

Intercultural competence, as seen by Chen and Starosta (Chen and Starosta 353-83), is presented as a three-part process that leads to *cultural awareness* including more self-awareness; *cultural sensitivity* with the focus on values and attitudes of openness, non-judgemental attitudes and social relaxation (Figure one); and finally *cultural effectiveness* modelling what to do and not to do in different intercultural environments.

Figure one: Intercultural Competence Dimensions.

Based on Chen and Starosta (1996)



Source: the author

In the following part of the article a summary of contribution from the area of intercultural communication competence drawing upon the concepts of ELF and ICC is presented. The author considers employers', teachers' and students' perspectives as documented in two recent national and transnational studies, and illustrates best practice piloted and implemented to HE language education by teachers at four significant European universities from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal and Spain. Finally, the limitations and implications for the future inclusion of ICC as seen particularly at the University of Applied Sciences in Budapest, Hungary, and MIAS School of Business and Interdisciplinary Studies, the Czech Technical University (CTU) in Prague, the Czech Republic are outlined.

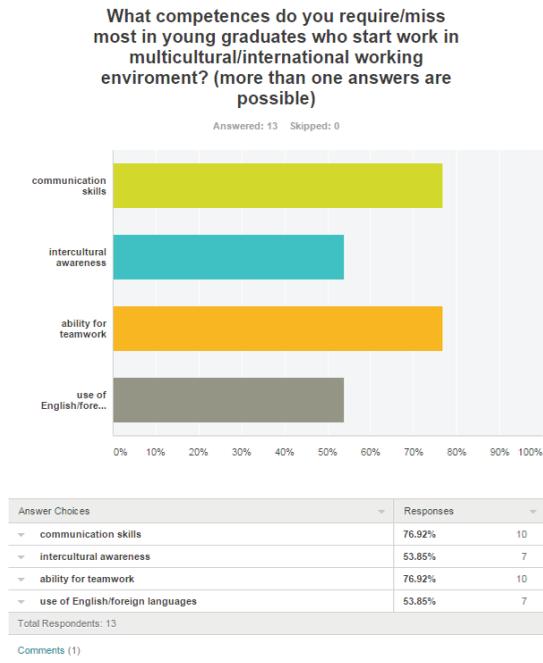
### **ICC and the language education**

Although language education has undergone noticeable content transformation since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and interdisciplinary studies, i.e. combining two or more academic disciplines into one activity, has become more common, intercultural communication remains one of the weakest components of the curricula and teaching "culture" is irregular and random in language classes. It is often limited to life and institutions although the objectives that are to be achieved in intercultural understanding involve social and intercultural competencies rather than facts. HE teachers themselves admit uncertainty in ICC ensuing from insufficient knowledge as they lack adequate training as well as in-service support. Research carried out among 50 HE language educators at CTU in 2015 (Hřebáčková 2015) confirmed that the respondents usually do not take a consistent ICC approach based on theoretical background. They mediate experience with other cultures mostly through comparing habits and systems which they classify as a "safe" activity. Discussing social and political topics was

seen as more challenging and all respondents suggested staying neutral and unbiased. When asked about publications and teaching resources, newspaper articles and Internet videos were used in most cases. Only two respondents specified theoretical resources referring to Hofstede and his classification of values and dimensions. Nevertheless, being aware of possible clashes, the respondents still consider including topics on cultural awareness as an important part of language education.

When the students' point of view was investigated and analysed in regards to their intercultural preparedness for the global workplace, similar common challenges to those of the teachers emerged. Needs analysis carried out among students at four European universities in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal and Spain between December 2014 and January 2015 showed that 61 per cent of students had never been trained in ICC and only 36 per cent realised they lacked opportunities in higher education to develop intercultural skills (Morgado, Gomes and Arau Ribeiro 2016). The need for graduates to have effective ICC skills and training was also reflected in a needs analysis among employers as part of the same study. 58 per cent of respondents reported that students lacked sufficient ICC competences and 63 per cent did not provide ICC training for new employees. None of the thirteen international companies operating mostly in the countries mentioned above found new graduates were well prepared to work in a multicultural environment. Figure two shows a balanced opinion of the employers on competences required or lacking in young graduates. 77 per cent of employers found communication skills and team work most relevant in international working environments, while 54 per cent of employers gave priority to intercultural awareness and use of English/foreign languages.

Figure two: Competencies missed in young graduates



Source: the author

In order to obtain further information about jobs/positions, employers were asked to specify which positions required ICC skills. Some of their answers are below:

- all positions
- marketing specialists, customer specialists/logistics,
- banquetting department, sales
- project coordinators responsible for international humanitarian assistance, social workers - international team members
- international projects engineers, service engineers, sales managers
- secretaries, commercial sector workers, board of directors
- visiting professors; foreign students;
- developers, system engineers, project leaders, businessmen
- all roles on CEE level MACH program - Microsoft Academy for college hires

In the follow-up question specifying how often people in these jobs/positions are exposed to intercultural situations, only 8 per cent of employers indicated that it is less than once a month, whereas a 75 per cent stated that it is very often if not every day.

In the same study by Morgado, Gomes and Arau Ribeiro, personal competences and work-related competences in contexts of high mobility of today's multicultural environment were identified. At the level of general skills, included were for example, awareness of diversity, independent thought, revising experience, continuous learning and openness. Language proficiency in social interaction, etiquette, using appropriate registers, listening skills, ability to interpret text and cultural perspectives were specifically connected with learning foreign languages.

These findings resulted in an extensive pilot project entitled ICCAGE (Intercultural Communicative Competence—Advantage for Global Employability) which developed new potential ways of teaching ICC (ICCAGE 2015) in HE and enabled the participants to understand and appreciate each other's didactical practices in teaching language.

The project combined topic-based modules and task-based activities with the main objective aimed at incorporating innovative intercultural elements and online virtual intercultural exchanges into HE language teaching. It aimed to establish more effective and dynamic learning environments that could combine features of e-learning as well as of more traditional in-class instruction. In line with new trends and directions in this field, the project offered an opportunity for the participating universities to support their own internationalization policies by engaging students in an online dialogue with partners in geographically distant countries as they built on Internet communication tools and online intercultural exchanges, most recently called telecollaboration (Helm 197-217). In addition, the project gave participants an opportunity to develop intercultural sensitivity which allows for the acceptance of other perceptions of the world, "to mediate between different perspectives, and to be conscious of their evaluations of difference" (Byram 5). This is seen as a valuable skill for employers in a global labour market and one that students often lack.

The selected topics included working in international teams, mediating between cultures, dealing with perceptions of space and time and collaborating online and focusing on three target competences (language, ICC and ICT) while adapting the teaching/learning objectives to the intercultural business environment HE graduates will inevitably enter. Students worked in multinational teams and discussed what is negotiable and non-negotiable from a cultural point of view; they experienced different ways of telecollaborating, while in the module "Living with Global and

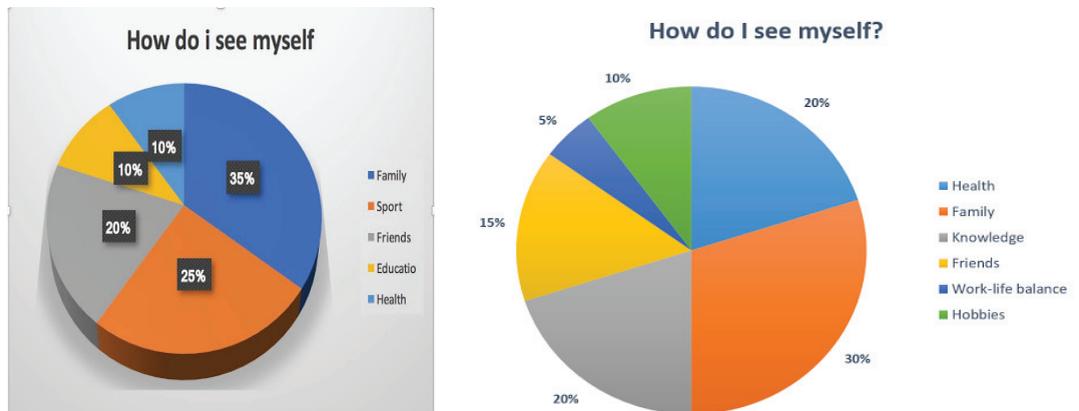
Local Identities” they analysed preserving their own cultural identities while becoming more global.

In the case study below, the author elaborate in more detail upon the findings as piloted with 84 students at the University of Applied sciences, the Budapest Business School, and CTU, MIAS School of Business and Interdisciplinary Studies in the academic year 2016-17 to illustrate practical ways of developing the students´ knowledge, attitudes and skills in areas that the employers value.

### Case Study

In the module “Living With Local and Global Identities” the students worked with some concepts of culture, analysed cultural values and dimensions, identified and contrasted global and local features (both visible and hidden) and practiced how to communicate and cooperate online in culturally mixed virtual teams. They were engaged in a series of national and international telecollaborative tasks which can be categorized according to O´Dowd and Ware (O´Dowd and Ware 173-78) into three main types: information exchange, comparison and collaboration. Students started with information exchange tasks to introduce themselves, their school, area of study and culture as they did not know each other. As shown in Figure 3 a) and b), they used verbal descriptions as well as cultural pie charts and videos. The second task, focused on creating and exchanging knowledge quizzes, was more demanding as it required not only exchange, but also comparison and critical analysis of knowledge of the home and target cultures. The findings were summarized by writing a transnational report. The subsequent two collaborative tasks, carrying out an opinion poll and creating videos, required students to work together across cultures to produce a joint result, which required detailed planning, intensive communicating, coordination and negotiation for agreement on the final output. The overall goal of the international collaboration was to profile what Dignen describes as an international working style (Dignen 9). The students focused on selecting relevant information, understanding cultural diversity, researching and simulating processes of business environment (data collection, information exchange, online meetings, e mail confirmations, discussion and negotiations, reaching agreement and drawing conclusions).

Figure three: Informative tasks  
Examples of students´ online introductions—mixed language levels:  
My cultural programming (a)



## My cultural programming (b)

*To tell the truth, I think that family is the most important thing in my life. Luckily my family members live near to my hometown so our relationship is really good. In second place are my friends, because they've been a part of my life for several years. After that, the third thing is sport. As I mentioned, I did athletics and played handball, and nowadays I usually do Crossfit or TRX (...)*

*Source: the author*

The project covered eight to ten weeks of the term as each university schedule differed. The tasks and activities fitted a general language course (Budapest, Hungary) as well as an intercultural course (CTU, the Czech Republic). Some of the tasks were completed out-of-class due to different scheduling and the students were given deadlines for submitting and uploading the outputs. The telecollaborative part of the project was entirely new for the teachers and the students. As it was part of a pilot project, the teachers were free to clarify and elaborate on the instructions to fit their relevant classroom contexts. At the end of the course, students were awarded Certificates for intercollegiate project participation as part of their course assessment. The certificate served not only as a recognition of their work and cooperation but as proof of training or a "training badge" for future employers.

### **Motivation and aims**

The main aim was to innovate standard teaching approaches and to develop a wide range of skills for the students to interact more effectively in real-life business situations; the project tried to fill in the expectation gap between school and practice. Specific priorities were to increase motivation and implement elements which would support creativity, critical thinking and reflections on the students' own cultural identities, which affect one's perspective when interpreting and evaluating unfamiliar behaviour patterns. In the feedback, participating students confirmed that they enjoyed the project activities, found them practical and inspiring and a good alternative to regular traditional classes. They appreciated the autonomy of the team work, relative freedom to organize tasks out-of-class and choose their own topics (e.g. artefacts and scenarios for creating videos). They welcomed the interdisciplinary nature of courses as they recognized the need to apply many social and management skills (e.g. to achieve consensus and meet deadlines across cultures). The students' English level was intermediate (B1 and B2). Language development arose from the desire and need to express complex ideas and opinions more accurately. The language styles of the students' online exchanges and negotiations were natural and informal. However, the adoption of a formal register (e.g. in writing transnational reports, which required an academic and factual genre) proved to be challenging and more problematic. Observing the students' online communication from the teacher's perspective, it confirmed Kramsch and Thorne arguments that it is necessary to "(...) prepare teachers to transfer genres of their local educational systems into global learning environments, and to prepare students to deal with global communicative practices that require far more than a local communicative competence" (Kramsch and Thorne 96).

### **Successes and lessons learnt**

The project's module activities brought new perspectives, authenticity and more interpersonal and intercultural interaction for all participants. Students managed to complete the tasks on national and international levels alike, resulting in personal satisfaction. The telecollaborative activities were carried out enthusiastically although they required frequent clarification from the teachers. Despite

being complex and sometimes difficult to integrate into a course syllabus, these activities proved beneficial. They provided students with innovative training compared to traditional textbooks and lectures. In the post-course questionnaire measuring the ICC impact, students were generally very positive about the project and found it helpful, informative and enjoyable. Most students agreed that:

- they understand they need to adapt their language and communication styles to others' needs,
- they have learnt how to better cooperate with people from other cultures,
- they understand that although cultures influence people, not all people from the same culture act the same way,
- they realise that they need to study and learn more about how other cultures work and communicate in a business context,
- they need social and other soft skills to communicate effectively with others
- 

They also agreed that they would recommend the activities to other groups. They suggested the activities become a regular component of the course syllabus.

From the students' feedback (abbreviated):

1. The project provided completely new experiences and the opportunity to look at the world through other people's eyes and discover different layers, aspects and cultural backgrounds(...) to analyse and introduce from the intercultural perspective(...) and to overcome bias and stay open to new challenges(...) (second year MA student in Project Management)
2. "(...)to be the team leader does not mean to be accepted and respected as a leader. I was annoyed at first but then I had to change my style(...)" (first year MSc student in Project Management)
3. "We managed Skype conversations (...)that helped us to get to know each other and it helped us to build a working relationship because having the opportunity to talk with each other "face to face" makes the whole situation more personal. It was also a good opportunity to practice language skills." (second year BSc student in a General English Course, Tourism and Catering)
4. "My discovery about myself was that I am more creative than I thought(...)" (second year MSc student in Project Management)
5. "Another thing I have learnt is the importance of soft-talk when working in groups. It is always good to know who will your team-mate be, so if there was one thing I would not change, it would definitely be the first "semi-official" Skype call before the first "project call". It is important for the project itself. I guess this helped us to create a better picture before starting to solve the project issue". (second year BSc student in International Management and Business)

### **Challenges and progressing onward**

In summarizing the practical uses of the module tasks and activities, four main areas for improving the overall performance were identified. Reflecting on the potential problems, ways of reducing or otherwise managing the tasks' impact are suggested below.

#### **1 Schedule**

The term started almost a month earlier in Budapest Business School than in CTU Prague. There

were also several state, and semester holidays, which complicated the communication between teams and adherence to deadlines. Classes were held at very different times making Skype synchronous communication during classes impossible. However, this was compensated for by out-of-class assignments which were left to individual teams to coordinate with the main responsibility on each team leader. While it gave the students more freedom, it also required more reliability and responsibility, which most students accepted and appreciated despite the initial hesitations. Several factors to reduce scheduling complications may be beneficial to consider including careful and early planning, sending follow-up e mails after class, being prepared to give alternative/additional instructions, adapting to new contexts, choosing reliable partners and good team leaders.

## 2 Communication and telecollaboration

Asynchronous communication required considerable time from the students to be able to complete especially the telecollaborative tasks. Good coordination was essential. A team leader was appointed for each team on both national and international levels who were personally responsible for sharing messages and communicating information, keeping deadlines, and managing the task delivery. Some teams were less experienced, culturally shy, and needed more guidance from the teacher, which caused unexpected communication gaps and some initial chaos. As a result, some deadlines needed to be rescheduled, which required negotiation skills as well as strong social skills. Some students complained about unequal participation which, in their views, resulted from unequal credit requirements between the academic institutions.

As for communication channels, the students used Google+ for initial cultural introductions, general comments and uploading project outputs. With an increasing number of messages Google+ became disorganized, and a limitation was that there could be only links to documents uploaded to the Google site, not individual documents per se. Skype was used for virtual meetings. Gradually, students turned to other social media like Facebook, and preferably worked via closed communities sometimes excluding their teachers from group communication. Surprisingly, at the end of the project many students (especially those with work experience) admitted that the intercultural communication challenges or even failures they had to face and overcome was useful practical training for real-life work although many said they would rather avoid it. Further risk mitigation should include having alternative solutions, being more flexible, learning more about communication strategies and styles, anticipating technical difficulties and allocating ample time for tasks. At the institutional level, teachers' different attitudes to online and out-of-class learning and the access to technology may indirectly influence the students' attitudes and outcomes.

## 3 Tasks

The two most important aspects of implementation are for teachers to be organised and to communicate clearly to the students. They need to organize the class, explain the aims, tasks and outputs clearly, foresee potential problems and agree on strategies and contingency plans if needed. This may appear time consuming, but is worth the effort. Therefore, sufficient time needs to be allocated not only for the specified tasks, but also for the initial introduction and final reflections, assisting students identify possible reasons for miscommunication or even communication failures.

The comparative tasks were piloted and tested in both culturally homogenous and culturally mixed groups. They were easy to modify with the respect to the particular cultures involved. However, more detailed teacher instructions were required for the telecollaborative task of creating and assessing

videos introducing local specifics and global identities as there was little or no experience by either the participating teachers or students.

In general, all three types of tasks worked well and the worksheets were found practical. Some more options were added (e.g. shorter quiz options which better respected potential time limits) and the teacher's manual was extended. Recommendations for less experienced teachers include studying the teacher's notes carefully and adapting them to individual needs, considering the class's practical language skills and allocating ample time for the completion of complex tasks, in particular telecollaborative ones, and for giving feedback.

#### 4 Teamwork

Although the team dynamics differed, the Czech national teams worked well as they knew each other better and were more experienced in team work. Internationally, guidance and consultancy with teachers was inevitable. Distributing and sharing information between teams and encouraging team ownership was challenging for some students as they preferred to act as individuals and complained about unequal performance. The initial disappointment that things were not progressing as expected finally turned into a positive learning experience, i.e. students learnt to consider different perspectives, to be more flexible, stay positive and alternate communication and leadership styles. A way to minimize team difficulties could include choosing reliable team leaders, clearly defining roles and responsibilities, giving regular feedback, practicing the language style of meetings and negotiations.

#### In Conclusion

If HE institutions want to continue to prepare their students for a competitive, international labour market, educators need to identify opportunities to introduce ICC training into the curricula where appropriate. The ICCAGE pilot project facilitated this opportunity and several of the lessons learnt concerning schedules, communication and telecollaboration, tasks and teamwork have been presented in this article. Despite various challenges that may discourage HE educators, ICC training with a telecollaborative learning dimension brings new experiences, increases learners' motivation and curiosity and enables teachers to combine more modern methods with traditional in-class teaching. Nevertheless, it requires pedagogical tolerance and willingness to adapt to new course designs and structures as well as shifts in foreign language acquisition in the direction of avoiding conflict, minimizing misunderstanding, checking comprehension, and responding in adequate ways. The benefits for companies have yet to be seen but participant feedback indicated that those who participated gained significant insight into themselves and use of English as well as working with others in an international context.

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## Linguistic Analysis of Roald Dahl's Nonce Lexis

*Abstract: Occasionalisms (or nonce words respectively) created by R. Dahl for specific literary purposes to amuse children's reading audience are the subject matter of the paper. By means of qualitative-quantitative analysis, Dahl's occasionalisms, well-known as Dahlisms, are examined from the aspect of structural linguistics focusing on the way of their coinage and semantics. From the point of their coinage the focus is on word-formative processes involved in creation of Dahlisms. From the point of lexical semantics the emphasis is put on the denotative and connotative meanings of Dahl's specific lexis. Reason to study, examine, describe, and analyse this specific type of lexis is that this helps to describe the smooth line between actual and potential words. Among other things, our aim is to contribute to the discussion what a word in general is, what an actual word is, and what a potential word is, as it seems it is not easy to distinguish these phenomena.*

### Introduction

Occurrence of this paper was motivated by Roald Dahl's centenary in 2016. There were various celebrations all around the world to commemorate his works and to extend the circle of his fans. One of those events to remember Dahl's work and his specific, creative, and fabulous language was (without any doubt) first and original dictionary summarizing and listing all his words and expressions he had ever created himself. The dictionary was published by Oxford University Press in 2016 thanks to its editor Susan Rennie who enlisted all relevant expressions used by Dahl, many of which became known as Dahlisms. Dictionary was meant for children to function as an explanatory lexicographical work, however, enriched by literary and nonce words used by Dahl himself. On one hand, there are listed many expressions which are commonly used in English, such as *author*, *bounce*, or *lexicographer*. On the other hand, there are listed nonce words coined by Dahl for his specific literary purposes or words which were modified by him for the same reasons, e.g. *exunctly*, *huggybee*, *mudburger*, etc. Susan Rennie, who compiled the dictionary, based all entries (be it actual or potential words) on excerpts from all Dahl's books for children (i.e. from *The BFG*, *Matilda*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, etc.) and thus creating an extended piece of work suitable for further (linguistic or other kind of) research.

Coining and/or borrowing new words are universal phenomena typical for Indo-European languages. Novel expressions, neologisms, are coined for various reasons; usually the naming need is the case. Authors of children's books, however, create neologisms in order to attract young readers' attention and to amuse them at the same time. By means of new coinages, writers express their literary and language wit, humour, pun, creativity showing other dimensions of language possibilities. Many nonce words (occasionalisms/hapax legomena) are created for specific literary purpose.

### Aims

- To examine the borderline between the concepts of actual and potential words.
- To prove that potential words can enter category of actual words not only among native speakers by means of their usage, but their acceptability is proved by prestigious OED.
- To investigate the literary lexis of children's author Dahl who himself created hundreds of new expressions from the point of semantics and word-formative processes.

## Research hypotheses

- Based on general linguistic and language knowledge, the majority of excerpted expressions are to be common nouns,
- In terms of word-formative processes and rules it is supposed that derivation and compounding are the two prevailing (i.e. dominant) word-formative ways of coining excerpted words,
- Majority of excerpted expressions are literary nonce words coined ad hoc for specific literary purpose(s), however, at least a small percentage may be considered actual words as well proved by their occurrence in the OED.

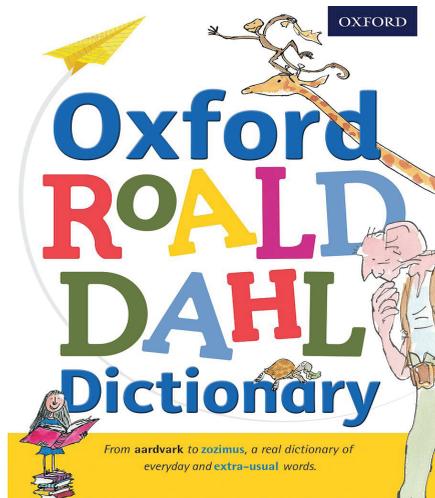
## Research methods

Various research methods have been selected to reach our aims. First, method of excerpt was applied when seeking novel expressions. Second, identification of potential words in the text was requested. Third, classification following particular criteria, was applied. Excerpted expressions are classified in accordance with the following criteria: a) word class, b) way of coinage (particular word-formative process/es, borrowing from other language or stylistic layer of native vocabulary, semantic shift of already existing word-form). Fourth, for the purpose of our investigation we have decided to apply quantitative and qualitative analyses. Fifth, interpretation of analyses is provided.

## Research corpus

Primary material suitable for our research has been chosen in the form of a specific dictionary listing all known Dahl's actual and/or potential expressions he had ever coined or used in his works. *Oxford Roald Dahl Dictionary* (henceforth referred to as *ORDD*) was published by Oxford University Press in 2016 and its chief editor was Susan Rennie (as presented in Introduction). *ORDD* (see the picture 1 below) was in fact the main research source of data excerpted, identified, listed, classified, analysed and further interpreted.

Picture 1 Oxford Roald Dahl Dictionary (2016)



Roald Dahl (1916–1990) is an author of many books for children and adults. In his children’s books, he is believed to coin and popularize around 8,000 words (Cooper online), expressions, and phrases, now all included on ORDD published in 2016.

### Actual vs. potential words

The concept of word itself has been the source of controversy for a long time in linguistics (Jackson, Zé Etienne 49 or Štulajterová, Jesenská 43). However, it can be stated that “word” represents a kind of thought unit (compare Jackson, Zé Etienne 49) whose form (phonetic and graphic) is more or less stable. New autosemantic words are coined for various reasons every year. Some of these are marked as nonce words.

According to Štulajterová a nonce word is “a new meaning of an existing word” (105) or “a spontaneous and elusive word based on a certain semantic change that is almost imperceptible to the linguistic observer until the word is written” (Štulajterová, Jesenská 105). Arnold describes nonce words as items “coined for one occasion” (Arnold 234) which is nothing else but occasionalism (hapax legomena). Galperin recognises several layers of vocabulary mutually related and overlapping (neutral, colloquial, literary, etc.) and within the literary vocabulary he distinguishes common literary words, terms and learned words, poetic words, archaic words, barbarisms and foreign words, and literary coinages including nonce words (Galperin 72). At the same time, he understands a nonce word as a type of neologism “coined to suit one particular occasion” (Galperin 102) which is the same definition as Arnold provides.

However, Galperin notices that nonce words live on the verge of literary language and very frequently “remind us of the writers who coined them” (Galperin 102). A couple of examples may be mentioned to support this statement: *morish* (= a little more, A. Christie), *not-thereness* (Huxley), *to be mother-in-lawed*, *aunted*, *uncled*, *cousined* (Steinbeck), *to be the most bestest good one* (H. E. Bates). All the mentioned instances refer to the strength of language to create new words by means of word-formative processes. Some authors “borrow” words from other writers. This can be demonstrated on an adjective *frightsome* (frightening and fearsome, to cause fright) used by Dahl in his *BFG*: *It was a frightsome poinsnowse viper! It was a dreadly dangerous vind-screen viper!* It is obvious that there are more shifts from spelling and word-formative norms. But these are to be disregarded for time being. *Frightsome* is an old expression that was used for the very first time several hundreds of years ago (Rennie 92). If we are to believe to Cooper, the expression was used “by the Scottish poet and army officer William Cleland in 1689, in which he refers to *walled cities (and) frightsome forts*” (Cooper online). *Online Etymology Dictionary*, however, does not know this expression. *English Oxford Living Dictionaries*, on the other hand, describe the expression as Scottish informal word meaning “causing fright; frightening, frightful” (online). It is believed to have its origin in the late 17th century when used by William Cleland. *Frightsome* is an expression revived by Dahl in his children’s work *The BFG*. Though archaic, the expression is fairly comprehensible to native speakers of English as well as to English learners as far as there are number of words coined by means of derivational morpheme *-some* (carrying the meaning “causing something”) as in *troublesome*, *quarrelsome*, *cuddlesome*, *tiresome*. *Frightsome*, however, is not to be found in any general dictionaries for English learners because it is not actual word. Functioning only in a particular variety of British English it can be found at the outskirts of language. More or less it can be said that it is a potential word in terms of Standard British English.

Now we have come to the point of discussing the difference between actual and potential words. It was Aronoff who defined actual words in 1983 as those properly created in accordance with English

word-formative principles and semantic rules. These are the words that are coined and used on regular basis in language. On contrary, potential words are those which can be coined but their usage is blocked by already existing words and/or word-forms.

We are going to prove that Roald Dahl in his works breaks the border between actual and potential words by coining new potential words making them function as actual words. The evidence is listed in *the Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) where some of his coinages (mentioned later in the text) have been added (Cooper online).

Usage of words like *stealer* or *ungood*, though coined in accordance with English word-formative processes, is blocked by existence of *thief* and *bad* which are known as actual (really existing) words, while *stealer* and *ungood* are only potential.

Potential words are possible to derive from existing morphemes (*steal* + *-er*, *un* + *good*) thanks to the principle of analogy working in language. If common nouns like *teacher*, *maker*, *baker*, etc. are possible to derive from verbs—why not *stealer*? If negative or opposite adjectives, such as *unhappy*, *uncomfortable*, etc. can be coined—why not *ungood*? The point is that usage of *teacher*, *worker*, *maker*, *swimmer*, *singer* and *baker* is not blocked by any other existing word-form. Derivative morpheme *-er* referring to common nouns, persons having a particular occupation or practicing a certain activity seems to be highly productive in those cases. The same is true (i.e. high productivity) for prefix *un-* in words like *unhappy*, *unharmful*, *undressed*, *uncomfortable*, *unhealthy*, *unhelpful*.

However, some Dahl's potential words entered the category of actual words when accepted and listed in the *OED*, e.g. *human beans*, *scrumdiddlyumptious*, *Witching hour*, etc. Malapropisms are typical in Dahl's tales written for children. *Human beans* (i.e. human beings) is one of them, popularized by the famous friendly giant, called *The BFG*, first published in 1982. However, the first emergence of the expression dates back to 1842 when used in the British satirical magazine *Punch* (Cooper online). Adjective *scrumdiddlyumptious*, used by *The BFG*, refers to something (usually food) utterly delicious (Rennie 2015), extremely scrumptious or splendid (Cooper, online). The expression is believed to be first mentioned in *The American Thesaurus of Slang* in 1942 (Cooper online). *Witching hour*, used in the *BFG*, refers to "a special moment in the middle of the night when every child and every grown-up was in a deep deep sleep, and all the dark things came out from hiding and had the world to themselves." (Dahl's *BFG* 2). Cooper citing the *OED* asserts that it was Shakespeare who made the phrase *witching time* popular in 1604 by drama *Hamlet*.

## Research results

Dahl is believed to popularize thousands of words. However, he himself created over 500 words and expressions, 533 to be precise as our research has revealed. Our data has been excerpted from ORDD, which lists all words and expressions coined by him. This way it was revealed that Dahl made up 143 proper names and 390 other expressions, common nouns, adjectives and verbs included (see tables below). Proper nouns (table 1) and common nouns (table 2) represent 333 units in total which is to prove that nouns still prevail in language.

Table 1 Dahl's proper nouns

Names of people	52
Names of animals	15
Names of giants	12
Names of witches	1
Names of monsters	5
Sweets	19
Drinks	3
Countries and other places (e.g. forests, factories, schools, planets)	11
Others	25
Proper nouns in total	143

### Motivation of proper nouns

The proper names are not used accidentally. Their coinage and usage have their own specific purposes, and these are not only literary ones. For instance, *Matilda*, the title of one of Dahl's books and the name of the main protagonist at the same time seem to be a common girl's name used without any specific intention. However, the opposite is true. *Matilda* (Wormwood), though, only a five-year child, is a symbol of inner strength to fight injustice and determination to read intellectually challenging books. She also possesses telekinetic powers and learns how to use them properly to face life troubles. To emphasise her inner power, Dahl, had chosen this name for a young fighter because *Matilda* means "mighty in battle". What is more, *Matilda* and *Honey* (Matilda's kind-hearted and highly supportive encouraging teacher) used to be types of tanks used in Northern Africa during WWII, at the time when Dahl served as a Royal Air Force pilot there (Rennie 149). The similar way motivated other proper nouns, e.g. giants' names. Their motivation is to fulfil literary purpose, however, their semantics is transparent, e.g. *The BFG* (*Big Friendly Giant*), *The Bloodbottler*, *The Bonecruncher*, *The Childchewer*, *The Fleshlumpeater*, *The Manhugger*, *The Maidmusher*, etc. Taking into account word-formative processes used to coin these names, one can see that all giants carry compound names (though derivation may be included as well). It can be concluded that these names follow the same pattern:

(definite article +) **free morpheme1 + free morpheme2 + bound morpheme (BM)**

**noun + verb + -er**

(The +) **Blood (n) + bottle (v) + -er (BM)**

(The +) **Man (n) + mush (v) + -er (BM).**

The only exception to this pattern is *The BFG* ← (definite article +) **free morpheme1 + free morpheme2 + free morpheme 3** ← (The +) **Big (adj) + Friendly (adj) + Giant (n)**. Compounding turns out to be very important word-formative process: long expressions (and names) are easy to be coined this way. Length of giants' names plays an important role here: the longer the name the stronger and fearsome the creature in appearance and frightening in deeds (cannibals). It is no coincidence that *The BFG* as the only positive giant is called by an initialism and not by his full name. The shorter the name the friendlier the creature towards people and other living creatures: *The BFG* is the only giant in *Giant Country* who does not eat people or does not hurt them in any way. However, this approach explains morphemic structure of proper nouns, but not the way they were coined. Compounds, such as *The Bloodbottler*, *The Bonecruncher*, *The Childchewer*, *The Fleshlumpeater*, *The Manhugger*, *The*

*Maidmusher*, etc. were coined by means of compounding in accordance with the following pattern (*The BFG* excluded):

**(The+) noun1 + noun2 (verb + -er)**  
 (The+) Blood + bottler (bottle + -er)  
 (The+) Man + musher (mush + -er).

From the semantic point of view, it can be asserted that all examined giants' names represent endocentric compound nouns, i.e. the question "Who is *The Bloodbottler* / *The Bonecruncher* / *The Childchewer* / *The Fleshlumpeater*, etc.?" may be answered simply following the same pattern:

- *The Bloodbottler* is a cannibal giant/creature (-er) who drinks people's blood as if from a bottle;
- *The Bonecruncher* is a cannibal giant/creature (-er) who crunches bones;
- *The Childchewer* is a cannibal giant/creature (-er) who chews children;
- *The Fleshlumpeater* is a cannibal giant/creature (-er) who eats human flesh as if sugar lumps;
- *The Manhugger* is a cannibal giant/creature (-er) who 'hugs' men in a lethal way.

**Motivation of common nouns**

Compared the numbers and percentage, it may be stated that common nouns outnumber proper ones as results in table 1 (see above) and table 2 (see below) show.

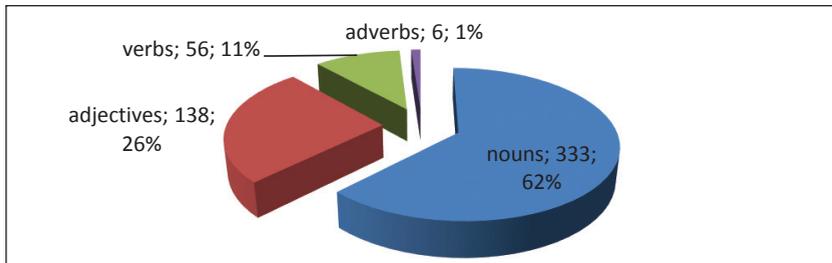
Table 2 Dahl's common nouns

Noun types	
countables	154
uncountables	31
pluralia tantum	5
Common nouns in total	190

As the table 2 above shows, countables outnumber other common nouns (uncountables and pluralia tantum).

Graph 1 depicts all 533 Dahl's coined expressions (proper nouns in included). It had been confirmed that nouns (62 per cent) as such prevail (graph 1 below) over adjectives (26 per cent), verbs (11 per cent), and adverbs (6 per cent). The reason for this is that naming need is much stronger than referring to qualities (expressed by means of adjectives) or actions, or states respectively (expressed by verbs).

Graph 1 Parts of speech



**Word-formative processes** involved in coinage new words are derivation (suffixation prevails), compounding, and blending. Coinage of **compound nouns** have been motivated by sounds and homonymy (homophony), however, (semantic) **malapropism** plays a key role here as well:

- *human beans* (← human beings);
- *whizzpopper* (← whizze + pop + -er);
- synonyms *chatbag* (← chatterbox) and *natterbox* is someone who keeps on talking all the time without stopping; *chatterbox* and *natterbox* rhyme together which is an important phonetic stylistic value added to them;
- *grob-sludging hole* (← prison);
- *mudburger* (← a burger made with mud as a delicacy to the *Centipede*);
- *notmuchers* (← not + much + -er + -s).

Compared to derivatives and compounds (table 3 below), there are not so many blends. However, expressions coined by means of **blending** have been found as well, such as *mushious*, *plexicated*, etc. Blend adjective *mushious* (← mushy + delicious) refers to something that is both mushy and delicious (Rennie 159). Blend adjective *plexicated* (perplexed + complicated) refers to something which is confusing, complicated and difficult to do or make (Rennie 183).

Noun *norphanage* coined as a kind of malapropism of *orphanage*, i.e. home for orphans, *norphan* (in Dahl's expression) can be understood as a play with words: a home for children who are not loved or desired. For Dahl it is common that when coining a new word, he works with it further, i.e. his new potential word undergoes other word-formative process(es) to make his readers believe that the word or expression is real (actual), not just made up. From another perspective, it may be viewed as a play on word based on homophony (compare the pronunciation of noun phrases: *an orphan* vs. *a norphan*). From this point of view, it seems that homophony played an important role in coining new nonce word after involving an indefinite article to emphasize its stylistic value. From this perspective *norphanage* was coined by attaching derivative suffix referring to place (*n/orphan* + -age), such as *vicarage* for instance.

His *norphanage* is a nice example of derivative from a noun *norphane*. Similarly, Dahl created a land called *Loompaland* inhabited by *Oompa-Loompas* who speak *Oompa-Loompish* language to communicate.

Borrowing from other sources, especially from other (stylistic) layers of language vocabulary (military or other slang; poets or belles-lettres authors) is a common thing by this particular author.

A number of Dahl's expressions were meant to be used as malapropisms (as mentioned above) in their nature, e.g. *butterfly* (instead of butterfly) or *nightingull* (instead of nightingale). An adjective such as *murderful* can also be considered half malapropism and half an expression coined by means of **suffixation**, formally perfectly created (potential) word. Though, non-traditional way of coinage, one can guess the meaning 'murderous', because by means of a derivational (bound) morpheme *-ful* other adjectives can be coined, such as *hopeful*, *hateful*, etc. This is the chance to play with words when children may coin new words this way, e.g. *giggleful*, *snortful* (Rennie 159). Another beautiful example of malapropism may be demonstrated on an expression *Dahl's Chickens* which was meant to refer to *Charles Dickens*.

Small amount of words were coined by means of **prefixation**, such as *umpossible* (i.e. impossible) or *re-inschored* (toughened to make something extra strong).

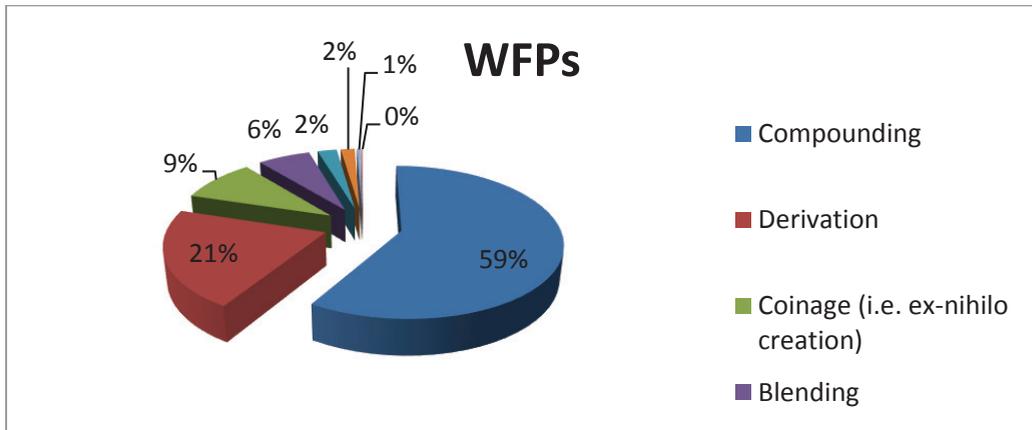
As a table 3 below depicts, compounding and derivation are the two dominant word-formative processes used to coin new potential words.

Table 3 Word-formative processes

WFP (all parts of speech included)	
Compounding	279
Derivation	100
Coinage (i.e. ex-nihilo creation)	44
Blending	30
Conversion	11
Clipping	8
Backformation	2
Initialisms	1
In total	475

As one can see from the graph 2 below, compounding represents nearly 60 per cent and derivation slightly over 20 per cent of all word-formative processes involved to coin new (nonce) expressions by Dahl. A big surprise was ex-nihilo which reached 9 per cent, i.e. quite a high percentage. Blending got only 6 per cent, and conversion and clipping reached each 2 per cent. Statistically, backformation and initialisms are not interesting at all.

Graph 2 Word-formative processes

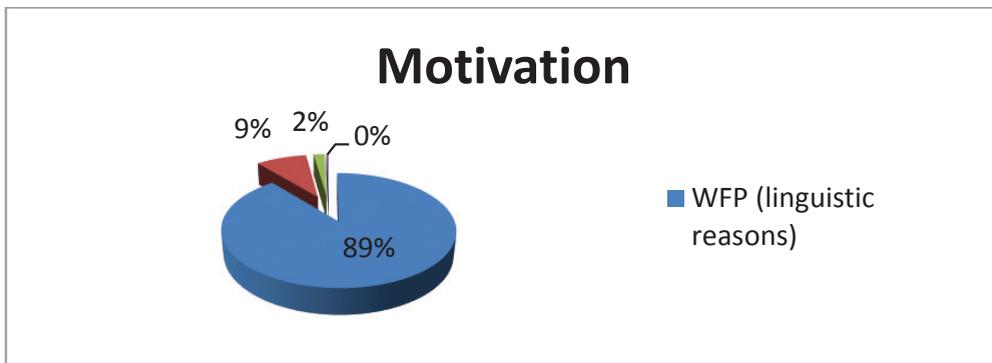


Results of our research show (table 4 below) that majority of Dahl's potential expressions were coined by means of word-formative processes. From the semantic viewpoint, 210 various synonyms have been found in Dahl's newly coined expressions and/or already existing words. However, the major motivation was resulting in WFPs representing nearly 90 per cent of all coined expressions (graph 3 below). A striking number of potential words is represented by malapropisms (and/or spoonerisms) very often based on homonymy (homophony respectively). Semantic shift and borrowing were not as numerous as could have been expected.

Table 4 Motivation of words

Types of motivation	
WFP (linguistic reasons)	475
Malapropisms	46
Semantic shift (extra linguistic reasons included, too)	10
Borrowing (linguistic + extra linguistic reasons)	2
In total	533

Graph 3 Types of motivation



### Conclusion

The borderline between actual and potential words is unclear and flexible, especially if we realise that skilful writer, such as Dahl was, coins new words in a very creative way or moreover, uses already existing but long forgotten (e.g. *scrumdiddlyumptious*,) and/or archaic words (e.g. *witching hour*) or expressions used in different varieties of English (e.g. *frightsome*). He also worked (and very actively) with slips of tongue, with malapropisms (*butterfly*, *crumpet*, *elefant*, *human bean*, *langwitch*). His way of using language and coining new words is very fresh, creative, witty, intelligent, and therefore extremely interesting for readers, be it children or adults. Adding some Dahl's expressions into the OED is an evidence of crossing the borderline between these two categories (i.e. from potential words to actual ones). This has confirmed one of our hypotheses. The other research hypotheses have been confirmed, too: the majority of excerpted expressions are common nouns. In terms of WFP derivation and compounding are the two dominant ways of coining new words. Majority of excerpted expressions are proven to be literary nonce words created ad hoc for literary purposes to attract readers' attention.

In terms of word-classes categories (graph 1) it is no surprise that majority of Dahl's new words are nouns (333, 62 per cent). He coined 138 adjectives (26 per cent) and 56 verbs (11 per cent). Our research (table 3 and graph 3) has shown that majority of words have been coined by various means of WFPs (table 4), mostly by compounding and derivation. Dahl, properly following rules of English WFPs (89 per cent, 475 units), coined such compounds as *chatbag*, *crabcruncher*, *mudburger*, *natterbox*,

*notmucher*, *puddlenut*, *ringbeller*, etc. Nearly 60 per cent (279 units) of all expressions were coined this way. He coined numerous derivatives (21 per cent, 100 units), such as *murderful* or *sickable*. He used productive suffix -some to coined many words this way, such as *darksome*, *filthsome*, *foulsome*, *healthsome*, etc. By means of ex-nihilo, he coined words like *bibble*, *fibble*, *gliss*, *higgle*, *lixivate*, *pebbling*, etc. 9 per cent (44 units) were created this way (graph 2). However, this way of coinage is the most disputable according to the fact that motivation of coined words can have onomatopoeic or extra-linguistic backgrounds which are not known to the researcher.

Motivation for coining new words was based mostly on linguistic reasons (table 4 and graph 3 above) resulting in WFPs and malapropisms.

Dahl's contribution to enriching English lexis is not only in creative coinage of new expressions, but also in revitalising long forgotten words, some of which are around 100 years old.

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## The Latest Neologisms and Their Reflexion in Dictionaries

*Abstract: The paper deals with the latest neologisms, focusing on one type of new words, namely neologisms formed by compounding. The new words which have been added to dictionaries reflect the ever changing extralinguistic reality and knowledge of these neologisms significantly enhances the way language users perceive reality and its new issues.*

*The study compares two dictionary types, their selection of neologisms and classification in entries.*

*Analysing the corpora which have been retrieved from the lists of the most recently published dictionary updates, the research endeavours to investigate the selected items from the point of view of both their morpho-semantic structure and semantic function.*

*After the excerption, the obtained corpora have been analysed from the point of view of word classes of their component parts and relationship between the individual roots in the expressions formed by means of composition. During the next step of research the examined words were sorted out according to semantic fields to which they belonged, and their frequency of occurrence in both dictionaries has been compared with respect to the type of dictionary.*

*Moreover, the analysis also concentrated on stylistic value of the examined compound language units and the way the stylistic classification of individual expressions is described in particular dictionaries.*

### Introduction

Language, as a means of communication and transfer of ideas and knowledge among speakers of a given language community, has to comply with the contradictory demands which on one hand require the preservation of language in its unchanged state to ensure continuity in the transmission of cultural heritage and social values by means of language intelligible to more successive generations, on the other hand, language ought to react to the continuously changing extra linguistic reality. The ever-evolving knowledge of human society creates new concepts, which need to be expressed by means of new linguistic signs.

The coining of new language items is a complex, gradual process, which involves not only the creative activity of forming new lexemes, but also the reception of new lexical forms by language users as well as their definition and evaluation by linguists, including the selection of some neologisms for further systematic processing as entries in dictionaries.

My contribution focuses on the stage of development and usage of neologisms which is connected with their incorporation into dictionaries. It is concerned with one type of new words—compounds, and their occurrence in the large set of the latest updates added to Oxford dictionaries, the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, both of which are accessible online with their recent updates.

### Research aims and methodology

The main objective of the present study is the investigation into the compound words which were included into the most recent additions to the Oxford Dictionaries, namely the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

Dealing with a large number of lexical items, the research had to pursue the task of the excerption of lexemes formed by compounding from the full list of updates, which was followed by a thorough analysis examining the investigated corpora from both the qualitative and quantitative point of view. Furthermore, the results obtained from the two types of dictionaries were compared and also classified according to predefined criteria.

The approach to the researched material was based on the inductive method. The selected items have been subjected to comparative analysis which endeavoured to emphasize the function of neologisms in language use, utilizing thus the functional structural approach to language phenomena.

### **The material examined**

The main subject of my research is the latest neologisms in the English language which have been added to English dictionaries; therefore the investigated material necessarily had to comprise complete lists of new words that had been recently included to the most frequently used monolingual dictionaries of English.

Nevertheless, the search for the material of interest was complicated by two factors. First, though large monolingual dictionaries, such as *Merriam-Webster*, *Collins English Dictionary*, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, *Oxford English Dictionary*, regularly announce their newest updates and newspaper articles published about some of the new entries provide short lists and definitions of some neologisms quite regularly, most dictionaries do not release full lists of their additions. Since these dictionaries have online versions, which are updated continuously, they also do not feel the need to issue the lists in a printed format. The only two dictionaries that have made the full lists of their recent new additions available online—the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*—both belong to the group of dictionaries which are published by the Oxford University Press.

Second, the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (further abbreviated as OALD) has made accessible three lists of new words only, each consisting of 100–200 neologisms. On the other hand, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (further abbreviated as OED) displays on its web pages lists of new additions from the years 2000–2017. Each year four lists of updates are released, usually consisting of about 500–1,000 new items. Thus, in order to obtain corpora of examined expressions of comparable size, the study focused on all the three full lists of updates in OALD that were further compared with the very latest full list of March 2017 updates in OED.

### **Theoretical framework**

The next part of the present study concentrates on theoretical considerations of the investigated phenomena, the way the basic linguistic concepts are defined and refers to the theories and approaches which are closely related to the researched topic.

The term neologism, which is used in linguistics as an expression that denotes newly formed words, has been used in linguistics for centuries, although it originally meant “practice of innovation in language” (*Online Etymology Dictionary*) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the following century the meaning changed to the current conception of the word “new word or expression” (ibid.). Lipka et al. (15) define neologisms as “new naming units”. This study, however, concerns solely those neologisms which have already been selected to be added to the particular dictionaries and thus have undergone the process called institutionalization

(Lipka 112, Bauer 48, Quirk et al 1522 – qtd in Lipka 112), which also includes the stage when new words are included into dictionaries (Bauer 66).

Furthermore, the study focuses its attention on one type of neologisms, namely compounds. In accordance with Jackson and Amvela, this analysis defines compounds as words which “are formed by combining two or more words (free morphemes)” (5). Both Lieber (376) and Jackson and Amvela (5, 92) stress the inconsistency with which compound words are spelt—they can be written as one word, or one word with its components connected by means of a hyphen, or as two words.

## Results and Discussion

During the initial phase of the practical investigation, the research activities were centred on the exception of the examined expressions from the full lists of neologisms, which was preceded by rather a time-consuming preliminary inquiry into the accessibility of complete lists of recent dictionary updates, which has been described above.

The main criterion for the selection of compounds from the other neologisms has been based on the definition of compounds as words consisting of two or more words which are free morphemes (Jackson and Amvela 5), called free lexical morphemes by Lipka (99).

Selection of the desired lexemes has also been facilitated by the way the new updates in OED and OALD dictionary are classified. Both OED and OALD mark some additions as new senses, that is new senses of words that are already part of the dictionary. This type of updates is considered an example of branching, which is described as the development of new meanings of a lexeme, by means of which a lexeme becomes polysemous (Pepřnik 42), therefore these additions were excluded from the investigation. In addition, OALD additions lists also denote some items as idioms and phrase verbs, which are not included in the scope of the present analysis.

The advantage of the work with OED neologisms has been the classification of some new entries and sub-entries as compound words, which made the search for compounds considerably easier. However, some neologisms which satisfied the criteria laid down for compounds were designated as special uses in OED (e.g. *sticky-sweet*), which are not regarded as compounds from the grammatical point of view (OED—*Guide to the Third Edition of the OED*).

In addition to the previously mentioned criteria for the classification of compound words, it was also necessary to distinguish compounds from blends. Bauer’s definition for blends, which describes them as “a new lexeme formed from parts of two (or possibly more) other words in such a way that there is no transparent analysis into morphs” (234), has been adopted as the basic criterion for the differentiation of blends from compounds. However, the examined corpora included neologisms created from two words, only one of which was clipped, for example (*Chi-town, mic drop*). Since Bauer (1983) does not further distinguish the possible types of blending, the investigation classified blends in accordance with Algeo (1991), who specifies a blend as “a word made by joining two or more forms but omitting at least part of one” (10). Thus, neologisms formed by the compounding of one clipped word and one word in full form were recognized as blends and were not included into the set of expressions selected for further research (e.g. *Brexit, hangry*).

Another issue to solve was the pairs of identical compounds which were listed twice in updates—both as a noun (adjective) or a verb. These pairs of compounds occurred only in the lists issued by OALD, in OED list there occurred only six pairs of identical words which were not compounds. Only one compound from a pair of identical compounds was always included in the investigated corpora—if the pair consisted of a noun and a verb, the noun was selected, the noun was also chosen from noun and adjective pair. The adjective or verb members of the pairs of identical compounds were then regarded as formed by means of conversion.

The decision to conceive nouns as a basic, original form in a pair is based on the fact that if the

identical pairs from OALD were looked up in the OED dictionary, adjectives and nouns were included into one common entry in OED (e.g. *standard issue*, *plus size*), or the adjective variant was not listed in OED (*rent-seeking*), only the noun. If the identical pairs from OALD consisting of a noun and a verb occurred in OED as main entries, the verb was identified as created by means of conversion (*autotune*), or only the noun occurred in OED (*doubledip*).

Then, lexemes which consisted of two words the second of which being a complex word made up from a lexical morpheme and a grammatical morpheme, that is a suffix or an ending, were analysed from the point of view of their historically preceding forms occurring in a particular dictionary or in its additions. If a form of a compound without suffix was found in the dictionary or its updates, the compound with the suffixed second word was treated as a derived word, which was formed from compound word by suffixation. Therefore, the update to OED *heartthrobber* was classified as a derived word, since there was already the compound *heartthrob* in OED, from which the derivative *heartthrobber* was created.

On the contrary, the words *money-launderer* and *money-laundering*, listed as additions to OALD, do not have any preceding form in the dictionary from which they could be derived, hence both *money-launderer* and *money-laundering* are regarded as compounds. Compounds which are composed from complex words are discussed by Jackson and Amvela (95), who distinguish compounds with second parts formed by a derived word, which can be divided into root plus suffix, though they function as a simple form in the compound. *Book-keeper*, *coat-hanger*, *dish-washer* and *left-handed* are quoted as examples of these (ibid. 95).

Altogether, 439 compounds have been excerpted from all the lists counting 867 lexemes. The corpus of compound words selected from OED consisted of 291 compounds, that is 63.7 per cent, the total number of words in corpus being 457. The list of updates to OALD comprised 410 new additions, from which 148 compounds were excerpted, which made up 36.1 per cent of OALD lists. The corpora selected from the two dictionaries consisted of rather a different number of items, therefore the following analysis will strive to express the gained data in the form of percentual results so as to ensure they will be comparable more easily.

A group of compounds, which are worth noting, are neo-classical compounds, which do not combine independent words but roots which exist merely in compound words and are borrowings from classical languages, Greek or Latin (Adams 128, Jackson and Amvela 95, Štekauer 273–4). Twelve neo-classical compounds have occurred in the investigated lists, seven in OED (*heliopause*, *pogonophobia*), and five in OALD (*nanoscience*, *autocorrect*). OED classifies these Graeco-Latin roots as combining forms, which can be utilized in composition (e.g. *auto*, *nano*-), however, *intra*- is described as prefix, although it has been, similarly to *auto*- or *nano*-, borrowed from classical Latin or Greek as a lexeme with its own semantic meaning.

In conformity with the study of Kastovsky (2009) this article defines *intra*- as a bound root, which can be looked upon as a lexical morpheme borrowed from Latin which is functioning as a word in English.

The next step of the investigation into neologisms formed by means of compounding was the analysis of the excerpted expressions from the point of view of the part of speech to which they belonged. As far as the internal structure of the analysed compound words is concerned, their components were classified according to the parts of speech to which they belonged. The terms part of speech and word class are used interchangeably as synonyms in this text.

Most compounds occurring in the lists were nouns, the number of adjectives was considerably lower and there were two verbs only, both of which occurred in OED. There were 271 nominal, 18

adjectival and two verbal compounds found in the OED list of the latest additions, that is 93.1 per cent of nouns, 6.2 per cent of adjectives and 0.7 per cent of verbs in the OED corpus of compound updates. The OALD lists comprised 132 nouns, 14 adjectives, one interjection and one adverb so that their percentual proportion was 89.2 per cent of nouns, 9.4 per cent of adjectives, 0.7 per cent of interjections and 0.7 per cent of adverbs. Thus it might be suggested that the large number of noun compounds seems to confirm the important prevalence of noun compounds in English (Jackson 31).

The analysis of the individual components of compounds focused on the word class which they were part of. This classification examined the individual words which formed parts of compounds, irrespective of the word class to which the whole compound belonged, so that for example *showtime* (noun) was analysed into *show* (noun) and *time* (noun). The composition of compounds with the highest frequency of occurrence have been the combinations noun + noun (70.0 per cent in OED, 55.4 per cent in OALD), adjective + noun (14.7 per cent in OED, 25.0 per cent in OALD) and noun + adjective ( 2.7 per cent in OED, 2.7 per cent in OALD). The other combinations of parts of speech in the compounds accounted for less than two per cent, e.g. noun and verb (*hate-watch*, *throat sing*). Some compounds were analysed into three roots, although most of them were created through a two level word formation process—*mixed martial arts* could be analysed as a compound consisting of a compound word *martial arts*, which was later connected to the adjective *mixed* so that the complex compound *mixed martial arts* was composed, its structure being illustrated as adjective + (adjective + noun). This type of complex compound had low frequency of occurrence, 7.2 and 7.4 per cent in both dictionaries.

The high frequency of occurrence of noun + noun compounds necessitated further investigation into the relationship between the two roots of compounds. The examined lexemes were thus classified according to the relation between their parts and subdivided into copulative compounds (*east-west*), with equal relation between their components, and qualifying compounds, which consist of one modifying and one modified part. Following Mathesius' s (1975) approach to the structure of compounds, the classification of compounds distinguished qualifying compounds of Germanic type, in which the modifying part precedes the modified part (*mood-board*), from French type, with the modifying element following the modified, basic one (*garden-fresh*).

Table 1 – Copulative and qualifying compounds in OED – frequency of occurrence

	Copulative		Qualifying						Total	
			French		Germanic					
					Germanic		Synthetising			
OED	3	1.0%	14	4.8%	247	84.9%	27	9.3%	291	100.0%

Table 2 – Copulative and qualifying compounds in OALD – frequency of occurrence

	Copulative		Qualifying						Total	
			French		Germanic					
					Germanic		Synthetising			
OALD1	0	0.0%	3	7.1%	33	78.6%	6	14.3%	42	100.0%
OALD2	0	0.0%	2	5.9%	31	91.2%	1	2.9%	34	100.0%
OALD3	4	5.6%	2	2.8%	57	79.2%	9	12.5%	72	100.0%
Total	4	2.7%	7	4.7%	121	81.8%	16	10.8%	148	100.0%

As can be seen in the tables above, the copulative relationship between the roots of compounds proved to be quite rare, with three occurrences in OED (1.0 per cent) and four in OALD (2.7 per cent). Qualifying compounds of French type accounted for 4.8 per cent of the analysed compounds in OED and 4.7 per cent in OALD. The low frequency of occurrence of copulative and French compounds corresponds to the tendency of language to clearly indicated dependency structure between language units including the relation of modification (Dressler 275).

In addition to the group of Germanic qualifying compounds, the investigation managed to distinguish another subtype of compounds within this group—synthetizing compounds (Mathesius 1975), which were composed from two roots whose original order was changed so that from (*He was*) *seeking a rent* the compound *rent-seeking* (OALD) is formed. Thus synthetic compounds were classified in the present investigation as a subgroup of Germanic qualifying compounds in which the change of original word order can be recognized. Synthetic compounds made up 9.3 per cent of compounds in OED and 10.8 in OALD, originating from a verb and its following modification (*to grab a land*), however, the tendency towards preference for pre-modification in the English language (Dressler 274–5) has enforced the change of sequence of its component parts so that the modifying element precedes the modified word (*land grab*).

Furthermore, another point of interest for the present study has been the assessment of stylistic value of the new dictionary updates, since a new lexical item is determined not only by its semantic value but also by its inclusion into the appropriate stylistic layer of vocabulary. The stylistic differentiation is much subtler in OED and distinguishes more types of English as well, namely British, Irish, American, Australian, New Zealand English and Scottish dialect. Some words of the OED corpus were marked as slang (1.7 per cent, e.g. *bug-out*, *buzzerlugs* (model of a hated person, annoying person)), colloquial (3.1 per cent, e.g. *stomach bug*, *freak flag*), depreciative, derogatory or offensive (1.0 per cent, e.g. *Mary Sue* (an idealized woman character without any negative personal traits)), or humorous (1.4 per cent, e.g. *pogonophobia* (described as “dislike of beards” (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*))). An interesting finding is that the highest percentage of new words with marked stylistic value in OED have been compounds marked as historical (5.5 per cent), such as *tight-lacing liver* (“a liver with an abnormal shape attributed to the pressure of a tight-laced corset” (*ibid.*)), *comfort woman* (a prisoner forced to work as a prostitute), or obsolete (1.7 per cent), e. g. *canal moulding* (“a moulding with a concave semi-tubular profile” (*ibid.*)). On the other hand, there has been zero occurrence of words with the stylistic classification “formal” in OED and only one occurrence of a stylistically formal word in OALD (*companion animal*) which is contrary to expectations, since especially OED is perceived as a dictionary listing word entries comprising all stylistic layers.

However, the stylistic description of words in OALD distinguishes only British, American and New Zealand English, informal, taboo, formal words and words with the connotation of disapproval. The terminology in OALD differs from OED—the category of informal words is introduced in OALD instead of the category of slang and colloquial words in OED. Informal expressions published in OALD additions comprise 9.9 per cent of compounds, one occurrence of formal compound and one disapproving compound word (*culture warrior* (people trying to preserve “a particular culture or set of values that they think is under threat, especially conservative political values in the US” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary Online*))). A higher percentage of informal expressions concurs with the focus of this dictionary on learners of English who utilize mainly general English word stock, aiming at the acquisition of Standard English vocabulary.

Finally, the study attempted to sort out the investigated words into semantic categories, defined according to the spheres of human activity, knowledge, society and other categories of extra linguistic

reality. Though a detailed semantic analysis has been out of the scope of the present investigation, and of the modest electronical equipment of the researcher, a semantic analysis dividing words into basic semantic fields has been carried out. Surprisingly, the semantic field concerning medicine and biology has had the highest frequency of occurrence in OED (25.1 per cent), followed by semantic fields dealing with the general field of human life, type of person, social arrangement (14.1 per cent) and science, technology and ICT (11.6 per cent), art and humanities (9.3 per cent). OALD additions occurred most frequently in the semantic fields concerning science, technology and ICT (26.3 per cent), economy (21.6 per cent) and the sphere denoted as society and human life (20.3 per cent). Unlike OED, OALD lists contained a low number of expressions from biology or medicine (2.7 per cent) and art and humanities (3.4 per cent), which is not according to the suppositions, since art and humanities belong to very fast developing fields of human activity.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis and comparison of compounds have highlighted the different approaches of both dictionaries to the selection of updates which they include as new entries or subentries, which is in accordance with the focus of OED on the description of the English language and registration of its changes, while OALD strives to help its readers to develop skills in present-day English.

Thus OALD presents more informal compound neologisms as compared to OED, which, on the other hand, has included more new updates characterized as historical. These new additions which are marked as historical in OED reflect the descriptive character of this dictionary.

The high frequency of occurrence of qualifying compounds of Germanic type in both dictionaries has confirmed the tendency towards pre-modification in compounds.

As far as semantic classification of compounds is concerned, OED neologisms include an importantly higher number of compounds from the scientific fields of biology and medicine and arts and humanities, which indicates a tendency to register new items from all the semantic spheres of vocabulary, including very specialized terminology, and also a tendency towards terminologization. A very high proportion of new compounds denoting the area of technology and information sciences indicates the range of influence technology exerts on our lives.

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## Initial Reading Competence in Students at Tertiary Level Foreign Language Studies

*Abstract: In the school year 2016/17 a research project investigating several aspects of reading competence and reading experience of 1<sup>st</sup> year university students studying programmes combining a subject with a foreign language (e.g. a lower secondary school teacher of History and German) was carried out at the University of Hradec Králové. There was a number of reasons for attempting to undertake such a project—one of them being the need to redefine teaching materials, pace and strategies, others connected with having clearer insight into the real level of knowledge and competences of accepted students, their potential weaknesses or incompetence in theoretical as well as practical subjects, and, last but not least, expected and real knowledge as reflected in entrance exams. The main aim of the project was to state, by means of action research, which amendments or modifications the ELT programme needs so that it supports general as well as academic reading competencies of 1<sup>st</sup> grade students.*

### **Rationale and literature review**

Reading experience and abilities or reading competence seem to be one of the key prerequisites for a successful navigation through academic waters—vast amount of information is conveyed by means of printed or electronic documents, be it articles, textbook materials, magazines or books, of practical, theoretical or literary nature. Thus reading, comprehending and processing the information as part of everyday study activities at university level should lead to learning, to the development of critical thinking skills and linguistic, professional, as well as general and personal growth of individual learners. However, students often fail in some respects—they often avoid homework reading (they will watch a film instead reading a literary work), neglect a theoretical seminar task preparation because of a text that they regard too demanding or long to read, moreover, they sometimes fail a test or an exam in a theoretical discipline because of laboured reading or too demanding specialised texts. As Du Boulay (1999) said:

One of the biggest problems in higher education, but one which is often not fully recognised by either students or lecturers until some way into academic courses, is the problem of reading, perhaps because reading in itself is not assessed. However, the results or output from reading are assessed (Nel and Nel 1).

As a result, we were interested in the level and range to which the first year university students are prepared to face these challenging assignments when they start their studies. Also, their personal reading habits, experience, approach and motivation to read were relevant. Nevertheless, we were aware that such a project is just one side of the problem, that reading is just one aspect of what Delgadova (49) summarizes as academic competence: "(...)a cluster of related abilities, skills, knowledge and dispositions of cognitive and non-cognitive nature that allow university students to perform the necessary activities as required, and thus to graduate and be successful in their career."

Generally, reading gains due attention nowadays. In the Czech Republic this fact is reflected e.g. in the established secondary school leaving state exam, in its didactic test segment—reading tasks

represent a substantial part of this test. On the other hand, the minimal limit for successful passing this test is only 44 per cent. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) definition for 2018 (11) of reading literacy is as follows: "Reading literacy is understanding, using, evaluating, reflecting on and engaging with texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential and to participate in society." When explaining the term in more details, the material stresses metacognition as an integral part of the competence:

Reading literacy includes a wide range of cognitive and linguistic competencies, from basic decoding to knowledge of words, grammar and larger linguistic and textual structures for comprehension, as well as integration of meaning with one's knowledge about the world. It also includes metacognitive competencies: the awareness of and ability to use a variety of appropriate strategies when processing texts. Metacognitive competencies are activated when readers think about, monitor and adjust their reading activity for a particular goal (PISA 11).

Reading and metacognitive strategies are mentioned almost universally by authors who deal with reading, e.g. Grabe and Stoller (2002), Spiro (2013), Schmitt (2007), Alderson (2000), or Hudson (2007). These authors mention e.g. rereading, reading selectively, imaging, adjusting speed, assimilating with personal experience, concentrating, summarizing, predicting, self-generated questions, thinking about the text structure, evaluating the text, self-observation, using context to resolve a misunderstanding, monitoring cognition, recognizing problems or inability to understand, planning ahead, being aware of revising strategies, etc.

Metacognitive strategies as a part of academic reading training are reported by Shamsi Nejad and Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki (2015) who surveyed more than 100 EFL learners after a 5-sessions course using Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA). The study showed a significant positive correlation between the metacognitive strategies the students used while reading and their reading comprehension performance. For academic setting, it seems useful to concentrate on Grabe's (2009) division—he distinguishes lower-level and higher-level processes. Lower-level processes include e.g. word recognition, phonological processing, semantic and syntactic processing, morphological processing, etc.; higher-level processes cover e.g. building a text model, building a situation model, executive control, goal setting, strategy use, metacognitive awareness, etc. Following these premises, we had to admit that the students are not frequently asked to think about, monitor or even modify their reading activities for various goals in almost any disciplines taught at the department. In a professional discussion among the department academics it was revealed that metacognitive competencies and higher-level reading processes are rather neglected in everyday teaching.

Also, the level of proficiency of incoming students is rather stagnant (or even unsatisfactory in individual cases, as important deficiencies or incompetence are noticed or recorded in their English output during the first term of their studies) therefore the need for obtaining more detailed information on the real knowledge and skills of these students was expressed while the English department staff were reviewing the programme constituents and materials and considering potential innovations and modifications.

While defining the project priorities and steps, many important factors or views had to be taken into account. As for the literature, major overviews of reading research can be found e.g. in Koda (2004), Grabe and Stoller (2002) or Grabe (2009). Generally, the idea of a synthetic approach (that is to investigate all of the three processing clusters of reading—decoding, information building, and the situation-model construction; in other words, to investigate how students cope with the phases of

decoding, text-meaning construction and assimilation with prior knowledge) as suggested by Koda (5-6) was disregarded for being too complex.

Nevertheless, the major standpoint relates to the question of how much L2 reading competence depends on L1 reading habits and skills and to what extent it is influenced by the L2 proficiency. Both Koda (21) and Grabe (146) mention famous Alderson's sentence (published in 1984): "Is second language reading a language problem or a reading problem?" It can be expanded into many other questions: Do the learners read in L1? Do they use efficient strategies in L1 reading? Can they use these strategies also in L2? Are they familiar with these strategies or is L2 too different or too difficult for them to use these strategies? Perhaps the well-known L1 strategies cannot be used because of low L2 proficiency (Koda 21).

Let us shortly summarise major theoretical premises that should be considered when setting up a reading research project. Koda (13-21) mentions *transfer theory* important for examination of L2 processing and reading behaviour, *connectionism* that is vital for understanding processes connected to skills acquisition and performance improvement, and *component skills approach* by means of which researchers can contrast components of competencies and study their potential impacts on L2 reading efficiency.

Historically, *transfer* was thought to be somehow universal between L1 and L2 processing, however, later also the language-specific view appeared—it was apparent that learners with different L1 backgrounds used different cognitive tactics during L2 reading (Koda 15). In a way, both positions, universal and language-specific, can be reconciled or seen as complementary—text-information processing is language-bound, conceptual manipulation seems to be irrespective of language.

The distance between L1 and L2 is important for *connectionists' views* (Koda 17). Language processing is mapping between linguistic forms and their corresponding functions, occurring in both L1 and L2, therefore it is important to study the distance of L1 and L2.

*Component skills approaches* perceive reading in its complexity, considering its multi-layered character. As such, this perspective is suitable for assessing L2 reading development and individual readers differences (Koda 20).

Based on these premises, two major theories explaining L2 reading influential factors emerged, nowadays well established among ELT professionals—L1 reading ability factor and L2 proficiency factor. These factors materialised into the *Developmental interdependence hypothesis* (L1 reading competence is the key factor in L2 reading development), and the *Linguistic threshold hypothesis* (L2 proficiency is the key factor of efficient reading performance). However, L1 reading experience also is a key factor in building L2 reading competences. Koda (9) stresses L1 experience saying: "(...) L1 experience embeds habits of mind, instilling specific processing mechanisms, which frequently kick in during L2 reading. Diversity in L1 experience, therefore, can induce qualitative procedural differences, whereas variances in L2 experience may yield quantitative efficiency differences."

Out of these factors only two were applied in our project: L1 reading experience and habits and L2 proficiency were studied; L1 reading competence was disregarded (we lacked professional L1 expertise). However, since there is no perceived orthographic distance because of Roman alphabet for Czech and English and there is similar historic and close cultural background, L1 decoding competence may be really a strong factor for L2 decoding. Its importance is proved in an interesting piece of research reported by Delgadova (in 2015) who took part in an international joint project between two Spanish universities and a Slovak one. Students in both countries were tested in L1 reading. The Slovak results suggested some reading competence deficiencies—insufficient preparation for academic reading, lack of analytical and critical reading skills. As a result, we plan a broader-range

project including L1 reading competence investigation for the next school year, with the professional support from the Czech language department colleagues.

L2 reading and vocabulary knowledge were checked, as representations of L2 proficiency. The “threshold” for our situation is approximately given by the language proficiency in the secondary school leaving state exam defined as B1, and the entrance exam, of the same level. As for a rather narrow focus, Koda (24) admits that most of studies prefer one-dimensional investigation, e.g. grammar and/or vocabulary and reading. This was our approach, too. Moreover, Koda (49) says that the studies frequently show that:“(…)vocabulary knowledge correlates more highly with reading comprehension than other factors,” e.g. more than morphosyntactic knowledge and reading strategies.

The range of vocabulary suggests how comprehensible or incomprehensible the text will be, at the same time it refers to conceptual knowledge. On the other hand, vocabulary can be also seen as a result of reading experience. Schmitt (747) compares the numbers of lemmas with the text coverage: 1,000 lemmas account for 72 per cent of text, 2,000 lemmas for 79,7 per cent, and 3,000 lemmas for 84 per cent of text. We should always have in mind that “to know a word” has always two aspects, stressed e.g. by Nation (27)—a receptive, as well as a productive aspect (as e.g. in What does the word sound like?—asked receptively; and How is the word pronounced? asked productively). This should be explored in the follow-up steps of the project. The fact that “learning new words, moreover, often requires the formulation of new concepts, even for cognitively mature adult L2 learners” (Koda 60) was proved by the project findings.

To sum up, an action research project combining several lines of investigation was planned and realised. The main aim of the project was to review the ELT programme, consider various modifications and innovations that would reflect the real needs of students who start their English studies. At the same time, these changes should support both general and academic reading skills. The research method was action research (questionnaires, a test) that should help revise procedures, objectives and materials, state deficiencies, weaknesses and needs of the students, define what to expect, how to develop the study programmes, etc. Reading and vocabulary representing L2 proficiency were chosen as the fields to be tested and investigated, although the main focus was on L1 reading experience and reading habits. Hopefully this project represents just a small but a revealing part, for the time being, of what will turn into a more complex study in the future, since we believe that:

(...) a clear understanding of the multiple complexities inherent in L2 reading development will enable language teachers to identify the range of difficulties L2 learner are likely to encounter in learning to read in new language, discriminate potential sources of learning difficulties more precisely, and restructure instruction in beneficial ways (Koda 3).

### **Study objectives and methodology**

The project encompassed three lines of investigation:

- a) attitudes to L1 reading and general L1 reading experience of 1<sup>st</sup> grade students of philological programmes, in the form of a questionnaire;
- b) questionnaire for teachers at philological departments—to state which particular words or concepts in foreign languages are difficult or cause misunderstanding, thus L2 proficiency;
- c) L2 reading in 1<sup>st</sup> grade students of English, representing L2 proficiency, a modified standardised test.

## Findings and results

Thus, here follow some chosen data based on the above mentioned project lines, designed in three parts.

Attitudes to reading and general reading experience of 1<sup>st</sup> grade students of philological programmes

Following the L1 reading experience project line, a questionnaire was distributed among 1<sup>st</sup> grade students of all programmes that are studied in combination with a foreign language (e.g. a teaching qualification, studied in combination of English and Maths, German and History, French and Russian, etc.). It consisted of five parts covering various aspects of reading experience since the respondents' childhood, in total 65 closed and open questions. Apart from personal background, the respondents were to answer questions related to their early age experience with reading together with parents (or being read to by parents), reading experience at elementary and secondary school. The final part of the questionnaire covered current personal approach to reading and general motivation to read.

Altogether, 67 questionnaires were collected, however, only 57 could be used because 10 questionnaires were either illegible, incomplete or similarly inadequate for further processing. In the study 43 women and 14 men took part. Only 8 respondents were older than 20 years which may suggest that they had already applied for a university programme previously (typically, the secondary school leavers are 19 or 20 years old). As for reading together with parents, 91 per cent of respondents replied that they experienced this type of reading, provided either by parents or closed relatives (fairy tales were mentioned in most cases); 51 per cent of respondents believe that this practice must have influenced their attitudes to reading persisting up to the present time. They reported that this experience transformed into positive relationship to books, reading as a hobby, vast vocabulary in L1 and effortless reading in L1.

Some rather striking findings are related to elementary school reading experience (generally ages from 6 to 15): almost 90 per cent of respondents had a reading portfolio (a dossier). What seems to be most surprising is the fact that almost 72 per cent of respondents believe that elementary school did not influence their current attitudes to reading. On the other hand, only 49 per cent of students had a reading portfolio at secondary school. Interestingly, 47 per cent of respondents stated that they feel influenced by secondary school reading—they mentioned they had realized importance connected with reading, they had had better choices and more information about interesting books, or that reading had become their hobby.

In the following Chart 1 the findings from elementary school experience are compared to the findings related to secondary school experience. The respondents had to state whether they had a reading portfolio, could choose any books according to their tastes, or were given a list of books to choose from, compiled by the teacher, or were assigned concrete titles to read. Finally, they stated whether their portfolios were checked by the teachers, or were even marked.

	Reading portfolio	Any books chosen	Books chosen from a list	Concrete books assigned	Portfolios checked	Portfolios marked
Elementary School	90%	61%	21%	8%	72%	65%
Secondary school	49%	7%	40%	2%	44%	39%

**Chart 1**—Elementary and Secondary school reading experience comparison

In the chart we can see that at secondary school there is little freedom in choosing books according to individual tastes since schools must produce a list of recommended books out of which every student chooses and compiles his or her own reading list with 20 book titles for the secondary school leaving exam in Czech language.

In the following Chart 2 the selected data is presented, showing how much the respondents read at elementary and secondary school. The data states how many books were read per a year (the information about fewer books than 4 is not included). Books read in a foreign language are mentioned below the chart.

		4–5 books read	6–7 books read	more than 7 books read
Elementary experience	school	38%	10%	31%
Secondary experience	school	25%	21%	42%

**Chart 2** –Numbers of books read at elementary and secondary school

We can see that the students were more active readers at secondary school even though they were limited in their choices. Six and more books read per a year were reported by almost 42 per cent of respondents at elementary school and 63 per cent of respondents at secondary school. In the questionnaire, books read in foreign languages were mentioned: at elementary school only 1 respondent was given a task to read an English book; at secondary school 16 respondents (28 per cent) had to read books in foreign languages, namely 13 respondents mentioned books in English, 3 respondents books in German, 2 respondents Russian books, and 1 respondent French books.

The questionnaire also asked whether the respondents really had read all the books in their personal list that they submitted for the secondary school leaving state exam—only 44 per cent of respondents had read all the books, 37 per cent had read most of the books in their lists, about 10 per cent had read more than half of the books, 7 per cent had read fewer books than a half, and 1 respondent had read just a couple of books or none (the prescribed number of books in the list is 20).

The final part of the questionnaire dealt with current attitudes to reading. Generally, 58 per cent of respondents perceive their approach to reading as “positive” or “rather positive”, 35 per cent of students marked “neutral” in this question, and 7 per cent of respondents chose “negative” or “rather negative”. Subsequently, the respondents had to think about possible reasons for the decreasing popularity of reading—e.g. more than 68 per cent of respondents chose little support by the family, almost 60 per cent marked reading as an activity that is not fashionable due to modern technologies, and 28 per cent of students mentioned little time.

We can see that students in philological programmes of studies do read and in most cases recognise the importance of reading, nevertheless, they are not all enthusiastic readers. Even if their approach is positive, they probably have very little experience with academic reading. The family and the secondary school are decisive influential factors, leaving the elementary school behind. This may be a challenge for us to think about how to incorporate or stress the support, motivation and approach to reading in the methodology section of the FL teaching programmes so that our trainees after becoming qualified teachers support reading.

### **Questionnaire for teachers at philological departments**

This line of the project provided a clearer picture of what the potential problematic areas,

concepts or even individual expressions or words are that the foreign language teachers experience as obstacles on the part of the students, causing difficulties or misunderstanding either in lectures or seminars. Although teachers from three other departments (French, German and Russian languages) were asked to contribute with their views or even lists of concepts or words, in the end we could work only with an English and a German version of such lists.

In the submitted lists, there are three main groups of words

- 1) common vocabulary contained in higher levels according to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), e.g. B2 or higher;
- 2) special vocabulary linked to special/theoretical areas that are new to the students (e.g. Basics of Linguistics, Phonetics, Basics of Literary Theory, etc.);
- 3) special vocabulary where the individual words may or may not be similar to English expressions, however, those words or concepts should have been mastered in previous stages of education.

In the 1st group there are words usually important for gaining and processing information, for successful reading of academic texts, knowledge enrichment and conceptual and cognitive development, however, even if often of general character, the words correspond to B2 and/or C1 levels of CEFR—here we feel a great mismatch between the requirements of the studied programmes and the level of proficiency with which the students arrive from secondary schools (B1). Some examples follow:

the English list—currency, suppose, effort, feature, legislative, survey, initial, distinguish, humid, setting; the German list—(here translated into English)—explain, add, substitute, treatment, sense, narrative, meaning, plot, fairy tale, proverb.

The 2nd group is represented by these examples:

the English list—alliteration, blank verse, idolatry, beaker, burial mound, declension, root vowel, inflectional; the German list—(here translated into English)—saga, catharsis, modern times, reflection essay, fable.

The 3rd group contains e.g.:

the English list—metonymy, metaphor, personification, epic, iamb, preaching, case, conjugation, nominative, dative; the German list—(here translated into English)—poet, introduction, summary, short story.

Having included these expressions, at least for English, the teachers suggest that they often see their students struggling with concepts or words that in many cases sound almost the same in both languages, but in spite of our expectations the students cannot recollect their meaning or just do not know the concepts at all.

### **Reading competence in 1<sup>st</sup> grade students of English**

All 1<sup>st</sup> grade students of English were tested in reading towards the end of the winter term. The team decided that a standardised test had to be used to concentrate on the general proficiency level rather than individual students reading competencies or deficiencies. There were 9 males and 19 females tested, the 5 Erasmus students are included as a subgroup. The test was taken from *Cambridge First Certificate in English 3*, namely Test1 Paper 1 Reading part 2 and Test3 Paper 1 Reading part 4. The time limit was 40 minutes.

The first part of the standardised test was a full page article about a journalist who took

a residential course for writers. The students had to mark answers on a separate sheet—there were 7 multiple choice questions. The order of questions followed the order of ideas and paragraphs, the task required detailed understanding. The maximum score was 7 points. The second part was a full-page text consisting of five parts, A–E. It was about sporting activities. There were 16 questions to be answered on a separate sheet, 1 had been already answered as an example. The students had to fill in the particular letter for which the individual statement would be true. This type of task was chosen since it requires quick reading in the form of skimming and later scanning the whole text because the statements are of random order. The maximum score was 15 points. The results are presented in Chart 3.

Test part	Whole group average	Females average	Males average	Erasmus students
1 <sup>st</sup> part (max. 7 points)	5,11 points	4,74 points <b>67,71%</b>	5,89 points <b>84,14%</b>	5,6 points <b>80%</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> part (max. 15 points)	10,61 points	10,26 points <b>68,4%</b>	11,33 points <b>75,53%</b>	8,2 points <b>54,67%</b>

**Chart 3**—Results of a standardised reading test

Interestingly, in both parts male students scored higher results than female students. For females the second part of the test was slightly easier than the first part, for male students the first part of the test was easier than the second part of the test. For the Erasmus students, the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the test seemed easier to cope with, the results for the 2<sup>nd</sup> part are quite low. However, we do not have any detailed or comparable information about previous stages of education or exams of these students.

To conclude this section, it is important to remark that the test is at B2 level (CEFR), so is the textbook the students started to use at the beginning of the winter term. However, the special and theoretical subjects are at C1 level, at least partly.

### Summary of findings

In the project the principle of action research was followed, with the aim to tailor the current programme to reflect the real level, knowledge and abilities the 1<sup>st</sup> grade university students arrive with from secondary schools. Based on previous experience, three lines of investigation were outlined to gain information in two fields relevant for reading competencies development, i.e. L1 reading experience and general attitude to L1 reading, and L2 proficiency as seen by the university teachers (vocabulary knowledge) and as reflected in an L2 standardised reading test.

In the reading experience questionnaire, about 58 per cent of respondents mark their approach to reading as “positive” or “rather positive”. They value family reading at young age and secondary school reading as key factors in their attitude. Some have the experience of reading a book or books in a foreign language, however, they lack L2 academic reading experience.

The teachers collected a list of words the 1<sup>st</sup> grade students typically do not know—these include not only words needed for theoretical disciplines but also common vocabulary. Sometimes even notions that should have been mastered in previous stages of education cause problems.

In a standardised English reading test at B2 level (modified version) assigned towards the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> term the students scored between 68 and 84 per cent, the male students being more successful in both parts of the test. However, the language connected requirements of theoretical disciplines are in many respects above this level since the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> term.

When reflecting all the findings the team set up the plan for next school year: to distribute the L1 reading experience questionnaire among the new group of 1<sup>st</sup> grade students, to test their L1 and L2 reading competence (also L2 proficiency), to restructure the materials in theoretical disciplines so that they are more instructive as to reading and critical reading techniques and metacognitive strategies. Also, the following suggestions should be discussed and incorporated in the programme.

### **Suggestions for further practice**

Firstly, a list of special / problematic vocabulary / concepts in each subject should be compiled and provided in the first session of the term, perhaps connected with some intensive vocabulary and conceptual work. Throughout the term due attention must be paid to pre-teaching phases (even if quite short) in every lecture or seminar. Alternatively, another approach might be adopted—such a list and proper pre-teaching might be connected to every new topic, irrespectively of the number of lectures or seminars. Also, teachers should clearly demonstrate, at least in a limited way, how various types of reading assignments might be carried out, e.g. using projectors, highlighters, system of symbols, various critical reading techniques, etc., so that students get gradually familiar with these techniques. Even metacognition may be demonstrated by teachers or made part of home reading assignments.

Secondly, an optional subject might be set up, covering the general / special / academic vocabulary needs of the novice students, as well as intensive reading training, introducing interesting texts on specialised topics, developing critical reading techniques. Perhaps if a subject on academic writing exists (which is our case), reading is definitely its integral part and so the approach to and the contents of the subject might be slightly modified to reflect both the aspects of academic expression.

Thirdly, an e-course might be launched or a portfolio of texts and tasks together with vocabulary lists might be collected and published, perhaps combining all the 1<sup>st</sup> grade subjects.

Last but not least, an introductory intensive crash course might be organised, perhaps allowing the students not only to get ready for the term, revise or learn important vocabulary (try some practical exercises, learn about academic reading and writing, etc.) but also meet other students and get to know each other.

In all the above mentioned cases, reading skills and strategies must be an integral part of teaching and learning. Students should be offered clear demonstrations of what strategies are, how they work and how they may be applied during the reading processes. Students should come to a conclusion that strategies perhaps are consciously controlled in early stages, so that reading problems are solved (Grabe 221-22). Later, when internalized, the strategies actually may be employed unconsciously and thus as skills.

As for the continuation of the research project, a similar strategy is planned for the school year 2017/18—reading competence of 1<sup>st</sup> grade English students should be tested, this time both in Czech and in English. The ensuing analysis should provide some insight into reading experience and abilities of individual learners so that some differentiated intensive vocabulary / reading / strategies training is offered to those who might need such support. We also wish to reuse the questionnaire on reading habits and administer it to the group of incoming students.

Generally, as Nel and Nel (2) pointed out university-level reading requires a systematic and comprehensive supportive approach. All teachers must co-operate consistently and continuously because academic reading skills develop gradually throughout all the university studies.

## Conclusion

The research project consisted of three investigation lines. The questionnaire about reading experience and habits among 1<sup>st</sup> grade students showed that home reading with parents poses an important factor in future approach to reading; secondary school reading influence seems more important and influential than elementary school experience. About 42 per cent of students have now either neutral or negative attitude to reading which may quite unfavourably impact on their approach to L2 academic reading load.

Questionnaires for teachers revealed that students often struggle with words or concepts that should have already been mastered in previous stages of education.

The reading test showed some individual differences that the teachers in practical subjects might wish to cope with, also, male students scored higher numbers of points. Even if the texts were general, not academic, the students did not achieve best results. This only proves the need to develop reading skills and strategies openly and systematically.

The project steps will be repeated next year, moreover, Czech reading test will be used.

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## Limitations of Cross-cultural Semantic Descriptors (developed for English learners)

*Abstract: This article considers the possibilities and limitations of semantic descriptors. The development of semantic descriptors, addressing a need for an objective, non-referential and culture-free semantic description of a lexical unit, has been a perpetual and constantly changing task since the 1950s (West 1953). Linguistic progress, accenting the need for objectivity and precision of semantic descriptors, is illustrated by a comparison of the original restricted vocabulary compiled by West (1953) and semantic descriptors developed 50 or 60 years later (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2015, Lipka 1972, Leech, Brezina and Gablasova 2015). Although the possibilities for their applications have been growing, limitations remain (Lipka 1972, Lyons 1971) being inherent resulting from the methods and purposes for which the semantic descriptors have been developed. However, their potential usefulness for lexicology, lexicography, translatology, (in translatology the same set of descriptors applied to a source language lexical unit and to its translation target language equivalent can stipulate the degree of translation equivalency) and pedagogy has been motivating linguists to perpetually question the limitations.*

### Concept and purpose of semantic descriptors

The very concept of semantic descriptors presupposes 1) their differentiation from a restricted vocabulary paraphrase found in defining dictionaries (with their lexical entries defined by a restricted vocabulary of English lexical units) and 2) differentiation between linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge (referentialism).

Semanticists agree on most of the characteristics of semantic descriptors including 1) their universality, 2) the principle of the simplest possible description and 3) the cultural neutrality of their notation (an absence of language ethnocentricity).

West's General Service List from 1953, based on the method of "restrictive defining vocabulary" where each of the lexical entries was defined exclusively from the selected vocabulary of the most frequent English words, was a historic attempt of developing a semantic metalanguage. The specifically selected words were semantic descriptors *sui generis*. The resulting semantic metalanguage was based on the presupposition that certain meanings, represented by the selected words, were simpler than others and that a more complex meaning could be described by the combinations of the simple ones. The simplest represented meanings were described in the Foreword to *An International Reader's Dictionary* (West 1969) as the "commonest words" such as *get*, *put* and *take*. The words were selected to represent the most frequent words in English and were taken from a corpus of written English.

The compilation of such a list has not been an isolated attempt. Sixty years later two recent *General Service Lists* were published independently, the *New General Service List* by Browne, Culligan and Phillips (2013), which was a major update of Michael West's 1953 *General Service List* of core vocabulary for second language learners, and another *New General Service List* by Brezina and Gablasova (2015); described in the study *Is There a Core General Vocabulary? Introducing the New General Service List*.

The *General Service List* from 1953 was subsequently developed by West in 1969 into *An International Reader's Dictionary*, the 18,000 words and 6,000 idioms of which were defined with 1,490

selected words in English, described as the English words first learned by foreigners. West's restricted vocabulary could not have been a list of semantic descriptors by default because of its reliance on extralinguistic knowledge and a lack of characteristics necessary in semantic descriptors. It defines, in other words, *unfaithful*, as *not being honest or true to one's master or friend* (368). The restricted vocabulary items *honest*, *true*, *master*, *friend* do not fulfil the need for applicability and the principle of the simplest possible description. The entry *negro*, *man of the black race of Africa* (248) clearly relies on extralinguistic knowledge.

### **Semantic descriptors and a restricted "natural language" defining vocabulary**

The criterion differentiating between a restricted vocabulary paraphrase and postulation of semantic features is not considered by West but is addressed by Goddard and Wierzbicka (2010) in their *Men, Women and Children: the Conceptual Semantics of Basic Social Categories*. All of them employ a metalanguage to compile monolingual English word lists with intentional definitions based on controlled word lists with West providing denotative definitions and Goddard and Wierzbicka providing logical and descriptive definitions.

Goddard and Wierzbicka (2010, 5) defend "natural language as the language of semantic representation" quoting Hjelmslev who presented semantic description as being no different in kind from those of a unilingual dictionary. Their natural semantic metalanguage consists of a highly restricted set of meanings that "resist further decomposition". An extreme position is employed by Allan (268) who maintains that any artificial semantic formalism is a degenerated form of a natural language. Any optimal semantic metalanguage ought to be based as transparently as possible on ordinary natural languages.

Additional linguists, who apply the Hallidayan approach of the semantic description using restricted vocabulary, are referred to by Goddard and Wierzbicka, these being, among others, Lock's (4) classification in *Functional Grammar of English* as it includes headings such as (in part): '*doing and happening*', '*seeing, liking, thinking, wanting, and saying*' and '*being and having*'. Leech, in his functional analysis of the English verb (30), classifies one of the verb groups as the state verbs of *having* and *being*. Leech, similarly to Lock, defines the group with what he considers to be two superlexemes. For both Leech, Goddard and Wierzbicka the verbs *have* and *be* are semantic notations with, however, contrasting definitions. For Leech (40) this verb "itself furnishes many examples", while for Goddard and Wierzbicka there is an apparent effort to exclude any polysemy; their semantic primes being by definition unambiguous. Levisen, commenting on the natural semantic metalanguage, points out that the exponents of primes exist as the meanings of lexical units (not at the level of lexemes) defining lexical units as "the pairings of a single meaning/ sense with a lexical form" (49).

When Lipka's comprehensive semantic features are compared with natural language primes, there is again an overlap of just two semantic universals: *be* and *have*, which Lipka (192) defines as a "group of semantic features" and Goddard and Wierzbicka, as we have seen above, as the unambiguous English exponents of natural language-based semantic primes free of any "artificial semantic formalism". Lipka puts forward a provision of additional, more specific designators in certain definitions of the nominals with collocation restrictions. He anticipated, as early as 1972, the limitations of universal metalanguages such as the one of semantic primes, stating that "the conflict between the requirements of the generality of features, and of the naturalness of definitions (...) can only be solved by a compromise of the principles" and postulating that even some of his own definitions "will need a slight alternation of the exponent of the feature to sound perfectly natural" (193).

### **The issue of referentialism (a differentiation between linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge)**

The concept of semantic descriptors presupposes a differentiation between linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge (referentialism). Referential independency, as one of the features of semantic descriptors, should prevent the blurred limits between universal semantic descriptors and randomly selected references to extralingual reality, cf. West's *Africa* in the entry *negro, man of the black race of Africa* (248) above.

Goddard and Wierzbicka's method of natural semantic languages (2010) claimed to be "radically opposed to what is variously termed objectivism, referentialism, or correspondence theories of the meaning, i.e. to the view that meaning consists in a correspondence between a linguistic expression and the real world" (22).

Their universal concepts aim at the development of a culture-free English version of the natural semantic metalanguage "with no literary, aesthetic or emotional aspirations, and in a very basic sense, communicatively adequate". Such an English should become "a universal cultural notation for elucidating meanings, ideas, assumptions, and so on., i.e. as an auxiliary language". It would be an auxiliary language of intercultural training: a "neutral" cultural notation for comparing languages and cultures (14).

Illustrating the neutrality, they reject the English lexical units *boys* and *girls* as too language and culture specific, comparing the English *girls* to Russian *devočki* and *devuški* to demonstrate a lack of correspondence. They refer in the comparison to 'similarities' between "parts of the girl's body and parts of a woman's body" (31). Their simplified cultural scripts, differentiating between *devočki* and *devuški*, by references to physical differences are difficult to reconcile with their radical rejection of referentialism and the assertion that the meaning of their semantic primes does not consider a correspondence between a linguistic expression and the real world.

When they claim that "meaning is first and foremost a conceptual phenomenon, albeit with social and cultural underpinnings", they cannot argue that the exponents of the semantic primes are words or word-like elements. They reject *men*, *women*, *boys* and *girls* as standard components of semantic analysis on the grounds of their polysemy, the exponents of the primes being meanings of lexical units, not of lexemes. They view their method as "more precise, descriptively superior and based on a theoretically sound and empirically well-grounded methodology of semantic analysis" when compared to the old analysis which is "an exemplar of a flawed and superseded approach" (37).

Goddard and Wierzbicka (1994) maintain that they have pursued Weinreich's approach of an "absolute" metalanguage, which is entirely independent of the object language, or any natural language (10). Although they follow the suggestion to use as few different words in definitions as possible, the complexity of their metalanguage does not comply with the demand for naturalness of definitions.

Their approach (2010), with pronounced referential features, results in a simplified cultural script defining *děvočki* and *děvuški* with the following semantic primes:

*people of one kind, b. people of this kind have lived for some time, not for a long time they are children, c. if someone is someone of this kind, parts of this someone's body are like parts of a woman's body, d. because of this, if someone is someone this kind at one time, afterwards this someone can be a woman* (33).

When defending the perceived complexity of their cultural scripts, Goddard and Wierzbicka implicitly admit that

although the wording of the individual components may be relatively simple, an explication taken as a whole is a rather complex structure. Quite so. Partly this is due to the fact that despite its small lexicon, the metalanguage of semantic primes allows a surprisingly rich flexibility of expression, and partly it is due to the way which explications must be crafted in terms of anaphoric and causal relations so that their various components cohere and make sense as a whole (18).

### **Semantic descriptors and the paradox of the simplest possible description**

Having described Allan's (268) claim that any artificial semantic formalism is a degenerated form of a natural language as an extreme one, the very need for the "artificial" semantic descriptors ought to be discussed. The attempts to develop and apply core or restricted defining vocabularies, consisting of lexical and semantic descriptors, follow, according to Lipka (35), Hjelmslev's demand for satisfying the requirement of the empirical principle of "the simplest possible description". Hjelmslev was not referring, however, to the selected lexical units included in the general services lists or the semantic primes of natural semantic metalanguages, but to a limited number of content-figurae (or semantic features) which would be of use when describing an unlimited number of signs. The semantic primes, developed by Goddard and Wierzbicka and West's restricted vocabulary, are examples of presenting selected lexical units (not semantic descriptors) as components of metalinguistic constructs.

The inherent limiting factor in the approaches applying the method of semantic descriptors was again observed by Weinreich in his critical review of Katz and Fodor's integrated theory of linguistic descriptions noting that "differentiation of submeanings in a dictionary might continue without limit" (18). His observation contradicts Goddard and Wierzbicka's (2010) assertion that the natural semantic metalanguage consists of a highly restricted set of meanings that "resist further decomposition" (8).

The possibilities of the application of the components of strictly referential semantics or purely language-immanent approaches for the assessment of translation equivalents have been discussed in greater detail earlier (Řeřicha 2014, Řeřicha and Livingstone 2015) with the conclusion that "in spite of the mainstream approaches shifting from highly formalized analyses to pragmatic, communicative and cognitive ones, there is still some space for a language-immanent classification." (Řeřicha 2014, 130). The paradox of the simplest possible descriptors lies in the unfeasibility of defining a limited number of submeanings resisting further composition on the one hand and the infinite options of decomposition on the other hand if referentialism is not strictly avoided.

### **Semantic descriptors and universality**

A foreign language learner synthesises a new relatively complex meaning using the specific semantic descriptors of the learned language only. The task of the semantic descriptors determines their necessity to be linguistically universal. The universality may not be directly proportional to the original language frequency, cf. West's linguistic ethnocentrism lacking the significant cross-cultural aspect.

Goddard and Wierzbicka's (2007) claim that their semantic primes include an additional syntactic description as "for each semantic prime, research has identified certain characteristic grammatical properties—patterns of combination, valency and complementation—and these properties also appear to be universal" (3). If their suggestion refers to the universality of "patterns of combination, valency and complementation", the assertion may be correct. If it refers to the exponents themselves, i.e. specifically the syntactic (distributory) function of *there is*, they ignore the fact that according to the functional sentence perspective the English *there is* may introduce a context-independent complement into communication, taking it a step further, which is not the function of e.g. the Czech *tam je* (*there is*), or Polish *tam jest* (*there is*). The English exponent of the basic/simple semantic prime

*there is* may be either contextually dependent or this particular semantic prime is not a word or word-like element but a conceptual representation with the meaning of existence and therefore cannot be described as a natural language applied as a language of semantic representation.

### **Semantic descriptors and cultural neutrality**

Lyons considers the vocabulary of the specific language to be organized by the structure of the culture; the vocabulary is therefore anthropocentric as well as culturebound (457). The cultural neutrality of semantic descriptors has to therefore be a result of a theoretically grounded process excluding any possibility of referentialism which is, however, inherent in any natural language.

West's (1953, 1969) restricted ethnocentric vocabulary is based on the perceived need of a foreigner learning English. A detailed introduction to the *General Service List*, as well as its historical background, and the process that led to its compilation has been provided by Gilner who points out that the content of *An International Reader's Dictionary* has been determined by its aim to compile a dictionary specifically for foreigners. It reflects the lack of cultural neutrality of the first half of the twentieth century, cf. the entry *negro, man of the black race of Africa* (248). There is also evidence of terminological ethnocentrism in West imposing an inauthentic perspective for the user e.g. at a randomly selected page (284), which includes a relatively high number of historicisms such as *pshaw, puce, pugree* and *puissant*.

The recent demand for cultural sensitivity is accented in Goddard and Wierzbicka (2007) who developed so-called cultural scripts as "a technique for articulating cultural norms, values and practices using the natural semantic metalanguage of semantic primes as the medium of description" (6) and aligning them with Jackendoff's (334) conceptual primitives. The cultural scripts themselves are the main tools for cross-cultural lexical semantics. According to the authors, the technique articulates the culturally strange in terms of the linguistically familiar, i.e. in terms of simple common words (15).

The cultural neutrality of the semantic primes is expected to solve the problem of terminological ethnocentrism which imposes an inaccurate and inauthentic "outsider perspective" (6) which is, as we have noted above, clearly in evidence in West's *An International Reader's Dictionary*. According to Levisen, a natural semantic metalanguage provides "an optimal framework (...) because it is highly useful for describing social, cognitive and emotional terms in culturally sensitive ways" (79). Goddard and Wierzbicka (2007) describe cultural scripts as a technique to articulate cultural norms using semantic primes, a technique of cross-cultural semantics allowing us to understand the meanings of the relevant culturally important words. The cultural scripts approach differs from the ethnography of communication by the empirically established semantic primes and the high importance placed on linguistic evidence (6). They select as an example the "Anglo cultural scripts" for the cultural key word *freedom* (and *free*), the Russian one connected with the key word *iskrennost' (candor)* and the Korean *yeyuy (deference)* (13). The selection itself of these specific "cultural scripts" seems driven by West-European stereotypes.

Goddard and Wierzbicka's (8) observation, however, on the English avoidance of direct imperative, interrogative imperative and "suggestive formulas" as well as the relative avoidance of pleading, begging, and other modes of "insistent asking" is very relevant and should be part of any cultural script.

### **Semantic descriptors and the frequency**

West's criterion of the "commonest words" refers to his lexicographical endeavour to identify the descriptors for his definitions with the most frequent words. This simple frequency criterion is criticized

by Čermák (78) stating that West's list of 1,490 of the lexical units represents as many as 4,607 different meanings. Similarly, Goddard and Wierzbicka (2007, 2) describe West's attempt as confused. They do not approve of the criterion of word frequency as a guide, as it does not take into account the fact that many common words are polysemous. West lacks a clear theory of the defining vocabulary and does not seem to differentiate between lexemes and lexical units.

An *ad hoc* analysis reveals that West defines e.g. the verb *get* as *obtain* (158) and *obtain* by a circular definition such as *get* (253). A differentiation between lexemes and lexical units supplementing the frequency of West's "words" might have shown that e.g. the verb *obtain* was a convenient lexeme and hyperonym for the lexical units *get* in the sense of *bring, buy, catch, punish*, etc. (158) and related idioms.

Frequency, however, cannot be easily dismissed. It is usually accepted as one of the criteria for the compilation of a restricted vocabulary. Levisen (71) maintains that it is reasonable to assume that the frequent words of a speech community are cognitively more revealing of the speakers' priorities than the marginal words, as the salient words can illuminate the cultural concerns and cultural values of a speech community. Goddard and Wierzbicka (2007) accentuate the conflict between the rival criteria for " 'basicness' or 'coreness': simplicity and versatility, on the one hand, versus raw frequency, on the other" (2). They maintain that simple inspection or statistics on corpora, when determining the frequency of particular lexical units, are insufficient. Nevertheless, they implicitly admit direct proportionality between the "raw frequency" and restricted vocabulary of their defining components (semantic primes) when admitting their "semantic primes tend to be high-frequency items" (5). The recent general service lists, compiled by Brezina and Gablasova and Browne, Brent and Phillips, are aware of the potential polysemy of many common words, being one of their theoretical considerations when applying the frequency parameter.

### **Pedagogy and the lexical appropriateness**

There is an obvious pedagogical aspect of the semantic metalanguages as one of their main practical tasks is to theoretically underpin vocabularies and textbooks for English learners. All the compilers of the core vocabulary mention its pedagogical aspects as their target audiences are English language learners and ESL teachers. Brezina and Gablasova state that

traditional word-family approach allowed us to narrow down the wordlist to significantly fewer forms than included in West's *GSL* and at the same time retain comparable coverage of text (...) Pedagogically, this feature of the new *GSL* is important for creating lexically appropriate teaching materials for different groups of learners (17).

Nation, proposing classroom use of monolingual dictionaries, emphasizes that "definitions are often within a controlled vocabulary. The definition vocabulary usually consists of around 2000 words. Thus to use a monolingual dictionary effectively learners need to have an effective receptive vocabulary of 2000 words" (4). Goddard and Wierzbicka (2007), mentioning the universal character of their metalanguage descriptors defined as semantic primes, maintain that "language teachers and curriculum designers would be well advised to re-consider their early lexical syllabi with a view to including all or most semantic primes in the early stages". They criticise three introductory textbooks, German, Chinese and Korean for English speaking students, having discovered that only from 8 to 10 per cent of their semantic primes were represented in the first 500 vocabulary items, in spite of the fact that "semantic primes tend to be high-frequency items" (5).

## Conclusion

The article has considered the possibilities and limitations of the semantic descriptors developed for selected semantic metalanguages since the 1950s. It has identified necessary characteristics of semantic descriptors and compared them with the components of the semantic metalanguages, specifically the relationship between the restricted vocabulary paraphrase and postulation of semantic features, the boundary between linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge, the paradox of the simplest possible description as well as the universality, frequency, cultural neutrality and pedagogical implications of the semantic descriptors.

The first considered semantic metalanguage of West's General Service List from 1953 is based on the method of "restrictive defining vocabulary" consisting of specifically selected words which were semantic descriptors *sui generis*. The simplest represented meanings are described as the commonest words such as *get*, *put* and *take*. These words are presented as the most frequent words of English and are excerpted from a corpus of written English. West's restricted vocabulary is referential, however, relying on extralinguistic knowledge, ignoring the characteristics of applicability and the principle of the simplest possible description.

The criterion differentiating between a restricted vocabulary paraphrase and a postulation of semantic features is addressed by the semantic metalanguage of Goddard and Wierzbicka (2010) who defend natural language as the language of semantic representation. The rejection of language-immanent semantic representations is not uncommon and artificial semantic formalism is often unfavourably compared to semantic representation by natural language. Recent mainstream approaches shift from highly formalized analyses to pragmatic, communicative and cognitive ones, although there is still some space for a language-immanent classification owing to the paradox of the demand for the simplest possible descriptors and the limitless options of decomposition.

The Hallidayan approach to semantic description enables a comparison of Lock's classification of *being and having* and Leech's classification, who in his functional analysis of the English verb, classifies one of the verb groups as the state verbs of *having* and *being*. Leech, similarly to Lock, defines this specific group with two superlexemes. The overlap of the two semantic universals *be* and *have* in Lipka's comprehensive semantic features and Goddard and Wierzbicka's natural language primes illustrates their theoretical differences, with Lipka (192) defining the semantic representations as "group of semantic features" and Goddard and Wierzbicka as unambiguous English exponents of natural language-based semantic primes.

The concept of semantic descriptors presupposes a differentiation between linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge (referentialism). The referential independency, as one of the characteristics of semantic descriptors, is needed to define the differences between universal semantic descriptors and randomly selected references to extralingual reality.

Natural semantic metalanguages describe meaning as a conceptual phenomenon with social and cultural aspects while presenting words as the exponents of the semantic primes. Words such as *men*, *women*, *boys* and *girls* are rejected as components of natural semantic metalanguages on the grounds of their polysemy because, it is argued, the exponents of the primes are lexical units, lexemes. The relatively simple ultimate components, when attempting to describe the basic lexical units, are involved in rather complex structures and refer to extralinguistic knowledge. They theoretically follow Hjelmslev's demand for the principle of the simplest possible description of the components which might describe an unlimited number of signs, but their claim that their components resist further decomposition contradicts the inherent limiting factor of semantic descriptors stating that differentiation of submeanings in a dictionary might continue without limit.

Linguistic universality, in natural semantic metalanguage, is not limited to lexical units but includes grammatical properties as well: patterns of combination, valency and complementation. The example of the universal syntactic (distributory) function of *there is* ignores the fact that while *there is* may introduce a context-independent complement into communication in English, it is not the function of e.g. the Czech *tam je* (*there is*), or the Polish *tam jest* (*there is*).

The need for cultural neutrality of semantic descriptors is relevant because of the anthropocentricity of vocabularies. Terminological ethnocentrism imposes an inauthentic perspective for the user as documented in West. Although natural semantic metalanguages insist they provide an optimal framework for describing social, cognitive and emotional terms in culturally sensitive ways, the selection itself of specific cultural scripts analysed above seems determined by West-European stereotypes. Natural semantic metalanguages are presented as a universal cultural notation. In contrast, the natural semantic metalanguage's meticulous search for "culture-free" nuclear vocabulary, which would provide a "neutral" cultural notation, implicitly clarifies, from our point of view, the major shortcoming of West's dictionaries written for foreigners, i.e. its unintentional terminological ethnocentrism.

The criterion of frequency cannot be easily dismissed, in spite of West's raw-frequency shortcomings, and is usually accepted as one of the criteria for the compilation of a restricted vocabulary. The frequent words of a speech community are supposed to be cognitively more revealing of the speakers' priorities as they deal with the cultural concerns and cultural values of a speech community. The recent general service lists are aware of the pitfalls of potential polysemy of many common words.

The pedagogical aspect is common to all the compilers of core vocabularies as their target audiences are English language learners and ESL teachers. The compilers maintain that core vocabularies and general service lists are important as they provide lexically appropriate teaching materials for introductory textbooks and monolingual learner's dictionaries.

The comparison of the original restricted vocabulary and natural semantic metalanguage descriptors developed 50 or 60 years later has confirmed Lipka's scepticism resulting from the paradox determining the development of semantic descriptors and supported his suggestion that it can only be solved by a compromise of the principles. A compromise can be attained by allowing an input of a language-immanent classification, thus transversing the gap between the inherent limitation of the method and the need for an objective, non-referential and culture-free semantic description of a lexical unit.

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## Using Graphic Novels in Foreign Language Teaching

*Abstract: Reading certainly is not what intrigues children nowadays as many of them consider it to be a boring activity assigned at school, it is not important and relevant to them, they do not have enough leisure time for reading and in some cases they even struggle with it. Growing up in a digital age where young people are surrounded by modern multimedia, they naturally seek for print media that contain similar visual impact and contribute to their enthusiasm. This might be offered by one of the most popular and fastest growing type of literature called graphic novels. The potential of graphic novels lies in the fact that by combining images and text, which share narrative responsibility, graphic novels bridge the gap between the media which people watch and the media they read. We strongly believe using graphic novels during foreign language classes can trigger students' intrinsic motivation in terms of both engagement and further preference when it comes to reading.*

### The Roots of Graphic Novels

As far as the origins of graphic novels are concerned, the roots of this phenomenon can be dated back to ancient times when the sequential art was used to tell the story by using pictures in combination with the words. McCloud (1994:10-23) outlines the history of comic books as a predecessor of graphic novels by saying this way of storytelling has been used in various forms, such as early cave drawings, hieroglyphics and even medieval tapestries for centuries.

Understandably, the history of graphic novels is interconnected with that of comic books in sense that comic books can be seen as the ancestors of which the graphic novels emerged later. The most significant authors who considerably contributed to the process of transforming the graphic novel into more sophisticated form were according to Fingeroth (2008:22) Robert Crumb, Will Eisner, Harvey Pekar, Alan More and Art Spiegelman, who are currently regarded for the pioneers in graphic novels history as well as an inspiration for current graphic novels authors.

As for the term graphic novel itself, it was firstly used in 1987 by Will Eisner after having written *A Contract with God*, a collection of stories depicting an impoverished overcrowded Jewish Bronx neighborhood. This publication was seen as a turning point and equally a milestone, when Eisner was awarded and the attitude towards graphic novels began to change.

Talking about the issue of graphic novels as such, it is rather difficult to find one definition that would cover the term thoroughly as the definitions of them are rather vague and contradictory. This may be due to the fact that even professionals are not united when it comes to the questions referring to graphic novels what causes even greater curiosity. Gravett (2005:7) agrees with the most common definitions that intend to identify graphic novels with a genre, while Fletcher—Spear et al. (2005:1) perceive them as a format and Fingeroth (2008:18) identifies graphic novels as a medium. Moleti (2008) even defines graphic novels as a blend of many genres, mediums, and forms. Weiner (2003:42) uses an umbrella term to characterize graphic novels as book-length comic books that are meant to be read as one story, including collections of stories in genres such as mystery, superhero or supernatural that are meant to be read apart from their corresponding ongoing comic book storyline.

As Bucher and Manning (2004:67) state, Eisner coined the term graphic novel to describe a visual medium including a complex story narrated in a comic book like format mainly engaging mature audience. The term can be applied to works that are either factual or fictive.

Goldsmith (2005:48-49) claims graphic novels present themselves through the combination of images and words. The role of images is not to simply repeat the text, but rather to supply information not revealed in a written form. In order to read a graphic novel, one needs to apprehend word and image synchronically. Similar opinion was advocated by McCloud (1994:12), who emphasizes the need to focus on the interaction of pictures and words as together they form a discourse that is unique.

What is typical for graphic novels and what distinguishes them from comic books is according to Roiteri (2003:7) mainly a standalone story, a publication on fine-quality paper and a shift in audience from teenagers to adults. Goldsmith (2010:33-36) states the graphic novel is a format that can contain various genres from nonfiction to fiction. It also differs by being a bounded narrative with a traditional division of a narrative to a beginning, middle and conclusion.

Over the past years, graphic novels have seen a resurgence in terms of popularity for this non—traditional genre as well as they have gained a status as an art form. It has not always been like this and also nowadays there is still some misinformation concerning their potential.

### **Selecting a Suitable Graphic Novel for Students**

Probably the biggest challenge for the teachers is to find the integration of graphic novels into the curriculum. When teachers introduce graphic novels into class, they should consider all peculiarities that make particular graphic novels appropriate or inappropriate for their students. In fact, comics and graphic novels are not a new phenomenon, but the attempts to integrate them into classes are quite recent. Unfortunately, most of the beliefs that make teachers dismiss graphic novels seem to be just groundless misconceptions caused by lack of information in this area.

Taking responsibility for teaching students also includes allowing them to choose their own reading text based on their interests and abilities. Since students have a wide range of interests, it is nearly impossible to zero in on one graphic novel that will appeal to every single student in the classroom. Because of the previously mentioned, it is advisable to have a selection of graphic novels that would be appropriate for students, they could benefit from and finally they would be interested in. One way to do this is to let students express their opinions and perspectives by creating a short questionnaire aimed at their reading interests rather than having students read something they are forced to.

In order to benefit from working with this intriguing format, potential graphic novels should be screened for appropriate content according to students´ age. One way of doing this might be looking at the book cover of particular graphic novels to see the rating provided by the publisher to indicate propriety of impropriety for the reader. Different publishers use their own graphic novels labeling.

Preparing for the work with graphic novels requires the instructors to familiarize themselves with the history of graphic novels as well as their key elements. Prior to teaching graphic novels in classroom, the teacher needs to know how to interact with the graphic novels and to explore the format on their own to gain understanding on what to expect from their students as the readers. Also Monnin (2013:1) agrees with the previously mentioned and she emphasizes the need of the terminology teachers need to know in order to both teach and read graphic novels in their classroom in sense they need to merge the understanding of print—text literacies with the understanding of image literacies.

Before introducing graphic novels into classroom, the teacher should not assume that students are fully equipped with this format. It might happen that some students see graphic novels for the

first time. Before actually starting to work with this modern format, the teacher needs to familiarize students with the most common components, codes and conventions regarding graphic novels to effectively achieve the full range of potential benefits proposed by graphic novels. This can be done by bringing a variety of comic strips and graphic novels and afterwards introducing the basic terminology and exploring the main features of graphic novels. This step can be realized in form of a discussion or students' reflection in order to activate their background knowledge regarding graphic novels. Peterson (2010:7) calls this the process of discovery in sense that students try to figure out what conventions—breaking tricks authors and illustrators of particular graphic novels use in creating them. This usually involves conveying perspectives about the text, gestures, facial expressions, spacing, layout, etc. While working with various graphic novels strips, students might discuss together what they have noticed, what they find important, what was confusing or troublesome for them.

Looking at the page of graphic novel can be overwhelming to somebody who is graphic novel illiterate. When students are familiar with the basic graphic novel components, they need to practice reading the text and images together. Berry (2012) refers to this process as understanding the mechanics of reading a graphic novel. She writes that a common tactic is to read all the text, because it contains pertinent information. Students have to learn how to proceed panel by panel, look at the text and pictures, savor it and digest it. Over time, student will get used to working with graphic novels and become completely fluent.

Being able to comprehend the message of the graphic novel requires according to Goldsmith (2010:4) practising multiple activities synchronically. This is because the text requires using traditional decoding skills, while images require the reader to focus on everything conveyed through and between single strips of images as they bring the story forward.

It is necessary to notice every single visual detail since no pencil stroke is accidental, each visual texture and detail means to evoke an aesthetic response. In case of graphic novels, the narrative is created more through the images than through the text. Usually, the author of a particular graphic novel is counting on the fact that the readers will draw conclusions and fill in the blanks in the narrative. Therefore, it is necessary to make students familiar with the basics of graphic novels reading so they can gain the most while working with them.

The process of decoding a particular graphic novel is described by Peterson (2010:10-11) as analyzing the discrete bits of visual and print information on each page and after that synthesizing those bits to make sense of the whole page. To understand how various parts of graphic novel contribute to the overall understanding of it requires the reader to do the following:

- use the information to infer relationships;
- evaluate the actions and intentions of characters or ideas and perspectives of the author;
- predict forthcoming actions;
- synthesize a coherent story and message from the graphic novel as a whole.
- 

When working with graphic novels, Monnin (2013:25-26) describes this experience as the process where three windows of opportunity open: *the words window* (comprehension of the story through words), *the images window* (interpretation of the story through pictures) and *the words and images window* (an ability to fully grasp the meaning gained from the synergy of images and words).

Swaity (2013) offers five different ways in which graphic novels can be used within the classroom. This can also be applied when students struggle with traditional literary works:

1. *free reading material*: students can pick the title on their own so they are not forced or threatened;
2. *an introduction to the original work*: students read graphic novels a couple of weeks before they access the traditional version of the book, so they can compare their experience of working with two different formats;
3. *an alternative*: especially for those students who have problems with the written form, they can partially benefit from the images that the graphic novel offers;
4. *for ESL students*: of any age to give a context for the language used;
5. *a supplement for regular teaching*: in this case, the teacher does not work with the whole graphic novel, they just pick certain parts of the graphic novel in order to assist their explanation of difficult parts of the story.

An important step is also to give students some space to respond in order to deepen their understanding as well as to demonstrate their comprehension of a particular graphic novel. This can be done by various means, for instance in form of journals, writing, drawings, video or other type of tangible outcome. By observing the products of mutual work, students can negotiate their understanding and connections to what they have read.

### **Current Research on the Topic of Graphic Novels**

Due to the fact that graphic novels are becoming more and more popular in the world, but not in current foreign language learning and teaching, many of the scholars are concerned with their assets. This part discusses the main topics and results within current research on graphic novels in Slovak Republic and worldwide.

Since the research within graphic novels is devoted to various aspects, we decided to focus on the area connected to their educational use as it has not been researched thoroughly. Only a few empirical studies have been conducted to investigate educational uses of graphic novels, which has resulted in particular misconceptions.

The studies of our concern had to fit two criteria, namely the topic involving graphic novels in an educational setting and secondly the publication date after the year 2013. The surveys were obtained from Google Scholar and Science Direct, which are regarded as reputable databases of research papers. We chose five studies to summarize the main ideas of the research done in the area of graphic novels regarding the school setting. The following articles, which are listed from the most recent one to the earliest, were under our investigation:

1. ALLEN, S.B. (2016): *How Teachers Use Graphic Novels to Encourage Student Engagement in Learning*.
2. CIMERMANOVA, I. (2015): *Using Comics with Novice EFL Readers to Develop Reading Literacy*
3. CIMERMANOVA, I. (2014): *Graphic Novels in Foreign Language Teaching*.
4. PETRIKOVA, M. (2014): *Creativity and Information and Communication Technologies in the Context of Education of World Literature for Children and Youth*.
5. SABETI, S. (2013): *A Different Kind of Reading: the Emergent Literacy Practices of a School Based Graphic Novel Reading Group*.

The main objective of Allen´s thesis was to identify the pedagogical understandings of teachers using graphic novels as a part of teaching process. The author builds his research on the belief that

“graphic novels are multimodal texts that support engagement with multiliteracies and therefore engagement in learning” (2016:10).

When looking at the theory of multiliteracies, Allen claims there is a need to expand the idea of literacy by including other literacies available within understanding our diverse world. The printed word is not only the only modality students use and teachers need to realize that learning is a dynamic concept which integrates linguistic, visual, audio, gestural and spatial modes of meaning.

The term multiliteracy was coined by the New London Group to propose two key principles for teachers when approaching literacy with their students. Putting it simply, when trying to interpret particular work, teachers should look at *what* students need to learn and *how* they might learn it to best support their own multiliteracies.

The study advocated by Cimermanova examines the strategies applied by novice readers when reading comic books and also graphic novels. The aim of the study was to summarize the possible effects of using authentic material that blends word and images to tell the story.

Cimermanova claims a lot of research has been done in the area of reading literacy and reading comprehension, however, it is still insufficient in the area of using comic books and graphic novels to prove a positive effect in these areas.

To sum up the results of the survey, the author believes that if readers are trained in the area of exploiting images, visual and fonts, they gradually become more sensitive to reading the content presented in form of graphic novels and comic books. Previously mentioned is the main reason why language teachers should make students more familiar with such strategies leading to more effective reading and simultaneously taking responsibility for own learning.

In her article dedicated to using graphic novels at schools, Cimermanova discusses the possibilities of using graphic novels as an authentic material based on the qualitative case study. The author believes that mature themes together with the combination of pictures make graphic novels available to all groups regardless of their proficiency.

Cimermanova interconnects graphic novels with reading literacy claiming that reading books containing pictures is often done only superficially, which according to her indicates the problem with reading literacy. Graphic novels can serve as a tool for bridging this problem by engaging strategies to read the fusion of pictures together with the text. Not only the graphic novels make readers think more by using their imagination but they also build more attentive readers.

The research was conducted on eight EFL teacher trainees in order to find out how graphic novels can affect the learning of foreign language vocabulary. Graphic novels written and illustrated by an Australian Shaun Tan were used in the case study. The process of obtaining data was divided into three phases: pre-reading, while-reading and after-reading phase, as it is usual when establishing the outline for lesson aimed at enhancing reading skills. The data were generated mainly from the classroom observations and discussions.

To sum up the results of the case study, Cimermanova believes that graphic novels can definitely be used as an alternative for reading classical books within foreign language education. She supports this idea by stating that graphic novels encourage students to think in a critical way, lead students to higher productivity not to forget to mention they are an authentic material.

Although primarily in her paper Petrikova reflects the possibility of using ICT when teaching literature, she highlights the possibilities to use ICT together with graphic novels, more precisely with Shaun Tan’s *The Lost Thing*, which was also used in the previous research conducted by Cimermanova.

Firstly, Petrikova explains the reasons for working with this novel, its peculiarities and the main

features working with an extract from this graphic novel. Based on these characteristics, she creates an example lesson plan, stating the educative objectives of the lesson, implemented teaching methods and teaching aids and materials needed for the lesson.

Creating several activities for students in combination with ICT, either before working with the graphic novel or while reading it can serve as an inspiration for novice readers when it comes to working with graphic novels. Petrikova concludes her paper saying that using graphic novels and their plot is a suitable way for teaching not only literature but also foreign language in terms of both, children and adults.

Sabeti discusses the possibility of implementing graphic novels as a part of extra-curricular activity aimed at literary practices as she considers reading taking place outside the school undervalued or ignored.

She introduces her study with explaining the influence of comic books as a medium that can engage all types of readers and the rise of graphic novels in the last years. These two are commonly connected with literacy, which the author interconnects with the following aspects: content; purpose; audiences; languages, genres, styles and design; flexibility and constraints; roles, identities and values; modes and technologies; actions and processes; participation.

The research was based on the combination of different qualitative methods such as the observation, the semi-structured interview and recordings of discussions among students.

After using graphic novels with students, the author firmly assists to their potential because of their layout and visual mode. By relying on both pictures and the text, the students learned how to make inferences and graphic novels also served as a tool for bridging in and out of school experience.

## **Research Methods**

As it was stated in the theoretical part, graphic novels are usually not considered for academic reading due to misleading assumptions surrounding them. Therefore, our effort will be to refute these beliefs by creating a booklet aimed at working with a graphic novel *Maus* and thus showing a potential of graphic novels in general.

### *Questionnaire*

As it was mentioned above, before starting working with graphic novels, it is recommended to give students some space and let them express their opinions by creating a short questionnaire to monitor their reading interests and experience with graphic novels (or at least comic books) rather than having students read something they are forced to.

We decided to conduct a survey research in form of a questionnaire to become aware of experience students had with graphic novels by then. Not only are the questionnaires cost-effective but they also serve as efficient means of gathering information about particular group.

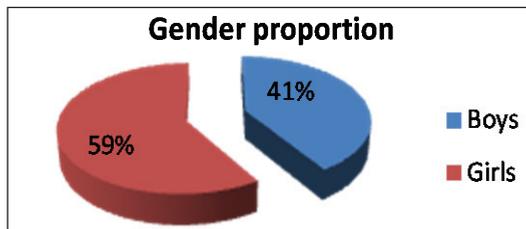
The questionnaire will determine the amount of time the students dedicate to reading as well as their general interests in reading. The purpose of the questionnaire is to help us select a purposeful sample of graphic novels for students. In addition, it will serve as a demonstration of students' reading interests and reading habits. The sample in our research consisted of 22 students aged 16-17.

The questionnaire includes both open and closed questions in order to get a better picture about the issue. The questions are rather simple as we supposed not a great deal of students have met with graphic novels before. The following questions are a part of the questionnaire answered by students:

### Reading habits questionnaire

1. What is your gender: Male/Female
2. Regarding your reading habits, why do you decide to read a particular book:  
school assignment    enjoyment    need for information    other:
3. Have you ever read any graphic novel? Yes/No  
In the next part, the students were supposed to continue, only if they have answered the previous question (number 3) with yes!
4. What do you prefer reading: Fiction/non-fiction?
5. Circle the reason for reading a particular graphic novel(s):  
school purpose    extracurricular course    leisure time activity
6. Do you find graphic novels more intriguing to read than classic books? Yes/No
7. Was it difficult for you to learn to rely on both pictures and the text? Yes/ No/ Just at the beginning
8. List the titles of graphic novels (comic books) you have read so far.

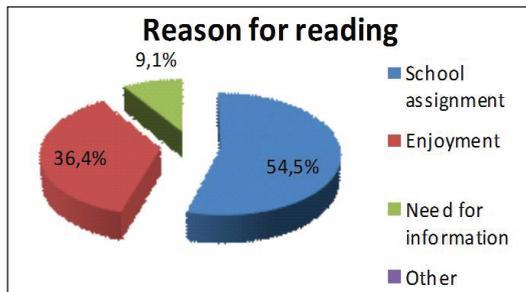
### QUESTION 1



Picture 1: Gender Proportion within the Groups

The graph clearly shows the division of extracurricular course aimed at increasing reading literacy through graphic novels according to the gender. In the group, which consisted of 22 students, 59 per cent out of the attendants were girls and the rest 41 per cent were boys aged from 15 – 16 years.

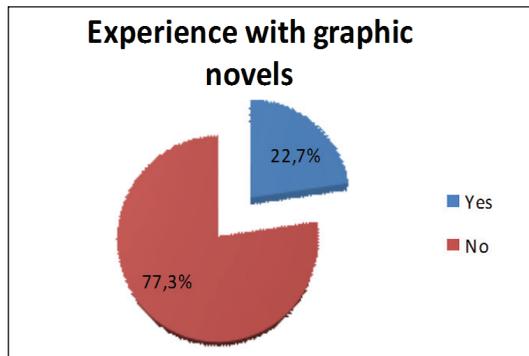
### QUESTION 2



Picture 2: Reasons for Reading Books

The second task of the questionnaire aimed to monitor students' reading habits when it comes to reading in general. We assumed that only a small minority of them considers reading as a pleasing activity, which has been proved as only a few asked confirmed they read because it is their pastime. Even smaller number of the respondents chose need for particular information as the main reason behind reading a particular book. The biggest number of respondents, 54,5 per cent pick a book in order to tackle school assignment, so students basically read only because they have to, not because they want to, which can be regarded an unsatisfactory and rather worrying finding.

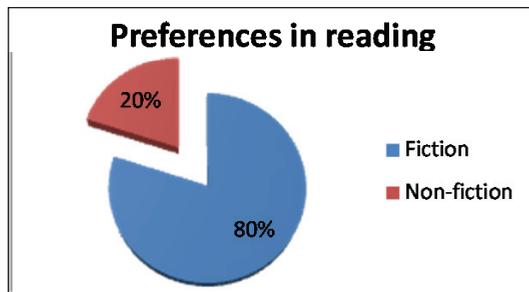
### QUESTION 3



Picture 3: *Experienc with Graphic Novels*

The aim of the next question was to find out whether students have ever come into contact with graphic novels or not. This question was quite crucial for our next continuation with the research as well as the preparation for the extracurricular course. We assumed that only a slight number of students is familiar with graphic novels and knows how to work with them. Again, our assumptions seemed to be true as only 22,7 per cent had experience with graphic novels what represents five students, out of whom some might have read just one graphic novel or consider comic books to be the same as graphic novels.

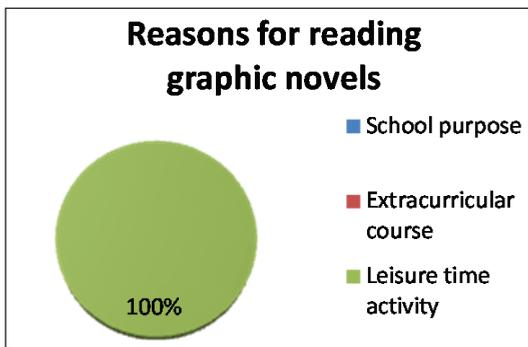
### QUESTION 4



Picture 4: *Preferences in Reading*

Regarding the preferences for fiction and non-fiction, the question was answered only by those students who admitted having experience with graphic novels (only five students). The majority of students claimed they choose fiction over non-fiction.

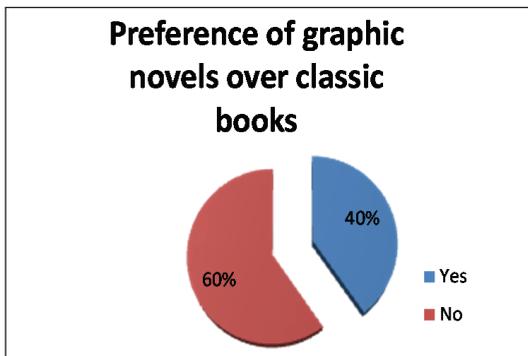
#### QUESTION 5



Picture 5: Reasons for Reading Graphic Novels

The question focused on the background where students having experience with graphic novels had come into contact with it. We were not surprised at all that graphic novels were not used as a means of education as none of the students chose school or some extracurricular course as the place and all students picked graphic novels from their own interest.

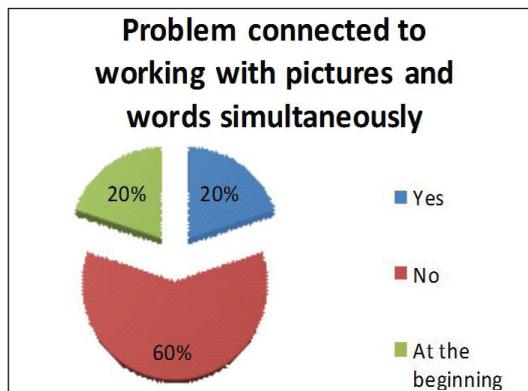
#### QUESTION 6



Picture 6: Preference of Graphic Novels over Classic Books

The main intention behind this task was to investigate whether students see graphic novel more beneficial, attractive and interesting than classic books. 40 per cent out of students admitted they prefer graphic novels, however, the majority (60 per cent) still finds classic written books more attractive.

## QUESTION 7



Picture 7: Problems with Graphic Novels Reading

Another issue we managed to look closer at was connected to the fusion of a written text with pictures what is typical for graphic novels. We wanted to know if working with both forms of storytelling at once is troublesome for students. The biggest part of the respondents agreed they did not have any problems while reading graphic novels, however, one student expressed it was difficult only at the beginning, but then he got used to it and a few admitted having problems to focus on both, the words and the images.

## QUESTION 8

The purpose of the last question of the given questionnaire was to find out which graphic novels have the students read so far. Some students wrote *V* for *Vendetta*, *This Summer*, *Blankets* and also graphic novels of popular TV version such as *The Vampire Diaries* and *The Twilight*.

After conducting the questionnaires with the students, we had a more precise picture about how to proceed with the course preparation. Even though the research sample was not so big, it was at least something we could draw upon in our next work and the preparation for the intended course and its syllabus.

Since only about one quarter of the asked has come into contact with graphic novels at all, we decided to start from the bottom approach before actually working with specific graphic novels. This meant pre-teaching what is typical for graphic novels as a medium, in this case the mutual dependence of words and images to get the overall meaning of the plot and the means of portraying particular visuals. This seemed to be the most suitable and wise way to make the most of upcoming lessons with the use of graphic novels as the main teaching material.

### **The Guide for Teaching the Graphic Novel *Maus***

The booklet for *Maus* will be divided into three main phases, which are traditionally used when the lessons are aimed at teaching reading skills.

#### 1. *pre-reading*

The prior knowledge students need to access before starting working with *Maus* contains

understanding the background and historical knowledge in order to ease students' understanding presented in this graphic novel. The main aim is to recall students' memories connected to the Holocaust as well as to deepen their knowledge in this area.

Another part stems from the Peterson's ideas discussed in the theoretical part by which he highlights the phase of discovering the author's conventions and basic components in a particular graphic novel. Students need to learn how to proceed panel by panel and be familiar with both the pictures and the text. This is a reasonable way to teach them the mechanics of reading graphic novels.

### *2.while reading*

Although the booklet is aimed primarily at enhancing reading skills strategies as well as reading literacy, also other skills will be practiced since students will spend a considerable time working in the groups discussing the main issues of the story, listening to each other and justifying their opinions. Other skills will be developed too as we understand reading literacy not just as a plain reading and the application of the reading strategies, but also as an ability to look at the text in a critical way, evaluate it and afterwards present ones' ideas and opinions in a sophisticated way.

The intention is to create a range of such activities that will give students enough opportunity to interact, understand, analyze, make meaning and express opinions and emotions reading chapter by chapter.

### *3.after reading*

After reading the *Maus*, the students are working together in groups. Each group picks a task that they are supposed to present during the last meeting. The task is naturally connected to the Holocaust in a form of a poem, a glossary of terms, a poster, a video, a soundtrack. The aim of the project is to raise awareness of the Holocaust among other young people from the same school.

After presenting their tasks, students will be asked to complete the worksheet reporting on what they have learned about the Holocaust. The main focus of the worksheet is to understand the dangers of discrimination, prejudices, mass slaughter and genocide on the humankind.

## **Example lesson plans**

The following lesson plans serve students to comprehend the message of the graphic novels, which present the narrative through the combination of images and the text. It is significant to present the students with the visual images as graphic novels are primary visual narratives as well as to get them confident with the graphic novels reading. The students will work with materials representing diverse graphic novels elements to understand their purpose in creating the narrative. It is necessary to make students familiar with the basics of graphic novels reading so they can gain the most while working with them.

### Objectives:

- to make students familiar with graphic novels as a sequential art to tell story
- to brainstorm peculiarities of graphic novels, comic books and manga
- to identify specific graphic novels elements and their significance in narrating the story
- to identify graphic novels elements on individual excerpts from graphic novels
- to be able to fill in the blanks portraying various graphic novels elements
- to create a story using excerpts from graphic novels

- to listen actively and be able to retell the story using drawings
- to suggest recommendations and justify opinion

Aids: handouts with graphic elements, the interactive board, the Internet, strips from various graphic novels

Class management/Techniques: group work, brainstorming, whole class work

Anticipated problems: some of the students may have already read graphic novels and might find a lesson a little bit boring, so the teacher can prevent this to happen by engaging them in explaining the graphic novels images.

#### LESSON 1

1. Students are given handouts with an excerpt from graphic novels, comic books and manga. While working in small groups, they are supposed to come up with as many features that are typical for these sequential forms of art as possible.
2. Leaders from each group report back to the whole class and write down the specific features of the graphic novels, comic books and manga on the board. If necessary, the teacher initiates the correct answers.
3. Working with the notes on the board, the main focus will be on the graphic novels and their difference from comic books and manga. The aim of this activity is to make students aware of the fact that graphic novels are a format, not a genre.

#### LESSON 2

1. The purpose of the following activity is to go deeper into particular graphic novels elements. The students are given handouts portraying various forms of graphic novels visuals (bubbles, panels, panel frames, caption, motion lines, gutter, emanata, sound effects) and their task is to explain what the purpose of particular element is and how it conveys the story. Students are firstly working in groups to brainstorm everything they know and when they are out of ideas, they might use online resources to check and confirm their assumptions.
2. Students discuss what they have found out and compare their assumptions about graphic novels element justifying their opinions with particular graphic novels or comic books.

#### LESSON 3

1. Each group of students is given one page portraying the story in graphic novel format. Students have to discuss what might be happening in the story as all the visuals (panels, bubbles, captions) are blank and come to common narrative.
2. After agreeing on the plot of the story, students within each group work together by filling in the gaps portrayed in their narrative. They should pay special attention to each visual element and its variations, e.g. to differentiate the speech bubble from the thought bubble, etc.
3. The groups are divided into one leader and from three to four movers. The leaders of each group stay at their place and present the narrative to the movers from the other groups. As the leaders are speaking, the movers are trying to catch the plot of the story by drawing pictures, symbols, etc. The movers have to stop at each leader to listen to the story. When all movers are back with their original group, they share the story with the leaders.
4. Consequently, the original graphic novels narratives can be compared with those made by the movers.

## LESSON 4

1. In order to understand how facial expressions convey emotions, students work in groups and create a collage of human faces that show different emotions.

## LESSON 5

1. Students work within groups and choose a headline for which they create a narrative within one page. They can work either with online software for creating graphic novels or draw the story themselves.

## LESSON 6

1. Students within each group make copies from their story, pass them to other groups, whose task is to read them and suggest potential adjustments.
2. Students choose the best graphic novel.

## Conclusion

The present article is just a part of the research that is currently still in the process and whose overall intention is to create a booklet that could be used with secondary students as a means of increasing reading literacy and overcoming reluctance when it comes to reading. As it was mentioned above, there are many challenges that arise when teaching reading in classroom. We believe that utilizing graphic novels as non—traditional forms of reading material is a way to engage students in reading, to assist to students dealing with reading comprehension barriers as well as to help them to tackle more serious topics.

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## Claiming In-Group Membership in Online Communities

*Abstract: The aim of the present article is to show how the members of several Internet communities communicate online in discussion board threads focused on the so-called women's topics, e.g. dieting or mothering, claim in-group membership via the following positive politeness strategies: 1. in-group markers, such as topic-related nicknames, diminutives and personalized address forms, terminology, special jargon related to the context of the forum with a special emphasis on acronyms, generic names and inclusive we, 2. stressing/ presupposing common ground and 3. joking. All of these strategies serve to enhance the community spirit and function as a powerful solidarity-building device, and thus serve as what Brown and Levinson refer to "social accelerators".*

### 1. Introduction

The message in Example 1 below, illustrating a typical message in the online discussions under examination, shows how important it is for the members of online communities to stress the spirit of mutuality and being on board. Due to the lack of co-temporality and physical proximity, which is typical of face-to-face conversation, online communities seem to be built on a shared topic, defined by the topic of the thread in which the individual members discuss their everyday life as well as their problems, often rather intimate. Consequently, we can say that the thread serves as their common ground and the members repeatedly refer to it as an important building stone for their virtual discussions.

(1) Welcome to the 30's. Always fantastic to see a new face. You'll find that you have a hard time staying away from this forum. The people are so great and there isn't anywhere else I know of where you can receive so much support and so many great ideas from so many different people.

The present article deals with a positive politeness strategy of claiming in-group membership, which is one of the strategies falling under the claiming common ground supra-strategy, as defined by Brown and Levinson (1978: 102). In their seminal classification of positive politeness strategies, claiming in-group membership stands beside 'conveying that H is admirable, interesting' and 'claiming common points of view/ opinions/attitudes/ knowledge/ empathy'.

### 2. Theoretical background

Leech (2014: 99) identifies claiming common ground with solidarity, arguing that it especially serves to reduce the social distance between speakers and promotes what Lakoff (1973) calls "camaraderie". He also states that if the asymmetry between interlocutors is not great, they do not need to apply this strategy as much. However, as will be shown below, the analysis of the corpus under examination has revealed quite the opposite. Even though the speakers are very close and there is hardly any asymmetry between them, they still find it necessary to repeatedly stress in-group membership and common ground as such.

Brown and Levinson (1987: 103) emphasise that claiming common ground strategies do not necessarily need to be used only to overcome a face-threatening act, but they are also "social accelerators", where the speaker suggests that he/she wants to be more intimate with the hearer. In

their view, the speaker shares common ground with the hearer by showing that they both “belong to some set of persons who share specific wants, including goals and interests” (103), which is true also about the virtual communities formed in the analysed material. They list the following realizations of claiming common ground: using in-group identity markers, using in-group language or dialect, and using contraction or ellipsis.

Common ground is related to involvement. Urbanová (2003: 50-1) speaks of Chafe’s (1986) distinction between involvement and detachment and adds that some conversation genres are more involved than others. Further on, she presents a scale showing a continuum between personality and impersonality in radio interviews. In these interviews, just as in computer-mediated communication, there is distance between interlocutors, which they try to overcome via various techniques, one of them being increased personality.

Watts (2003), too, sees politeness as a social act shaping the interpersonal relationship between interlocutors and distinguishes two types of discourse, confrontational and cooperative. He describes the attributes of the latter as “a friendly attitude towards the caller, which is displayed by being helpful, sympathetic and not argumentative; humour, ...; knowledge about local events, issues and characters, etc.” As will be shown below, all of these features can be found in the discourse under examination.

Spencer-Oatey (2003) also deals with establishing a common ground, or, in her words, rapport, which she defines as “relative harmony and smoothness of relations between people” (530) and refers in this respect to people’s association rights, concerning their belief they have the right to be involved with others.

Finally, let us conclude that women’s language, which is usually associated with positive politeness, “treats the addressee as a member of an in-group...” (Brown 1998: 85). Brown lists the following expressions of interest in the addressee

- exaggerated expressions of approval
- in-group identity markers (slang, code-switching, in-group address forms...)
- seeking of agreement and avoidance of disagreement
- joking
- claiming reflexivity of goals (mutuality of goals)
- giving of goods in the form of goods, sympathy, understanding, and cooperation

### 3. Material under examination

The analysed material is a corpus consisting of approximately 200,000 words, compiled by the author of this article from various message boards devoted to dieting, life style, mothering and other “women’s topics” (except for the last thread in which the members discussed politics and American presidential elections). For more information on the particular sub-corpora, see Table 1 below.

Corpus	Thread	Message board	Topic
1.	Slimming_world_support	Three Fat Chicks	dieting, special diet
2.	30_Somethings_chat	Three Fat Chicks	dieting, everyday talk- chat
3.	Infertility_forum	Mothering	infertility, trying to conceive
4.	Due_date_October2008	Health & Fitness	pregnancy
5.	Catholic_mammas	Mothering	parenting, religion
6.	Leftist_forum	Mothering	politics, 2004 elections

Table 1. Individual threads, their source and topics

The analysis of the corpus has indicated a frequent use of the subsequent three positive politeness strategies, which will be examined below in depth: in-group markers, presupposing common ground and joking, which will be dealt with only marginally. Let us now look at them one by one and illustrate them on various examples from the corpus.

#### 4. In-group markers

By using in-group markers, interlocutors acknowledge their pertinence to a group. For a newcomer, it is relatively hard to understand everything and it is essential for them to master new skills so that they can communicate efficiently. The analysis of the material under investigation brought to light the following six means of promoting in-group membership: topic-related nicknames, jargon, terminology, generic names, diminutives and the inclusive *we*.

##### 4.1 Topic-related nicknames

Contrary to real life, every message board member is represented by a self-chosen nickname, which very often corresponds with the topic of the thread or, better to say, of the entire discussion board. When studying the individual messages in the examined material, it soon strikes us how omnipresent nicknames are. Traditionally, nicknames were viewed as a mask helping to hide a person's real-life identity (Bechar-Israeli 1995, Crystal 2001, Paolillo 2001). Concealing of real-life identity is especially typical of synchronous CMC where "participant membership is fluid, undergoing constant rotation" (Paolillo 2001: 184). In chatting, individual identities are often fluid as well (*ibid.*), as some users tend to use more than one nickname. However, in the corpus nicknames are only one part of the entire identity, represented by other features as well, and many users do not try to hide their real-life identities at all. As is suggested by Bays (1998), the nickname is "the first sign of individuality when one encounters another participant" (9). It serves as a first impression and shows the aspect of face that the participant wants to present". In this respect, it is important to mention her emphasis on face in the Goffmanian sense, as it proves nicknames are also related to expressing linguistic politeness.

Crystal (2001: 157-9) identifies choosing a nickname, or a "nick", as it is called in the Internet world, as a ritual act. He offers a classification of nicknames, which served as the basis of my own classification, enriched by a few more categories reflecting the nicknames appearing in the corpus. Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that many nicknames are not clear-cut and it was rather problematical to classify them or find out what they actually represent or how they initiated. Without discussing their origin with their bearers themselves, it is often impossible to deduce the motivation behind them. Therefore, the intention was not to analyse all of them, but rather to illustrate the most distinct categories with some examples.

Similarly to Crystal's (2001) classification, the most frequent was the first category of *self*. In this category, users make references to where they come from, how old they are, or to their gender, which may prove the fact that many message board contributors do not try to mask their identity but, on the contrary, stress what they view as their most prominent characteristics. The second most numerous category was category 6 in the classification below; in this category, nickname bearers refer to the message board topics. In this case, it is very likely that they tailored their nickname to the purpose of this board only and that they use other nicknames on other boards.

1. self: e.g. *Welshtigger*, *Scottie*, *IrishJoan* (referring to the place of origin); *Frenchie72*, *Kar73*, *sheila1971* (referring to the year of birth); *jenniellie*, *Elaine 12*, *KarenK* (proper names); *Goth\_*

- Girl, scary mary, 707Goddess*, (revealing the gender) *GatorgalstuckinGA* (gender and place of origin); *happy2be*
2. names connected with technology and the medium: none
  3. names to do with fauna and flora: *Rabbit*, *#leef*
  4. names to do with famous characters: *lois lane* (film and comic book character)
  5. names to do with sex or provocation: none
  6. **topic-related nicknames:** *SlimmingWorldChick*, *SlimmingWorldQueen* (inspired by the name of the diet the participants are on); *veggie* (vegetarian); *cherrycupcake* (food), *walking2lose*, *wannaBsize7*
  7. others: *bits*, *sand*, *DolciFlori*, *creaky*, *LBH*, *milleradah*

As this article deals with in-group language, let us now concentrate in more depth on category 6, i.e. topic-related nicks. Rather surprisingly, only 8 nicknames out of 39 participants were related to the topic of dieting; some referred to the special diet of *Slimming World* (*SlimmingWorldChick*, *SlimmingWorldQueen*); others showed their motivation to lose weight (*fightinflab*, *determinedtodiet*, *Melgetinthin* and possibly also *Piglet*).

The situation in the mothering threads is quite different from the dieting boards. Many members stress they are mothers also in their nicknames; participants tend to reveal they either want to be pregnant, or are pregnant (e.g. *Hopefully 01*, *mommy2twins2be*); some nicks are very descriptive, such as *Mich is cooking another due June 4<sup>th</sup>*, which is actually rather rare and impractical. Furthermore, they constantly stress they are mothers in their nicknames (e.g. *turnipmama*, *starry-mama*, *mum4boys* or inventive *PottyDiva*). Two nicks can be related to another topic of one of the threads, Roman Catholic religion (*Channelofpeace* and *exquisitebones*). However, there is not a single nickname that would refer to politics.

## 4.2 Jargon

In-group jargon belongs to the group's shared history and is a major part of its identity. If you are not well-acquainted with the language of e.g. pregnant women, you will find it quite difficult to understand their online conversations.

On the whole, there are two groups of abbreviations and especially **acronyms**; those that can be found in any discussion board in general and those that are related just to the topic of the thread. Yet it must be mentioned that most of the topic-related jargon is not restricted only to the threads under examination; they employ abbreviations commonly used in this type of discussion forums (i.e. used by all pregnant women or women undergoing infertility treatment). There are even special dictionaries of these acronyms available on many discussion boards.

Finally, acronyms and abbreviations are used both to save time when typing and to support mutuality in the community, as many of them are known only to the in-group. As opposed to synchronous chatting, it is the latter type that prevails in the data, perhaps also due to the fact that there is no such emphasis on responding as quickly as in chatting).

- general Internet acronyms (some of which have already entered other types of communication): *BBL* (be back later), *ASAP* (as soon as possible) *KWIM* (know what I mean?) or those used to refer to family members, such as *DH* (dear husband) or *DD* (dear daughter) or *ASF* (as for me; before giving personal update)
- dieting: *STGW* (short term goal weight), *FF* (fat free), *SBD* (South Beach Diet)
- infertility: *AF* (Aunt Flow—euphemism for menstruation), *BFN* (Big Fat Negative—negative

pregnancy test), *IUI* (intrauterine insemination). Some can be rather complicated, such as *CCRM* (Colorado Center for Reproductive Medicine) or *ICSI* (Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection).

- pregnancy: *BFP* (Big Fat Positive—positive pregnancy test), *EDD* (estimated due date), *POAS* (pee on a stick—home pregnancy test)
- mothering: *SAH* (schooling at home), *SAHM* (schooling at home mother), *CHC* (Catholic Heritage Curriculum)
- politics: *dems* (democrats), *ObL* (Osama bin Laden)

### 4.3 Terminology

This category overlaps with jargon, as many of the abbreviations and acronyms refer to special methods used in medicine or special diets. It is used especially in the dieting boards, where it refers to the special diet the participants are on (*Laughing Cow Triangles*, *green day*, *syns/sins*, *Healthy Extra*). Furthermore, there are abundant medical terms in the infertility board, where some participants display quite a deep insight into the issue of fertility treatment, which is illustrated in Example 2.

- (2) AFM: Had my phone consult with the doctor 2 hours away. We would do estrogen priming before I get my period, then a combo of letrozole (femara) followed by gonal-f injections and an antagonist. Probably also vaginal suppositories of estrogen to thicken the lining after I finish taking the femara.

### 4.4 Generic names

Apart from online nicknames and their derivations, such as *GG* instead of *GatorgalstuckinGA*, there are a great number of generic names and terms of address, e.g. *guys*, *folks* or *honey*, all of them used to convey solidarity and membership in a group of people. In particular, there are two subgroups of such addressing forms: those referring to the whole group (collective address forms) and those used for one person only (individual address forms). There were many instances of individual address forms in the *30\_Somethings\_chat* thread, which most resembles synchronous communication and represents a very close-knit online community. Thus, it can be assumed that individual address forms are viewed as more intimate, whereas collective address forms are used mainly to enhance mutuality. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), generic names are used to soften face-threatening acts.

1. collective address forms: *(you) ladies, folks, guys, all, everyone, chicks*
2. individual address forms: *girl, guurl, sunshine, babe, my dear*

Furthermore, there are also references to the purpose of the forum, as in *few slimmers*, *SW girls* or *mamas*. Last but not least, there are instances of playful and inventive address forms also functioning as face enhancers, such as *lovely muffins and studrockets*, referring both to female and the two male members of the forum.

### 4.5 Diminutives and personalised address forms

This category overlaps with individual address forms above. As is evident from the examples, most of them are gender specific. They are used to create a friendly atmosphere and promote the community spirit. All of them were used only by women. Apart from the examples listed above, the *30\_Somethings\_chat* offers very inventive and playful (Example 3 referring to a user called *Hanna*) and at times rather lengthy forms of address, such as in Example 4. In this example, the poster refers to many board members one by one, coming up with very original terms of address.

(3) HAPPY BIRTHDAY HANNER NANNERS!

(4) Joan: How are you my little cinnamon sprinkled deep fried ice cream served on a chocolate dipped waffle cone? How's the house?

Sheila: Hello my favorite phreak in the world of plain vanilla! 

Lisa: How's it goin' sunshine? 

Inclusive we

Participants use the personal pronoun *we* to stress they are all in the same situation. It belongs to strategies used to presuppose/assert common ground, which will be dealt with below. It has yet another function apart from the one mentioned before: it serves as a face-threatening act mitigator, shifting responsibility for failure away from the hearer. Example 5 illustrates a response elicited by another user's complaint about putting on weight while on holiday. Interestingly, the speaker starts by a compliment ("it could be even worse") and claims that it can happen to anybody. This is a frequent strategy used when shifting responsibility away from another member, be it failing to persevere with a diet or expressing worries about being pregnant (both in Example 5 below).

(5) I think you did really well to only put on 7 pounds on holiday ... We all are entitled to forget our diets on holiday...

I think we are all really in the 'worry wart' stage as you put it so we're with ya!

There are approximately 40 instances of this strategy occurring across all the six threads. For some more examples, see Example 6.

(6) It happens to us all - I have days when all I can think about is food.

YK, we all have to learn the hard way sometimes to get on with each other.

I'm positive we all will achieve our goals here(...)

### **Presupposing/asserting common ground**

To put it briefly, via this strategy the interlocutors express how happy they are to belong to the community. Therefore, it does not correspond with how it is conceived by Brown and Levinson (1987: 117-24) in their Strategy 7. In their conception, they give the following examples: speaking about unrelated topics (small talk) before performing an act of request and thus showing interest in hearer. Another of their strategies is *point-of-view operations*. In this interesting strategy, the speaker speaks from the point of view of the hearer; for example, if *here* is used, it means the place where the hearer is standing, not the speaker (place switch, time switch). Furthermore, they mention the use of the inclusive *we*; however, contrary to 4.6 above, where it really includes both the speaker and hearer, here it actually just means that when the speaker says to the children: "We have had a nice nap", it was only the baby that has taken the nap. It could be generalised that all of the examples mentioned by Brown and Levinson (1987) under this strategy are somehow manipulative and are used to make the hearer do what the speaker wants him/her to do. As is emphasised by Brown and Levinson, it can be used both in positive and negative politeness strategies.

However, the conception of asserting common ground in the analysed corpus is rather different; when the speakers assert common ground in the analysed data, they do not intend to make others do them a favour. Actually, they do it just to promote solidarity and mutuality; hence they do so somehow unselfishly, without any ulterior motives.

The analysis has revealed there are several contexts in which this strategy occurs on a regular basis, i.e. welcoming a new member, expressing thankfulness for being a part of the forum, “being on the same bandwagon”, stressing in-group membership, etc. Let us proceed to describe the individual sub-strategies in detail.

First of all, claiming common ground is used when there is a newcomer asking to join the forum; it is reciprocal, as it takes place on both sides. The newbie assures the forum that she would like to join because it is a great place to be (Example 7) and the old-timers make sure the newbie feels welcome (Example 8). They assert common ground by stressing she will enjoy her stay with them as the forum is wonderful. They also point out that the new member can expect to get information (new ideas) and support from others.

(7) Newbie here! Hi! I'm so glad I found this forum.

(8) welcome to the forum (...) I think it's a fab place to come along -spill your stuff and get great ideas and support.

If you're *new*, I bid you welcome. You're now part of this wonderful support network. Secondly, the users show their appreciation and gratefulness to others and point out how much the forum has helped them in their (often difficult) situation. They also mention that this is the only place where they can turn to, as others know how they feel and are able to help them (there are three such cases in Example 9). In the last part of this example, the speaker explains her paradoxical situation: on the one hand, she is sorry she must join an infertility forum; on the other hand, the situation is not that bad since she shares her fate with a group of great women.

(9) just want to say thank you to all of you! You have no idea how much your advice, experiences and support mean to me. Without you I think I would be looney toons by now!

i'm just so grateful for everyone here because it is really my only outlet where i can obsess, panic, cry, rejoice, and compare. i am thankful!

Thanks all, I'm sorry to have to be offically joining you but couldn't wish to do it with a nicer buch of women.

Thirdly, they point to the similarities they share with other board members, as they are “on the same bandwagon”. They find it very important that others find themselves in the same situation and thus are able to understand it (Example 10). In the first utterance, the shared feature is their being pregnant for the first time; in the second case as well but she still keeps it a secret in her real life, hence she is happy to have found somebody to discuss it with.

(10) This is my first pg, too, so i'm in the same boat.

So in any case, I wanted to talk with people who are also going through this, and maybe relieve some of my frustration at not being able to tell every single person I know right now!

i love this thread (...) it's neat to talk to people who are going through the same thing at almost the same time.

The last context in which this positive politeness strategy is used is stressing in-group membership, often in contrast to another group or others. For instance, they stress the fact they are women, as in Example 11, or define themselves against men, as in Example 12. Finally, in Example 13, the speaker pays a compliment to the entire board and compares it to other boards she attended in the past, with not as many such good listeners as in the present board.

- (11) We women know our bodies quite well.
- (12) I honestly don't believe men can handle thinking before comments (...) (Sorry BigJohn and Rx—except ya'll).  
Like a typical man, I have to force him to open up while I am just the opposite.

- (13) I tried a lot of other boards before finding this one. They all seemed that people got on and wrote about themselves but never asked about others or answered the question others have posed. I am just so blessed that I found this board! You guys are great!

The last strategy of stressing in-group membership is remarkably manifested in the first part of the board discussing politics, when the community is only being formed and new members keep coming, claiming they want to become part of the leftist community. They are joking about their having controversial ideas, thus being unacceptable for the majority. In doing so, they are both forming their own community and distancing themselves from others.

Example 14 illustrates such an introductory utterance of a newcomer asking to be allowed to join the community; it is evident that the woman even uses swear words to emphasise her political views. Example 15 offers a similar utterance: making fun of the usual way of introducing a new member in *Alcoholics Anonymous* is very funny and at the same time it shows how controversial the forum may be.

- (14) Count me in! I'm pissed, I'm liberal, and I VOTE! :LOL



- (15) Excuse me (...) is this the Satan-worshipping forum?  
Hello, my name is Candice. I am a liberal. I sacrifice animals, drink blood, eat babies and worship the dark lord.  
(Everyone: "Hello, Candice!")  
I am so happy to have found you all. (Where's the damn pentacle smile when you need it?:)

## Joking

Joking is delineated as a separate strategy, namely Strategy 8 in Brown and Levinson (1987: 124). They point up it is based on "mutual shared background knowledge and values"; hence it can definitely be included among the claiming common ground strategies, at least briefly, even though it would certainly deserve greater attention, as CMC language as such is regarded as playful and making frequent use of humour (e.g. Danet et al. 1997, Crystal 2001).

Even though Lakoff (1973) claimed that women do not joke as often as men, the corpus proves quite the opposite, as there are numerous funny utterances and remarks. One of the reasons for the frequent occurrence of playful and witty remarks is that humour goes hand in hand with involvement (Norrick 1994: 409). He proceeds claiming that "if the attempt at humour is understood and accepted, participants in the conversation may enjoy enhanced rapport". However, when the hearer does not enjoy the joke, it can, on the contrary, result in loss of rapport. Likewise, Coates (2007: 29) agrees that "shared laughter nurtures group solidarity". Furthermore, playful conversation needs cooperation of all participants, as conversational humour is a mutual and joint activity, especially humour performed by women (Crawford 2003, Holmes 2006, Coates 2007). Norrick (2003) makes a distinction between telling an "artificial" joke and spontaneous conversational joking. He adds that it is the latter that serves as a rapport-enhancer. Hence it is evident that spontaneous humour is also likely to prevail in my corpora.

Further on, the following illustration of humour shows the rapport-building function of humour in the discussion boards. One of the interlocutors, *Mo*, the board's entertainer, tries to attract other member's attention by giving a "chain order": she asks others to do 10 squats or any other form of physical exercise (Example 16). Basically, it is a funny request for cooperation. She uses persuasive devices (red and purple print, capital letters, setting her own example, imperative). She also adds a hedge (*I know, it's sounds silly (...)*) in order not to sound too strict or impolite. Of course, in fact it is only a playful attempt at attracting more posts. This message is successful as it elicits 7 responses (Examples 17-21). Thus by this humorous encouragement, *Mo* calls for a joint activity; she is joined by other contributors, one of them being a newcomer (Example 18). The newcomer asserts common ground and, interestingly, gives the group's sense of humour as the reason for her wanting to join the community. When she is welcomed to the board in Example 19, the contributor also stresses that she is about to join their *fun little group*. She goes on to praise *MO* for her initiative (even though she introduces her compliment with a hedge, *I kind of*, perhaps because she is aware it is only meant as a joke). She finishes her contribution with a funny remark, in a similar way to Example 20. Indeed, most of the contributions to *Mo*'s challenge are quite funny as well.

(16) Thisisateam effort 10repchain lettertypethang. I'llstart. I'mgoingtogetupright here right now and do 10squats. Ok, done-I did deep squats, weight free, holding for a count of 5 on each one! WHO'S NEXTANDWHATAREYOU DOING? I know, it's sounds silly(...) but just try it this once everyone, please (...) COME ON EVERYBODY! GO GO GO! MO

(17) MO i got up and did 10 jumping jacks at work everyone thought i was crazy LOL

(18) You look like a pretty fun group, so I thought I'd say "hello".  
I'll join in with 10 calf raises! 

(19) Welcome to our fun little group Katrina!  
Mo I did 10 squats at my computer. I *kind of like* the 10 rep chain letter. Did it when the kids and hubby were not in the room. Them might think I went off the deep end for sure.

(20) Mo- Seriously you should become a motivational speaker, I did 10 squats.

(21) I did 20 each of arm circles (frontward and backward) while sitting on my big tush. WOOHOO.  
Better than nothing!

## Conclusion

The article has explored the claiming of in-group membership in online communities built upon various threads retrieved from discussion boards devoted to the so-called women's topics, such as dieting, infertility, pregnancy, mothering, but also politics. All the virtual communities formed upon the examined message boards have developed certain routines and traditional patterns as a part of their in-group language, via which they express their pertinence to the group. They use a number of various in-group markers, such as topic-related nicknames, diminutives and personalised address forms playing a major role in turn-taking and addressivity; terminology and special jargon related to the context of the forum with a special emphasis on acronyms; collective and individual generic names; and the inclusive *we*, which is of special importance in the second part of the article dealing with

presupposing/asserting common ground. Finally, the chapter is completed with a short subchapter on joking, which is a frequent positive politeness device helping to consolidate the community spirit. Humour appearing in the corpus is often based upon shared background knowledge, thus pertaining to community values. As opposed to Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), whose conception of employing positive politeness strategies is somehow manipulative, as the speaker wants to persuade the hearer to do him/her a favour, the interlocutors in the online communities examined in this article use these strategies to enhance each others' faces and boost the general spirit of mutuality and solidarity.

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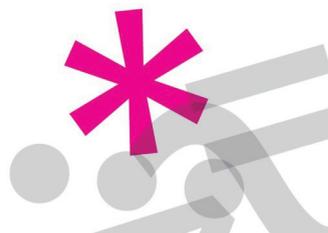
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