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OF EDUCATION

INTERPRETATION OF MEANING ACROSS DISCOURSES

Edited by Renata Jančaříková

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Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	5
<i>Olga Dontcheva-Navratilova and Renata Povolná</i>	
The meaning of meaning.....	5
CHAPTER 1 – ACADEMIC DISCOURSE	11
<i>Vladimíra Ježdíková</i>	
Contrastive and resultive conjuncts in English academic prose	11
<i>Zuzana Kozáčíková</i>	
The use of non-finite clauses in written academic discourse	25
<i>Martina Malášková</i>	
Hedging devices in literary criticism research articles.....	33
<i>Melanie Marcinkowski</i>	
Modality in academic discourse: Meaning and use of epistemic verbs in research articles.....	47
<i>Radek Vogel</i>	
Lexical cohesion in popular vs. theoretical scientific texts.....	61
CHAPTER 2 – FICTIONAL DISCOURSE	75
<i>Jolana Kaštovská</i>	
On the textual realization and interpretation of lists in contemporary prose text: The case of Simon Mawer’s <i>The Glass Room</i>	75
<i>Renata Šimůnková</i>	
Modal expressions of necessity and their non-explicit counterparts.....	85
CHAPTER 3 – LEARNER DISCOURSE	97
<i>Reima Al-Jarf</i>	
Effect of background knowledge on auditory comprehension in interpreting courses.....	97
<i>Lenka Slunečková</i>	
ESP students and the mysteries of English word order.....	109
<i>Makrina Zafiri</i>	
Bridging the gap between reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in tertiary education: The case of the students of architecture at the University of Thessaly in Greece	121

CHAPTER 4 – LEGAL DISCOURSE.....	133
<i>Monika Gyuró</i>	
Coherence in court arguments.....	133
<i>Magdalena Szczyrbak</i>	
Concessive schemata in judicial argumentation: A dialogue in a monologue?	147
CHAPTER 5 – MEDIA DISCOURSE.....	161
<i>Jaromír Haupt</i>	
Palpated, phonendoscoped, x-rayed and tomographed: The structure of science news in good shape	161
<i>Vladislav Smolka</i>	
Word-order as a means of resolving ambiguity.....	175
<i>Zuzana Urbanová</i>	
Faithfulness/Verbatim reproduction in direct reported forms: An overview	185
<i>Věra Zouharová</i>	
Personal and preferred partner characteristics in personal advertisements: With regard to appearance.....	197
CHAPTER 6 – POLITICAL DISCOURSE	209
<i>Jana Adámková</i>	
Vagueness in British political interviews	209
<i>Jana Svobodová</i>	
Threat perception in the speeches of G. W. Bush and B. Obama: A comparison.....	219
CHAPTER 7 – SPONTANEOUS AND PREPARED SPOKEN DISCOURSE	231
<i>Jana Švárová</i>	
On the structure and use of compliments in present-day English.....	231
<i>Petra Zmrzlá</i>	
Now as a discourse marker	241
SUMMARY	253
INDEX.....	255
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS.....	258

INTRODUCTION

THE MEANING OF MEANING

Olga Dontcheva-Navratilova and Renata Povolná

It is nowadays commonly acknowledged that the use of language for conveying meaning is fundamental to human society. However, meaning is not a simple phenomenon and can be understood in several ways. According to the *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* the meaning of ‘meaning’ can be defined as follows: 1) the meaning of a word, expression or gesture is the thing or idea that it refers to or represents and which can be explained using other words, 2) the meaning of what someone says or of a book, film, etc. is the thoughts and ideas that are intended to be expressed by it. This suggests that when expressing meaning language cannot be seen as only reflecting some ‘given’ reality, it is also affected by the communicative intentions of the interactants and the context in which the communication takes place. Moreover, since from a discourse perspective meaning is a result of interaction between discourse participants, it is “not something which is inherent in the words alone, nor is it produced by the speaker alone, nor by the hearer alone. Making meaning is a dynamic process, involving the negotiation of meaning between the speaker and the hearer, the context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic) and the meaning potential of an utterance” (Thomas 1995: 22). It follows that when interpreting the meaning of discourse the interactants cannot rely only on what is written or said, since “under natural circumstances, texts occur and are understood in their discourse settings, which comprise all of the linguistic, situational, social, psychological, and pragmatic factors that influence the interpretation of any instance of language use” (Biber et al. 1999: 4).

The perception of semantic unity of discourse, i.e. its coherence, is a dynamic process which comes into being in human interaction (Tárnyiková 2002: 56) and is affected by an awareness of communicative principles and conversational maxims, and the interpreter’s encyclopaedic knowledge. In line with our previous research (e.g. Dontcheva-Navratilova 2007, Dontcheva-Navratilova & Povolná 2009a, 2009b, Povolná 2007, Povolná & Dontcheva-Navratilova 2007) coherence is regarded here as context-dependent, hearer/reader-oriented and comprehension-based, interpretative notion (Bublitz 1997: 2) and therefore

essentially collaborative in nature (Tanskanen 2006: 170). Therefore, the perception of coherence cannot be taken for granted but, depending on situation, genre or text type, it can rather be viewed as being more or less temporary, since it is permanently in need of being checked against new information. In order to help their hearers/readers create coherence, speakers/writers normally use signals to guide them to a suggested line of understanding which comes as close as possible to their own understanding. Conversely, hearers/readers use these signals as instructions to achieve coherence and arrive at an interpretation which is in conformity with the speakers'/writers' communicative intentions. However, the signals that the speakers use are different from those that the writers have at their disposal, since while spoken discourse can be characterised by a permanent negotiation of meaning between all participants, in written discourse there is a lack of overt negotiation of meaning (Seidlhofer & Widdowson 1997, Povolná 2009).

Since in the process of human communication participants make predictions about the meanings that are to be exchanged, it is evident they have to draw on established patterns available in their background knowledge. These patterns are affected by register, genre and text type conventions associated with particular types of social occasion (Hatim 1997). Therefore, in creating and interpreting meaning in discourse speakers and writers interact with the existing patterns by reproducing or modifying them, and in making sense of discourse listeners and readers are likely to activate the relevant meaning potential available in their background knowledge in order to derive coherence from the text.

When encoding and decoding meanings, discourse participants take into account numerous factors which determine the character of the interaction and impose constraints on the meaning potential of discourse. In agreement with Jakobson's (1990[1960]) theory of language functions different types of discourse are characterized by a specific constellation of language functions one of which can be seen as predominant. Thus communicative functions may be associated with specific language choices for the transmission of meaning in particular registers, genres and text types. It should be noted that language forms may perform different functions on different occasions or more than one function simultaneously.

The referential function, often considered to be the main function of language, conveys meanings about referents introduced in the discourse. While it is undoubtedly the predominant communicative function in academic, learner and legal discourse, it is also present in all the other types of discourse scrutinized in this volume. Referential meanings in academic, learner and legal discourse are usually complemented by metalingual and conative meanings, the former related to defining the code and repairing misunderstandings, the latter associated with direct appeal to the audience with the aim of influencing their opinions or behaviour. The referential and conative functions are also distinctive of media

discourse, where the pretended objectivity of the message is undermined by subtle expression of ideological perspective. Owing to its overt interpersonal nature, political discourse is characterised by direct appeal to the addressee and the audience, who is expected to be persuaded or misled into sharing a particular opinion or undertaking action, and thus it is connected with the conative function. Another aspect of interpersonal meaning is conveyed by the expressive function, which reveals the speaker's emotions and attitudes to the state of affairs at issue. Expressive meanings are typical of the inherently subjective fictional discourse, whose emblematic communicative function is the poetic function. It should be noted that this function is not restricted to fictional discourse and often appears in media discourse and informal conversation. The phatic function, considered by Urbanová (2008: 46) as the predominant function in spoken discourse, is related to the establishment of interpersonal relations by ensuring that the channel of communication is open and creating an atmosphere of togetherness. Summarizing the brief review of the repertoire of functional meanings conveyed in human interaction, it can be concluded that the interpretative perception of meaningfulness of discourse is the result of an interplay of the predominant and supporting aspects of meaning in different types of discourse.

This volume comprises the results of research into the interpretation of meaning in different types of discourse, a topic which is central to the work on the project *Coherence and Cohesion in English Discourse*, which is supported by the Czech Science Foundation, within the framework of which the *Fourth Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English* was held at the Department of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Brno, in September 2010. These studies explore different aspects of the interpretation of meaning across written and spoken discourses, namely academic, fictional, learner, legal, media, political, and spontaneous and prepared spoken discourse.

The chapters of the present volume are rooted in different approaches to the interpretation of meaning which reflect the specificities of the particular discourses and genres affecting the communicative intentions that participants are trying to get across and the strategies used for deriving coherence from the texts.

Chapter One comprises several studies on academic discourse, which is characterized by a high level of informativeness and explicit logical organization. The main focus is on the contribution of grammatical and lexical means to the perception of cohesion and coherence in academic prose and the role of modality and hedging expressions in shaping the meaning conveyed by the authors who endeavour to anticipate the expectations of their prospective readers and to guide them towards an interpretation which is in accordance with an intended

understanding of the text. The investigations into cohesion in academic discourse adopt a comparative perspective. Thus Ježdíková examines the cohesive role of contrastive and resultive conjuncts in three text types, namely textbooks, research articles and conference papers related to the field of computer science, arguing that different academic settings for which scientific texts are designed influence the type of cohesive means used. Adopting a corpus-based approach, Vogel studies lexical cohesion in popular science and didactic physics texts from the perspective of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework and analyses how cohesive chains contribute to a coherent interpretation of discourse. Kozáčiková's investigation into syntactic and semantic properties of non-finite clauses considers their potential to condense meaning in academic abstracts, which can influence the reader's decision to read or not to read an academic paper. The studies by Malášková and Marcinkowski represent corpus-based investigations into interpersonal meanings in the genre of research articles; the former focuses on hedges in the field of literary criticism, while the latter is a comparative analysis of the use of epistemic verbs in two subdisciplines of the natural sciences, namely biosciences and physics, and their popular adaptations in *New Scientist*.

Chapter Two, which also explores cohesion and modality, is concerned with the interpretation of meaning in fictional discourse and studies language devices expressing the poetic function of language. Kaštovská investigates the cohesive role of lists in order to point out the discrepancy between exemplifying and enumerating and its impact on meaning interpretation. Šimůnková studies modality from a translation point of view, while concentrating on a comparative analysis of explicit and implicit expressions of necessity in English and Czech contemporary prose.

The development of learner's abilities in comprehending spoken and written discourse is at the core of the chapter on learner discourse (Chapter Three). Al-Jarf studies the role of background knowledge in interpreting oral media reports, arguing that Saudi Arabian learners face major problems caused in particular by the lack of prior knowledge of foreign proper names. Slunečková reports on the problems encountered by Czech learners when interpreting the different functions of word order in Czech-English and English-Czech translations. Zafiri considers the appropriateness of language materials used in development of language skills in tertiary education in Greece, focusing on the use of terminology in architecture.

Both contributions in Chapter Four are concerned with legal discourse. They explore the contribution of schemata in the construction and interpretation of referential and interpersonal meanings in argumentative texts. Gyuró attempts to find out how global and local coherence is built at different stages of court argumentation. Szczyrbak's genre-based analysis investigates concessive

schemata in judicial argumentation focusing on the interactional functions of acknowledgements and counterclaims in the context of dialogicality of legal decision-making.

All the four studies included in Chapter Five deal with different genres of media discourse. Haupt analyses how meaning is constructed in science news from three different points of view, namely move analysis, van Dijk's (1988) description of news structure and coherence structure while focusing on contrastive relations. Smolka studies the role of word order in resolving ambiguity in meaning on examples taken from internet newspaper discourse. Urbanová explores different approaches to faithfulness and verbatim reproduction in direct reported forms in news discourse considering how the choice of form reflects the communicative intention of the writer and the expected conventions of a given genre or text-type. Finally, Zouharová's study focuses on personal advertisements published in British quality newspapers with special regard to lexical choices related to the representation of the preferred partner characteristics.

Chapter Six deals with persuasive strategies in political discourse. Adámková examines British political interviews, while Svobodová focuses in her detailed analysis on speeches delivered by American presidents. The former studies the use of vague reference to numerical quantity and semantically empty nouns and phrases by both interviewers and interviewees for achieving their communicative intentions, while the latter compares different types of political speeches of G. W. Bush and B. Obama with focus on threat perception.

The last Chapter Seven deals with phatic meanings in spontaneous and prepared spoken discourse. It opens with Švárová's study of the syntactic and semantic structure of compliments and their various functions and reactions to their use in everyday interactions as represented by British and American sitcoms. The last contribution in the volume by Zmrzlá looks into possible pragmatic functions of the discourse marker *now* in impromptu and prepared spoken language.

The studies included in this volume are concerned with the interpretation of meaning in different types of discourse. While using different frameworks for their analyses, the authors share a dynamic understanding of discourse and a functional approach to the analysis of language data. With its insights into the ways in which meaning is interpreted in different varieties of English discourse the contributions of the individual authors attempt to suggest new directions for further research and study of written and spoken discourse.

Note

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CHAPTER 1 ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

CONTRASTIVE AND RESULTIVE CONJUNCTS IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC PROSE

Vladimíra Ježdíková

Abstract

The contribution examines the role of certain cohesive devices, namely conjuncts, in academic discourse, comparing their distribution in three text types which are represented by a textbook aimed at university students, research articles from a recognized scientific journal and conference papers. The material under investigation is taken from authentic scientific texts on computer science, all of which are intended for the technically educated reading scientific public, yet are all different in the purpose for which they were written, the presupposed type of readers and the situational framework in which they are presumed to be read.

Focusing mainly on the most distinctive semantic categories of resultive and contrastive conjuncts, the paper analyses the frequency and variety of both semantic categories of conjuncts and individual tokens. The paper tests the hypothesis that different academic settings for which scientific texts are designed influence the type of cohesive means used.

Key words

academic prose, cohesion, cohesive means, conjuncts, contrastive conjuncts, resultive conjuncts

1 Introduction

Cohesion and means of cohesion are frequent topics of various handbooks and textbooks on the academic style of writing in which the most familiar cohesive devices are cited together with examples of their appropriate use in a text. Cohesive devices are also often the subject of linguistic investigation since analysis of the way they are used in academic discourse could contribute to the understanding of the complex process of text creation, the function of particular cohesive devices in this process and factors influencing their use.

In my contribution, I would like to deal with one particular means of cohesion which is called conjuncts, concentrating primarily on the resultive and contrastive semantic types of these cohesive devices.

Conjuncts are sometimes treated under different names by certain linguists – they are called connective adjuncts or connective adverbs by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), while the term linking adverbials is used by Biber et al. (1999) and Halliday and Hasan (1976) write about conjunctives or conjunctive adverbs. Conjuncts are also included among sentence connectors (e.g. by Swales & Feak 1994), sentence adverbials (Leech & Svartvik 1988) or transitional words (Kirsznner & Mandell 2009).

In accordance with Greenbaum (1969) and Quirk et al. (1985), the division of adverbials into adjuncts, subjuncts, disjuncts and conjuncts has been applied to the investigated texts in this contribution.

Allow me now to characterize briefly the cohesive device named conjuncts. Conjuncts are adverbials which are peripheral in the sentence structure and have connective function. The main diagnostic criterion for differentiating this type of adverbials from disjuncts is their inability to serve as a response to a *yes-no* question (Greenbaum 1969):

– conjunct: *Have all factors been doubled?* **Moreover*, yes.

– disjunct: *Is this new method much more effective?* *Frankly*, yes.

Unlike disjuncts, conjuncts do not accept premodification (ibid.).

**Very similarly*, older services such as *Gopher* and *Veronica* have really been replaced almost entirely by the Web. (DIT: 74)

1.1 Material under investigation

The material under investigation is taken from authentic scientific texts on computer science, all of which are intended for the technically educated reading scientific public, yet are different in the purpose for which they were written, the expected type of readers and the situational framework, or setting, in which they are presumed to be read.

For my analysis, three types of scientific texts have been used. The first text sample is a textbook on computer science designed for college students, called *Discovering Information Systems*, which was published in 2003.

I would like to mention here that the present study understands the sub-style called the style of textbooks as belonging to scientific style, in agreement with Hausenblas (1996), who states that the complexity of certain subject matters of textbooks enforces the use of scientific stylistic means which are regarded appropriate for students at higher levels of education.

The second group of texts under investigation comprises articles from a scientific journal dealing with research and practice in information technology,

especially computers and programming. The journal is called *The Journal of Research and Practice in Information Technology* and has been published continuously since 1967. The analysed text sample includes articles published between the years 2003-2008.

My hypothesis was that conjuncts as particular signals of register of academic prose would differ according to the openness and closeness of particular genres of academic prose and that there can even be found differences in conjuncts between texts belonging to the same genre but designed for a different social context.

Hence, to compare the way scientific information is conveyed among the members of the relatively closed community of computer scientists, I have decided to choose papers from conference proceedings on computer science as the third type of texts for my analysis. The analysed papers were published online between the years 2005-2008 in proceedings from conferences which were organized by USENIX – *the Advanced Systems Computer Association*, whose conferences take place all over the world and whose office is in Berkeley, California.

Conference proceedings have been chosen as an example of mostly information oriented and therefore more closed type of genre to be compared to the genre of a scientific journal article and a college textbook in which the addressee is respected, although to a different extent.

1.2 Research aims

The present paper focuses on two semantic categories of conjuncts, namely contrastive and resultive conjuncts, particularly their different semantic roles in texts, differences in the frequency of occurrence and variety of conjuncts in the individual text types analysed. Another point of interest has been the level of stylistic formality of particular conjunct tokens in individual texts samples in connection with different academic settings for which the texts were intended.

The hypothesis was that texts aimed at less educated readers, that is students, would differ in the formality and frequency of occurrence of individual conjunct tokens used as compared to texts oriented at more academic types of readers and settings of scientific journal or conference proceedings. Certain differences were expected to occur between scientific journals and conference papers.

Another hypothesis concerned the frequency of occurrence of resultive and contrastive conjuncts in the texts analysed, which was supposed to be higher in both scientific journals and conference papers because of the greater need for precise reasoning in these text types while the textbook was supposed to comprise more text parts with listing and sequencing of facts without any expression of various logical connections between them.

2 Contrastive and resultive conjuncts

Let me now turn the attention to the description and distinctive features of the two semantic categories of conjuncts under investigation.

The function of resultive conjuncts is included in their name since they express results which follow from the previous discourse. For contrastive conjuncts, the typical function is expressing links between ideas which are mutually contradictory or links between two different perspectives on the same idea. The former links are conveyed by antithetic and contrastive conjuncts, such as *on the other hand*, *however*, the latter ones are expressed by means of replacive or reformulatory conjuncts, such as *in other words*, *alternatively*.

Most resultive and contrastive conjunct tokens which have been excerpted from the analysed texts are also listed in Biber et al. (1999), Quirk et al. (1985) and Greenbaum (1969). The resultive and contrastive conjuncts that are not enumerated by the above mentioned authors constitute a minority of the analysed set of conjuncts, namely one resultive (*for this reason*) and six contrastive conjuncts (*either way*, *for comparison*, *in any way*, *on the reverse side*, *put another way*, *to put it into other words*).

The frequency of occurrence of resultive conjuncts in the texts analysed is summed up in Table 1. As can be seen from the table, the highest number of resultive conjuncts is in the scientific journal (133 occurrences), which is followed by conference papers (112 occurrences), with the lowest number being in the textbook (78 occurrences), which is in accordance with the hypothesis that resultive conjuncts are more frequently used in texts aimed at scientific readership.

Type of text	Textbook		Scientific journal		Conference papers		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>accordingly</i>	–	–	1	0.8	3	2.7	4	1.2
<i>as a result</i>	–	–	1	0.8	8	7.1	9	2.8
<i>consequently</i>	–	–	2	1.5	2	1.8	4	1.2
<i>for this reason</i>	1	1.3	1	0.8	1	0.9	3	0.9
<i>hence</i>	9	11.5	18	13.5	12	10.7	39	12.1
<i>of course</i>	4	5.1	2	1.5	–	–	6	1.9
<i>so</i>	30	38.5	20	15.0	23	20.5	73	22.6
<i>therefore</i>	22	28.2	23	17.3	28	25.0	73	22.6
<i>thus</i>	12	15.4	65	48.9	35	31.3	112	34.7
Total	78	100.0	133	100.0	112	100.0	323	100.0

Table 1: Resultive conjuncts with regard to their frequency of occurrence

As far as the number of individual resultive conjunct tokens is concerned, altogether nine different tokens have occurred in the texts analysed, with the highest number in scientific journals, in which all nine tokens have occurred, while eight different tokens occurred in conference papers and only six in the textbook. When resultive conjunct tokens in individual scientific journal articles and conference papers are considered, their number ranges from two to five tokens per one scientific journal article and from one to six per one conference paper. Thus it can be stated that the results indicate that the variety of resultive conjunct tokens used vary more according to the style of individual authors than according to the text type.

Contrastive conjuncts are the largest group of conjuncts, which includes the highest number of possible realization tokens. De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) study a similar type of cohesive conjunctions which is referred to as *contrajunctions*. A *contrajunction* is defined as enabling “problematic transitions at points where seemingly improbable combinations of events or situations arise” (ibid.: 73). As examples of *contrajunctions* the authors cite *but*, *however*, *yet*, *nevertheless* (ibid.). De Beaugrande and Dressler’s (1981) characteristics of *contrajunctions* can also be accepted as a basic feature of contrastive conjuncts, with certain modification for replacive and reformulatory conjuncts which rather deal with contradictory approaches than with contradictory ideas. Since the places in texts where the authors introduce contradictory ideas are the most difficult ones as far as comprehension is concerned, the readers might perceive the particular text parts as lacking coherence and cohesion. The seemingly incoherent parts of text which introduce opposing views thus might enforce the use of a contrastive conjunct to convey explicitly to the reader how the connection between ideas should be comprehended.

As can be seen from Examples (1) and (2), the omission of contrastive conjuncts would significantly lower their comprehensibility, especially in Example (2), while in Example (1) the conjunct *nevertheless* is used for both purposes – to enhance comprehension and to emphasize the contrastive idea expressed by the sentence introduced by *nevertheless*.

- (1) *Password protection is the most common method of protecting corporate data.*
Nevertheless, fraudulent transactions are often carried out by unauthorised users who manage to gain access to the corporate network by using the login details of another user. (DIS: 112)
- (2) *Consumer electronic devices (CEDs) are increasingly important computing platforms.*
CEDs differ from general-purpose computers in both their degree of specialization and the narrowness of their interfaces. ... Nevertheless, CEDs are often formidable computing platforms that possess substantial storage, processing, and networking capabilities. (USENIX – Integrating Distributed Storage: 319)

Contrastive conjuncts, together with appositional conjuncts, belong to the two types of conjuncts which have occurred most frequently in the texts analysed. The frequency of occurrence of contrastive conjuncts is shown in Table 2 below. As can be seen from the table, the conjunct *however* differs significantly from all the other contrastive conjuncts since its frequency of occurrence ranges from 52 to 78 per cent in the investigated text types as compared to other contrastive conjuncts, the individual frequencies of which do not exceed ten per cent in any text type.

Similarly to resultive conjuncts, the lowest overall frequency of occurrence of contrastive conjuncts is in the textbook (91 occurrences). The highest frequency of occurrence has been found in conference papers (183 occurrences).

The high frequency of occurrence of contrastive conjuncts in all the investigated corpora can be accounted for as a consequence of the above-mentioned function of contrastive conjuncts to ease transition between contradictory ideas in texts. While the use of other types of conjuncts is usually not necessary, the use of contrastive conjuncts is more elicited by the necessity to explain somewhat difficult relationships in a text and therefore they are exploited very often in complex scientific texts.

Type of text	Textbook		Scientific journal		Conference papers		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Conjunct</i>	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>after all</i>	1	1.1	1	0.6	–	–	2	0.5
<i>alternatively</i>	2	2.2	–	–	5	2.7	7	1.6
<i>at the same time</i>	1	1.1	2	1.3	1	0.5	4	0.9
<i>by comparison</i>	1	1.1	–	–	–	–	1	0.2
<i>by contrast</i>	–	–	3	1.9	–	–	3	0.7
<i>conversely</i>	–	–	1	0.6	5	2.7	6	1.4
<i>either way</i>	1	1.1	–	–	–	–	1	0.2
<i>even better</i>	1	1.1	–	–	–	–	1	0.2
<i>even worse</i>	2	2.2	–	–	–	–	2	0.5
<i>for comparison</i>	–	–	–	–	1	0.5	1	0.2
<i>however</i>	47	51.6	123	77.8	119	65.0	289	66.9
<i>in any case</i>	1	1.1	1	0.6	–	–	2	0.5
<i>in any way</i>	1	1.1	–	–	–	–	1	0.2
<i>in contrast</i>	–	–	4	2.5	17	9.3	21	4.9
<i>in other words</i>	–	–	1	0.6	1	0.5	2	0.5
<i>instead</i>	6	6.6	3	1.9	9	4.9	18	4.2
<i>nevertheless</i>	6	6.6	2	1.3	1	0.5	9	2.1

<i>nonetheless</i>	–	–	1	0.6	–	–	1	0.2
<i>of course</i>	3	3.3	–	–	2	1.1	5	1.2
<i>on the other hand</i>	9	9.9	3	1.9	6	3.3	18	4.2
<i>on the reverse side</i>	1	1.1	–	–	–	–	1	0.2
<i>put another way</i>	–	–	–	–	1	0.5	1	0.2
<i>rather</i>	2	2.2	4	2.5	4	2.2	10	2.3
<i>still</i>	–	–	–	–	3	1.6	3	0.7
<i>then</i>	1	1.1	1	0.6	1	0.5	3	0.7
<i>though</i>	–	–	3	1.9	–	–	3	0.7
<i>to put it into other words</i>	1	1.1	–	–	–	–	1	0.2
<i>worse</i>	1	1.1	–	–	1	0.5	2	0.5
<i>yet</i>	3	3.3	5	3.2	6	3.3	14	3.2
Total	91	100.0	158	100.0	183	100.0	432	100.0

Table 2: Contrastive conjuncts with regard to their frequency of occurrence

3 Some semantic differences between certain resultive conjunct tokens

There seem to be certain interesting differences in the way the conjunct *for this reason* and other resultive conjuncts form cohesive ties.

The cohesive function of the resultive conjunct *for this reason* is in certain antinomy to resultive conjuncts *as a result*, *as a consequence*, *in consequence*. Although both the conjunct *for this reason* and the other above mentioned conjuncts are placed in initial position in clauses expressing result, they differ in the reason-result relationship between the clauses which they express.

If it is taken into account that the part of discourse preceding the above mentioned conjuncts expresses reason or cause for the following sentence, which expresses result, the differences between the conjunct *for this reason* on the one hand and conjuncts *as a result*, *as a consequence* and *in consequence* on the other become more apparent. Let me illustrate it by the following examples:

- (3) *Decisions made by top-level executives are often too unstructured to be adequately supported by a DSS (Decision Support Systems). For this reason, Executive Information Systems (EIS) have been developed, which provide rapid access to both internal and external information, often presented in graphical format, but with the ability to present more detailed underlying data if it is required.* (DIS: 98)

- (4) *The mobile proxy intercepts any incoming SMS messages from the edge proxy. It strips off the control portion of the message and passes the remaining user portion back to the SMS handler for delivery to the user. As a result, both the user and the mobile proxy have information describing the updates.*
(USENIX – Efficient and Transparent: 59)

In spite of the fact that the conjunct *for this reason* is placed at the beginning of a sentence which expresses result (consequence), it refers to the previous part of text, either to a sentence or to an even longer stretch of text, which is denoted as the reason (cause) for the following sentence by means of the conjunct *for this reason*. On the contrary, conjuncts *as a result*, *as a consequence*, *in consequence* explicitly state that the sentence which they introduce will consider an issue which follows from the previous sentence or part of text as their result.

It should also be emphasized here that resultive conjuncts are not identical with conjunctions which introduce clauses of result, since they link main clauses or simple sentences. Resultive conjuncts have not been used to denote a type of subordinate clause but to make relationships between sentences explicit.

As regards Examples (3) and (4), the relationship between the sentence which precedes resultive conjunct (marked as S1) and the sentence introduced by conjunct (S2) could be expressed graphically in the following way:

(3a) S1 (reason) Conjunct S 2 (consequence)

<

(4a) S 1 (reason) Conjunct S 2 (consequence)

>

In Example (3), the conjunct *for this reason* introducing the second sentence stresses that the reason for the consequence conveyed by the second sentence is contained in the preceding part of text, i.e. in the first sentence. Thus, the link between sentence one and sentence two is more anaphoric.

In Example (4), the conjunct *as a result* is applied to express explicitly that the second sentence will consider the consequences or results produced by the activities which are described in the first sentence. If the cohesive tie expressed by the conjunct *as a result* had to be expressed in terms of linear direction, it would have to be named forward reference, or cataphora (cf. Halliday & Hasan 1976: 17).

It is necessary to note here that the concepts of anaphoric and cataphoric reference of resultive conjuncts have been used in connection with the specification of direction of cohesive ties between two sentences. Since conjuncts generally operate anaphorically and express cohesive bonds with the preceding sentence (Quirk et al. 1985: 644), Examples (3) and (4) above always illustrate conjuncts

which are connected anaphorically to previous sentences. The basic orientation of conjunctions is therefore regarded as anaphoric.

4 Stylistic differentiation of resultive and contrastive conjunctions

In the next part of my contribution, I would like to deal with resultive and contrastive conjunctions from the stylistic point of view and examine how the use of these cohesive devices is influenced by the extent of the concentration on the addressee and by the different setting and purpose of different text types.

The purpose of the textbook is to convey specialized scientific knowledge from a particular field of computer science for students to comprehend or even to memorize, while scientific journal articles are aimed at informing its readers about both the latest discoveries and problems of everyday practice in this field. On the other hand, the purpose of conference papers is to deal with investigative processes in computer science, various contradictory theories, hypotheses, partial findings and final results of the current research activities.

Moreover, successful accomplishment of the purpose of the text is enhanced by their adjustment to the presupposed type of addressee, which each author keeps in mind, though sometimes only subconsciously. The supposed reader of the college textbook is a student with insufficient background knowledge who expects an explanation of basic facts concerning the topic of the textbook. The setting of the textbook can be characterized briefly as either public (e.g. a classroom) or private (e.g. student's study-room).

The scientific journal addressee can be both a scientist pursuing an academic career and a practitioner, both of whom share the common background knowledge of computer science issues.

The conference papers addressee is supposed to be a researcher who has additional knowledge of current trends in the scientific investigation in his branch of study and who also actively participates in some research projects.

As for the setting of scientific journal articles, it is not connected with a particular place; its basic feature is that it should be a quiet place suitable for concentrated silent reading, probably in a specialist's office. On the other hand, the setting of conference papers differs from the previous two types of setting in the respect that the papers were originally designed to be read aloud in front of a gathering of computer scientists at a conference.

For the purposes of the present analysis of resultive and contrastive conjunctions from the stylistic point of view, the excerpted conjunctions have been compared as far as their level of stylistic formality is concerned. Then the frequency of

occurrence of conjuncts with stylistically marked level of formality has been investigated.

Most conjuncts are regarded as stylistically neutral means of cohesion. Some of them, however, are defined as formal by Greenbaum (1969) and Quirk et al. (1985). Conjuncts denoted as informal constitute only a few exceptions from the stylistically neutral set of conjuncts.

The highly formal and informal resultive conjuncts are exemplified in the following examples.

- (5) *The factor loadings for the items retained for the dependent, intermediate and independent variables were well above 0.5 level, hence they displayed adequate convergent and discriminant validity.* (JRPIT, T4: 190)
- (6) *Switches I and L are sources of red control signals only, so we ignore them for now, but see the discussion on covert channels in Section 5.* (JRPIT, T11: 317)

In Example (5), the resultive conjunct *hence* occurs; it belongs to more formal resultive conjuncts according to Greenbaum (1969) and Quirk et al. (1985). The formal conjunct *hence* also corresponds to the verb *retained* and the phrase *displayed validity* which indicate a more formal and sophisticated style as compared to the less formal conjunct *so* in Example (6). Other expressions in Example (6) are also stylistically less formal, or maybe it could be said they are almost informal, such as the structure *ignore them for now*.

The frequency of occurrence of formal and informal resultive conjuncts has been included in Table 3, with the numbers in brackets denoting the frequency of occurrence of particular conjuncts in the textbook, scientific journal and conference papers respectively.

formal	informal	neutral
<i>hence</i> (9, 18, 12)	<i>so</i> (30, 20, 23)	–
<i>thus</i> (12, 65, 35)	–	<i>therefore</i> (22, 23, 28)

Table 3: Formal and informal resultive conjuncts

To sum up, my results in Table 3 indicate that the formal conjuncts *hence* and *thus*, which typically occur in academic scientific texts, have a significantly lower frequency of occurrence in the textbook, which is aimed at less academic readership. On the other hand, the informal conjunct *so* has the highest frequency of occurrence in the textbook.

For comparison, the frequency of occurrence of *therefore*, which can be regarded as stylistically neutral, has been included in the above table. Both

scientific journals and conference papers prefer the more formal *thus* to *therefore*, the frequency of occurrence in scientific journal being 65 occurrences of *thus* and 23 occurrences of *therefore* as compared to 35 occurrences of *thus* and 28 occurrences of *therefore* in conference papers.

The following examples of contrastive conjunctions comprise conjunctions *nonetheless* and *conversely*, which are regarded as stylistically formal means of cohesion, the informal conjunction *put another way* plus an exemplification of the neutral conjunction *on the other hand*.

- (7) *Nonetheless*, it is more important to find and resolve requirements problems than syntax problems since their impact of the success of the project is vastly greater. (JRPIT, T1: 226)
- (8) *For example*, a public encryption key identifies whoever knows the corresponding private decryption key. *Put another way*, knowledge of a decryption key provides the ability to be (or speak for [9]) the entity identified by the corresponding encryption key. (USENIX, T10: 2)

Example (7) illustrates the use of formal contrastive conjunction *nonetheless*, which is stylistically in accordance with the formal conjunction *since*, which introduces the second clause in Example (7). In contrast, Example (8) introduces the informal conjunction *put another way*, which is an incomplete and hence informal form of *to put (it) in another way*.

- (9) *Conversely*, if the functions compute different values along the path and the assert fires, *then* KLEE will produce a test case demonstrating this difference. (USENIX, T 8: 221)
- (10) *On the other hand*, a problem results when a city name exceeds the sample 30 characters space limit. (DIS: 80)

Example (9) includes another highly formal contrastive conjunction, namely *conversely*, which occurs only once in one type of text – scientific journals. Example (10) is an illustration of a stylistically neutral cohesive device – the conjunction *on the other hand*.

Table 4 includes other examples of neutral contrastive conjunctions, namely the conjunction *however*, which has a significantly higher frequency of occurrence as compared to other conjunctions listed in the table.

formal	informal	neutral
<i>conversely</i> (0,1,5)	<i>put another way</i> (0,0,1)	<i>on the other hand</i> (9,3,6)
<i>nonetheless</i> (0,1,0)	–	<i>however</i> (47,123,119)
<i>nevertheless</i> (6,2,1)	–	–

Table 4: Contrastive formal and informal conjuncts

In accordance with the hypothesis that a more formal style also prefers more formal conjuncts, the formal conjunct *conversely* has occurred solely in scientific journals (1 occurrence) and conference papers (5 occurrences). The very formal conjunct *nonetheless* has been used in scientific journals only once. However, the conjunct *nevertheless* has occurred in all the text types, with the highest frequency in the textbook (6 occurrences) as compared to scientific journals (2 occurrences) and conference papers (1 occurrence), which is contrary to my hypothesis.

5 Conclusions

The analysis has showed a lower frequency of occurrence of contrastive and resultive conjuncts in the textbook than in scientific journals and conference papers, which confirms the above stated hypothesis concerning the supposedly higher frequency of occurrence of resultive and contrastive conjuncts in scientific journals and conference papers, which could indicate the stronger need for precise reasoning in these text types.

The analysis of the level of stylistic formality of resultive and contrastive conjuncts and their frequency of occurrence in the investigated texts has revealed a lower frequency of occurrence of formal resultive conjuncts and zero frequency of occurrence of formal contrastive conjuncts *conversely* and *nonetheless* in the textbook. Contrary to the hypothesis, the formal contrastive conjunct *nevertheless* has the highest frequency in the textbook. The informal resultive conjunct *so* has the highest frequency of occurrence in the textbook. These results seem to imply that the supposed addressee, purpose and setting of the textbook have influenced the frequency of occurrence and lower stylistic formality of resultive cohesive means used in this less academic type of discourse which is still regarded as a scientific text. Analogically, the higher frequency of occurrence of formal resultive conjuncts and the higher number of formal contrastive conjuncts in the scientific journal and conference papers have been influenced by the academic setting of texts aimed at conveying information to the addressees with more advanced shared background knowledge. However, the frequency of occurrence of formal contrastive conjuncts, unlike the number of

formal contrastive conjuncts, does not seem to be influenced by the differences between the three text types, which partially restricts the validity of the second hypothesis and requires further investigation.

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THE USE OF NON-FINITE CLAUSES IN WRITTEN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Zuzana Kozáčíková

Abstract

This paper investigates the use and syntactic properties of non-finite clauses in different types of written academic discourse. Non-finite clauses are defined narrowly as the forms not inflected by categories that are marked inflectionally in language, as tense, aspect, mood, number, gender and person. Considering their syntactic and semantic distribution, non-finite clauses serve as markers of formal language variety. The present study tries to look at the formal realization and communicative use of non-finite forms in language.

Key words

dependent clause, written discourse, academic discourse, research abstracts, non-finite clause, to-infinitive clause

1 Written discourse

Written academic discourse as one of the two types of discourse in general has been analysed from various angles, since written communication forms a nucleus for effective communication without direct and immediate response from either addresser or addressee. For this purpose and for some others as the written stable code of communication, written discourse has been the primary focus of many linguists. The difference between spoken and written form of language comes from the nature of the medium used. Unlike spoken discourse, which tends to be colloquial and more spontaneous (of course, we cannot take this as generalization, e.g. a spoken academic lecture is hardly colloquial), written discourse relies on some other discourse features than spoken one. Miššíková (2003: 34) specifies the main grammatical principles of written discourse where we can linguistically observe more complicated sentence units than in spoken language and those expressions that tend to be in some cases bookish and redundant. Dontcheva-Navratilova (2005: 67) clearly analyses the main linguistic features of speech and writing as those typical of speech (simpler structures, prosody, informality, interaction features, normal non-fluency, clause complexes, lexical sparsity, inexplicitness, repetitiveness, monitoring) and of writing (punctuation, fluency, sentences and paragraphs, more complex structures, lexical density, explicitness, non-repetitiveness, formality features, no monitoring and interaction features).

Considering sentence structure, the preference for hypotaxis is typical of written discourse, while parataxis involves the linking of units mainly in spoken communication. This more or less reflects the theory how the choice of the medium (either spoken or written) has become the key point in the language structures used.

Before looking into the findings of my research, let me point out the main properties of the non finite-clause and its use in written form of communication, which has become a key point in this paper.

2 Non-finite clauses

As to the terminology concerning the non-finite clause in question, it reflects hardly any difference, taking into account the terminology by different authors. The terms *finite* and *non-finite* are widely used in linguistics and grammar studies to label important differences between clauses with a full verb phrase that has 'tense' and other clauses that have the internal structure of sentences without having a full, complete verb phrase. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1997) defines the term finite as "a form that has a specific tense, person and number" and non-finite as its opposite. One of the leading sources dealing with this question is *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Quirk et al. (1985) and its more accessible version *A Student's Grammar of the English Language* by Greenbaum and Quirk (1990). The non-finite clause as the subordinate clause is "a clause whose verb element is non-finite." For them, the non-finite clause reflects the use of subordination, as the grammatical device, which enables to construct a multiple hierarchy of clauses (Greenbaum & Quirk 1990: 285). The distinction between linguistic subordination and coordination, i.e. between hierarchical and non-hierarchical connection in language, has been investigated during the last decades by many authors within various research paradigms. In linguistics, a non-finite verb form is viewed as the structure not marked for tense, modality and aspect and these grammatical properties distinguish finite forms from non-finite ones. Roberts (1992) takes non-finite clauses as incomplete structures, since they may lack one or more major elements of structure, such as the omission of subject in the case of identical subject in the main clause or indefinite subject with no need to specify it. He takes a very similar view as Greenbaum and Quirk (1990) in his claim that a non-finite form consists of non-finite verb group or Miller (2001), who has viewed non-finite forms as sequences of words, which lack a finite verb but nonetheless are taken as dependent clauses. In addition, Biber et al. (1992) regard non-finite clauses as more explicit and less compact. Quite a similar description can be found in Leech and Svartvik (2002), who specify three ways in which clauses may be described

in terms of clause elements (S, O, A, C) and clause functions (nominal, adverbial, relative, comparative) and finally verb form (finite, non-finite and verbless), as shown in the following illustrative examples.

- (1) *The best solution would be to rely on his decision.* – nominal non-finite clause in the function of subject complement
- (2) *Leaving the school, he has become more independent.* – adverbial non-finite clause in the function of adverbial
- (3) *It is demanding to be a good student.* – nominal non-finite clause in the function of extraposed subject

Coming back to our informative review of the literature on non-finite clauses, the structural classification of non-finite clauses is rather rigid, by no means tentative and may be summarized as follows.

- (1) TO-INFINITIVE CLAUSE
He helped to build the roof.
- (2) BARE INFINITIVE CLAUSE
You had better leave now.
- (3) -ING PARTICIPLE CLAUSE
Parking in front of the gate is illegal.
- (4) -ED PARTICIPLE CLAUSE
Rejected by the editor, the book was not published in 2009.

It is quite evident that this informative preview of the sources dealing with the non-finite clause does not show too much difference and we may take these clauses as building blocks for more complicated structures in written discourse. This exclusive use of non-finite structures directly reflects their grammatical role of sentence condensers, which is due to the nominal tenor of English sentence as opposed to the verbal tenor preferred in the Slovak language.

3 Academic written discourse

Non-finite clauses in written language illustrate formal language typical of official documents and academic writing. Formality typically goes hand in hand with a high degree of politeness and language structures such as complex

sentence and subjunctive mood, which help to reveal the real difference between formal and informal scale of writing.

As far as the academic prose style is concerned, its tendency for highly formal language, complex sentences, and the use of appropriate terminology, clear arguments and straightforward text organization has become quite evident and necessary in the academic surroundings. Agger (1990: 137-139) claims that academic writing and publishing proceed according to certain norms and reflects what has already been published in the field and as a synopsis brings a new approach to the studied topic. Even though, academic discourse shares common features listed above, academic writing represents a wide area and pieces of academic writing differ in a certain way, for example, an academic paper by a college student does not share the same criteria as an academic monograph by a distinguished scholar. The most crucial difference between these two may be viewed as the difference in the methods and outcomes of a given research. More differences can be found in Hartley (2008: 5), who also points out the main criteria for measuring the difficulty of academic text. Three kinds of measure include expert-based methods, as the most crucial are the ones that use experts to assess the effectiveness of the piece of text, reader-based methods that involve the actual readers in assessing a text and finally text-based methods, which focus on the text itself. Such measures include computer-based readability formulae and computer based measures. In my view, the first type of measures is of immense importance; the second and third types are the qualities common not only to academic texts.

4 The outcome of the research

As for my own research presented in this paper, it has been established around the distribution of non-finite clauses in academic discourse, specifically in abstracts for academic papers. Biber et al. (1992) distinguish four main registers and these are conversation, fiction, newspaper language and academic prose. In all of them, subordination and coordination are classified as the processes of unit combination. A very similar topic has been studied by Rafajlovičová (2008), whose study looks at subordination and coordination in different text types as proposed by Biber et al. (1992: 5). In her academic research corpus comprising eleven research articles mainly from medical discourse, she examined subordination strategies in different text types. Among all these text types, non-finite clauses were the most frequent in academic corpus, representing 30.2 per cent of all the clauses in the selected corpus. Due to the fact that an academic corpus is the most formal text type, this finding may be more or less assumed and expected. In our study, abstracts for academic articles were taken into consideration as the

primary means of complex research and definitely help to communicate complex research. A research paper abstract is basically a brief summary of the content of a research paper. An abstract is usually one paragraph (depending on the size of the paper) that says what the paper is about in very clear terms. Many writers prepare their abstracts in order to help readers to decide whether or not to read the research paper and therefore a good abstract to a research paper should be a primary focus of an attentive author. Syntactic analysis of an academic abstract reflects a high tendency for formal language realized through the grammatical structures in its context, for example, non-finite forms or longer sentences, and this becomes a crucial point in our research. The study is based on the qualitative analysis of abstract for academic research articles published in the journal *Topics in Linguistics* published by the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia (Issues 2 and 3) and the Proceedings of the First International Conference on English and American Studies Theories in Practice. *Topics in Linguistics* presents a selection of papers from linguistics focusing on politeness and interaction (Issue 2) and interface between pragmatics and other linguistic disciplines (Issue 3). *Theories in Practice*, on the other hand, concentrates on three areas of research (linguistics, literature and methodology). The corpus in the study is represented by altogether 41 abstracts, which represent 6,120 words with the approximate length of five words for every sentence in the studied abstracts; the total number of dependent clauses is 79. Almost every abstract follows a simple scheme – from a brief introduction of a research to suggested research results, in some cases an abstract presents a theoretical overview of the literature with a suggested research. The primary focus of our small-scale research was:

1. to compare the proportion of *finite* and *non-finite* dependent clauses in chosen discourse
2. to find out which type of *non-finite* dependent clause is the most common in academic discourse
3. to analyse the most common functions of dependent clause *non-finite to-infinitive clause* in academic discourse

and, as it results from these aims, to investigate the use of non-finite structures in abstracts for research papers. As the results show (see Table 1), the proportion of finite and non-finite clauses shows a certain balance in the use of non-finite clauses with a slight preference for finite clauses (54.5%), which are more explicit than non-finite ones (45.5%). Even though non-finite clauses are quite typical of academic discourse, a typical grammar of finite clause (e.g. SPO word order) demonstrates its usage in language.

	NUMBER OF SENTENCES	PERCENTAGE
FINITE	43	54.50%
NON-FINITE	36	45.5%

Table 1: The proportion of finite and non-finite clauses

The sample of finite clauses from a chosen sample:

- (1) ... how this marker can enhance the negotiation of meaning in spoken interaction...
- (2) ... because the source and target texts are generally written by different people...
- (3) ... *which is reflected in FTAs as well as the mitigators of these acts...*

The sample of non-finite clauses from a chosen sample:

- (4) ... writers of Academic English are aware of their readership and adapt their texts, knowing conventions of the appropriate medium, culture and audience...
- (5) ... surveying different approaches to the Textual Theme, the paper discussing...
- (6) ... *the aim is to see what aim...*

As far as the most common non-finite clause type is concerned (see Table 2), the presented research results show a clear tendency for the to-infinitive clause (55.5%), which is followed by the *-ing* participle clause (27.7%) and *-ed* participle clause (16.8%). No example of the bare infinitive clause was found in the studied corpus. This more or less reflects the main function of the non-finite clause, which is syntactic compression and condensation (Leech & Svartvik 1992: 995).

	NUMBER OF CLAUSES	PERCENTAGE
TO INFINITIVE	20	55.5%
ING-PARTICIPLE	10	27.7%
ED-PARTICIPLE	6	16.8%
BARE INFINITIVE	0	0%

Table 2: Different types of non-finite dependent clauses

The sample of non-finite clause types from a chosen sample:

TO-INFINITIVE CLAUSE – ...*the basic purpose of the religious communication, to persuade the reader of the veracity of the Christian doctrine...*

-ING PARTICIPLE CLAUSE – ...stylistics can engage with other areas of literary study, shedding light on questions about literary interpretation...

-ED PARTICIPLE CLAUSE – ...the paper deals with translation strategies proposed by Andrew Chesterman...

As the to-infinitive clauses are the most common dependent clauses in the studied corpus, the following table (Table 3) demonstrates semantic meaning and functions of these non-finite forms. As presented in Table 3, to-infinitive clauses either open a sentence, since they are placed at its beginning in the function of subject (15%) or complete its meaning as a subject complement (65%) or object (10%), or have some other functions, e.g. as adverbials or apposition (10%).

	THE NUMBER OF CLAUSES	PERCENTAGE
S	3	15%
O	2	10%
Cs	13	65%
OTHER FUNCTIONS	2	10%

Table 3: Main functions of non-finite to-infinitive clauses

Quirk et al. (1985: 1061) have established the main functions of dependent clauses as subject, direct object, subject complement, appositive and adjectival complementation, and view nominal to-infinitive clauses as those, which indicate that the proposition they express is viewed as a possibility or a proposal rather than something already fulfilled. Indeed, the infinitive clause may refer to a proposition that is assumed to be true or to a situation that is assumed to have already occurred. Coming back to our research sample, we predominantly agree with Quirk et al. (1985: 1061), since in the presented examples, to-infinitive clauses have been established around possible outcomes of the situation described in the abstract and function as subject complement.

- (7) ... the aim of this paper is to give an overview of the way in which the process of communication...
- (8) ... the role of this paper is to point out to the mechanism of politeness...
- (9) ... this paper seeks to demonstrate how the pragmatic approach to modern bilingual lexicography is used...
- (10) ... this paper attempts to ascertain whether adds targeting women confirm theoretical claims...

5 Conclusion

The investigation has proved that owing to its important function, non-finite clauses in written academic discourse serve as a primary means of sentence condensation and are typical of formal register. As academic discourse represents a highly formal register, it was assumed that the proportion of these clauses would be rather high. This expectation has been proved as it is introduced in the present paper. The primary aim of this paper was to look at the main syntactic use of these clauses in written academic discourse, since academic abstracts are those written forms researchers write first and a good abstract definitely influences the reader's decision whether to read or not to read an academic paper.

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HEDGING DEVICES IN LITERARY CRITICISM RESEARCH ARTICLES

Martina Malášková

Abstract

The research of hedging has received a considerable amount of attention in recent years. This phenomenon has been surveyed from many different points of view and its importance has thus been sufficiently proven. There are, however, still areas that have been neglected so far. One of them is the field of literary criticism. This paper presents the results of a small scale study focusing on the occurrence of hedges in literary criticism research articles (RA). The results of the research show that various types of hedges can be found in the above mentioned type of RAs and indicate that further research of this field may fruitfully contribute to our understanding of the concept of hedging.

Key words

academic discourse, research article, hedges, metadiscourse

1 Introduction

Hedging has been approached from different perspectives since 1972 when it was first labeled as such by Lakoff. The concept of hedging has been linked to other concepts such as metadiscourse, modality and politeness; it has been studied in both speech and writing, from the semantic as well as the pragmatic point of view and also comparatively with respect to gender and culture. The centrality of the use of hedges in academic writing is nowadays taken mostly as a matter of fact. The results of previous research showed that hedges occur in academic writing across different fields (Hyland 2005). The importance of hedges in academic discourse lies in the multiple pragmatic roles they fulfill while serving as bridges between the constituents of the particular discourse situation. Scientists are members of their respective discourse communities (Swales 1990) and their scientific credibility within those communities is manifested by the acceptance of the results of their research by other community members. The most widespread vehicle for presenting one's work and disseminating knowledge in general is doubtless the format of the research article (RA) that "has enormous qualitative and quantitative importance and occupies a pre-eminent position in the contemporary market-like academic world" (Zapletalová 2009). The writers employ hedges – among other language means – in order to establish both the relationship towards the proposition of the statement and their readers at the same

time. Therefore it can be stated that the character of hedges is both ideational and interpersonal (Halliday 1978). This twofold feature of hedging is important since it enables the author not only to describe the real world phenomena with the highest precision possible, but also to invest different degrees of commitment to the information contained in the proposition while opening the space for negotiation with the recipients of the text. And it is the dialogic function of hedging which is crucial in the construction of meaning among the members of the discourse community.

There are many studies of the occurrence of hedging in RAs in different scientific fields, such as medical (Skelton 1997), sociological (Namsaraev 1997), cell and molecular biology (Hyland 1998), applied linguistics, computer science (Hyland 2005) and others. Surprisingly, the field of literary criticism has been relatively neglected in terms of discursive analysis (Peck MacDonald 1990). The existing studies deal mostly with the concept of modality in literary criticism (e.g. Simpson 1990) and little is known about different functional types of hedges and their formal variations.

2 Hedges – the semantics

In recent years Hyland's approach to hedging, on which the present study draws upon, has become one of the most prominent frameworks for the study of this discourse phenomenon.

There are three principal motivations for the use of hedging expressions that are primarily concerned with the three components of the discursive situation – the proposition, the writer and the reader. They will be now discussed in turn. Firstly, scientists are obliged – based on the community discursive practice – to report their results with the highest accuracy possible. This may be achieved by employing various means that allow the writer to capture different degrees of precision of the propositional information thus reflecting the reality truthfully. In accordance with Hyland (1996) this type of hedges is called content oriented hedges and they operate mostly within the scope of the proposition itself. This category of hedges is basically identical with the category of approximators in the classifications of Salager-Meyer (1994) and Prince et al. (1982).

The second major type of hedges is related to the writer and his need to protect himself from possible criticism. This is achieved mostly by withdrawing the complete commitment to the information presented in the proposition. Various impersonal strategies are used in order to shift the responsibility for the statement away from the author. Hedging expressions in this category are labeled as writer oriented in both Hyland's (1996) and my classification where they fall into the broader group of participant oriented hedges. In some of the previous

classifications similar expressions serving the purpose of distancing the author from the content information are called shields (e.g. Salager-Meyer 1994).

Bearing in mind his ultimate goal, that is to deliver his viewpoints to the reader and persuade them to accept those, the writer has to choose very carefully the language means in order to be successful in the interaction with his readers. The need to be accepted by the discourse community is the third primary motivation for using hedges in academic writing. These reader oriented devices open space for the negotiation of meaning between the writer and the reader and function as negative politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson 1978). The following table sums up the semantic classification of hedges used in the present study.

Content oriented		Participant oriented		
		Writer oriented	Reader oriented	
aim at greater accuracy (precision) and/or	the extent of applicability/generalizability	protect the writer by depersonalizing the information presented in the proposition	appeal to the reader by employing various strategies of reader involvement and/or	protect the writer by personalizing the information presented in the proposition

Table 1: Semantic classification of hedges

The semantic classification presented in the table above is based on the semantic classification by Hyland (1996). As follows from the aforementioned, the overriding motivation for the use of hedges is clearly pragmatic. The writer seeks acceptance of his fellow researches and he attempts to do so by making claims cautiously communicated in academic texts. In order to be successful, that is to achieve the desired perlocutionary effect, he must modify the illocutionary force of the message by choosing the language means very carefully. As Hyland and Salager-Meyer (2008) put it, “claim making is a risky practice”. Therefore the scientific writers must weigh very carefully the strength of their claims. It can be generalized that the stronger the claim, the higher is the risk of such a claim to be rejected. Using hedges makes the claims weaker thus lessening the risk of rejection and strengthening the author’s position within the discourse community. In practice, however, it may sometimes be very difficult to detect the writers prevailing motivation for the use of a certain kind of hedging expression. This is in conclusion with Hyland’s study (1998) in which he used native speaker informants to get more insight into the pragmatic motivation on the side of the writer.

3 Hedges – formal realizations

In terms of formal realization, similarly to the semantic functions, there are numerous approaches that sometimes considerably differ. Regardless of this variability, the formal means of expressing hedging can be divided into two broad categories – lexical and strategic. Some authors take into consideration only the lexical means (Biber et al. 1999), others accept a broader approach to the formal realization claiming that hedging can be realized by structures such as conditionals, questions, admission to lack of knowledge, etc. (Salager-Meyer 1994, Hyland 1996, 1998).

The present study adheres to the latter approach that takes into account also more complex structures functioning as hedges. On the lexical level, it is mostly epistemic modal verbs, precision adverbs, epistemic lexical verbs, adjectives and nouns. The more complex strategic structures involve both personal and impersonal reference to methods/models/experimental conditions, conditionals, questions, admission to lack of knowledge and various reader involvement strategies. In the course of the research, it has been reaffirmed that it is not possible to relate one form solely to a particular hedging function. This is in consistence with Hyland (1998) who claims that “the interpretation of hedges in RAs cannot be captured by assigning particular semantic meanings to decontextualized forms”. Other authors also maintain that “no linguistic items are inherently hedgy but can acquire this quality depending on the communicative context or the co-text” (Markkanen & Schröder 1998). It would therefore be problematic to draw exhaustive lists of all possible formal means functioning as hedges. The following table, however, attempts to relate the principal formal realizations to the semantic categories outlined in the previous sections.

Content oriented primarily expressed by:	Participant oriented	
	Writer oriented primarily expressed by:	Reader oriented primarily expressed by:
precision adverbs epistemic lexical adjectives epistemic lexical nouns epistemic modal verbs limited knowledge	impersonal structures referring to model/method/theory/ experimental conditions abstract rhetors epistemic lexical verbs attribution to literature	personal engagement structures (personal attribution, reference to methods/models, etc.) reader engagement structures (assumption of shared goals, conditionals, questions, reference to testability, etc.)

Table 2: Formal classification of hedges

4 Hedging in RAs

The prestigious character of the research article is given by its ability to promote and sustain one's academic career. If a scientist's work is published and subsequently accepted and cited by the discourse community he is a part of, it markedly contributes to his credibility and status within the discourse community. This already suggests that a great deal of interaction goes on in the process of presenting the results of one's scientific work. The writer not only provides the reader with certain claims, but he also has to provide the readership with guidance on how the claims are to be understood so that the readers adopt the writer's point of view. This is achieved by various language means with interactive character. These means are most commonly considered a part of metadiscourse (e.g. Hyland 2005). Hedges are examples of such features that together with other similar means expressing stance and engagement help the writer achieve the desired goal.

Each new claim presented in the RA should be taken as pending or provisional before it is accepted by the members of the respective discourse community. And it has to be marked as such in order not to hinder the act of acceptance. Various types of hedging expressions are used in RAs to mark claims as subject to negotiation and acceptance on the side of the reader. Two basic types – content oriented hedges and participant oriented hedges represent the writer's relationship to both the propositional information and the readership.

The content oriented hedges used in RAs are the writer's expression of the relationship between the information contained in the proposition of the utterance and the real world status quo, or, in other words, what the world is believed to be like. By using this type of hedges the writer aims at reaching the highest possible accuracy of the claim he makes. This is achieved by adjusting either the precision or the scope of applicability of the statement. In this way, the writer in fact weakens the strength of the claim to hedge himself against possible criticism thus lessening the risk of rejection.

- (1) *Proust, its title alluding to things past possibly reminding us of the Shakespearian tag which Scott-Montcrieff applied to his translation.* (LC C)
- (2) *In general, the physical setting is mapped and controlled, by a fussy, neurotic, Crusoesque tendency in the narrative to counting, and to the measurement of distances and time.* (LC E)

Participant oriented hedges, on the other hand, represent more explicitly the relationship between the writer and the reader. This category is further subdivided into two major subcategories – writer oriented hedges and reader oriented hedges.

The former category is characterized by the writer's need to protect himself and this is achieved primarily by withdrawing direct responsibility for the statements by the use of impersonal structures. The author makes himself invisible to the reader with the help of impersonal subjects, impersonal reference to methods/models/theories and experimental conditions, very often in connection with epistemic lexical verbs. The impersonal character of this type of hedges is also their most distinctive feature. The distancing of the author from the proposition functions indeed as a kind of shield protecting the writer from possible negative reaction.

- (3) *These later, popular, place poems forcefully suggest that the common understanding of his later career as a decline into Toryism needs revision.* (LC A)
- (4) *Prosody, for Hill, is vital to the poet's ability to work within the gravitational field of language; he claims 'the utmost significance for matters of technique', in permitting 'the inertia of language' to be 'overcome' (LOL, p. 2)* (LC B)

The latter type of participant oriented hedges – the reader oriented hedging expressions – differ from the previous category in that the author intentionally commits himself to the claims he makes in the text. The purpose of this is to appeal to the reader by humbly presenting the claim as only one of the possible interpretations – the one the author feels most appropriate. Another strategy used in reader oriented hedging is involving the reader. Emphasizing the fact that the writer and the reader are at the same level, members of the same discourse community, sharing the same goals increases the chance of the reader adopting the writer's point of view.

- (5) *'Acting scripts, not literary texts' has been the rallying call; and most of us accept that the more often we can see these plays in good productions the more easily we rid ourselves of the often unconscious anti-performative assumptions inherited from our academic tradition.* (LC D)
- (6) *We are left in doubt as to whether the final phrase is 'it' that Long Meg is urged to tell: the phrase hangs, holding by a tenuous grammatical thread to the imperative that apparently governs it.* (LC A)

5 Material and methods

As has already been mentioned, the present study deals with literary criticism RAs. The research corpus comprises five literary criticism research articles taken from *Essays in Criticism*, a well-established journal with world-wide circulation

published by Oxford Journals. The texts for this study were selected randomly out of a larger corpus of literary criticism RAs. The length of the research corpus was estimated to 35,000 words. The articles were published between 1999 and 2009. One of the important criteria for the choice of research material was the language background of the authors since it has been proven that the use of hedges is influenced by their mother tongue (e.g. Nikula 1998, Burrough-Boenish 2002). Therefore only native speakers of English were included into the present research in order to avoid the L1 bias. It is of interest to note that literary criticism RAs in the present study have a structure that is considerably different from the IMRD structure suggested by Swales (1990). In none of the research articles does the structure contain clearly distinguished sections and the overall character of the texts is rather descriptive.

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were carried out based on the above presented semantic and formal classifications (See Tables 1 and 2). The aim of the quantitative analysis was to find out whether and to what extent hedges occur in literary criticism RAs. Consequently, the qualitative analysis attempted to identify the principal formal realizations of hedging and their semantic roles in this type of texts. It was assumed that there will be a particularly high number of reader oriented hedges as opposed to the content oriented type. This assumption was guided by the character and structure of the examined texts as well as by previous research (Malášková 2009).

As mentioned in the previous section and illustrated by the above examples, in some cases it is very difficult – if not impossible – to distinguish the semantic type of hedge and assign it a particular pragmatic motivation. Therefore using the fuzzy category model (Lakoff 1973) seems to be the most viable strategy when classifying hedges in research articles. This model takes into consideration not only core cases of each type of hedge, but also less central ones. For the purpose of this analysis each instance of a hedge found in the analysed text was considered from the perspective of the fuzzy category model and classified in accordance with its prevailing function.

6 Results and discussion

The qualitative analysis has revealed that all three semantic types of hedges were present in the material. The following table summarizes the occurrence of each type of hedges.

	LC A	LC B	LC C	LC D	LC E	Total (hedge type per corpus)
Content oriented	29	34	38	30	21	142
Writer oriented	42	30	97	41	40	250
Reader oriented	5	45	13	68	12	143
Total (hedges per RA)	76	109	138	139	73	535

Table 3: Results of the quantitative analysis

As can be observed in the table above, the number of content oriented hedges is almost equal to the number of occurrences of reader oriented hedges, which is rather surprising. The hypothesis that reader oriented hedges would be the most frequent type was not proven by the results of the present study with writer oriented hedging expressions being the most common type in the analyzed texts. The reasons for this are not clear, but it can be speculated that the writer's need to protect himself is the most important pragmatic motivation for the use of hedges.

Type of device	Number of occurrences
precision adverbs (style disjuncts, content disjuncts, downtoners)	68
epistemic modal verbs	46
epistemic modal adjectives	10
limited knowledge	4
other (epistemic lex. verbs, nouns, etc.)	14
Total	142

Table 4: Content oriented hedges

Content oriented hedges were present in all analyzed RAs and the number of occurrences is very similar in all analyzed texts. As the following examples illustrate, content oriented hedges operate within the proposition itself, express limited extent (7), probability (8) or possibility and degree of precision (9). The author is not explicitly linked to the hedged proposition, therefore similar hedges can be considered impersonal.

- (7) *The note identifies the site as druidical, remark its 'singularity and dignity', and then gives a rather different test of the poem to that which appeared in 1836.* (LC A)
- (8) *Wilkinson's language hints at monstrosity and magic, probably because when a boy he had heard about other, more sinister, folk beliefs.* (LC E)

- (9) *Indeed some may feel that, for many of our students, Titus has become almost too popular; too central, a text.* (LC D)

Type of device	Number of occurrences
epistemic lexical verb	83
abstract rhetors	55
epistemic modal verbs	25
attribution to literature	27
empty subjects	15
modalized passive voice	19
hypotheticals	19
impersonal reference to method/model/ experimental conditions	2
other	5
Total	250

Table 5: Writer oriented hedges

Writer oriented hedges – the most frequent type of hedges in the analyzed corpus – are typically associated with impersonality and their primary role is to protect the writer by shifting the responsibility to abstract rhetors (10), (11), attribution to literature (12), empty subjects (13), very often in connection with epistemic lexical verbs and passive voice (only modalized instances of the passive voice were taken into account for the purpose of this analysis). It appears that the authors of literary criticism articles do not underestimate the need to protect themselves and they employ various kinds of impersonal structures to saturate this need.

- (10) *The closing sentence appears to provide the analogy by which the image can be understood: the visible wind is seen to provide a metaphor for the “apprehension” of spiritual affect.* (LC B)
- (11) *These later, popular, place poems forcefully suggest that the common understanding of his later career as a decline into Toryism needs revision.* (LC A)
- (12) *Raymond Williams asserted that Orwell’s home circumstances gave him an upbringing that was “in important ways strange and even alien” by the standards of most people’s lives.* (LC E)
- (13) *It seems natural to Elizabeth, and to the other English in the novel, that Europeans should hold sovereignty over the East, just as it seems natural that human beings should stand above and dominate the natural world.* (LC E)

Type of device	Number of occurrences
reader involvement devices	92
personal attribution	14
epistemic lexical verbs	12
epistemic modal verbs	12
hypotheticals	13
Total	143

Table 6: Reader oriented hedges

The last semantic group of hedges – reader oriented hedges – is realized mostly by various reader involvement strategies. These draw the reader into the process of the negotiation of meaning, creating the impression of equality and sharing. Reader involvement means are the most common type of writer oriented hedges. They include mostly first person personal pronouns (14). Among other means used for expressing reader oriented hedges belong personal attribution, very often in connection with epistemic lexical verbs (15) and hypotheticals (16).

- (14) *We are left in doubt as to whether the final phrase is the “it” that Long Meg is urged to tell: the phrase hangs, holding by a tenuous grammatical thread to the imperative that apparently governs it.* (LC A)
- (15) *Shakespeare has, I suspect, taken over from Spenser’s Faerie Queene (1.8.xxxvii-xli) some details from its piercing description of a prisoner released from confinement in a fetid dungeon, his skeletally thin body and his legs too weak to support him [...]* (LC D)
- (16) *Had the impulse and lesson of Martinville and episodes like it been rediscovered and sustained, the vocation which constitutes the real story of the novel would no longer have been invisible and occluded. The detour of wasted years would be avoided, but since this detour constitutes the substance of much of the novel, earlier discovery of the narator’s true vocation here would have weakened rather than reinforced the arch thrown between Combray and Le Temps retrouvé.* (LC C)

The quantitative analysis shows that the writer oriented hedges form not only the largest group of hedging expressions, but also the most variable one. As the results of the analysis imply, the writer’s need to protect himself from possible criticism is probably the most important motivation for the use of hedges in literary criticism articles. These findings are in discrepancy with what was expected prior the analysis. Based on the results of a pilot research (Malášková 2009) it was assumed that the authors of literary criticism RAs would attempt to appeal to the reader and tend to persuade the readership by producing texts heavily hedging

assertiveness when interpreting a piece of literary work. However, it seems that this is not the case. Even though the writer employs reader oriented hedges to present the results of his work tentatively and with regard to his audience, it still seems to be more important to hedge commitment to the propositional information by making himself 'invisible' in the text by using high numbers of writer oriented hedges. It has to be emphasised, however, that the present study is only small scale and further research is needed to confirm this tendency.

The results of the analysis suggest further research questions, such as the issue of clustering. Since, as Hyland (1998) notes, hedging expressions show a relatively high tendency to cluster, it is interesting to explore the reinforcing strength of hedging agglomerates, the possible combinations of different hedging expressions, and the principles of clustering. The example below illustrates the occasional difficulties when identifying the type of hedge clusters:

- (17) *A basic question which includes all the others is quite simply: what is the early Shakespeare? I have said that for me the early Shakespeare comprises the Henry VI plays, King John and Titus Andronicus. But the dates of all these are very much in debate, and although for most of the last half-century we could assume that at least the authorship of Titus was not in doubt, it is now once again an area of contention. The presumed date of Titus swings between altogether different degrees of earliness, as the two most recent editions bring out. (LC D)*

The example above shows that there is a relatively high density of varied means used at a very short space in the text. It seems that such heavily hedged instances of text should be analyzed in one piece with regard to the prevailing semantic role.

7 Conclusion

The present study attempted to analyze literary criticism research articles in order to identify different semantic types of hedges present in this type of text and bring more information about the frequency of occurrence of these devices. The results have shown that there are various semantic types of hedging expressions used in literary criticism RAs and that these are realized by various formal means. These means can be both lexical and structural and the results of the analysis support the claim that one form can serve various functions. This is connected with another typical feature of hedging that has been confirmed by the research – hedges are highly context bound and it is only in context that hedging expressions are assigned their particular functions. These functions are guided by several principal motivations – the needs to be as accurate as possible

in reporting the results of one's work; to protect one's scientific credibility by adjusting the strength of one's claims based on the grounds for those claims and to appeal to the fellow members of the discourse community the writer is a part of. In concord with the findings of other authors, it has been observed that it is often quite difficult to distinguish clear cut types of semantic function and the best solution seems to be to employ the fuzzy category model and to look at the prevailing characteristics of individual hedging instances. It should be noted some difficulties in the analysis can be accounted for by the strong tendency of hedges to cluster. The clustering can be most probably explained by the authors' need to reinforce the power of hedging expressions.

To sum up, literary criticism RAs present a very interesting yet neglected area. The limited scope of the present study does not allow for any generalizations. However, the findings suggest that further research is needed not only to confirm the results of the present study, but also to provide further insight into the field that has yet to be fully explored.

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MODALITY IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE: MEANING AND USE OF EPISTEMIC VERBS IN RESEARCH ARTICLES

Melanie Marcinkowski

Abstract

This contribution reports on a study of epistemic verbs in a corpus of scientific research articles from two subdisciplines of the natural sciences (Biosciences and Physics) and their popular adaptations in *New Scientist*.

Epistemic devices express the writer's commitment to the truth value of a state of affairs. Epistemic verbs can be divided into downtoners, i.e. verbs that indicate writers' lack of confidence (e.g. *indicate, assume*) and indicators of certainty that express writers' conviction of the state of affairs described in the proposition (e.g. *show, conclude*). Epistemic verbs are thus an important means of communicating knowledge and presenting findings in scientific research articles and their popular versions.

This study explores the meaning and use of frequent epistemic verbs in their personal and impersonal uses and aims at contributing to the research on stylistic conventions in scientific and popular academic writing. The analysis shows that there are quantitative as well as qualitative differences in the use of epistemic verbs between the two subdisciplines and their popular versions.

Key words

academic writing, natural sciences, specialised and popular discourse, epistemic modality

1 Introduction

Research articles have become increasingly important for the communication of findings in the sciences and establishing membership of the scientific discourse community. Over the last decades, the genre has attracted rising amounts of research, particularly from an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) perspective. Especially stance (e.g. Hyland 2004, Biber 2006) and evaluation (e.g. Hunston & Thompson 2001) as well as writer-reader relations have been intensively investigated. Despite the growing body of literature, there is still no consistent typology and systematic-functional classification of linguistic items. What most of the studies have in common, however, is the epistemic component in their analyses, i.e. the expression of a degree of certainty (or uncertainty) towards the truth value of a proposition.

This study focuses on markers of epistemic commitment, and particularly on lexical verbs. Epistemic modality is crucial for negotiating knowledge in academic writing. It affects the way research and findings are presented since, by using epistemic expressions, speakers can alter the degree of certainty expressed in the writing.

- (1) This **indicates that** the small deviations **may be due to** a correlation with the large gas leak/spin anomaly. (0003AX01)
- (2) However, **the results clearly demonstrate that** [Cr(pic)3] has significant germ line mutagenic activity that dramatically parallels the mutagenic activity of EMS. (0105PN)

In (1), the epistemic markers, *indicate* and *may*, lower the degree of confidence expressed, whereas the indicator of certainty *demonstrate* in combination with the boosting adverb *clearly* has the function of increasing the degree of certainty in (2). Here, the epistemic strength is additionally reinforced by the explicit evidence *the results*. As can be seen from these two examples, epistemic meaning is conveyed by different lexico-grammatical categories. The focus of research, however, has been on modal verbs, modal adverbs and modal adjectives rather than on lexical epistemic verbs so far. Most of the studies have, furthermore, concentrated on those items expressing low certainty or doubt.

In this paper, I will not only include linguistic means conveying doubt, but also those indicating certainty. This study thus aims at contributing to the research on epistemic modality in academic writing and especially to studies of epistemic verbs. For this purpose, I will search for similarities and differences in the use of epistemic verbs across two scientific disciplines (Biosciences and Physics) and their popular adaptations in *New Scientist*. I will show to what extent scientific research articles in both disciplines and their popular adaptations differ in the use of epistemic verbs.

2 Epistemic modality and evidentiality

The concept of epistemic modality and the related notion of evidentiality have been extensively discussed in the relevant literature. There are two prevalent viewpoints. While some authors treat evidentiality as an independent category, others consider it as an additional feature of epistemic modality. If we take Nuyts' (2001) narrow definition of epistemic modality: the "evaluation of the chances that a certain hypothetical state of affairs under consideration (or some aspect of it) will occur, is occurring or has occurred in a possible world" (ibid.:

21), he clearly refers exclusively to the degree of certainty of a proposition. Evidentiality, on the other hand, if taken as a separate concept, can be defined as “the functional category that refers to the perceptual and/or epistemological basis for making a speech act” (Cornillie 2009: 45). Evidentiality thus refers to the reasons a speaker has for making a statement about the likelihood of a state of affairs, i.e. whether his or her knowledge is based on hearsay, direct observation or is somehow deduced.

The so-called broad view of epistemic modality includes, apart from the degree of certainty, an evidential notion. Plungian (2001), for instance, argues that “an evidential supplement can always be seen in an epistemic marker” but that vice versa “not all evidential markers are modal in that they do not all necessarily imply an epistemic judgment” (ibid.: 354). The expression or implication of some kind of evidence is, according to this definition, included in the concept of epistemic modality.

In this paper, the so-called broad view is followed, which includes the evidential notion in the concept of epistemic modality. Epistemic verbs do include reference to the source of information, especially in academic writing where findings are only accepted when somehow proved through accepted means in the discourse communities. Since the strength of epistemic verbs depends largely on their textual context, the evidential notion is sometimes expressed explicitly, sometimes only implied.

3 Epistemic verbs

It has already been pointed out that modal auxiliaries, adjectives and adverbs have been the centre of attention in epistemic modality studies. This is surprising given the fact that “lexical verbs offer a more overt and precise means of signalling the writer’s commitment to a proposition than adverbs, signalling relative degrees of assurance and uncertainty” (Hyland & Milton 1997: 190). It is only since the 1980s that other lexico-grammatical items are frequently included in the research, which leads to the still diffuse terminology and absent consensus regarding the semantic classification of epistemic verbs.

Nuyts (2001), for instance, deals with epistemic verbs in his chapter on *mental state predicates*. Varttala (1999) uses the term *epistemic main verbs*. Holmes (1982) provides an extensive list of epistemic devices including *lexical verbs*. She divides markers into downtoners, i.e. “lexical devices used to signal the speaker’s lack of confidence” (ibid.: 18) and boosters, i.e. “lexical devices used to express strong conviction” (ibid.). Biber (2006) establishes two categories of the so-called *stance verbs*. The first one includes certainty (e.g. *conclude, know*) and likelihood markers and the second one probability verbs (e.g. *think, doubt, seem*).

Hyland (2004) does not give a detailed analysis of the lexical verbs expressing certainty or doubt. He is rather interested in the overall concept of stance. He classifies items that “strengthen claims [and] express the writer’s judgements of certainty and emphasise the force of statements” (ibid.: 16) as boosters and gives the examples *show* and *demonstrate*. On the lower certainty area of a scale of commitment we have items “which reduce the force of arguments and criticisms” (ibid.), called hedges.

In this study, I will adopt the categories established by Rizomilioti (2006), who uses the term downtoners for items expressing low certainty. According to him, items expressing a high degree of certainty can be divided into boosters and indicators of certainty. He further places epistemic verbs in the latter category since they are somewhat less emphatic than hedges (e.g. *might*, *possibly*) and boosters (e.g. *clear*, *definitely*). I have thus divided the epistemic verbs analysed here into downtoners and indicators of certainty.

Let us have a look at the downtoner *suggest*. Its strength and commitment conveyed varies considerably with its immediate co-text. In combination with the hedge *may* (3), for instance, or the booster *strongly* (4), the degree of certainty decreases or increases respectively.

(3) *It may be suggested that...*

(4) *The data strongly suggest...*

A widely discussed issue in modality studies has been the epistemic scale, going from absolute to low certainty that the state of affairs described in the proposition is real. This scale has mostly been described by modal adverbs and adjectives since they provide the prototypical meanings of *possibility*, *probability* and *certainty*. Although the semantic organisation of epistemic verbs differs considerably from that of modal adjectives and adverbs, they also express a degree of certainty, even if “quite vague regarding the strength of the qualification” (Nuyts 2001: 111).

Despite the growing number of studies, there is still no consensus as to whether it is possible to arrange all epistemic markers into categories of certainty. Proposals range from three to even five levels, i.e. *absolute certainty*, *high certainty*, *moderate certainty*, *low certainty* and *uncertainty* (e.g. Rubin 2007: 142). Concerning the differentiable degrees this might be the highest possible in the English language. Thompson et al. argue that “English may not be precise enough to distinguish so many shades between certainty and doubt” (2008: 4). They thus propose a four level categorisation as seen in Table 1.

Absolute	High	Moderate	Low
a statement marked as known, accepted <i>e.g. as is known..., well-established that...</i>	higher certainty level <i>e.g. conclude, know, show, find, prove</i>	lower certainty level <i>e.g. believe, think, assume, indicate, suppose, seem</i>	very low certainty level <i>e.g. doubt, not know</i>

Table 1: Degrees of certainty (Thompson et al. 2008)

The strength of epistemic verbs and the commitment conveyed largely varies with their syntactic environment. The epistemic scale of certainty is hence only “to some extent also relevant for the mental state predicates” (Nuyts 2001: 110). In this study, I will follow the well-established distinction between items that express a low degree of certainty, i.e. doubt and those conveying a high degree of certainty.

Apart from that, the semantic organisation of epistemic verbs differs from that of modal adjectives and adverbs. There is at least one main additional semantic component, expressed explicitly in the text or implied – the evidential component. Most of the verbs studied here do not merely express certainty or uncertainty, but additionally refer to the source of information. Hyland (1998) also states that “epistemic verbs [...] mark both, the mode of knowing and its source (belief, deduction, report, perception), and thereby carry implications about the reliability of the knowledge itself” (ibid.: 120). He explicitly partitions epistemic verbs into two main categories, epistemic judgement verbs and epistemic evidential verbs. Epistemic judgement verbs refer to the degree of commitment and mainly include speculative (*believe, speculate, suspect*), performative (*propose, suggest*) and deductive verbs (*calculate, infer, conclude*). The second category of epistemic evidential verbs “refers to evidentiary justification, either based on reports of others, the evidence of the writer’s senses, or the feasibility of matching evidence to goals” (ibid.: 124). It includes hearsay or quotative evidence (*show, deduce, suggest, speculate, predict*) and sensory evidence (*appear, seem, rationalise*). Whether an epistemic verb functions rather as judgement or evidential verb is largely due to its co-text. The verb *suggest* can have a performative, epistemic function (*we suggest that...*) and an evidential one (*the data/writer suggest*). Most of the verbs analysed here are, indeed, used with and without direct textual evidence. They can therefore be classified as both, epistemic judgement verbs (like in *we have shown that...*) and epistemic evidential verbs (e.g. *the data shows that...*).

4 Data and methodology

The analysis is based on a corpus of research articles belonging to two disciplines of the natural sciences, Biosciences and Physics. The Chemnitz corpus of Specialised and Popular ACademic English (SPACE)¹ contains 107 research articles as well as their popular versions from *New Scientist*. Hence, the corpus contains data of “expert-to-expert communication in some restricted academic fields and expert-to-general-academic” communication (Schmied 2007: 1). Whereas the specialised component contains research articles that communicate findings to the scientific discourse community, the popular component contains texts that are “produced for audiences without a professional need for information about science” (Hyland 2009: 152).

	specialised	popular	total
Biosciences	267,105	30,499	297,604
Physics	161,864	40,694	202,558
total	428,969	71,193	500,162

Table 2: Number of words in SPACE 07

Table 2 displays the number of words in the individual components. As can be seen, the popular component is smaller than the specialised one. This is due to the fact that the popular articles are generally shorter than their scientific counterparts. Files in the specialised components are tagged PN for the specialised Biosciences articles, AX for the specialised Physics texts and NS for the popular articles.

It must be mentioned that unmarked encoding of certainty is not included in this study. The items analysed here were selected on the basis of the lists provided by Hyland (1998), Biber (2006) and Holmes (1982). To be able to analyse the meaning and use of epistemic verbs, only items with a minimum of ten occurrences in either of the specialised sub-corpora were included. The final list contains the eleven downtoners: *appear, assume, believe, imply, indicate, not know, seem, speculate, suggest, tend, think*, and the ten indicators of certainty: *argue, conclude, confirm, demonstrate, establish, find, know, prove, reveal* and *show*.

Since several of the verbs studied here are polysemous, co-text was searched manually in order to determine whether the meaning conveyed was epistemic or non-epistemic, that of certainty or uncertainty. Table 3 lists four of the verbs that have at least two different meanings, the second one being non-epistemic.

show	provide facts or information that make it clear that something is true display on picture, table, figure
find	to discover or learn something by study, tests, sums get by searching, display on picture, table, figure
indicate	show that something is likely to be true represent something
suggest	tell someone your ideas about something, to propose make someone think that a particular thing is true, to indicate

Table 3: Selection of polysemous verbs

As can be seen, *show* can have the epistemic meaning ‘provide facts or information that make it clear that something is true’ but it can also be used to explain a figure, table, etc. In (5) we have *to show* as a marker of epistemic modality in a *that*-clause. It clearly expresses certainty about the state of affairs giving explicit evidence. In (6), on the other hand, it does not qualify the truth value of a proposition and is thus ruled out.

- (5) *Semendeferi et al. (10) showed that frontal cortex occupies about the same proportion of total cortex in humans as it does in the great apes. (0054PN)*
- (6) *Fig. 1B shows the ratio of frontal to rest of cortex for the wider range of primates in our data set. (0054PN)*

To ensure that only epistemic uses were taken into consideration here, individual syntactic criteria were considered as well. Verbs functioning as head of *that*-clauses as in (5) were classified as epistemic. In some cases, it was further possible to establish classification indicators. In the case of *appear*, for instance, all instances of *appear* + PREPOSITION were ruled out as being non-epistemic. In (7) *appear* does not function as a marker of low certainty or doubt but can be paraphrased as ‘start to be seen’. Likewise does *assume* in (8) not convey epistemic meaning and was excluded from the analysis.

- (7) *Thus we take 600 Myr as a crude estimate of the upper limit for the time it took life to appear on Earth. (0019AX)*
- (8) *As a cell design becomes more complex and interconnected a critical point is reached where a more integrated cellular organization emerges, and vertically generated novelty can and does assume greater importance. (0075PN)*

It must be admitted that it was not possible to judge all items unambiguously. Doubtful cases were classified as non-epistemic and not included in this study.

I did, furthermore, not only include instances referring to the writer's own expression of certainty but also those that dealt with sources other than the writer (e.g. other researchers, studies, literature, etc.).

5 Findings and discussion

Table 4 displays the ten most frequent items in the corpus. It only contains those items that were unambiguously judged epistemic. In the case of *show*, for instance, only 59 per cent of the instances in the Biosciences component and 58 per cent in the Physics sub-corpus were clearly epistemic verbs.

BioPN			PhysAX			BioNS		PhysNS			
	Item	Tokens		Item	Tokens		Item	Tokens	Items	Tokens	
1	<i>show</i>	385	1	<i>show</i>	265	1	<i>find</i>	76	1	<i>think</i>	54
2	<i>suggest</i>	206	2	<i>assume</i>	236	2	<i>suggest</i>	29	2	<i>find</i>	40
3	<i>indicate</i>	151	3	<i>find</i>	212	3	<i>think</i>	26	3	<i>believe</i>	25
4	<i>demonstrate</i>	136	4	<i>imply</i>	93	4	<i>believe</i>	20	4	<i>seem</i>	20
5	<i>find</i>	122	5	<i>indicate</i>	62	5	<i>seem</i>	20	5	<i>show</i>	20
6	<i>reveal</i>	75	6	<i>suggest</i>	53	6	<i>show</i>	20	6	<i>suggest</i>	17
7	<i>appear</i>	73	7	<i>seem</i>	47	7	not know	15	7	not know	16
8	<i>seem</i>	73	8	<i>argue</i>	46	8	<i>know</i>	12	8	<i>know</i>	15
9	<i>confirm</i>	57	9	<i>prove</i>	43	9	<i>appear</i>	10	9	<i>assume</i>	14
10	<i>establish</i>	44	10	<i>conclude</i>	42	10	<i>prove</i>	8	10	<i>reveal</i>	13

Table 4: Most frequent epistemic verbs: absolute numbers

It can be seen from the table that *show* is by far the most common epistemic verb in the specialised sub-corpora. In both popular components, it plays a minor role with 20 occurrences each. What is further interesting is the fact that there are more indicators of certainty (1,262) than downtoners (967) amongst the ten most frequent items in the specialised sub-corpora. Although the deviation is not much and not statistically significant, it is still remarkable that indicators of certainty occur more often in the research articles than downtoners. Numerous studies of academic writing have suggested that researchers rather hedge their writings in order to safely and politely present the research, results and discussions. These numbers, however, show that linguistic means indicating certainty do indeed play an important role in academic writing.

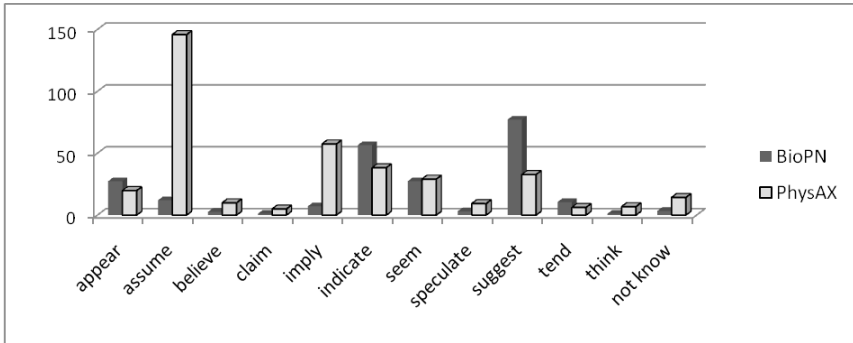


Figure 1: Downtoners per 100,000

Figure 1 shows downtoners in the two specialised components. Numbers are calculated per 100,000. As can be seen, occurrences differ enormously in relation to item and sub-corpus. Amongst the most frequent items are *appear*, *assume*, *imply*, *indicate*, *seem* and *suggest*; *assume*, *imply*, *not know* and *suggest* occur statistically significantly (at the $p = 0.01\%$ level) more often in Physics than in the Biosciences.

Indicators of certainty in the specialised sub-corpora are compared in Figure 2. It can be seen that *show* is by far the most common item in both disciplines. *Argue*, *find*, *conclude*, *demonstrate* and *prove* show significant (at the $p = 0.01\%$ level) deviations.

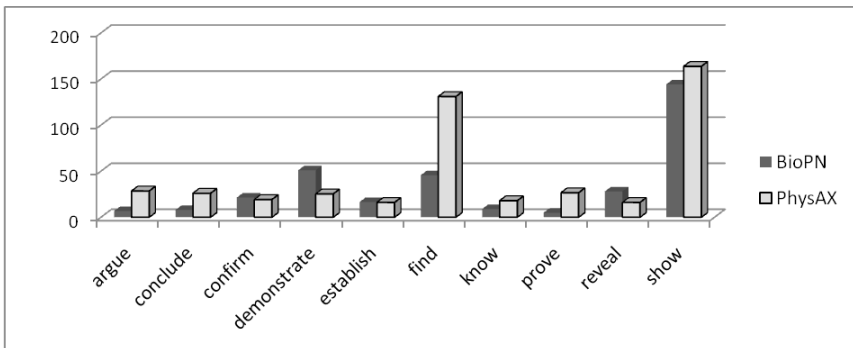


Figure 2: Indicators of certainty per 100,000

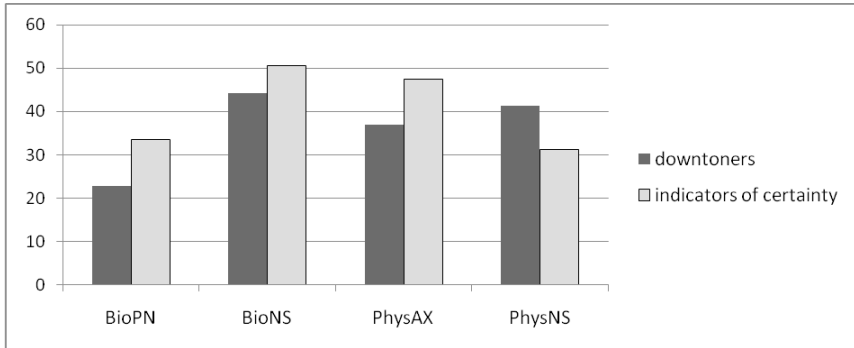


Figure 3: Downtoners and indicators of certainty per 10,000

Downtoners and indicators of certainty in all four sub-corpora are displayed in Figure 3. When comparing the specialised and popular Biosciences components, it becomes obvious that frequencies of both semantic categories seem to rise in the process of popularisation. This does not hold, however, for the Physics components where the relative numbers for downtoners rise while indicators of certainty decrease.

The text-based analysis showed that epistemic verbs are used impersonally as well as with personal pronouns. In (9) *show* is used with a nonhuman subject in an active construction to emphasise the research and its outcomes instead of the researcher behind it. The epistemic verbs analysed here are indeed very frequently used in active constructions with nonhuman subjects and in passive constructions as already suggested in other studies. *Show* takes a human subject in only 15.1 per cent of all instances, of which 8.7 per cent are writer related subjects (*I, we*) and 6.4 per cent refer to others. General research related subjects, such as *study, analysis* and *result* are commonly used in the research articles analysed here.

- (9) *The data presented here show elevated germ-line mutation rates in the F1 and F2 offspring of initially irradiated males belonging to three inbred strains CBAH, C57BL6 and BALBc, which clearly demonstrates that transgenerational instability is not restricted to one particular inbred strain of mice and shows significant interstrain variation in transgenerational instability. (0062PN)*
- (10) *Naively, quantum field theory and classical gravity would suggest the back-reaction due to varying couplings would be enormous. (0013AX)*

Epistemic verbs are, furthermore, frequently qualified by hedges or boosters, as in example (9). The modal adverb *clearly* reinforces the modal certainty conveyed by *demonstrate*. It thus strengthens the conclusion drawn from evidence explicitly provided in the text. In (10), on the other hand, the downtoner *suggest* is further weakened by the hedge *would*. As these examples show, the traditional degrees of certainty are further subdivided. Taken into consideration the syntactic environment of epistemic verbs, most of them do not merely express doubt or certainty but finer shades of epistemic commitment.

- (11) ***The current data indicate that our Universe is poised somewhere near the razor-thin separation between phantom energy, cosmological constant, and quintessence. (0031AX)***

A further significant feature of epistemic verbs in the scientific articles is their high frequency in *that*-clauses. In this syntactic construction, epistemic verbs provide facts, information and are especially used “to link experimental or observational evidence (results, data, analysis, etc.) to conclusions” (Johns 2001: 56). In (11), for instance, the conclusion that ‘*our universe is poised...*’ is proven by ‘*the current data*’. There is an overall strong tendency for writers to present their findings that way and, in fact, 104 out of 151 instances of *indicate* occur in *that*-clauses.

In summary, a comparison of both categories in the four sub-corpora revealed that downtoners are used more frequently than indicators of certainty only in popular Physics. The analysis of research articles in specialised Biosciences, popular Biosciences and specialised Physics showed that epistemic verbs indicating certainty are indeed widely used by scientists.

6 Conclusion

This paper has analysed the use of epistemic verbs in the Biosciences and Physics as well as their popular adaptations in *New Scientist*. For that purpose, items were divided into two main groups, downtoners and indicators of certainty. A list of 21 items was elaborated and all instances of the verbs were analysed manually in order to rule out non-epistemic uses and to differentiate between the expression of certainty or uncertainty in ambiguous cases.

It was shown that in the SPACE07 corpus analysed here, both categories are frequently used to communicate knowledge, present the research and evaluate findings.

Furthermore, it can be said that downtoners are slightly more frequent in the popular Physics than in the specialised Physics research articles analysed here, but numbers for indicators of certainty significantly decrease in the popular component of Physics. Contrary to that, downtoners as well as indicators of certainty are more frequent in the popular than in the specialised Biosciences sub-corpus. The process of popularisation in Biology does thus seem to involve the more frequent use of epistemic verbs.

It was also shown that nonhuman subjects are favoured in specialised academic writing. Writers use research related subjects, such as *study*, *data*, *analysis* and *experiments* to emphasise the research and experimental evidence instead of the role of the researcher.

Notes

- ¹ For more information on the corpus and its compilation, see Schmied (2007) and Haase (2007).

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LEXICAL COHESION IN POPULAR VS. THEORETICAL SCIENTIFIC TEXTS

Radek Vogel

Abstract

Lexical cohesion, i.e. selection of lexical items which are in some way related to other lexical items in a text, contributes importantly to creating the texture, as defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976), and increases the overall coherence of the text. The article looks into different devices of lexical cohesion employed in scientific texts, namely reiterations (including exact repetitions and synonyms), use of superordinate expressions and general terms, and marginally also collocations. It is built upon an assumption that two basic types of scientific text, popular and theoretical ones, display some differences in the ratios between these lexical cohesive devices as well as in the frequency of their occurrence in each individual type. The analysis has been undertaken on two corpora of texts dealing with various topics in physics, comparing a text which is highly theoretical with one covering the same respective topic, adapted rather for didactic purposes or purposes of popular science. Lexical chains reveal the cohesive links between thematic elements of the texts and highlight the differences between individual texts matched in pairs. Particularly the use of general and superordinate lexemes in contrast to exact repetitions has proved to be the feature distinguishing between the two text varieties.

Key words

antonymy, direct cohesive chains, generalisation, lexical cohesion, popular scientific texts, repetition, specification, superordinates, synonymy, theoretical scientific texts

1 Introduction

Authors of written texts, since they cannot rely on immediate interaction with recipients of messages incorporated in their texts (unlike the possibility to ask for clarification in most types of spoken discourse), must plan and construct the texts carefully to secure their comprehensibility. For this reason, they employ a repertory of lexical, grammatical and structural means to express the relations between text components clearly and communicate thus the content and purpose of the text to the readers successfully. As Dontcheva-Navratilova (2006: 51) puts it concisely, “the writer’s role in this interaction is to anticipate the reader’s reaction and to use different signals and strategies to guide him/her in lifting the range of possible interpretations and support the intended interpretation”.

This paper looks into one type of means which achieve connectedness and ensure understanding of written texts, namely the devices of lexical cohesion. Moreover, since the distinction of the medium of communication does not provide a complete characteristic of the considerations that must be made while constructing a target text, the remaining two aspects of Halliday's (1978) triad of register variation have to be defined as well. The tenor, i.e. mutual relationship between participants in the act of communication, is realised as a certain level of formality. This paper assumes that two types of scientific text identified by the specific levels of (in)formality and anticipated readership, i.e. popular and theoretical ones, reveal different frequencies of occurrence of and ratios between types of cohesive devices, including lexical ones. As to the third aspect, the field or province, the present analysis has been carried out on two corpora of texts discussing various topics in physics, contrasting theoretical (or academic) texts with their rather popular (or didactic) counterparts dealing with the same topics.

2 Lexical cohesion: Its function and devices

Discourse in any field of activity is characterised by existence of two relations, namely semantic connectedness, referred to as coherence, and syntactic connectedness, known as cohesion (Urbanová 2008: 83), which is also the focus of this paper. Contrary to coherence, dependent on the result of interplay between the chosen cohesive features and subjective factors associated with the personality of the recipient, cohesion is a more objective and identifiable concept. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 293) stress its fundamental importance for the construction of texts: "Typically, in any text, every sentence except the first exhibits some form of cohesion with a preceding sentence, usually with the one immediately preceding. In other words, every sentence contains at least one anaphoric tie connecting it with what has gone before".

Halliday and Hasan distinguish two types of cohesion, i.e. lexical cohesion (LC) and grammatical cohesion (GC) (Urbanová 2008: 83-84, Halliday & Hasan 1976: 303). Expanding this division, some linguists also point out to structural cohesion as a specific type of cohesion (cf. Dontcheva-Navratilova 2005), although Halliday and Hasan (1976) acknowledged its role as well.

Lexical cohesion is thus one of the main types of cohesion. Halliday and Hasan distinguish two related aspects of lexical cohesion – **reiteration** and **collocation** (1976: 318). The former one, reiteration, is realised either as the repetition of a lexical item or the use of a synonym (ibid.). Since reiteration occurs in the context of reference, "a reiterated lexical item is accompanied by a reference item, usually *the* or a demonstrative" (ibid.: 318-319).

Urbanová (2008: 84-85) lists two lexical devices among cohesive devices, i.e. **reiteration**, which is seen as a repetition of key words or derivatives thereof, and **sense relations**, especially synonymy and antonymy. Similarly, Dontcheva-Navratilova (2005) employs a classification of subtypes of lexical cohesion which is derived from semantics, namely various sense relations. Urbanová's (2008) conception splits reiteration (as defined by Halliday & Hasan 1976), separating synonymy and joining it with other semantic relations into a larger set based on similarity of meaning. As Urbanová (2008: 84) points out, lexical cohesive devices contribute to approximation of meaning, explanation and connectivity of the content of text parts, whereas the tools of grammatical cohesion help to achieve surveyability and comprehensibility via arrangement of the grammatical structure of a text.

Zmrzlá (2009: 39-40) attempted at a synthesis of the above-mentioned classifications of grammatical, lexical as well as structural cohesion by Halliday and Hasan (1976), Tanskanen (1995) and Dontcheva-Navratilova (2005) and combined them into a single hierarchy. Leaving grammatical and structural cohesion aside, lexical cohesion is divided into reiteration and collocation (as in Halliday & Hasan 1976), and reiteration is further divided into repetition, equivalence, generalisation, specification, co-specification and contrast, while collocation has two subtypes, i.e. ordered set and implication.

3 Theoretical and popular scientific discourse

3.1 Lexicon of exact science

Knittlová (1990: 26) suggests the division of the style of science and technology into two distinct branches, the theoretical and the practical (or didactic) one, and mentions also Mistrík's (1985) classification of the so-called didactic style into the scientific and popular branches. The lexicon of the style of science is characterised (ibid.: 27) by conceptuality, marked use of nouns and adjectives, use of terms with a clear and narrow denotation, absence of expressive lexemes, exclusiveness and therefore high repetitiveness of lexis, resulting in quite a stereotypical vocabulary, and semantic condensation with preference of noun groups (ibid.: 40, 49). The popular scientific style differs from its theoretical counterpart by less specialised terminology, inclusion of colloquial expressions, higher frequency of occurrence of paraphrase, expressive and personality features, etc. (ibid.: 28-29).

Knittlová (1990: 47) also mentions Galperin's (1977) observation that there exist distinct styles of exact sciences on the one hand, and humanities on the other, each with their typical means, though it is possible to identify a convergent trend.

Schmied (2006) reports on a corpus-based research dealing with complexity in lexis and syntax, which investigated two types of discourse: specialist discourse (on-line databases and peer-reviewed publications) and non-specialist discourse (namely popular adaptations of academic articles in *New Scientist*) (2006: 144). Together with an analysis of syntactic complexity also lexical complexity was in the focus of the research. The author hypothesised that non-specialist texts would have fewer unknown nouns and more general nouns, whereas the specialist texts would be more complex syntactically and lexically. The analysis was carried out with the use of computer software and followed the methods of corpus linguistics. It proved the above-mentioned hypotheses and usefulness of the number of unknown words (according to Word-Net) as a valid indicator of lexical complexity (Schmied 2006: 149).

Krhutová (2009) examined the professional discourse of English texts for electrical engineers and lexical cohesive chains in them. The prominent features of lexical cohesion established in this occupational variety were the use of specific terms of electrical engineering (estimated at 30%) and, among members of cohesive chains, it was the use of superordinates.

Lexical cohesion in science and popular science texts was approached differently by Myers (1991), who focuses on the relation between the specialised scientific knowledge (domain knowledge) a reader is assumed to have and the explicitly marked cohesive relations. Myers compares scientific and popular articles on one discovery in genetics, claiming that it is possible to create a computational model of cohesion explaining why even a non-specialist reader lacking specialised knowledge can understand scientific texts. He suggests that “readers of scientific articles must have a knowledge of lexical relations to see the implicit cohesion, while readers of popularizations must see the cohesive relations to infer lexical relations. This difference helps to explain some striking differences in the kinds of cohesive devices in the two kinds of texts (...)” (1991: 5). Myers sees the difference in the variety of used cohesive devices, or actually in the primacy of lexical vs. grammatical cohesion: “Scientific articles are held together by repetition. Popularizations also depend mainly on repetition, but they can use replacement, conjunctions, pronouns and other devices as well. The fact that the scientific texts do not use pronouns or replacement for cohesion makes them harder for the nonspecialist to follow, whereas the range of devices in the popular texts makes for explicit cohesion that allows the links between sentences to serve as a basis for inferences about the meanings of any unfamiliar terms” (ibid.).

3.2 Link between cohesion and coherence

As noted above, coherence is achieved by properly applied cohesive devices. Halliday and Hasan conclude that “the expression of the semantic unity of the text lies in the cohesion among the sentences of which it is composed” (1976: 293).

Halliday and Hasan (1989) have later combined LC and GC into a single approach defined semantically. Within this approach, cohesive ties, i.e. links between cohesively related items (the term ‘cohesive links’ denotes cohesive ties holding between two textual items), yield the so-called cohesive chains (CCs) if such semantic links exist between more than two related items. CCs may be divided into **identity chains** (where the relation between their members is co-referentiality) and **similarity chains** (the relation is co-classification or co-extension) (Hasan 1989). It is the existence of CCs that contributes crucially to achieving coherence of a text (ibid.).

As for the types of cohesive tie, i.e. links between text items underlying cohesive chains, Hasan (1985) recognizes three types: co-referentiality, co-classification and co-extension. Co-referentiality is based on identity of reference, co-classification is made up of items in an identical class and co-extension is based on a general resemblance. The concept of direct CCs is thus equivalent to the tie of co-referentiality (cf. Zmrzlá 2009: 38, 41-42).

4 Analysis of lexical cohesive devices in texts on physics

4.1 Methods of analysis

The present research is built on the distinction between scientific texts differing in the level of formality, not in the genre as such. However, an effort was made to include comparable genres of theoretical (or academic) and popular scientific written style in the two parallel corpora. Therefore, the corpus of theoretical scientific texts includes an extract from a university textbook, entries from an Internet encyclopedia and a research article from a printed scientific journal, whereas the popular science corpus contains equivalent texts focusing on a more general readership, namely texts from an Internet document containing a popular explanation of physical phenomena, a support material for physics teachers and an article from a popular science webzine. The comparability and a certain representativeness in terms of topics was sought by the choice of texts defining or explaining identical or somehow commensurate areas of physics (see Section 4.2).

The scientific or academic style and its written mode is quite rich in different genres, e.g. research papers, dissertations and theses, abstracts and résumés/summaries, scientific studies or reports, grant proposals, etc. Swales (1990: 18-25) also deals with the concepts of genre chains, genre sets and genre networks in the academic environment, as genres are grouped in sets by serial order, thematic relatedness, engagement of a particular individual, etc. Scientific texts differ substantially by their specific purpose (called ‘mode’ in Crystal & Davy 1969), which has been proved by deviations in the use of cohesive devices within each subcorpus in this research.

In agreement with, for example, Zmrzlá (2009) and contrary to Halliday and Hasan’s classic concept from 1976, in my analysis cohesion within a sentence (inter-clausal linkage) is considered relevant, not only cohesion across sentence boundaries. This approach is necessitated by the typical syntactic complexity of scientific texts (cf. Zmrzlá 2009: 39), which leads to the use of cohesive devices marking ties between items in different clauses within complex and compound sentences and thus contributing to the coherence of the whole text.

Also, direct CCs in the present analysis include both reiterations and relexicalisations of the key word of a given text, irrespective of whether they refer directly to the concept in question or to a more general (superordinate) or a more specific (subordinate) concept or whether they are used only as attributes modifying another concept. This concept differs fundamentally from that of Zmrzlá, who only included in her direct CC the items which referred to the same notion in the extralinguistic context (2009: 37). However, not applying this broader approach would result in the absence of some basic kinds of LC, such as generalisation or specification, as they do not strictly refer to the same entity, but rather to its class or its specific subtype or realisation, respectively. The method used in this paper thus conforms to that outlined in Halliday and Hasan (1976).

Several practical rules had to be formulated and followed during the analysis:

- (1) Lexical cohesion occurs at the same time with grammatical cohesion, so the identification of cohesive chains, analysis and evaluation of cohesion must take into account both types, although the focus then shifts to lexical cohesion, as this is the subject matter of this paper.
- (2) Passages of text including numerous physical formulae, equations, calculations, visuals, examples, subheadings, etc. have to be skipped as they do not provide enough linguistic material and cause fragmentation of the syntactic pattern of the text. They are excluded from the CCs in the present analysis, although they actually extend them, often by means of repetition.
- (3) Only those expressions are suitable for being chosen as the key expressions of CCs that have a sufficiently concrete and specifiable denotation and that

are placed relatively high in a hyponymic hierarchy, i.e. they are neither too general nor too specific, otherwise the established LC relations would be biased qualitatively. Especially suitable are then noun phrases denoting the key concepts of a text, occurring in chapter headings, titles of articles or encyclopedic entries.

- (4) As there is virtually no semantic difference between phrases containing the key notion of a CC but expressing it via different grammatical structures, for example, *charge* in *possess charge* and *be charged*, both such instances are seen as co-referential and thus members of the same CC. Word-class distinctions are not so precisely defined in English with its easy conversion and few formal markers of syntactic roles, so CCs need not be homogeneous in terms of word class.
- (5) Lexical and grammatical cohesive devices may be both at play, disabling thus simple classification of a CC member. For example, *(static) electricity – the electricity around you* is an example of repetition in terms of LC, but the occurrence of the definite article makes it probably also a case of generalisation in contrast with the specific use of the key expression in the former case(s).
- (6) Some types of cohesion overlap and can hardly be separated from each other, or, in other words, their cohesive force combines several distinct types of cohesive means. For example, two types of LC may be difficult to distinguish: *excess positive charge* (spe/rep) – *excess negative charge* (spe/rep). Is it exact repetition of the focal word, *charge*, modified by some attributes (i.e. a collocation), or rather specification (another subtype of reiteration), i.e. a bundle of words which has a different denotation from the single-word key expression and thus a different referent in the real context? The fact that specific (subordinate) items may include the superordinate lexeme as the head word (but sometimes they are lexically different) confuses the matter even more.
- (7) Distinction between an open compound lexeme and a collocation is often hard to draw, which leads to an uncertainty whether a pair or a bundle of words are a single lexeme, or just a collocation with the focal word being repeated. For example, are combinations *like charge* and *unlike charge* specific subtypes of electric charge, representing a lexical cohesive relation of specification, or are *like* and *unlike* just freely attached attributes, and the word *charge* is thus directly repeated? And is the pair *positive charge* and *negative charge* more lexicalised (as it was classified in the present paper) so as to analyse it as the cohesive relation of specification?

4.2 The composition of the corpus and the research questions

The corpus is composed of two parallel subcorpora, the corpus of theoretical (TST) and the corpus of popular scientific texts (PST). The former corpus includes texts “Electric charge and matter” (T1, *Physics*), “Electric charge” (T2, *Wikipedia*), “Friction” (T3, *Wikipedia*) and “On the physical foundations of the method of Sjöstrand for reactivity measurements by the pulsed neutron technique” (T4, *Annals of Nuclear Energy*). The latter corpus consists of texts “Electricity” (P1, *Explain that Stuff*), “Static electricity” (P2, *Explain that Stuff*), “Friction for children – Four tricks to help children understand friction” (P3, *Ezine articles*) and “Is the electromagnetic radiation from a laptop computer dangerous?” (P4, *Factoidz*).

The key expressions (focal words) in the cohesive chains are *electric charge* (T1, T2), *electricity* (P1), *static electricity/electric charge* (P2), *friction* (T3, P3), *the method of Sjöstrand for reactivity measurement* (T4) and *electromagnetic/EMF radiation* (P4).

Theoretical premises discussed in Sections 2 and 3 yield the following research questions:

- Q1: What is the ‘density’ of lexical cohesive chains in the discourse of science (physics)?
- Q2: What is the ratio of lexical vs. grammatical cohesive devices in scientific texts (physics)?
- Q3: What is the ratio between individual types of lexical cohesion in such texts?
- Q4: Are the differences in register (theoretical vs. popular, research vs. didactic) reflected in the use of means of lexical cohesion?

4.3 Corpus of theoretical scientific texts: The analysis

Members of cohesive chains were identified in the individual source texts and tagged by an appropriate abbreviation in brackets. Instances of grammatical cohesion are classified and marked as reference (**ref**), substitution (**sub**), ellipsis (**ell**), and lexical cohesion includes repetition (**rep**), equivalence (**equ**), generalisation (**gen**), specification (**spe**) and antonymy (**ant**). Cases of multiple class membership are marked by a double tag with a slash in between the abbreviations; however, only the first (dominant or less doubted) type counts in the statistics.

Each cohesive chain has been analysed quantitatively to answer questions set in Section 4.2 and the results have been transferred to a single table to allow comparison. Below is an example of a tagged CC and the corresponding analysis of types of cohesive devices from the TST corpus:

Friction (rep) – Friction (rep) – the force (gen) – *the opposite of* “slipperiness” (ant) – *several types of* friction (rep) – dry friction (spe) – Dry friction (spe) – static friction (spe) *between non-moving surfaces* – kinetic friction (spe) *between moving surfaces* – Fluid friction (spe) – the friction (rep) *between layers within a viscous fluid...* – Lubricated friction (spe) – a case of fluid friction (rep/spe) *where a fluid separates two solid surfaces* – Skin friction (spe) – a component of drag (equ) – the force (equ) *resisting the motion of a solid body through the fluid* – Internal friction (spe) – the force (gen) *resisting motion ...* – the friction (rep) – friction (rep) – *many types of* friction (rep) – Friction (rep) – a component of the science of tribology (gen) – Friction (rep) – *not a fundamental* force (gen) – friction (rep) – 0 (ell)

Total words: 248 (1 page)

Members of the chain: 27

Chain in percentage of total words: 27/248 (10.9%)

Grammatical cohesion in the chain: 1/27 (3.7%)

Ellipsis: 1/1 (100%), 1/27 (3.7% of the total)

Lexical cohesion in the chain: 26/27 (96.3%)

Repetition: 11/26 (42.3%), 11/27 (40.7% of the total)

Equivalence: 2/26 (7.7%), 2/27 (7.4% of the total)

Generalization: 4/26 (15.4%), 4/27 (14.8% of the total)

Specification: 8/26 (30.8%), 8/27 (29.6% of the total)

Antonymy: 1/26 (3.8%), 1/27 (3.7% of the total)

Figure 1: Text and analysis – T3 (‘Friction’, Wikipedia)

4.4 Corpus of popular scientific texts: The analysis

The same procedure of tagging, analysis and calculation of percentages has been used in the PST corpus. As the corpus of popular texts displays a larger heterogeneity, two examples are included to illustrate it. Text P1 seems to be fairly standard within the framework of this (sub)style, with a relatively high proportion of grammatical cohesive items. Text P3 yields different results from ‘standard’ texts in the PST corpus, since it contains no examples of GC in the chain, which is quite nontypical in the PST discourse (unlike the TST discourse, where the proportion of grammatical cohesive devices is distinctively low). Also, text P2 shows deviations, making it difficult to identify the dominant type of LC

when the key (multi-word) expression is variously paraphrased and/or just one part of the full term is used in the relexicalisations. This results in uncertainty of their classification as either repetitions or equivalents; and when considering equivalents, also whether they are mere relexicalisations of the term (equivalence) or specific types of the entity (specification). Text P2 thus distorts the statistics of the PST corpus, since equivalence has been preferred in the analysis to possible repetition or specification.

Electricity (rep) – electricity (rep) – a bolt of lightning (spe) – *a sudden, massive surge of electricity* (rep) – The energy in a single lightning bolt (spe) – Electricity (rep) – the most versatile energy source (equ) – it (ref) – one of the newest (sub/equ) – it (ref) – Electricity (rep) – it (ref) – own renewable electric power (equ/spe) – electricity (rep) – it (ref) – electricity (rep) – Electricity (rep) – a type of energy (gen) – that (ref) – 0 (ell) – electricity (rep) – it (ref) – static electricity (spe) – electricity (rep) – that (ref) – current electricity (spe)

Figure 2: Text P1 (electricity, *Explain that Stuff*). For analysis, see Table 1.

Friction (rep) – Friction (rep) – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – this concept (gen) – friction (rep) – fiction (rep) – Friction (rep) – Friction (rep) – Friction (rep) – a push (equ) – a pull (equ) – a force (gen) *which works against the motion of objects that are in contact as they move past each other* – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – *three types of* friction (rep) – sliding friction (spe) – rolling friction (spe) – fluid friction (spe) – Sliding friction (spe) – sliding friction (spe) – Rolling friction (spe) – rolling friction (spe) – Rolling friction (spe) – sliding friction (spe) – fluid friction (spe) – fluid friction (spe) – the friction (rep) – drag (equ) – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – fiction (rep) – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – friction (rep) – the friction (rep) – *reduce* friction (rep)

Figure 3: Text P3 (Moffat, L., ‘Friction for children – Four tricks to help children understand friction’, *Ezine articles*). For analysis, see Table 1.

4.5 Comparison of frequency of lexical cohesive devices

It is interesting to compare the results of the analysis of lexical cohesive devices in the theoretical vs. popular physics discourse with findings of a similarly focused study, which was conducted by Zmrzlá (2009) on a single scientific article from the field of computer science. Zmrzlá observed the features of both GC and LC

as they were manifested in the direct cohesive chain consisting of items referring to the key expression and the main topic described in the article. Particularly the ratio between grammatical and lexical cohesive devices is worth mentioning and comparing with the findings of the present study: Zmrzlá identified more than three times as many aspects of LC than those of GC in the cohesive chain (2009: 47-48). Also, by far the most frequent type of LC was repetition (53.5% of all members of the cohesive chain), followed by generalisation (18.6%). Grammatical cohesion was quite evenly divided between ellipsis (12.8% of the items of the cohesive chain) and reference (10.5%). No instances of substitution and specification were found (*ibid.*), which was explained by specifics of the topic in question. In the present research, particularly the results for repetition in the TST corpus oscillate around the figure given by Zmrzlá, and the results for reference and ellipsis prove their regular occurrence in the TST discourse, though the figures are lower in the physics corpus.

Source	T1 <i>Physics</i>	T2 <i>Wiki- pedia</i>	T3 <i>Wiki- pedia</i>	T4 <i>Annals of Nucl. Energy</i>	P1 <i>Explain that Stuff</i>	P2 <i>Explain that Stuff</i>	P3 <i>Ezine artic- les</i>	P4 <i>Fact- oidz</i>
Total words	1,065	778	248	415	210	509	641	572
Words in the cohesive chain	49	77	27	18	26	40	44	30
Chain in % of total words	4.6%	9.9%	10.9%	4.3%	12.4%	7.9%	6.9%	5.2%
Grammatical cohesion (GC)	5/49	8/77	1/27	3/18	9/26	5/40	0/44	8/30
GC as % of the chain	10.2%	10.4%	3.7%	16.7%	34.6%	12.5%	0%	26.7%
Reference (% of GC / % of the ch.)	20% / 2%	62.5% / 6.5%	0	100% / 16.7%	77.8% / 26.9%	80% / 10%	0	100% / 26.7%
Substitution (% of GC / % of the ch.)	40% / 4.1%	25% / 2.6%	0	0	11.1% / 3.8%	0	0	0
Ellipsis (% of GC / % of the chain)	40% / 4.1%	12.5% / 1.3%	100% / 3.7%	0	11.1% / 3.8%	20% / 2.5%	0	0
Lexical cohesion	44/49	69/77	26/27	15/18	17/26	35/40	44/44	22/30
% of the chain	89.8%	89.6%	96.3%	83.3%	65.4%	87.5%	100%	73.3%
Repetition (% of LC / % of the ch.)	79.5% / 71.4%	65.2% / 58.4%	42.3% / 0.7%	13.3% / 11.1%	58.8% / 38.5%	17.1% / 15%	63.6% / 63.6%	27.3% / 20%
Equivalence (% of LC / % of the ch.)	2.3% / 2%	2.9% / 2.6%	7.7% / 7.4%	53.3% / 44.4%	11.8% / 7.7%	60% / 52.5%	6.8% / 6.8%	54.5% / 40%
Generalisation (% of LC / % of the ch.)	2.3% / 2%	5.8% / 5.2%	15.4% / 4.8%	13.3% / 11.1%	5.9% / 3.8%	11.4% / 10%	4.5% / 4.5%	4.5% / 3.3%

Specification (% of LC / % of the ch.)	9.1% / 8.2%	26.1% / 23.4%	30.8% / 9.6%	20% / 16.7%	23.5% / 15.4%	11.4% / 10%	25% / 25%	13.6% / 10%
Antonymy (% of LC / % of the ch.)	6.8% / 6.1%	0	3.8% / 3.7%	0	0	0	0	0

Table 1: Summary of the proportions of cohesive ties used in the corpora of theoretical scientific texts (T1-T4) and popular scientific texts (P1-P4).

5 Conclusions

The analysis of individual texts in both corpora shows that lexical cohesive chains with the key word make from 4.3 per cent to 12.4 per cent of the total wordcount (in fact even more, as the multi-word character of chain members was not taken into consideration). No obvious TST/PST difference has been observed.

Lexical cohesive devices in the chains account for 65.4-100 per cent, on average nearly 90 per cent in the TST corpus, over 80 per cent in the PST corpus (and even less without the distortion caused by text P3). Conversely, grammatical cohesion is more frequent in the PST chains (with one 0% exception), its most prominent type being reference.

The most frequent type of lexical cohesive tie is repetition (including derivatives), more frequent in the TST corpus (ca. 40-70% of the whole chain, except text T4 taken from a journal). Equivalence seems to be more frequent in the PST corpus, sometimes replacing repetition as the dominant LC tie (texts T4, P2, P4). Equivalence is clearly reciprocal to the more exact repetition.

Specification is the second most frequent type of lexical cohesive tie, not revealing a substantial TST/PST difference. Lastly, generalisation is marginally a more frequent type in the TST corpus, which may be connected with more references to hierarchical relations (the same applies to a higher use of specification, though just in some of the theoretical scientific texts).

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CHAPTER 2 FICTIONAL DISCOURSE

ON THE TEXTUAL REALIZATION AND INTERPRETATION OF LISTS IN CONTEMPORARY PROSE TEXT: THE CASE OF SIMON MAWER'S *THE GLASS ROOM*

Jolana Kaštovská

Abstract

The proposed paper reports on the current use of lists and enumeration in literary fiction. The first part presents authentic samples of lists, focusing on the creative realizations of lists which largely depart from the simple example – *men, women and children* (after Halliday & Hasan 1976) and on the 'iconic' lists of three items (cf. Quirk et al. 1985). The second part introduces semantic interpretations of selected samples of the lists in order to point out the discrepancy between exemplifying and enumerating as defined in Jeffries (2010). Although lists and enumeration may be generally considered rather peripheral cohesive devices in the mainstream texts, particularly literary fiction, they may link larger chunks of text and contribute to the overall organization and structure of text as they do in text colonies (cf. Hoey 1986, 2003 [2001]).

Key words

listing, enumeration, text linguistics, literary prose text, CDA

1 Introduction

In my extensive research on the forms and functions of structural parallelism in literary prose texts, listing was confirmed to be its most frequent function. Moreover, in one of the analysed 400-page novel by Simon Mawer, a striking number of 300 lists were found: 200 lists are realized in triads, about 50 lists are triads further extended into lists of four or more items and about 50 lists have four or more items (we are using *about* because of the fuzzy boundaries between the lists and frequent overlaps).

This rather interdisciplinary analysis is anchored in the Czech structuralist and Hallidayan functional grammar where “a text is the product of ongoing selection in a very large network of systems – a system network” (Halliday 2004: 23); thus a text may be seen as an actualization of the linguistic means, which opens the space for creativity, hence variability of text realizations.

This general view of language and its function is complemented with the concepts and approaches of text linguistics as conceived by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1982) and particularly in *Text Production* (de Beaugrande 1984), where de Beaugrande elaborates on the characteristics of written texts and ‘listing’ represents one of the Seven Principles of Linearity, together with the core-and-adjunct, pause, look-back, look-ahead, heaviness, and disambiguation principles (ibid.: 153-192). Hence, listing (or enumeration), in traditional grammars reduced to the description of the correct usage of conjunctions which conjoin coordinated sentence elements, as for example the almost archetypal *On this farm, they keep cows, sheep, pigs, and a few chickens* (Quirk et al. 2005: 951), becomes a ‘principle of listing’ that subsumes “the means form enumerating in sequence a set of related or comparable items” (de Beaugrande 1984: 189) and applies to all scales and levels of language. In fact, de Beaugrande suggests a scale of lists starting from ‘local lists’, which occur within a sentence, up to ‘global lists’, where “the list items may fill one paragraph each” (ibid.) and, on still a more global scale, “items may each fill a series of paragraphs” (ibid.). In this point we see a correspondence between global scale lists and text colonies as in Hoey (1986, 2003 [2001]).

Formally, de Beaugrande claims that listing is “a type of recursion, [when] one category in the linear sequence is selected and repeated” (ibid.) – compare the downranking principle in Halliday (2004) and the recursive development of text in Daneš (1984).

Hence the principle of listing not only connects words or groups of words (as traditionally exemplified in sentence grammar), but also structurally higher units as phrases, clauses, sentences, and even paragraphs that are comparable or somehow related (for more details, see Section 2). Due to the limited space, the examples will remain within the boundaries of sentences.

Dealing with listing, de Beaugrande also touches on the issue of number of repeated items. He suggests that recursion, like any repetition, “cuts down on [processing] load [in readers], so that the normal preference for twos and threes can be suspended” (ibid.) and texts abound with lists of four or more items. While analysing Mawer’s novel, the question of the ‘normal preference’ arises immediately at the beginning, as most of the present lists consist of three items, which surely contributes to the style of the text.

In the part on the interpretation of lists, the analysis draws on the concept of several figures of speech based on repetition of form/structure, the schemes:

parallelism, apposition, parenthesis, asyndeton, and polysyndeton. Although the original account of their form and effects spans to the classical rhetoric, which traditionally has been concerned with meanings and ‘effects’ of texts, as in Corbett and Connors’ *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (1999 [1965]), these figures have become essential part of modern stylistics and currently have been revived and enriched in the modern disciplines like pragmatics and critical discourse analysis (CDA). With the framework of the latter, Jeffries (2010) pointed out the fact that the established types of lists generating certain expectation from the readers may overlap and thus trigger of further potential meanings (for more details, see Section 3).

2 The spectrum of realizations of listing in Mawer’s novel *The Glass Room*

As we have stated, the principle of listing is based on the recursion of structural units, and this ‘variability’ of items will now be illustrated in the following examples, starting off with a conventional list of almost archetypal form (bold typeface is used to highlight the lists; *M 222* means Mawer – page 222):

- (1) *The subjects are taken by the receptionist down to the lower level, into the Glass Room. Details are filled in on a form: **date of birth, place of birth, first language, second language, other languages, religion, race, nation.*** (*M 222*)

There are eight items realized as words (religion, race, nation) or phrases (date of birth, etc.), conventionally bounded by commas, though the absence of presupposed conjunction (asyndeton) may lead to the question whether the list is complete. The list in Sample (2) consists of four non-finite clauses:

- (2) *There was the sound of panic in the air; **passengers arguing with officials, papers being scrutinised, tickets being examined, passports and visas being waved like weapons.*** (*M 285*)

In Sample (3) we may recognize a list of three complex clauses (visually emphasized by the structural constant *she hasn’t been*):

- (3) *He hasn’t seen her for over a week. **She hasn’t been in the café where they first met, she hasn’t been answering the phone number that she gave him, she hasn’t***

been at the Grand Hotel when he went for a drink. And now here she is, coming suddenly and unexpectedly out of the storm. (M 275)

In Sample (4) the items ‘grow’ or get extended from a word to non-finite clause and a complex sentence, thus forming a multiple subject of the main clause, and as a result breaking the readers’ expectation of lists being at the end of a sentence, inevitably delaying the processing of information:

- (4) *He has heard about it, women of her kind taking things. **Morphine, playing with morphine, the morphine that is needed in the front line to deal with genuine pain,** being used by them to treat their own imagined pain. (M 277)*

Sample (5) introduces another frequent type of list (about 50 out of 300 lists in Mawer 2009), where a list of three items realized within one clause (or sentence) is completed, or extended by one (or more items) in the following clause (or sentence):

- (5) *‘Werner, let me go!’ She calls him by his first name. Always it has been **Stahl or his rank, or something mocking like Doctor Mabuse;** but now it’s Werner. (M 279)*

As we can see, this list and its amendment are in a disjunctive relation, thus creating a sharp contrast in meaning (see Corbett & Connors 1999 [1965]).

Sample (6) represents a reversed situation when a list of three is preceded by a graphically separated item:

- (6) *‘The Glass Room appeals to men like him. They find it **rational. Cool, balanced, modern.** But don’t be fooled.’ (M 359)*

It seems that the triplet accomplishes the meaning of *rational*, hence it serves the function of apposition, although in a convention realization, it would very probably be placed within one sentence.

We have seen a list extended by a further item, but there are also cases when a list (of three, four, or more items) is combined with another list inserted within the last items as in Sample (7):

- (7) *The train rattled on, **slipping** easily through cuttings and across bridges, **passing** through darkened stations, **sliding** through the dark night and **carrying** with it its cargo of secrets and lies, and silences. (M 300)*

There are some doubts whether to consider Sample (7) to be one large list or two interlocked.

Having presented a fraction of lists in indicative sentences, Mawer's text offers five examples of lists in the form of questions:

- (8) *'Herr Obergruppenführer Heydrich, you are...' What is he? Welcome? Feared? Impressive?* (M 267)

As well as three lists of imperatives:

- (9) *Go there, sit there, do this, people are saying to him, and then this officer who looks to be in charge strolls over and asks a civilised question.* (M 289)

To end up this demonstration of formal variety in listing, and to prove that the number of items is in fact limitless, let us introduce one of Mawer's extensive chains of items which may be subdivided into at least three separate lists, and at the same time, forming one large structural stereotype about dreaming:

- (10) (10.1) *She dreams. She dreams of cold. She dreams of glass and light, the Glass Room washed with reflection, and the cool views across the city of rooftops, the cold view through the trees, the crack of snow beneath your boots. She dreams of a place that is without form or substance, that exists only in the manner of dreams, (10.2) shifting and insubstantial, diffuse, diverse:*

(10.3) *space*

glass, walls of glass

a quintet of chairs, placed with geometrical precision

a sweep of shining floor – ivory linoleum

white and black

the gleam of chrome

These things move, evolve, transform in the way ... (M 304)

List 10.1 enumerates the thing the character dreams of, List 10.2 forms a sub-list of adjectives modifying the place and List 10.3 is a prototypical list of items reminding a shopping list and in Hoey's terms, it is a colony placed within the mainstream text. The extract deserves a more detailed analysis which would exceed the framework of this overview (see the study on structural parallelism).

2.1 Unity, explicitness and ordering in lists

De Beaugrande (1984) claims that lists “should be controlled for unity, explicitness and ordering” (ibid.: 189). First, there are the **unified lists**, in which “the items are distinctly comparable among themselves [and] have clear content relations” (ibid.), either additive or disjunctive. Considering Samples (1-10) provided, we may say that all lists are unified, as for example Sample (10) by the motif of dream.

On the other hand, there may be “a markedly disunified list [which] should be disturbing or surprising” (ibid.), and conversely, lists of items too close in meaning may appear redundant or for special effect:

(11) *It seemed more like a cry of misery or pain or something. (M 207)*

Here, the last item is a mere filler so that the rule of three is completed, and also emphasizing the meaning of the cry.

In Sample (12), the first two items may be derived from the context, but again, to put emphasis and importance on character’s occupation, Mawer lists three items:

(12) *‘...What kind of scientist are you?’*

‘Zoologist, anthropologist, geneticist. I am the director of the research centre at the Landauer House.’ (M 230)

Second, the **explicit lists** are those in which “the category to which items belong is announced” (de Beaugrande 1984: 190). Typical listing signals are colons, or discourse marker like the following includes *first/second/third*, etc., and the final list item is usually introduced by a conjunction (*and*, *or*).

Out of the twelve samples, only Samples (1) and (10.3) have a graphically (colon in (1) and indented list in (10.3)) announced beginning and end of the list. Considering the conjunctions, only Sample (7) has a conventional *and* before the last item; and all items in Samples (5) and (11) are repeatedly joined by *or*, thus becoming expressive polysyndetons. And analysing a contemporary literary text, the markers like *including* are generally rare.

Third, an **ordered list** is “one whose linear succession has a discoverable motive” (ibid.), e.g. a time progress as in this description of successive actions following the normal course of things:

(13) *Anyway, I always promote soldiers. It makes them feel good.’ She peels off her gloves, folds them into her bag and takes out a silver cigarette case. He declines her offer of a cigarette but reaches across the table with his lighter. (Mawer 2009: 230)*

Note:

However improbable, in Mawer's novel a majority of descriptions of characters, settings and actions are described with just three details as in Sample (13).

Thus, each list may be positioned simultaneously on three scales: from unified to disunified, from explicit to implicit, and from conformally ordered to disordered lists.

2.2 A tentative scale of lists

Hopefully, this tiny overview has shown that listing and lists may considerably vary in structure and realizations, as exemplified in the samples from Mawer's novel. To sum up the dominant trace, we may say that there is a scale or spectrum of lists ranging from the conventional, or let us say archetypal list (e.g. Sample (1)) to the highly creative realizations as in Samples (4), (5), (6), (8) and (10). Undoubtedly, the higher the level of creativity of a list, the more stylistically prominence in text it may get from the (informed) reader and rhetorical force.

3 The interpretation of potential meanings in lists

It was Jeffries who in her book *Critical Stylistics* (2010) came with the idea of the potential for 'ideological effects' underlying lists. In her framework of stylistics and critical discourse analysis, she identifies two types of lists: one is **enumerating** the all possible items and it is an attempt so that readers take the list as completed. The other type is **exemplifying**, giving a selection of possible items/members of group.

Jeffries admits that there is "sometimes no linguistic difference ... and the reader/hearer will often have to rely on pragmatic inferencing" (ibid.: 66). Let us illustrate the difference in her introductory examples:

(5.1) *The whole household turned out to welcome us: Mum, Dad, Uncle Sam and the twins.*

(5.2) *The whole town was there: The Mayor and his wife, the City Councillors and representatives of every trade and business you could imagine. (taken from Jeffries 2010: 66)*

The first example is clearly enumerating, as the reader will not doubt that the list includes all the members of the household. Example (5.2) is an exaggeration and the list only names but a few representatives of the 'whole town'. Jeffries

claims that there are conventions in English “which identify some lists as more comprehensive than others” (2010: 67). It is the potential overlap between the two list types which causes ambiguities and it is the reader’s experience which helps to discern the two.

Out of the so far mentioned samples, Samples (1), (3), (5), (8), (10), (12) and (13) seem to be examples of enumeration, when Sample (1) seems to be the less questionable (we would expect that the list includes all the items, because if it did not, we would expect some ‘catch-all phrase’ like *etc.*, *or something*, *and so*) in comparison to List (13) that makes the reader think that these are the most important details we need to know; and List (12) that might be taken as an exaggeration to add the importance of the character.

On the other hand, Samples (2), (4), (6), (7), (9) and (11) seem to represent a scale of exemplifying, as Samples (7) and (9) correspond with conventional exemplifications, though the form of Sample (6) makes us believe that these four characteristics are the only possible under the circumstances.

In the following sample, the overlap of two list types seems to be even stronger:

- (13) *The briefcase he is carrying has everything important in it – **birth certificates, marriage certificate, the deeds of the house**, all those things that document who you are and who you might be, those scraps of paper that give you existence. Where that goes, they go. (M 183)*

This seemingly enumerative list is very probably incomplete, although the “catch-all phrase” states that “*all those documents*” are listed.

3.1 Iconic number three

Finally, there is the iconicity of number three in listing. In agreement with the theories in aesthetics, where number three is considered iconic, even mythic (see Machovec et al. 2005), and rhetorical tradition of triads like in the eternal *Veni, vidi, vici* (see Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, recently Corbett & Connors 1999 [1965]), Jeffries (2010) speaks about “the ubiquitous three-part list [that] seems to imply completeness, without being comprehensive, and often appears to supplant real content” (ibid.: 73). She claims this strategy of listing just three items serves as a “positive image-making” (ibid.), which is important especially in political texts/speeches, needless to say in fictional world of a novel. Thus, Mawer exploits the ‘principle of three’ to describe several dozens of settings, characters, situations and actions.

The best illustration of the “power” of number three occurs in the chapter called *Protector*, where Mawer discloses his obsession with triads and simultaneously pinpoints the cultural base of the iconicity in number three:

- (14) *Motor bikes are followed by a closed car containing officials, and then a dark green Mercedes convertible with the Hakenkreuz flying from the front mudguard and SS-3 on the number plate. It takes little to understand where this man stands in the hierarchy of the state. The Führer is SS-1; Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler is SS-2; this man is SS-3. The father, the son and the holy ghost. A trinity.* (M 266)

Here we can see the gist of the power the triads inherit and produce from several historical periods and which Mawer exploits generously: about 200 lists out of 300 are triads, 50 more are ‘extended triads’ and only about 50 lists have four or more items.

The mythic and spiritual power of three could be illustrated by the following sample:

- (15) *Breathing is so fundamental to human life, as fundamental as the heart. The words involved in the act of breathing sound in his mind: inspiration, respiration, expiration. Birth, life and death.* (M 337)

Sample (15) seems to be one list coupled by apposition explaining and emphasizing the meaning of the list, but formally – the punctuation and the conjunction *and*, the sample may be analysed as two lists parallel in meaning, but separate in form, which creates further rhetorical force, supposing that punctuation in written texts is the representation of intonation in spoken text, but this topic would demand a separate analysis (cf. Halliday 2004).

4 Conclusions

Although listing has traditionally been a marginal topic in the fields of linguistics, it may greatly contribute to the overall structure of texts and be responsible for a part of ambiguity so natural in authentic texts.

In this study we have presented a limited number of examples to hint or foreshadow at least some of the variability that creative writers may produce in lists. In our view, lists may be arranged in a large scale of types, ranging from archetypal lists, conventionally marked in text and punctuation, to creative, rhetorical extravagancies extracted from Mawer’s novel.

There are several categories that contribute to the variability of lists. Formally, lists may vary in the rank of its items (sentence element, clause, sentence, etc.), in punctuation (conventional commas, semicolons, to full stops separating items into sentences), the use of conjunctions (conventional conjunction before the last items, or asyndetic, or polysyndetic realizations), and in “size” of the items (constant size, growing or shrinking). Concerning meaning, lists may be exemplifying (including the catch all type) or enumerating.

Although we have analysed only local or small-scale lists, similar variability applies to large-scale lists which are subject of my research on structural parallelisms and stereotypes.

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MODAL EXPRESSIONS OF NECESSITY AND THEIR NON-EXPLICIT COUNTERPARTS

Renata Šimůnková

Abstract

The paper presents a study based on excerpts from eight works of contemporary fiction which focuses on the cases in which corresponding to an explicit modal expression in the original text no explicit modal expression is used in the translation. In other words, it deals with necessity explicitly expressed at the lexical level in one language corresponding to the absence of such an expression in the other language, modal verbs being considered lexical means of modality. The study attempts to classify such cases and to explain the reasons behind the choice of the particular translations, for example, lexicalization, pragmatic factors, the translation copying the original does not sound natural, etc. Root and epistemic modality are dealt with separately, but at the end of the paper the individual findings are summarized to provide a complex picture.

Key words

modality, necessity, deontic, epistemic, translation, contrastive study

1 Introduction

Although much has been written about modality in the Czech language, e.g. Benešová, Panevová and Sgall (1971), Dušková (1972), Petr (1987), Tárnyiková (1985a, 1985b), and even much more about modality in English, e.g. Palmer (1979), Perkins (1983), Kiefer (1987) or Huddleson and Pullum (2002), when translating from English to Czech and vice versa one often struggles making a decision what the most appropriate expression to be used is. The concept of modality is universal; it is not found only in English or Czech, but in the majority of, if not in all, languages. According to Palmer (1986: 7), “it is probable that there are very few languages that do not have some kind of grammatical system of modality”. The concept of modality is also rather complex and the individual modal systems differ to a greater or lesser extent. The fact that modal systems in individual languages are so varied provides a considerable challenge for those linguists who attempt to introduce a universal description of modality. Differences in modal systems of individual languages also cause problems to learners and non-native users of foreign languages. From my experience of a university teacher of English I have learnt that even students at a relatively advanced level of English make mistakes in certain areas of the English modal

system. This finding motivated me to conduct a study of the differences in the semantic field of necessity in English and Czech and the ways in which they are reflected in works of professional translators (cf. Šimůnková 2009). The paper presented here is focused just on one particular area, namely on situations when in one language there is an explicit expression of modality used while in its counterpart such an explicit expression is missing.

2 Methodology of the study

2.1 The aim

The original study of necessity, of which this paper is just a small part, attempted to describe how necessity is expressed on the level of lexis (the level of the sentence form as such is not dealt with here, with the exception of the imperative) in English and Czech in as broad a conception as possible. Therefore, the choice of the means was not decided in advance, it was just delimited in general features based on theoretical findings, but the last decision about what means were excerpted, was left to the author and her judgment whether the means is still within the scope of the topic. Although being to some extent subjective, it should help to provide a more complete picture of the issue than the studies commonly available. Basically, the area of the study was delimited by Coates' (1983) dendrogram showing modal clusters, where it represents the *Obligation/Necessity* cluster (Figure 1).

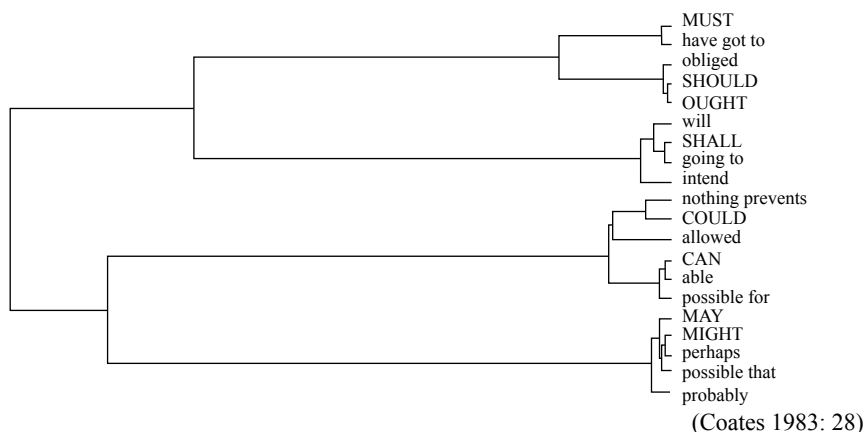


Figure 1

There were three reasons for approaching the theme contrastively. The results show: firstly, to what extent expressing necessity is a universal feature; secondly, to what extent it is bound to the structure of a predominantly analytical language on the one hand and a predominantly synthetic one on the other; thirdly, since studies of grammar should desirably result in some practical output often serving learners of foreign languages or translators, the study might be of use to those who need to translate expressions of necessity between the two languages. The study aimed at mapping lexical expressions available to express necessity in the two languages concerned, determine differences in the use and meaning between the individual means and thus demonstrate in what way the semantic field of necessity is structured and how much the structure is language dependent.

2.2 The material

The excerpts on which the lexical means of expressing necessity were studied were taken from works of contemporary British fiction and their corresponding published translations into Czech, and from contemporary Czech fiction and the published counterparts in English. The term ‘contemporary’ is for our purpose synonymous with ‘post-war’. The material, as the set of excerpts will hereafter be referred to, consisted of 2,000 excerpts. From each piece of fiction all unquestionable (defined and listed in accordance with theoretical findings) examples of necessity expressed on the level of lexis and those expressed by means of the imperative were excerpted. An attempt was made to excerpt all lexical “necessity” means present. This was done realizing the fact that in some cases the choices were inevitably subjective. The complete exclusion of these cases from the material, however, would have distorted the picture of the studied matter and some interesting findings which could be seen only in this kind of research could have just been missed.

The final number of excerpts from each book was determined by the actual number of means expressing necessity found in a particular book. The only exceptions were cases of Rowling and Kundera, where entire books were not used, but only such a number of excerpts to complete the pre-set number of examples, which was 500 excerpts from English fiction and 500 excerpts from Czech fiction.

2.3 Data processing

Once the desired number of items was excerpted, the material was divided into smaller chunks in order to make it possible and manageable to be analyzed. Although the whole viewpoint of the study is semantic, the first division of the

material, at least as far as densely represented means are concerned, was done on the formal basis, each lexical means representing one group. Each modal means (or a group of means) was discussed for deontic modality first and then its role in expressing epistemic modality was dealt with. For each delimited form, its basic interpretations (meanings) were introduced on the theoretical basis and then compared to the situation found in the material. The basic interpretations were based on Leech (2004: 78-79) and Chalker (1990: 181). Although the whole issue was studied from the perspective of both languages (English originals – Czech translations and vice versa), the formal delimitation was always done from the viewpoint of English, regardless of the direction of translation in order to set clear semantic categories which could then be easily compared.

3 Empirical results

3.1 Quantitative results

As has already been mentioned, this paper focuses on cases where in one language there is an explicit expression of modality used while in its counterpart such an explicit expression is missing. The relevant number of such cases occurred only in the case of the following modal expressions: MUST and HAVE TO. In the case of other modal expressions the studied phenomenon also occurred but these were just individual cases on which no generalizations could be drawn.

The quantitative results are presented in the following table:

No modal means in Czech						No modal means in English	
Deontic necessity				Epistemic necessity		There are considerably fewer cases of this kind – the overall occurrence is lower than 0.5 %	
MUST		HAVE TO		MUST	HAVE TO		
EN→	CZ→	EN→	CZ→	EN→	CZ→		used only exceptionally
CZ	EN	CZ	EN	CZ	EN		
0.5 %	1 %	19 %	28 %	20 %	16 %		

Table 1: Quantitative results

3.2 Qualitative results

3.2.1 No modal means in Czech – deontic necessity

HAVE TO

The most common non-modal Czech counterpart of English HAVE TO was just a lexical verb in a particular tense, as it is illustrated by the following examples:

- (1) *What if the boy lost? Then we **would have to rush** him to the hospital in the Cadillac that he had not won. – Pak se s ním **poženeme** do nemocnice v cadillaku, který nevyhrál. (DA)*

*And to think we **have to be** seen by the world to be arm in arm with them. – Když si pomyslím, že jsme s nimi jedna ruka a svět se na to **dívá**. (IS)*

*Nazdar, **řve** táta, proč vždycky řve tak nahlas? – ...dad yells – why **does** he always **have to yell** so loud? (VI)*

*Je to zajímavý život, řekl jsem, spisovatel **je** trochu jako dobrodruh. – And a writer **has to be** a bit of adventurer. (KL)*

*Křičela tolik, že Tomáš **oddaloval hlavu** od její tváře. – She screamed so hard that Tomas **had to turn his head** away. (KU)*

*Jednou **jsem vozil** **babičku** asi dvě hodiny z vyšetření na vyšetření... – On one occasion I **had to push an old lady** in her trolley ... (KL)*

*...se s ubohými Němci děje tohle to, co jsem viděl na vlastní oči, což potvrzovalo všechno to, proč **byly zabrány** Sudety – ...why Sudetenland **had to be taken back** (HR)*

The most common and also most obvious reason for the lack of an explicit modal expression in Czech is the fact that Czech does not have so clearly delimited modal means to express requirement as a result of circumstances as opposed to obligation coming from a concrete source which is in English expressed by the use of HAVE TO and MUST respectively. Therefore, in order to distinguish between the two concepts, the inevitable requirement is presented as a fact. HAVE TO is also often used for verbs which express duration but not necessarily ‘progressive aspect’, which is in Czech solved by means of imperfective aspect – *svět se dívá* – *have to see X is watching*, *dvě hodiny jsem vozil* – *I had to push X I was pushing*.

The second most common counterpart includes expressions such as *stačit*, *zbývat*, *jen* and other expressions similar in meaning:

- (2) *stačí přijít a zatáhnout* za provázek a figurína jako dětský balónek se stáhne ... – and **all you have to do is come and pull on** the right string and the mannequin ... (HR)

Ale protože hluchnou, nezbyvá jim, než si ji pouštět hlasitěji. – But because they are going deaf **it has to be** played louder still. (KU)

Stačilo natáhnout ruku a obejmout ji ... – **All I had to do was reach out and embrace her.** (KL)

All we have got to do is find the tent again. – už jenom **zbyvá najít stan.** (RO)

As HAVE TO mainly deals with obligation imposed by someone other than the speaker, the person imposing the obligation is often not known or clear. HAVE TO often expresses the most reasonable course of action to reach a certain goal – it says that doing something is necessary if one wants to reach a certain goal = all one is required to do by the situation/circumstances is ... = for the successful completion of the desired aim it is enough... This flow of reasoning illustrates the correspondence between the English original and its Czech translation. Why is not, however, the form with *enough* common in English and one with MUSET in Czech? It may be caused by the fact that in English personal constructions prevail while in Czech impersonal constructions are relatively common: *pro dosažení cíle mu stačí aby ...* .

MUST

The most common non-modal Czech counterpart of English MUST was the imperative as illustrated by the following examples:

- (3) *You must stop thinking like that.* – **Přestaňte** myslet na takové věci. (DA)

... but as soon as I die, you must put on a pair of shoes and walk down to the village – ... *ale až umřu, obuj si boty, sejdí dolů do vesnice* (AM)

Now, you must take good care of yourself – *A teď, buďte na sebe opatrná.* (IS)

This would need to be studied on a more representative sample of language but the examples from the material suggest that the imperative in English has more immediate (what concerns the time of the action required by it) function than in Czech. All the examples concerned referred to actions which were supposed to be in progress for a certain, longer period of time. For example, *You must stop thinking like that*, i.e. from now on you must think differently, refers to thinking in general and it includes a long period of time, which might be the rest of life. An utterance such as *Stop thinking like that*, on the other hand, would more likely refer to thinking of a particular matter and the time reference would

be much more immediate, probably including the following half an hour or so. An utterance *Excuse me* refers to something that was done or that is being done, while *you must excuse me* refers to something that will be done. After saying *Put on your shoes*, the speaker expects an immediate reaction, while in the sentence above, i.e. *You must put on a pair of shoes*, the reaction is expected as soon as the speaker dies, which may be a question of years. In Czech translations with MUSET the imperative would be acceptable too, and therefore it seems that the difference in interpretations between MUSET and the imperative mood in Czech is less sharp than in English.

Another possibility is, as in the case of HAVE TO, a lexical verb:

- (4) *I must say it was quite amusing.* – *Uznávám, že je to docela zajímavé.* (DA)
You must excuse me, but I ... – *No... nežlobte se, ale ...*(IS)

These cases comprise a special group where normally a verb of reporting is also involved. MUST is often used with verbs of reporting such as *say, admit, understand*, etc. to express a personal opinion. The verb phrase in these cases is usually in the first person or less frequently in the second person. If the subject is in the second person, then it describes necessity for the hearer, as it is common to all meanings of MUST in this group. It is again used in the cases where the speaker has the actual power to impose the obligation. MUST in this interpretation can, however, be considered as representing a gradient between deontic and epistemic modality. In these cases MUST does not modify just the verb in the sense of saying what the speaker/hearer is obliged to do, but it rather comments on the content of the proposition from the viewpoint of its truthfulness. Its illocutionary force does not aim at the change of behaviour, or at any literally performed reaction, but it rather aims at the change in the way in which the content of the proposition is perceived. Modality expressed by MUST in these cases is therefore close to epistemic interpretation.

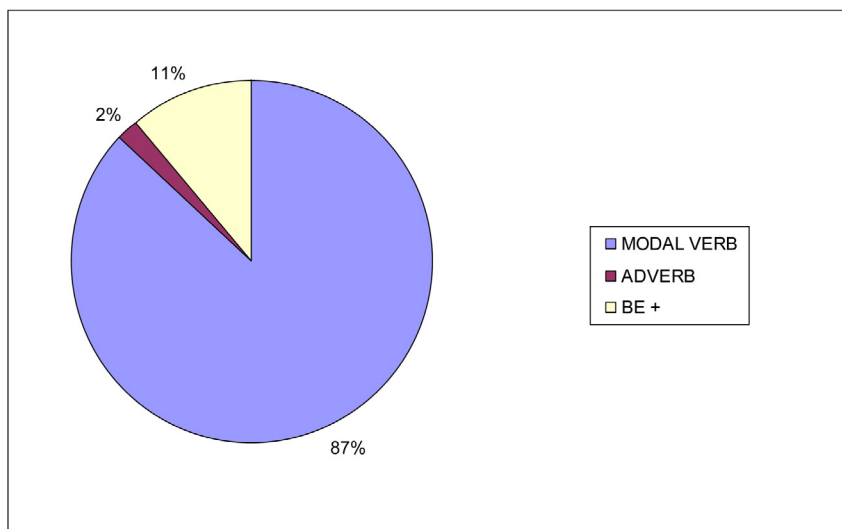
3.2.2 No modal means in Czech – epistemic necessity

The most common non-modal Czech counterpart of epistemic MUST was just a lexical verb as it is illustrated by the following examples:

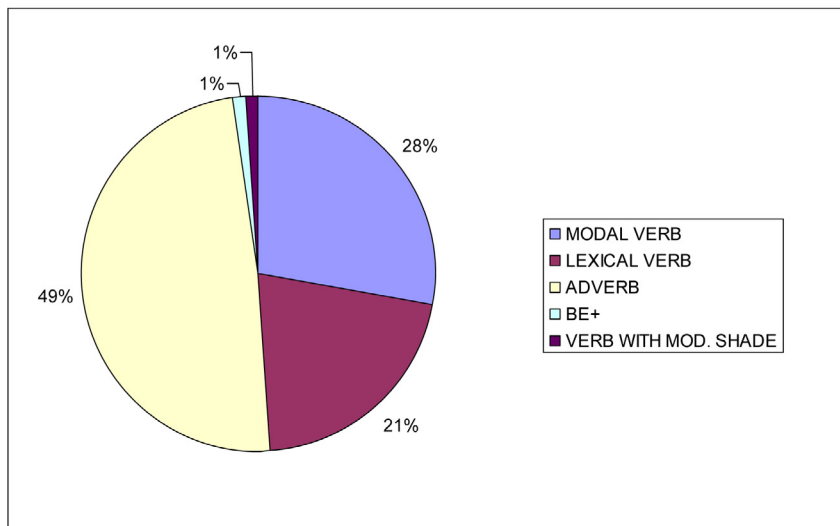
- (5) *The man must be mad, she cried.* – *Ten chlap se zbláznil, vybuchla.* (DA)
I'm so happy, I think I must be going to die. – *Jsem tak šťastná, že si myslím, že už mě brzy čeká smrt.* (AM)
Amy's not been back here for; ooh it must be eight or nine years. – *Amy už zde nebyla, no, to bude už osm nebo devět let.* (AM)

*...ale pak ve dvě hodiny mu nesl právě ten pingl Karel tác, a na něm bylo všechno ve stříbře, a podle poklopů to byla vždycky husička ... – But at two Karel would bring him the tray and judging by the silver covers over the food it must **have been a small goose** ... (HR)*

In Czech epistemic modality is explicitly expressed much less frequently than in English. Apart from the frequently used adverbs and adverbial particles as described by Dušková et al. (1994: 185-186): “Modální slovesa jako prostředek vyjadřování jistotní modality jsou v angličtině častější než v češtině (často odpovídají českým modálním adverbium nebo částicím)... (author’s translation: Modal verbs as a means of expressing epistemic modality are far more frequent in English than in Czech (these often corresponds to modal particles and adverbs)), epistemic modality is often not expressed explicitly at all. This statement is supported by the following two graphs illustrating the most frequent means used to express epistemic modality in English (Graph 1) and in Czech (Graph 2):



Graph 1: Modal means EN – epistemic necessity



Graph 2: Modal means CZ – epistemic necessity

3.2.3 No modal means in English

As has already been stated these cases are much less numerous than in the opposite direction just discussed so it is not possible to form any general statements or conclusions. It might, however, be beneficial to at least list the excerpts and briefly comment on them. The most frequent counterpart was – as in the case of Czech – a lexical verb.

- (6) *The Portkey is through here.* – *K přenášeđlu musíme tudy.* (RO)

...now that **he was facing** the challenge of repeating the feat, Harry was drawn to the pace – *Ted', když **musel počítat s tím**, že si ten zážitek zopakuje ...* (RO)

Cost me a tenner to old Feasey. – *Musel jsem starýmu F. **vypláznout pětku.*** (DA)

However – and **I say** this with some pride and gratitude – Lord Darlington never made ... – *Musím však s pýchou a vděčností **prohlásit**, že Lord D. ...* (IS)

...naštěstí **jsem právě v té době musel do Německa** ... – *it fortunately **coincided with a visit to Germany*** (VI)

... podle předem stanoveného plánu je **musíme dát na to místo**, kde byly ty kupy staré- ...and bundles of freshly cut grass were brought in, or else we **set out** ready made haystacks exactly where the old ones had been. (HR)

... a každý věděl, že je má, že jich **musí mít** moc, že jistě šetří ... – ...though everyone knew he **had** a lot of it and was saving up ... (DA)

In the first five cases it is very likely that the translation with an explicit modal expression is not used because it would sound less expressive, inappropriate, or the exact translation is not possible at all.

4 Conclusion

Czech more frequently than English does utilize an explicit means on a lexical level to express necessity. This tendency is more significant in the area of epistemic necessity. The most frequent Czech counterparts then are: a lexical verb, the imperative, a particular expression such as *stačit, jen*, etc. The tendencies discussed above might have their core in one difference between English and Czech described by, for example, Mathesius (1975) and Vachek (1990), i.e. in the weaker semantic status of the English verb in comparison to the Czech one; in Vachek's words, "the general weakening of the actional dynamism of the English predicative finite verb" (1990: 93).

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CHAPTER 3 LEARNER DISCOURSE

EFFECT OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE ON AUDITORY COMPREHENSION IN INTERPRETING COURSES

Reima Al-Jarf

Abstract

Saudi college students majoring in translation take six interpreting courses. In those courses, they practise listening to and interpreting authentic lectures in a variety of subject areas. Results of an interpreting pre-test showed that college students majoring in an interpreting course have problems with media reports. They have difficulty discriminating phonemes and comprehending the meaning of unfamiliar foreign proper nouns such as place name, names of politicians, organizations, chemicals or diseases that they encounter in oral media reports. Results of questionnaire-interviews with students showed that the source of difficulty was lack of prior knowledge and unfamiliarity with foreign proper names.

Key words

interpreting skills, foreign proper nouns auditory discrimination, meaning transfer, background knowledge

1 Introduction

Listening in a second language constitutes a major problem for many students and instructors. Students often have auditory discrimination problems such as difficulty in discriminating sounds of words and letters, difficulty in distinguishing important and unimportant sounds, difficulty in blending sounds into words or difficulty in associating sounds of words with meaning (Mann & Suiter, n.d.). Many have listening comprehension problems such as difficulty understanding the main ideas, supporting details, organization of oral discourse or inability to figure out the meaning of difficult vocabulary from the spoken context. Successful beginning level language listeners use more metacognitive strategies and use

these strategies to interact at a deeper level with a text to construct meaning (Vandergrift 1998). On the contrary, lower-level adult ESL listeners resort to the wrong aspects of the lecture in responding to comprehension questions, while advanced learners exhibit both metacognitive and cognitive learning strategies. Intermediate and lower-level learners mostly make use of cognitive strategies (Smidt & Hegelheimer (2004).

A review of the literature has shown several studies that investigated the factors that help enhance second language auditory discrimination and comprehension skills. Research findings show that schemata and linguistic knowledge play a significant role in second-language listening comprehension and contribute to listening proficiency (Long (1990). The effect of background knowledge was found to vary according to the level of language proficiency among international students in Germany (Krekeler (2006). Students understand and recall the passage related to their specific knowledge better than the unrelated passage (Markham & Latham 1987). Cultural background knowledge (cultural familiarity) has a facilitating effect on both reading comprehension and reading efficiency of third graders acquiring literacy in Dutch as a first and second language (Droop & Verhoeven 1998). L2 learner's prior cultural knowledge also plays a role in target language lexical meaning-making. A central meaning of an L2 word (conceptual, connotative, synonyms, antonyms, lexical cultural categories, specific knowledge in lexical meanings, and cross-linguistic factors) exists and is shared by the L2 learners with the same cultural background (Qi 1992).

Several research findings also indicated that teachers can enhance students' auditory discrimination, comprehension and recall by speech modification (Chiang & Dunkel 1992), by presenting the students with varying levels and amounts of background information and analogy (Hayes & Tierney 1980), and by increasing attention to personal background knowledge in instruction (Lin & Bransford 2010). Providing advance information specific to a novel event leads to better recall and better integration of the experience into a general event representation both soon after the event and even four months later (Sutherland et al. 2003).

Depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge were found to be significantly correlated with listening comprehension skill and could predict half of the variance in the listening scores (Staehr 2009). A lexical coverage of 98 per cent is needed for coping with the spoken texts that constitute the listening test (ibid.). General vocabulary knowledge and familiarity with the specific vocabulary content of a reading or listening comprehension text influence reading and listening comprehension of that text (Mehrpour & Rahimi 2010). Efficient listening strategies may make the comprehension of lexically complex texts possible. However, most learners need very high lexical familiarity for good comprehension (Bonk 2000). Lexical and grammatical knowledge affect reading

and listening comprehension in university students learning Spanish (Mecartty 2000).

Vocabulary size is also important for language proficiency. Staehr (2008) found that vocabulary size explains a significant and substantial portion of the variance in the listening scores and that the majority of the learners did not know the most frequent 2,000 words in English, but if they did, they would also perform adequately in the listening, reading and writing tests. Staehr (2008) concluded that the 2,000 vocabulary level is a crucial learning goal for low-level EFL learners. In a similar study, Nation (2006) reported on the trialing of fourteen 1,000 word-family lists made from the *British National Corpus* to see what vocabulary size is needed for unassisted comprehension of written and spoken English. The trialing showed that if 98 per cent coverage of a text is needed for unassisted comprehension, then an 8,000 to 9,000 word-family vocabulary is needed for comprehension of written text and a vocabulary of 6,000 to 7,000 for spoken text.

Brown, Waring and Donkaewbua (2008) examined the rate at which English vocabulary was acquired from the three input modes of reading, reading-while-listening, and listening to stories. The results showed that new words could be learned incidentally in all three modes, but that most words were not learned. Items occurring more frequently in the text were more likely to be learned and were more resistant to decay. The data demonstrated that, on average, when subjects were tested by unprompted recall, the meaning of only one out of the 28 items met in either of the reading modes and the meaning of none of the items met in the listening-only mode, would be retained after three months.

As to the combined effect of background knowledge and difficult vocabulary on students' comprehension of narrative passages and recall of a passage from a social studies text, research by Stahl et al. (1989) and Stahl and Jacobson (1986) indicated that vocabulary difficulty may affect micro-processing (development of coherent text base) while prior knowledge may affect macro-processing (summarizing), and that these effects function independently, not interactively. Knowledge-based pre-instruction can significantly improve comprehension of a text dealing with an unfamiliar topic, but cannot compensate for difficult text vocabulary.

Although numerous studies revealed a close connection between background knowledge and/or difficult vocabulary and auditory discrimination and listening comprehension, studies that investigate the effects of background knowledge and/or difficult vocabulary on auditory discrimination and comprehension while interpreting media reports from English into Arabic and from Arabic into English are lacking. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the effects of background knowledge and unfamiliar vocabulary on auditory discrimination and comprehension while interpreting media reports from English into Arabic

and from Arabic into English. The study will investigate students' ability to discriminate phonemes in unfamiliar foreign proper nouns such as place name (foreign countries, cities, states), names of politicians, heads of state and prime ministers, international organizations, forums and corporations, acronyms, etc. which they encounter in media reports and which hinder comprehension and transfer of meaning into English or Arabic.

2 Participants

Seventy-four senior female students majoring in translation at the College of Languages and Translation (COLT), King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, participated in the study. They were in their 5th semester of the translation programme and were all enrolled in their first liaison interpreting course (2 hours) that the author taught. All the subjects were native speakers of Arabic. They all had completed courses in EFL (66 hours) and were concurrently enrolled in linguistics (11 hours), consecutive and simultaneous interpreting courses (4 hours).

3 Data collection

3.1 Tasks

In the first liaison interpreting course, interpreting training proceeds in a series of graded exercises and steps consisting of: breathing exercises; speech shadowing exercises; sentence paraphrasing exercises; summarizing in the same language, first of sentences, then of whole paragraphs; memory training exercises in which the students interpreting words, sentences, and short easy dialogues; interpreting easy specialized interviews with familiar topics, then interviews increase in length, difficulty level and topic familiarity.

3.2 Test

One month after the beginning of the semester, the subjects took an interpreting test which consisted of five Arabic and five English dialogues. The dialogues consisted of media reports on education, IT, politics, medicine and business topics. The dialogues were tape recorded. The test was given in the language lab where the students listened to each dialogue from the audio-tape and were required to interpret the Arabic dialogues into English and the English dialogues into Arabic. Each student recorded her interpretation of the texts that she heard on tape.

The author listened to each student's tape and recorded her interpreting errors on the dialogue script. Each student was given two scores, i.e. an overall interpretation accuracy score and a vocabulary error score. Both scores were correlated.

A corpus of 560 errors in interpreting foreign proper nouns such as place name, names of politicians, organizations, news agencies that they encounter in media reports was collected. A corpus analysis started by highlighting the errors. Each error was then classified as being an auditory discrimination error or a semantic error (meaning transfer error). The strategies that the students used in figuring out the English or Arabic equivalents in the flow of speech were identified. Auditory discrimination and meaning transfer errors sources were also identified.

3.3 Questionnaire-interviews

To find out the sources of difficulties that the students encountered while interpreting the media reports in the test, the participants answered an open-ended questionnaire-interview.

4 Results

4.1 Types of interpreting errors

The results of the analysis of the interpreting error data revealed a significant correlation between the students' overall interpreting accuracy score and her vocabulary errors score ($r = .58$; $p < .01$), which means that good student interpreters rendered highly accurate interpretations of the dialogues and made fewer vocabulary meaning errors, whereas poor student interpreters produced poor, incomprehensible and incoherent interpretations of the dialogues and many vocabulary meaning errors.

Results of the analysis of the interpreting error data also indicated that student interpreters in the current study had problems comprehending media reports and interpreting their content from English into Arabic and Arabic into English. The students had difficulty in discriminating phonemes unfamiliar foreign proper nouns such as place name, names of politicians, organizations, news agencies that they encounter in media reports. They had difficulty comprehending the meaning of unfamiliar chemicals, diseases, names of organizations, measurement units, acronyms referring to international organizations, political posts and providing the correct English or Arabic equivalent.

In Examples (1) – (10) in Table 1 below, the participants had difficulty hearing the phonemes in *Rio de Janeiro*, *Paraguay*, *Al Gor*, *Chromium*, *microgram*, *Abuja*, *Davos*, *Scandinavia* and *St Louis Missouri*, whether they were heard in English or Arabic. Such proper nouns are borrowed in Arabic. In 75 per cent of error data (words and phrases), the students gave a nonsense word as in *Dignero* for *Rio de Janeiro*. In 14 per cent, a familiar word that rhymes with the stimulus word (source word) was given such as *Al go & goal* instead of *Al Gore*, some confused *Balkans* and *volcano*. In ten per cent, words and phrases were reduced as in *Buja* instead of *Abuja*, *micro* instead of *microgram* probably because of poor short term memory. In other errors, phonemes were substituted as in *Dagos*, *Dados*, *Dabos* for *Davos*; *NADO* for *NATO*; *PCA* instead of *PDA*.

Source Text	Examples of Misinterpretations
(1) وري ن ا ج يد وير	<i>Rio Dignero – Janerio – Rio Jinero – du Ri – Ridigi tora – dew Grano – Rio Ranyero – redio – Gnero</i>
(2) ياوغاراب	<i>Bilgrulay</i>
(3) روغ ل ا	<i>al go – algaw – Al Tor – Arjer – Al Gairo – Goal – Al Jool</i>
(4) <i>Abuja</i>	<i>Albuja, Buja, Buji</i>
(5) <i>Davos</i>	<i>Dagos, Dabos, Dados</i>
(6) <i>Scandinavia</i>	<i>Skinavia</i>
(7) <i>Helinx (38%)</i>	<i>Helinx (38%)</i>
(8) <i>Saint Louis, Missouri (50%)</i>	س يول تنس ايروزي- يروزور – يروزيل س يول – س يول تنيس ع اس – يروس نمب يرزي مل ا قن يد م/ ياروزيم تنس – يروس نك يزاري م –
(9) ان يثا , i.e., <i>Athens</i>	<i>Athina</i>
(10) موي موركل ا قدام (63%)	<i>clodium – cryomine – lokerteem – lenkemeem cronium chronomium – cromemine – lokonium</i>
(11) م غك يم	<i>micro – microme</i>
(12) <i>PDA</i>	<i>(heard it PCA)</i>
(13) <i>NATO</i>	ودانل ا تاوق
(14) <i>WHO (66%)</i>	نم
(15) <i>FAO (40%)</i>	ءا ذغ ل ا ة مظن م- ة عارزل او ة يذغ ل ل ا ة يمل ا ع ل ا ة مظن م ل ا ة عارزل او
(16) <i>An inflated Balkans</i>	قرح فتم ل ا نيك ا ربل ا – ن ا ق ل بل ا ي ف م خضت ل ا لود ة دع نم قن و ك م ل ا

(17) <i>A Rand Corporation study</i>	<p>– عساولا نواععتلا – ءكترتشم ءيرادا قسارد – ءينواعت - نواععتلا – قئقؤملا لكئيها تاسارد – ءينواعت قسارد – ءينواععتلا دنارا تاسارد قسارد – ءكترتشم قسارد – ءينواععتلا تاساردلا – ءئيها تاسارد – تاسسؤملا قسارد – قلماش قصاخ ءئيها قسارد – قنواعتم قسارد</p>
(18) <i>World Bank:</i>	<p>كئب – يملاعلا يلودلا كئبلا – يملاعلا كئبلا يجراخل يلودلا كئبلا – ملاعلا</p>
(19) <i>Exchange programs (83%):</i>	<p>رييغت – جماربلا لدابت – ليديبتلا جمارب – جماربلا لدابت – جماربلا ليديت – جماربلا قريغتملا جماربلا – جماربلا لدابت</p>
(20) <i>يبيروال داخالا</i>	<i>Soviet Union – United Europe</i>
(21) <i>ءيمزي تامورلا لصافملا تابامتلا (76%)</i>	<p><i>infection of this disease – arthroritis the rheumatism – viral infection – artrititist – arthritis – arthritics – artimism – rheumatism infection – athelitis – wo romaorthopedics – infelmation – airthritist – infection of rheum.</i></p>
(22) <i>ناسنالا قوقح يملاعلا نالعالا</i>	<p><i>announcement – announcing – announced – agreement – advertising – world announcement</i></p>
(23) <i>قمال سلجم</i>	<p><i>National – National council – Nation – people’s association – Nation council –society council – cabinet – K assembly – cabinet – community council – Umah council – People Shura Council – council of people</i></p>
(24) <i>يدوعسلا ءيلخادل ريذو بئان</i>	<p><i>under state minister – internal affairs – sub minister – under secretary of internal – under foreign minister – vice minister of interior affairs inter M – under internal M – vice internal M – vice president of interior minister.</i></p>
(25) <i>يكييرمالا ءيجراخلا قرازو ليكو</i>	<p><i>supervisor – foreign offers – Am dept – State Dep –foreign Dept in America – under security foreign –American responsible – prime minister – security of interior dept – under secretary of foreign dept – secretary of Dept State – foreign minister.</i></p>

Table 1: A sample of auditory discrimination errors

Examples (13) – (25) in Table 1 show semantic errors in interpreting media reports, i.e. meaning transfer errors. Error data analysis showed that 66 per cent of the participants translated *WHO* in (14) as a Question word, although the whole media report talked about the World Health Organization. The context in

which the acronym occurred was not taken into consideration. They interpreted it as if *WHO* was used in isolation. Forty per cent knew what *FAO* in (15) was about but they did not know the exact Arabic equivalent. They manipulated the word order. In interpreting *inflated* in (16), some participants used the Arabic equivalent used in economic contexts; others interpreted it as *exploding* that fits the *volcano* context.

4.2 Interpreting error sources

Questionnaire-interviews with the participants revealed inadequate L1 competence. The participants indicated that they were unfamiliar with the Arabic terms for the following: *World bank, exchange programs, Abuja, Davos, Scandinavia, St Louis, Mo, PDA, NATO, WHO and FAO*. They reported that they were unfamiliar with the different designations used in different Arab countries for 'Parliament'. In Egypt the parliament is called *People's Council*, in Jordan it is called *Council of Representatives* and in Kuwait it is called *National Council*. They did not know that the English equivalent should be *parliament*, regardless of the Arabic designation used in the different countries.

The error data analysis, as well as questionnaire-interviews, also revealed lack of proficiency in EFL, i.e. limited vocabulary knowledge. The participants are unfamiliar with English terms such as: *يملأ الخزانة، بيورو، داخلة، نازو ليكو، يدوعسلا، خادلا ريزو بئان، يتيوكلا قمالا سلجم، ناسنالا ققح* *يكييرمالا، خادلا ريزو ليكو.*

The participants indicated that although Arabic has the same designation for the same political post in Arab countries, the USA and UK as in *بئان ه سش* *يكييرمالا، خادلا ريزو ليكو، يدوعسلا، خادلا ريزو*, although the English equivalent depends on the country. They indicated that they were not familiar with the equivalent English term used in the USA, UK and Saudi Arabia for the same political post. Thus, they over-generalized American designation to the Saudi or British context.

Finally the subjects reported that they did not know the specific context in which a particular meaning of a polysemous word is used in both English and Arabic such as: *inflated, under secretary, يملأ الخزانة، قمالا سلجم*

4.3 Interpreting strategies

The interpreting error data revealed several strategies that the participants resorted to when they encountered foreign proper noun with which they were unfamiliar. Whenever they heard an unfamiliar word or phrase in the spoken

source text with which they had auditory discrimination difficulty, they would produce (make up) nonsense words that rhyme with the source words as in *Dagos, Dados, Dabos* which they provided for *Davos*; *clodium, cronium chromium, lokonium*, which they provided for *chromium*. Fifty per cent of the participants provided nonsense equivalents such as *lizouri, rozouri, kansouri, mansouri* instead of *Misouri*; *Scinavai* for *Scandinavia*. Sound analogy was also used in producing equivalents for unfamiliar words and phrases. *Corporation* and *volcanoes* were provided as equivalents for *Rand Corporation* and *Balkans*.

A second strategy was used with polysemous words in the source text which have one-to-many equivalents. In Arabic, the word ‘نَالَع’ is polysemous and has three English equivalents *announcement, declaration* and *advertisement*. But due to inadequate vocabulary knowledge in English, the participants could only access *announcement* while interpreting the source text, as they were not familiar with *declaration*, although it did not fit the new context *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, in which it occurred. The same strategy was applied in interpreting *inflated Balkans* since the meaning they could access was the one used in an economic context, not the one used in a political context.

A third strategy was the use of literal translation, i.e. word for word translation, in cases such as the *Kuwaiti Parliament*, which is literally called the *National Council* in Arabic, *The World Bank*, and *Universal Declaration of Human Rights, FAO, Rheumatoid arthritis*,

A fourth strategy was over-generalization of the Arabic term. Since the participants knew that some names of countries and cities are identical in English and Arabic, they over-generalized this to cases in which the English and Arabic designations are different. Since some students were unfamiliar with *Athens* as an equivalent for the Arabic *Athina*, they transferred the Arabic *Athina* to the English target text.

A fifth strategy that was used in a few cases was the use of erroneous equivalents as in rendering *The Soviet Union* for the *EU*.

5 Discussion

A positive correlation was found between the participants’ overall interpreting test scores and their word knowledge accuracy score. This finding is consistent with Staehr’s (2008) study with Danish secondary students, in which he found a strong relationship between vocabulary size and listening ability in English as a foreign language and that the majority of the learners did not know the most frequent 2,000 words in English, and if they did, they would perform adequately on the listening test. Staehr’s findings suggest that the 2,000 vocabulary level is a crucial learning goal for low-level EFL learners.

Analysis of the interpreting error data in the present study showed that the participants seemed to lack metacognitive skills, i.e. thinking processes they were using while interpreting. Some participants seemed to interact with the media reports at a superficial level, and hence failed to interpret and construct the accurate meaning that fit the context. They would provide the first meaning that crossed their mind whether it fit the context or not. In figuring out the meaning of unfamiliar words, they made glosses that fit the micro-context (at the phrase or sentence level, although this context was invented by the participants) but not the global context at the media report level. This finding is also consistent with findings of a study by Vandergrift (1998), in which he found that successful beginning level language listeners use more metacognitive strategies and use these strategies to interact at a deeper level with a text to construct meaning. Students in the present study resorted to the wrong aspects of the media report in interpreting unfamiliar words and phrases. Here again, low level interpreting students made use of cognitive strategies which students in Smidt and Hegelheimer's (2004) study made use of. Smidt and Hegelheimer found out that lower-level adult ESL learners enrolled in a listening comprehension are more likely to resort to the wrong aspects of the lecture in responding to comprehension questions, while advanced learners exhibited both metacognitive and cognitive learning strategies.

The results of the present study show the interaction between interpreting students' schemata and their vocabulary knowledge. This finding is consistent with prior studies. Bonk (2000) tested 59 Japanese university students of low-intermediate to advanced English ability using first-language recall protocols as comprehension measures and found that efficient listening strategies made comprehending lexically complex texts possible, but that most learners needed very high lexical familiarity for good comprehension.

Familiarity with current world events seemed to strongly affect the interpretation of media reports in the present study and contribute to its accuracy, especially names of cities such as *Rio de Janero*, *Athems*, *St Louis*, *Mo*, *Abuja*; countries such as *Paraguay* and *Scandinavia*; the *World Economic Forum in Davos*; international organizations and corporations such as *FAO*, *WHO*, *World Bank*, *Rand Corporation*. Interpreting errors in the current study showed the interaction between prior knowledge and difficult vocabulary. There was no title in the taped dialogues (media reports) to help the students guess the overall topic of the dialogue. The participants listened to the dialogue once and in small segments. This finding is consistent with prior studies as well. Qi (1992) investigated the role of a second language (L2) learner's prior cultural knowledge in target language lexical meaning-making. The findings were that a central meaning of a L2 word (word meanings – conceptual, connotative, synonyms, antonyms, lexical cultural categories, specific knowledge in lexical meanings, and cross-linguistic factors) exists and is shared by the L2 learners with the same cultural background.

6 Conclusion

Interviews with students showed that the source of difficulty was unfamiliarity with: foreign proper names, organizations, acronyms, names of foreign countries, states and cities; presidents, prime ministers and so on. To help interpreting students at COLT acquire world knowledge, they were required to watch English T.V. news on CNN or the BBC, read news headlines and news stories of major world events in English newspapers, do note-taking and summarizing exercises. At the end of the semester, the students were post-tested. The post-test results revealed significant improvements in students' auditory discrimination and comprehension of foreign proper names in the flow of oral discourse.

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ESP STUDENTS AND THE MYSTERIES OF ENGLISH WORD ORDER

Lenka Slunečková

Abstract

The paper is based on a research project carried out at the University of Economics, Prague, which attempts to show the problems students face when producing and interpreting English texts which are connected with the different functions of word order in English and in Czech. In both English and Czech, some issues were found which may lead not only to difficulties in understanding the text but to more or less significant changes in meaning. The students' awareness of these issues appears to be very low. As academic and technical texts require a high level of precision, we believe it should be paid more attention in ESP teaching at university level.

Key words

Czech, English, word order, translation, ESP

1 Introduction

The present paper is based on research carried out at the University of Economics, Prague, investigating the mastering of English word order by students of Economic English. The research project was funded by the Czech Science Foundation (GA CR 405/09/P092).

The main aim of the project was to identify problems encountered by Czech ESP students which may be linked with the different functions of word order in Czech and in English (cf. Dušková 1994: 518). We focused both on the production of English texts and on the interpretation of the information structure of an original English text. We also attempted to identify the causes of these problems and suggest some possible solutions.

2 Material

The material for the research was provided by students of Economic English at the University of Economics. According to a survey carried out in 2009 at the Faculties of Finance and Accounting and of Business Administration, students who enrol at the university have been learning English for ten years on average. A vast majority of them have passed their final examination in English, mostly

at grammar schools. All students are required to pass entrance examinations in English on a level similar to the FCE exam, focusing on the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, in which their average result is about 80 per cent. This suggests that most of the enrolling students are close to the B2 level of the CEFR.

The students participating in the research were attending a course of English for Economists, which was a four-semester course focused on economic vocabulary. In addition, the course included business communication skills as well as revision of English grammar, and in the textbook used, students were also regularly asked to translate short economic texts from and into English.

Students usually took the course in the first and second years of study. The participating students were attending the last semester of the course and preparing for the final examination, which roughly corresponds to a B2 level exam in Business English. Many of them then continue directly to specialized C1 level courses. Students completing the English for Economists course are thus expected to have relatively good grammatical control and not to make mistakes which cause misunderstanding. They should be able to correct errors in sentence structure in retrospect.¹

For the purpose of the research, the students were asked to translate two short texts describing current economic issues, one from Czech into English and one from English into Czech (see the Appendix). In addition, anonymous questionnaires were used to obtain background information about the students' experience with and opinions on learning (Economic) English in general and English word order in particular.

Both texts translated by the students were based on authentic business news articles published at the beginning of 2009, which were shortened and slightly modified to include specific structures. The vocabulary involved was adequate to the level required of the students. Each text comprised ten clauses.

In the Czech text we focused on instances of word order which would be in conflict with the grammatical principle in English and therefore require either a change of word order or a syntactic change to be translated. The text included instances of the subject in postverbal/final position, the object and subject complement in initial/preverbal position, and adverbials in non-final position. In English we concentrated on sentences in which the English grammatical word order causes a divergence from the basic distribution of communicative dynamism, as described in Dušková (1999a). The text included instances of final/postverbal thematic objects and adverbials and the initial rhematic subject.

Altogether, we obtained translations from about 250 students, approximately half of whom were students of the Faculty of International Relations, with a traditionally high priority accorded to the knowledge of foreign languages. After eliminating those who did not complete the whole task and those whose

mother tongue was not Czech, we were left with a total of 225 pairs of student translations. These were subsequently examined and analyzed.

3 Czech to English translation

In the first part of our analysis, we focused on the ability of the students to use the basic grammatical word order in English. In addition, we were interested in the translation of certain syntactic structures which are specific for the Czech language.

3.1 Subject – verb – object/subject complement

The Czech text contained four clauses in which the original word order (governed by FSP) does not correspond to the English grammatical principle. In two out of these four clauses, the results of the translation were relatively good. In Sentence 1 (*Na počátku roku 2009 čelí Evropská unie nečekaným problémům*), only nine per cent of students copied the Czech order V-S in English. Equally in Sentence 9 with a Czech final rhematic verb (*část z nich však nařízení nedodržela*), nine per cent retained the preverbal position of the object.

However, the situation was different in Sentence 4 with an OVS pattern (*Spotřebu plynu v České republice pokrývají dodávky z Německa*). A full quarter of the students retained the original word order in their English translations (*Gas consumption in the Czech Republic covers supplies from Germany*), thereby changing the grammatical structure of the sentence and reversing the semantic roles of the individual elements. As the noun-verb-noun pattern is identical for both SVO and OVS structures, the students who produced the latter in their English translation presumably perceived it as formally correct and failed to realize that it would automatically be interpreted differently in English.

Out of the remaining students, 68 per cent used the English passive, which enabled them to produce a grammatically correct structure while keeping the original word order unchanged. Nearly five per cent of students translated the sentence using the active voice with a correct grammatical word order, which nevertheless deviates from the basic distribution of CD.

The last clause in this group contained an initial subject complement and a postverbal subject in Czech (*ale horší je situace na Slovensku*). In this case, there was a variety of English translations. Only four per cent of the students copied the original word order, while the majority clearly attempted to avoid placing the complement in the initial position. In 45 per cent of the translations the students used a verbonominal construction, adjusting the word order (*the situation is worse in Slovakia*). In one tenth of cases, a construction with the

existential-locative *there* was used (*there is a worse situation in Slovakia*). However, 39 per cent of the students used the translation *a worse situation is in Slovakia*, and furthermore, some of the solutions mentioned earlier contained serious grammatical mistakes.

3.2 Adverbials

Concerning the position of adverbials, two different types of constructions were analyzed. Firstly, we examined four clauses containing adverbials of time, place, and cause, which were placed in non-final positions in the Czech original and would typically be placed finally or initially in English. These proved fairly easy to translate, especially in clauses with a relatively simple syntactic structure and few clause elements.

The initial adverbial of time in Sentence 1 (*Na počátku roku 2009 čelí Evropská unie nečekaným problémům*) was translated correctly virtually in all cases. Nearly one quarter of the students moved the adverbial to the final position, while the others retained the original word order. There is obviously a strong tendency to place scene-setting adverbials initially, which may not be solely due to the influence of the Czech counterpart. In fact, it was also noted in the above-mentioned Sentence 5 (*ale horší je situace na Slovensku*), where the original final phrase *na Slovensku* was rendered as a final adverbial in 64 per cent of instances, whereas other students preferred to place it initially.

More problems occurred in longer clauses. For instance, students experienced difficulties in Sentence 7 (*může tam do deseti dnů dojít ke kolapsu celé energetické soustavy*), which has a large number of clause elements and in addition requires a syntactic transformation when translated into English. Although the adverbial of time *within ten days* was placed incorrectly in only four per cent of cases, it was omitted in over one fifth of student translations.

The other group of clauses we concentrated on contained adverbs of time which are typically placed in mid-position in English (e.g. *stále, už*). In Sentence 3 (*a tak ruský plyn do Evropy stále neproudí*), the English adjunct *still* was placed before the negative auxiliary verb in just one half of translations. In addition, six per cent of the students used the adjunct *yet* in its correct position. However, nearly one fifth of the students failed to place the adjunct *still* correctly in English, and an even higher number of students did not translate it at all. In the more complicated Sentence 10 (*Jiné podniky už kvůli energetické krizi zastavily výrobu*), only 37 per cent of the students used the adjunct *already* in mid-position, while more than half failed to translate the expression in any way.

The tendency to omit some adverbials may be due to the students' uncertainty as to what the correct translation would be, and/or due to the fact that they may

be perceived as not crucial for the overall message of the sentence. Both of these factors may come into play in the case of adverbs such as *yet* or *already*. Last but not least, the position of the original Czech adverbials means that they may be simply overlooked by the students when translating, especially in longer and more complicated sentences.

3.3 Syntactic structures

Apart from the issues discussed above, we were also interested to see how well the students can cope with Czech grammatical structures that do not exist in English and therefore require the use of a different structure in translation. Of particular interest was Sentence 6 (*Pokud se spor nevyřeší*), which contained a Czech reflexive passive but otherwise was very simple to translate. Three quarters of the students used the English periphrastic passive construction, thus retaining the original word order. Several English active constructions occurred as well, but very infrequently. However, 13 per cent of the students produced the grammatically incorrect translation *If the problem does not solve*, copying the original Czech structure regardless of the passive.

This result is similar to what we saw in Sentence 4 in that the structure noun-verb which results from a literal translation of the original Czech sentence would not be formally identified as incorrect. Again, the students failed to take into account the meaning of the structure. The Czech reflexive passive may not have been identified because the reflexive particle *se* is used to fulfil several different functions apart from forming the passive in Czech.

In addition, we examined Sentence 7 (*může tam do deseti dnů dojít ke kolapsu celé energetické soustavy*), displaying a Czech subjectless clause. Here, all students were clearly aware of the need to use a different structure in English. The resulting translations included a variety of constructions such as *there may be a collapse, it can cause a collapse, a collapse may occur*. However, about 14 per cent of the students were not able to use the chosen construction correctly in English. This suggests that the sentence is perceived as relatively difficult by students, which may partly explain the poorer results in the translation of adverbials we noticed in this case.

3.4 Summary

In conclusion, the students appear to have no major problems with English grammatical word order in relatively simple sentences in which they can follow the basic SVOMPT rule. In these cases, most students are able to produce English sentences with correct grammatical word order, even if it differs from its Czech

counterpart. Nevertheless, several problematic areas have been identified, which can be defined as follows.

One problematic issue is the placement of English adverbs in mid-position. Students presumably require a more detailed explanation and more practice in this respect. However, it would appear that students regard these expressions as of relatively little importance compared with other elements in the sentence. Rather than face the problems with their translation, students will frequently either overlook or consciously omit them.

More importantly, students may have difficulties with structures that require the use of the English passive. This is particularly the case in sentences with a noun-verb (-noun) pattern, as we saw in the Czech clauses involving the active OVS pattern and the reflexive passive in our research. Whereas students are generally capable of forming the English passive correctly, it is apparently more difficult for them to identify instances where it should be used. It may be assumed that while the forming of the passive voice is taught and practised regularly, the students are not sufficiently informed about its use or functions in English as compared with Czech.

It was also noted that although students are mostly aware of the need to restructure certain syntactic constructions when translating from Czech into English, they are less successful in using a correct English structure in these cases. In particular, this applied to English existential constructions and structures with *there* and *it* as subject in our research. Again, more practice in this area could presumably improve the situation. As we have seen, the need to use unfamiliar or insufficiently mastered syntactic structures increases the incidence of errors in word order even in elements which might otherwise be used correctly.

4 English-to-Czech translation

To complement the first part of our research, we then investigated the ability of students to render an original English text into Czech, focusing on the identification and expression of the functional sentence perspective (FSP). Ideally, the neutral Czech word order should broadly correspond to the basic distribution of communicative dynamism (CD), with the rheme proper placed in the final position, which enables the reader to understand the text easily (cf. Čechová 2000: 320). Naturally, as this principle is of less importance in English, translation into Czech will often involve changes to the original English word order.

In our sample text, we examined typical English constructions where the grammatical word order deviates from the basic distribution of CD, and assessed the degree to which the students are influenced by English word order in their

Czech translations. In addition, we looked at the rendering of certain English syntactic constructions into Czech.

4.1 Presentation scale

Sentence 7 (*From 1999 deflation set in*) was an instance of a presentation scale with a rhematic subject followed by a verb of appearance on the scene. The translation was fairly successful, with 84 per cent of the students placing the rhematic element finally in Czech. Admittedly, the original sentence was very short and simple. In addition, it was followed by another clause with the same FSP pattern and displaying the basic distribution of CD.

Even so, one tenth of the students retained the original English word order, and some others produced a different construction (*Deflace začala v roce 1999*), which would suggest a completely different FSP in Czech.

4.2 Final adverbials

The text comprised two sentences with English adverbials of time placed finally, following the rheme proper. In Sentence 1 (*The UK economy shrank by 1.5% in the last three months of 2008*), nearly one fourth of the students placed the adverbial initially and one third in mid-position. However, over 40 per cent copied the English word order in Czech. In Sentence 2 (*The government expects a decrease of 1% this year;*), which immediately follows and therefore the adverbial of time can be easily identified as linked with the previous clause, the results were only slightly better, with one third of the students retaining the original word order. More than half of these students failed to use an appropriate Czech word order in both instances.

The influence of the original English word order thus appears to be considerably stronger in these cases. Unfortunately, placing the adverbials finally in Czech would indicate them as rheme proper, changing the original FSP. Although here the reader would be able to identify the original information structure using other indicators, it would require more effort to understand the message.

4.3 Final objects

The last group of sentences we examined were those containing a final thematic object, which proved to be the most problematic. In Sentence 3 (*but other economists disagree with its optimistic prediction*) with a contextually

bound nominal object referring to the rheme of the previous utterance, a full 54 per cent of translations retained the original English word order.

Although it is normally the rheme which is located at the end of the sentence in Czech, this is not always true of sentences containing a rhematic verb, since the verb is closely associated with the mid-position (Uhlířová 1987: 61). Therefore, the final placement of the thematic object in the Czech translation may not be considered as simply incorrect, even though it may make it more demanding for the reader to follow the information structure of the text. On the other hand, I do not believe that the theoretical possibility to place a Czech rhematic verb in mid-position was the only or even main reason for the results we obtained. To verify this assumption, the other sentence from this group was presented to the students in two different versions.

In one half of the texts, the sentence contained a nominal object (*As the UK needs to avoid this scenario*), similarly to Sentence 3 described above. Here the percentage of translations with unchanged word order was even greater, as high as 77 per cent, confirming a strong tendency to place the object post-verbally.

In the other version, the nominal object was replaced by a pronominal one (*As the UK needs to avoid this*). Obviously, the pronominal object could never be placed finally in the Czech translation, due to the rhythmical principle of Czech word order. Nevertheless, as many as one fifth of the students expanded the object into a nominal phrase in Czech in order to retain the original final placement of the thematic element (e.g. *Jelikož Velká Británie se potřebuje vyhnout tomuto problému*). The influence of the original English word order on the Czech translation thus appears to be very significant as far as the object is concerned.

4.4 Syntactic structures

In addition to the word order issues discussed above, we also examined the student translations of certain syntactic structures from English to Czech. Of particular interest was Sentence 10 (*the Japanese experience is now being discussed at high levels*), which contains an English passive verb. Its Czech equivalent *diskutovat* did not originally form the periphrastic passive as it did not take an object in the accusative form. Typically, a similar clause would be restructured using an active or reflexive construction. The structure *diskutovat něco*, which would allow passivization, has also appeared in Czech only recently and is less frequent (Grepl et al. 1997: 433).

However, in our translation, as many as 65 per cent of students simply copied the original English syntactic construction in Czech (*japonské zkušenosti jsou diskutovány*), although in some cases they made changes to other clause

elements in the sentence (out of the remaining students, many failed to translate the sentence at all.) This result would appear to confirm the degree to which Czech speakers can be influenced by the structure of an original English text.

4.5 Summary

Generally, in the translation from English into Czech the students appear to be influenced by the English original to a considerable extent. Whereas the English presentation scale did not present major problems in our sample, a relatively large proportion of students retained thematic adverbials in the final position in their Czech translations. This was even more frequent in the case of thematic objects.

It may be presumed that many students do not stop to consider the position of objects and adverbials placed finally, as it is a very frequent position for these clause elements in Czech. On the other hand, final rhematic verbs do not occur so frequently, which may also contribute to the students' good results when translating the English presentation scale with a final verb.

The fact that students frequently copy the English word order in Czech may naturally have a negative effect on the recipient of the text. Inappropriate word order in Czech will affect the students' ability to express the distribution of communicative dynamism and even lead to changes in the FSP.

5 Background information

When analysing the student translations from English into Czech, we saw that some of the problems students experience can make the interpretation of the information structure difficult. The question remains whether these problems are caused by the students' difficulties in identifying the FSP of the English text or rather their inability to render it properly into Czech. It is possible that students do not perceive word order as one of the issues that should be attended to, concentrating mainly on the vocabulary and familiar grammatical problems. In this last section, I would like to present some information gained from surveys conducted among the students as well as lecturers of Economic English courses that concern this particular question.

It clearly followed from the results of the surveys that word order is not considered a particularly important issue in ESP courses. Over one half of the students believe that word order rules can be mastered intuitively, without more detailed study, and approximately the same number of students see mistakes in word order as less important than other grammatical problems.

Although similar opinions were expressed by some of the lecturers, many of those expressed strong disagreement with the above-mentioned statements. Furthermore, a vast majority agreed that students should be taught about the main differences between English and Czech word order.

Still, in the actual courses English word order is not given a lot of attention. Although only one tenth of the lecturers strongly agreed that the students have mastered the basic rules of English word order, and a total of three quarters said that students tend to make frequent word order mistakes in spoken English, they do not address this issue regularly in class. By their own admission, most of them only mention word order rules when correcting students' mistakes, although all of them claim to teach grammar in classes. And perhaps more significantly, only one third of the students said that the lecturers drew their attention to word order mistakes in class.

What is equally interesting in this respect is what the students in fact understand under the notion of English word order. In our survey, they were asked if they remembered any particular word order-related phenomenon they personally find difficult. Most of the students did not answer, which presumably means that there was no specific problem they were aware of (nearly one half believing they have mastered English word order sufficiently), or could recall at the moment. Out of the 28 responses received, the most frequent were, in this order: *I don't know, the position and ordering of adverbials* (which seems to correspond to the students' apparent uncertainty when required to use the expressions *still* and *already* in the translation), and *none*. Other issues mentioned included *word order in (indirect) questions* and *verbs with two objects*.

Generally, students appear to associate word order with those issues that are typically practised and/or tested in classes and examinations, and which mostly concern the position of individual clause elements within the clause. The overall structure of the clause and the use of different syntactic patterns are not mentioned. This would in part explain the students' failure to identify and correct those mistakes in our translation which involved restructuring the original Czech sentence (using the passive, existential construction etc.) as well as the ease with which they frequently copy original English word order, apparently without stopping to consider that it might be changed in the Czech translation.

Unless these issues are addressed in class, students of Economic English are unlikely to improve or indeed realize the need to improve in this area. More attention should be paid to those issues of English word order where interference of the students' native Czech can be expected. Furthermore, while it is obviously beyond the scope of an ESP course to deal with questions such as Czech word order rules, brief information on the role of word order in English might increase the students' awareness of potential problems in this area as well.

6 Conclusion

In general, our research shows that ESP students at university level have mastered many basic word order issues in English. They are relatively successful in dealing with simple structures and know the position of individual clause elements, possibly with the exception of certain more marginal phenomena. Nevertheless, they frequently encounter difficulties in more complex structures. What is especially alarming is the situation concerning the use of the English passive, which is of considerable importance in the repertoire of English syntactic structures and perhaps even more so in technical and academic texts (cf. Dušková 1999b). Here, students can easily be influenced by their native Czech. Equally, their translations into Czech are strongly influenced by original English word order.

One may surely understand and agree with the students' point of view inasmuch as a certain degree of grammatical incorrectness does not represent a major concern to them as ESP users. However, such mistakes that can cause misunderstanding or significantly impede communication (such as using the OVS order in English seen in our investigation, or ignoring completely the basic word order principle in Czech) are hardly acceptable in B2/C1 level students, and should be avoided by all means.

In my opinion, ESP courses should reflect this situation and address at least some of these issues. In more advanced courses, attention should be paid specifically to problems linked with the production of longer texts and translation. With this knowledge students will be more successful in creating specialized presentations and papers, which may represent an important part of their future careers.

Notes

- ¹ See Council of Europe (2001) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Online document: www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/.../All%20scales%20CEFR.DOC, retrieved 2010.

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Appendix I: Czech-to-English translation

- (1) *Na počátku roku 2009 čelí Evropská unie nečekaným problémům.*
- (2) *Rusko a Ukrajina se neshodly na ceně plynu,*
- (3) *a tak ruský plyn do Evropy stále neproudí.*
- (4) *Spotřebu plynu v České republice pokrývají dodávky z Německa,*
- (5) *ale horší je situace na Slovensku.*
- (6) *Pokud se spor nevyřeší,*
- (7) *může tam do deseti dnů dojít ke kolapsu celé energetické soustavy.*
- (8) *Slovenská vláda nařídila firmám omezit spotřebu,*
- (9) *část z nich však nařízení nedodržela.*
- (10) *Jiné podniky už kvůli energetické krizi zastavily výrobu.*

Appendix II: English-to-Czech translation

- (1) *The UK economy shrank by 1.5% in the last three months of 2008.*
- (2) *The government expects a decrease of 1% this year;*
- (3) *but other economists disagree with its optimistic prediction.*
- (4) *They are also concerned about the risk of deflation.*
- (5) *A similar situation occurred in Japan in the 1990s,*
- (6) *when the government failed to respond to economic problems with early action.*
- (7) *From 1999 deflation set in,*
- (8) *and there was a long period of falling prices and economic slowdown.*
- (9) *As the UK needs to avoid this (scenario),*
- (10) *the Japanese experience is now being discussed at high levels.*

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN READING, WRITING, LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION: THE CASE OF THE STUDENTS OF ARCHITECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY IN GREECE

Makrina Zafiri

Abstract

This paper probes into the second language learning needs of first and second year university students who are studying architecture at the University of Thessaly, Greece. More specifically it examines the texts which have been chosen and appropriately prepared for the specific purpose of teaching English for Academic Purposes. It also examines the teaching of writing skills to the aforementioned students, with an emphasis on coherence, development, appropriate use of the terminology learnt and readability.

Oral language practice, especially the oral use of the terminology and language which has been taught and learnt during the course of the lesson will also be looked into. The article also reports upon the creation of a genuine need for tertiary education students to communicate in English using the terminology and language learnt. This paper rounds off with the presentation and use of authentic videos, listening exercises and written material which the presenter of the paper (and teacher of ESP/EAP) has produced and used.

Key words

ESP/EAP language teaching, reading, writing, listening and speaking teaching material.

1 Introduction

Socio-economic changes, technological development and scientific evolution have made it mandatory for more qualitative and specialized knowledge in the field of foreign language learning and more specifically for ESP/EAP.¹ Today, as Dowling and Mitchell (1992: 434) mention, students are less frequently required to master grammatical rules or reproduce passages from great works of literature. Rather, a discernible trend in language teaching is the shift towards learners being encouraged to communicate, to learn the skills needed to survive in a foreign culture with a foreign language. In tandem, a second trend is the growing number of language teachers who believe that language courses must be designed to meet the particular needs of the learners undertaking those courses. One result of this trend is an increase in the number of specific purpose language

courses being offered to adult learners, particularly at the postgraduate level and beyond. English, on the other hand, as a lingua franca plays both a centrifugal and a centripetal role as it not only caters for the learning needs of students who are learning the language so as to enable them to communicate effectively with speakers who use English as a common code of communication, or even to read and write using the English language, but also for those adult students who are interested in more specific and specialized knowledge in their work field or in their science. In Greece most of the books found in university libraries, which students need to further their studies or to conduct any form of research work, are written in English, which brings us to our next point which is that this is the reason why English, especially ESP/EAP, is taught in all, or almost all, universities in the country. This is why, as mentioned earlier, the teaching and learning of English is also centripetal, as the rationale behind the idea of specificity in ESP/EAP is that: it is designed to meet specific needs of the learner; it is related to particular disciplines, occupations and activities; it is centred on the language appropriate to those activities; it is an approach which contrasts with 'general English' (Strevens 1988, as quoted in Hyland 2005: 16).

On the other hand, students who come into an ESP/EAP class are usually viewed as adults (Sifakis 2004) who are fully grown psychosocially and culturally, with an established self-respect and respect for others (i.e. teacher and fellow learners) from all aspects (i.e. physical, emotional, social, cultural, intellectual, political) and a sense of discipline in the learning process itself; they know what their needs are; they have a greater sense of perspective and an ability to make judgments (about themselves and others) based on accumulated experience; they are usually serious in what they undertake and want to be taken seriously; they have a certain social status and a collection of fixed ideas and values; and, they are also inherently autonomous, which renders them responsible decision-makers whose motivation (or degree of voluntary participation and personal involvement) is a central prerequisite, as far as learning is concerned. Studies have shown that there are strong correlations between, on the one hand, high strategy² use and learning success (Oxford & Burry-Stock 1995) and between strategy use and motivation (Nunan 1997) on the other. It is true that most adult learners have already developed learning strategies in their mother tongue and are thus able to transfer them to the learning of the second language (Kellerman 1991) and more specifically to ESP/EAP. When adult learners, like all other learners, use the same strategies, often, in different situations in their second language learning, then according to Schmeck (1988: 8), "we can suspect the presence of a style". Learning style is directly related to learners' language skills which basically refer to their ability to successfully carry out and finish a writing, reading, listening, or speaking task.

When Greek ESP/EAP students walk into a university class they usually have at least an intermediate knowledge of the English language. Many Greek university students have a certified B2 level and quite a few students either have certified C1 and C2 levels or are in the process of preparing for the aforementioned levels. We thus see that, prior to attending ESP/EAP language classes, adult university students have some knowledge of the English language and should be able to carry out reading, writing, listening and speaking tasks, but is this always the case? How do students feel and how do they react when confronted with ESP/EAP material? Is a general knowledge of the English language enough for adult university students to deal with the torrent of novel, and perhaps difficult words whose meaning is unclear even when these words are explained to the students? These and many more questions will be answered in this paper.

2 Reading, writing, listening and speaking material

In this section I will be looking at the design and evaluation of the reading and writing material which is used by first and second year students of architecture at the University of Thessaly.

2.1 Reading material

The Greek Ministry of Education does not permit the use of reading material which is produced by foreign publishers as these are considered very expensive. Thus, most ESP/EAP teachers are obliged “to make do” with either material produced by themselves or books produced by Greek publishers; some disciplines have a large range of books to choose from, whereas there are others with none or one or two books to choose from only. Most of the ESP/EAP books produced in Greece today, by Greek publishers, do not have listening exercises and none, or almost none, of the books have video cassettes with listening, writing and speaking exercises in which case ESP/EAP language teachers will either have to improvise or allot time, energy, and sometimes even money (out of their pockets) to produce material which is appropriate for the needs of their ESP/EAP students. What follows is the course design and reading material produced for the students of architecture at the University of Thessaly.

2.1.1 Reading material for the students of architecture

One of the best ways to cater for the needs of our students is to “follow the bread crumbs home”, in other words, go back to the students study guide, to see the courses which are on offer, and to speak to the lecturers responsible

for the teaching of the particular courses. This is the first step which could be taken towards collecting the appropriate material, evaluating it, and using the one which is the best for our students. In a similar study conducted by Kourdis (2008: 137), for the teaching of French terminology at the Department of Architecture, of the University of Thessaly, students are not only interested in being taught the terminology of the specific discipline but also translation techniques and cultural elements of the target language. The teaching of English in tertiary education is very much like the teaching of French (cf. also Kourdis 2008: 137) or any other foreign language in that the material used is or should be, authentic, as it is derived from authentic texts or research work of renowned scientists in the field; material in the form of pictures, photographs or slides is used to elicit oral language; architectural plans and drawings are also used in the teaching and learning process to elicit both written and oral language; if listening cassettes are unavailable, as is the case with most ESP/EAP teaching material which is available to students of Greek universities then the production of listening material by the ESP/EAP teacher becomes imperative; video cassettes are also necessary for the language teaching and learning process, and if unavailable then it would be wise for the ESP/EAP teacher to produce his/her own material.

A combination of all five of the aforementioned materials could bring about the desired results. For the teaching of EAP to students of architecture at the University of Thessaly the reading material used is authentic and is derived from research material or books found in the departmental library, the Internet, etc. This material is in direct correlation with the study guide of the department, the other courses which are offered by the department and the needs of the students. The exercises which accompany the texts are usually comprehension exercises such as: a) answer the following questions, b) say whether the following sentences are True or False, etc.). Further exercises, which concern the use of the terminology learnt, facilitate the consolidation process exercises such as gap filling, opposites, synonyms, etc., are also given to students. For more writing practice students are introduced to paragraph writing, summary writing, and academic writing which we will be looking at in the next section.

2.2 Writing material

In Greece many interesting course books have been produced by Greek authors and published by Greek publishers, which means that there is a broad choice of books to choose from today in some of the sciences. On the other hand, students in Greek tertiary education have needs that go beyond the basic goal of written or oral communication as has been shown in a study conducted by Panourgia et al. (2009: 141). The aforementioned study showed that Greek

tertiary education students are often concerned with analysing and critically interpreting information, synthesising disparate sets of information, etc. (ibid.). Nevertheless, students must gradually be introduced to the art of writing starting from the paragraph in the first semester (Panourgia 2008). Students must be told how to write a paragraph, as it is not self-explanatory that they know how to do it. Students must be told that to write an effective paragraph the following must be included: i. unity; ii. coherence; iii. adequate development. Paragraph development must also include: a) classification; b) logical division; c) exemplifying; d) description; e) cause and effect relationship; f) definition; g) comparison and contrast; h) problem solution; i) data commentary; j) hypothesis – prediction (Panourgia 2008). After being taught the basic principles of paragraph writing, students must be taught the basic principles of summary writing (e.g. by asking students to do a controlled or guided activity) as well as the requirements for effective summary writing (e.g. locate the topic sentence).

The material must come from selected topics chosen by their instructress as not all students in an ESP/EAP class in Greek universities are of the same language level. After students have had ample practice in paragraph writing, they are then ready to be introduced to academic writing. In building students academic writing skills the following must be clarified before students are prompted to write something on their own. Students must be told that academic writing is: a) formal; b) objective; c) it is something tentative and cautious; d) it is concise; e) it is varied, not repetitive (Panourgia 2008: 58-60). It would be wise to ask students to work in pairs or groups of three or four students when attempting to write their first research paper in the English language as the application of the academic writing skills which they have acquired may not be easily applicable by all students, mainly because they are not of the same language level. Workshops should be conducted at a regular basis in which the ESP/EAP language teacher will explain possible ways of correcting mistakes which appear in their work.

2.3 Listening and visual material

It is very difficult to find listening and visual material for ESP/EAP learners in tertiary education in Greece especially for the students of architecture; this is why it was imperative for the ESP/EAP language teacher to compose and/or find his/her own material. On the other hand, students are usually bewildered by the torrent of very often unknown words which they listen to and by the Englishes which exist around the world and all too often they are encouraged not only to understand the speaker but also to be able to answer questions on a particular subject. There are reports (Jung 1990: 207) that in the past even “British audiences who during and after the Second World War were confronted for the

first time with American movies, found it difficult to understand the English of American actors". Sometimes students are even confused by the instructions they are given by their teacher and by the exercise(s) they are asked to finish. Many students are also overwhelmed with the length of speech they are listening to. As Flowerdew (1995: 11-12) so rightfully notes, listening has its own distinct characteristics and the demands placed upon it as compared with conversational listening are: a) type of background knowledge required; b) application of the turn-taking conventions; c) ability to concentrate on and understand long stretches of talk without the opportunity of engaging in the facilitating functions of interactive discourse; d) note-taking; e) ability to integrate the incoming message with information derived from other media (e.g. textbook, handouts, overhead projectors, chalkboard). So what can we do to help them?

- a) First of all it would be wise to help them recognize that all formal speeches have structure (just like written language).
- b) Secondly, we should encourage students to listen carefully to the introduction: encourage them to take notes; encourage them to recognize and note the main idea and the parts of the speech which they are listening to, etc.
- c) Thirdly, we should direct them to listen for discourse markers such as: words/phrases that signal a beginning; words/phrases that continue an idea, etc.
- d) Fourthly, we should encourage our students to listen for stress, intonation, speed, pauses and repetition, etc.
- e) Fifthly, we should encourage our students to listen for names, numbers, dates, etc.

For the needs of teaching listening to first and second year students of architecture and for lack of materials available on the Greek market, I have used short films of well known architects (a sort of documentary), whose work is being presented in detail. I used documentaries because they are quite long, highly-planned programmes which present fact and opinions about a single subject (Sherman 2003: 62). Thus when students are presented with the unit on 'structures', they are also introduced to Antonio Gaudi, who is one of the most famous architects in Spain. Through a documentary they are introduced to his personality and his work. Following Sherman's (2003: 64-65) model, to help students lighten the comprehension load of the documentary, the ESP/EAP language teacher should brief her students on the subject. Ask students to, for example, assemble everything they know on Gaudi, check reference sources (e.g. encyclopaedias, history books, the Internet, articles from TV magazines

or websites), prepare quizzes or briefing sheets for each other on essential background information, do preliminary vocabulary work, establish key words, drill phraseology and start on a vocabulary map, pose the main questions before starting and get speculative answers or personal opinions which should be sealed in an envelope to be opened after viewing the video, etc.

Students could also be encouraged to produce, in groups of three to five people, their own documentary video, for which they could also prepare their own written work. Students could then present their work in class and hold an open discussion because, as Franks and Jewitt (2001: 201) mention, “we view learning as happening when people act in and on the world”. I have also found that inviting experts in the field to attend and participate in the discussion panel (the expert’s panel) has always enriched my students’ knowledge on the subject and on the vocabulary/terminology in the particular field. Before proceeding with the production of the video students should be given instructions on: a) their choice of documentary and write down the reason(s) for their choice (briefly); b) research of the subject (in an encyclopaedia, on the Internet, etc.) before proceeding and c) ask them to view the introduction of their documentary (the first five minutes and ask them questions such as what is the mood/tone, what does it show, does it answer any why and how questions, is there any new vocabulary produced, etc.) (Sherman 2003: 67-68). Students could also be encouraged to do one or more of the following: to present a written report to their teacher or to the other students, to present a report orally in class, to write a letter to the TV channel giving their opinion of the documentary, to write a short documentary preview, to produce a basic rating form or difficulty report and attach it to the cassette (Grading).

2.4 Production of spoken language

In Greek universities research on academic skills in teaching ESP/EAP has for the most part focused extensively on reading and writing skills. Listening and speaking skills have been neglected, especially the latter, and this is where most of the difficulties arise as students are unable to respond to questions using the terminology which they have learnt during the lesson or even carry out a conversation using the genre-specific vocabulary which they have learnt.

So how do we encourage our students to communicate effectively in the English language using the vocabulary/terminology which they have learnt?

- Students seem to be more proficient at everyday conversation; even the weaker students seem to show more language production than in speaking tasks which include terminology; thus students should be encouraged to continue using the language they already know.

- In the field of architecture, students are encouraged by their professors to photograph construction sites which they visit, or buildings of architectural interest which they may have seen. In this case an ESP/EAP language teacher could turn these photographs into slides and hold extensive discussions on the subject matter of the slide/photograph.
- Students of architecture are also asked to produce models of buildings, bridges, roads, etc., for their subject courses. These could be utilized by the ESP/EAP language teacher to elicit language, which is often novel and which the students have learnt during ESP/EAP reading courses but which the students have not as yet used orally.
- Students who are studying architecture are obliged to produce drafts, drawings, designs and plans for their subject courses. These could be exploited by the ESP/EAP language teacher to elicit new language from his/her students.
- During their listening exercises, which in the case of the students of architecture at the University of Thessaly are derived from a video, students are encouraged to comment and evaluate the video they have just watched and listened to, thus producing novel language.
- When students produce their own video and show it to the rest of the class, including their subject professors who are usually invited to attend and comment on the video, the students are obliged to produce language which is novel and which includes terminology.
- As aforementioned, subject professors are usually invited to attend ESP/EAP language courses, especially when students present their video. After the showing of the video and the oral presentation of its contents by the student, or the students responsible for its production, subject professors who have been invited to attend the presentation can ask questions and address the ESP/EAP students in English about their field of science. Very interesting conversations arise from this exchange of knowledge and information.

3 Concluding remarks

This paper probed into the second language learning needs of first and second year university students who are studying architecture at the University of Thessaly in Greece. More specifically it examined the texts which have been chosen and prepared for the specific purpose of teaching English for Academic Purposes. It also examined the teaching of academic writing to the aforementioned students,

as well as the presentation and use of authentic videos, listening exercises and written material produced and used for the needs of teaching EAP to students of architecture. Oral language practice, especially the oral use of the terminology and language which has been taught and learnt during the course of the lesson, was also looked into. The main aim of the ESP/EAP language teacher was to create a genuine need for students of architecture to communicate in English using the terminology and language which was used during the course of the lesson.

As it is sometimes difficult to find books or authentic written material to use in the teaching of English for Academic Purposes, teachers are obliged to produce their own ESP/EAP material and must thus be trained to do so. Unfortunately, today there is no in-service training for ESP/EAP teachers in Greece. Most of the information, and perhaps even training that ESP/EAP language teachers in Greece receive is from conventions/conferences and workshops which take place in Greece or around the world.

Finding listening or visual material is perhaps one of the most difficult parts of teaching ESP/EAP in Greece. This is where an ESP/EAP teacher has to become inventive or improvises. If visual material is available on the market or in the university library, as was the case with the Department of Architecture, then it is up to the teacher to use the available material appropriately and effectively to produce exercises and activities which will cater for the needs of his/her students.

Encouraging students to produce oral language is perhaps the most difficult part of teaching ESP/EAP. Some of the tips presented in this paper, which concern the production of oral language by students of architecture, may aid ESP/EAP teachers of other disciplines to formulate and put into practice ideas which will encourage their own students to use the language they have learnt. We, ESP/EAP language teachers, should always remember that whether we are teaching English to first graders in primary school or ESP/EAP students at university we are first and foremost teaching the language for communicative purposes.

Notes

- ¹ “As regards categorization of the many different fields and subfields that ESP refers to, it is possible to refer to at least two groupings. One such grouping looks at the different professional areas involved. According to this rationale, there are two broad categories, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). EAP is further subdivided into English for (Academic) Science and Technology (EST), English for (Academic) Medical Purposes (EMP – involving medical students in tertiary education), English for (Academic) Legal Purposes (ELP) and English for Management, Finance and Economics (EMFE – involving students who study for MBA). EOP is subdivided into two major categories, one involving

professionals (and termed English for Professional Purposes, or EPP) and the other involving non-professionals (and termed English for Vocational Purposes, or EVP). Under EPP we would place English for Medical Purposes for practicing doctors and English for Business Purposes (EBP). Under EVP we would place teaching prevocational English (e.g. finding a job or interview skills), or teaching vocational English (which would involve training for specific trades or occupations) (Sifakis 2004).

- ² According to Oxford (1990: 8) strategy is “planning, competition, conscious manipulation, and movement towards a goal”; in other words, strategies are “a plan, a step, or a conscious action towards” achievement of an objective.

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CHAPTER 4 LEGAL DISCOURSE

COHERENCE IN COURT ARGUMENTS

Monika Gyuró

Abstract

Coherent communication seems to be a necessary and sufficient condition in any institutional talk including forensic discourse in court of justice. Argumentation forms an important part of legal discourse when people intend to attain comprehensibility and consistency in their communication in support of their case trying to win their suits. The paper seeks to explore both global coherence manifested in the argumentation stages of the discourse analysed and local coherence. Local coherence can be detected not only by the size of the discourse units, but also by the relations that exist among them. From the traditions of argumentation theory the argumentation stages proposed by van Eemeren, the concept on argumentative schemata by Perelman and the dialectical analysis based on speech acts by Walton prove to be fruitful to our investigation, thus providing an overall picture of the phenomenon in question.

Key words

argumentation, global coherence, local coherence, legal discourse, argumentative schemata

1 Introduction

Argumentation as a rhetorical genre has been the subject of interest of high priority for centuries in European culture. The origin and synthesis of the approaches to argumentation theory can be found in Aristotle's treatises in *Semantics and Ontology* (2002), *Topics* (2003) and *The Art of Rhetoric* (1991). In these three works Aristotle considers argumentation as a method to gain knowledge about the world. According to his theory, an argument can be illustrated as a premise-conclusion structure: A set of premises or facts support a proposition formed as a conclusion.

With the revival of modern rhetoric in the 1960s, research was characterised by bringing argumentation closer to real life discarding the scholastic traditions

that had ruled the discipline for a long time. In their work, *The New Rhetoric*, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) developed a new theory of argumentation, combining the basic concepts of rhetoric and dialectic to involve audience as a social group into the investigation on the one hand and to put formal logic aside and view argument as a probable domain according to Aristotle's dialectic view on the other.

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1996) consider argumentation as a procedure of rule-governed dispute aimed at convincing the other party. The field of pragma-dialectics is related to rules that make the resolution of a debate possible. The interactional aspect is crucial in argumentation that represents the social feature in the communicative process. In this way, dialectic is manifested in the interaction of the parties, and the rules they use in their interaction is pragmatic in the linguistic sense. According to their views, argumentation follows a stage-by-stage progression of confrontation, opening, justification and conclusion in an argument. The rules correspond to argumentation schemata, such as analogy or causality.

Forensic discourse has been considered to be a prime example of argumentation since Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Its analysis reveals several important features which contribute to the understanding of the structure and coherence of the discourse to be analysed here.

2 Court argument as an institutional discourse genre

Court or forensic arguments as a discourse genre originate from the Aristotelian division of rhetoric. He divided speeches into three types: deliberative, forensic and epideictic (1991: 12). The different elements, aims and forms are grounded in specific situations calling for specific discourses characterised by common factors in the different types of speeches.

Forensic discourse as a genre exerts specific elements (accusation and defence), aims (justice) and forms (proof). Due to these constituting elements, forensic discourse is to be considered as argumentation. On the other hand, forensic argumentation belongs to institutional interaction which takes place between professionals or professionals and clients. Forensic argumentation as institutional discourse is characterised by both general and specific features. The general features involve the factors of institutional discourse such as the dialogical arrangement of talk exchanges, the asymmetrical power distribution, the specially designed and organised 'verbal interventions' and the technical vocabulary which make the discourse relevant to the professional activities in which people are engaged in (Shuy 1983).

The specific features of forensic discourse involving court arguments are characterised by the inherent properties of the legal system. Deductiveness of the legal system is its principal constitutive feature. Kerchove (1993: 42) defines a deductive system as “any set of sentences which contains all its consequences”, i.e. which includes the propositions deriving from those propositions by rules of inference accepted within that system. Kerchove lists three other elements in the legal system to characterise it. Axiomatization is a method in which a person states by way of axioms all the propositions that he will later call upon to support his demonstrations. In case of contradiction between two norms certain general rules are applied to allow priority to one or the other of the norms present. The legal system’s consistency criteria of solution (hierarchy, chronology, specialization) can resolve the conflicts. The last formal feature of the legal system is its completeness. According to this principle, the system should not contain ‘empty legal space’; in other words, whatever is not legally regulated is legally irrelevant. As a consequence, deductiveness, axiomatization, consistency and completeness provide coherence in jurisdiction, which can be detected in a linguistic way as well.

3 Coherence in argumentation

Communicative coherence means the degree to which the elements of communication are related to each other to allow the speech partners to share their knowledge about the world (Sillince 2001). In this way, coherence can be conceived of as the shared understandings of the participants’ conversational goals or tactics (Nofsinger 1983). On the other hand, linguistic coherence explains why conversation is understandable, orderly and meaningful in different contexts. We presume that argumentation in courtroom settings ought to be consistently coherent. We also assume correspondence between cognitive, institutional and linguistic processes.

The study of comprehension has been a central domain of investigation by cognitive psychologists for a long time. According to Goldman (1999), “a mental representation is a construction by the reader that differs from and goes beyond the information in the text itself” (ibid.: 17). On the basis of this view, a central component of successful comprehension lies in the construction of mental representations.

A definition of coherence by Goldman (1999:18) provides a more profound support to our analysis. According to her, coherence can be defined in two possible ways. A representation is considered to be coherent if it is associated with a canonical structure. The following factors provide structure in argumentation. Firstly, argumentative discourse follows certain rules of ordering (van Eemeren

1996). In a dialectical type of discourse the moves the parties follow are definite. The moves extend from asking questions, making assertions to defending assertions. These moves are organised in adjacency-pairs (questions-answers, problem-solution) that form longer sequences that develop certain topics involved in argumentative stages, which evolve through several turns of the interlocutors.

Secondly, argumentation may be regarded as a resolution of viewpoints that passes through phases. This process provides argumentation a sort of development, starting from a confrontation and ending up by a resolution of dispute. This approach is concerned with the dialectical analysis of a dispute. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992: 35) list four stages of argumentation in a dispute:

1. *Confrontation stage.* At this phase, a standpoint is set up and opposed.
2. *Opening stage.* Here, the participants take up the roles of a proponent and opponent. The former party defends the standpoint with the help of argumentation; the latter opposes the proponent's viewpoint to defend his own. Both participants should agree on premises and rules of a dispute.
3. *Argumentation stage.* This stage is regarded as a 'real' dispute, when the proponent defends his standpoint and the opponent casts more doubts on this view.
4. *Concluding stage.* The dispute seems to be resolved if the standpoint or the doubt have been eliminated.

The basic assumption in argumentation is that the construction of problems or intentions has an underlying hierarchical structure in terms of which the participants understand each other and the goals of the message. The hierarchical structure is thought to function both as global and local coherence in discourse, as Brown and Yule formulate it (1983: 223-230).

Global coherence involves larger segments of discourse in the form of definite patterns. Applying such a pattern of coherence organisation, institutional members construct connections between problems in order to construct coherent cognitive maps (Sillince 2001: 4). In argumentation, global coherence is revealed in conversational episodes or stages of a dispute (confrontation, opening, argumentation and concluding).

According to the second definition by Goldman (1999: 18), a representation is coherent, if it includes meaningful relations among its elements. Connecting premises and conclusions depends on a number of schemata creating categories (e.g. part-whole, analogy, generalization) in argumentation.

Perelman’s concept of argumentative schemata proves to be a fruitful approach to our analysis, providing local coherence in argumentation processes. He divides argumentation schemata into “argumentation by association” and “argumentation by dissociation”. The former comprises elements into a whole; the latter separates a whole into elements. In the first category, quasi-logical arguments resemble examples of formal logic, but in a limited sense. Arguments based on the structure of reality build analogy between reality and the example in question. In the second category, arguments by dissociation differentiate ideas that were one before.

Table 1 shows how these relations serve the logical pathways to conclusions according to Perelman’s theory (1969).

Argumentative schemata	Description
<i>Association</i>	
<i>Quasi-logical</i>	
Part/whole	The properties of a set apply to its members
Whole/part	The properties of a set member apply to the set
Comparison	X is smaller/taller etc. than Y
Definition	Identity of description of X
Probability	X is very likely to happen
Tautology	X = X
Reciprocity	X and Y should be given the same treatment
Incompatibility	X and Y cannot coexist
Transitivity	aRb bRc, therefore aRc
<i>Based on structure of reality</i>	
Causality	X causes Y
Direction	X will necessarily lead to Y
Ends and means	X is a means to Y
Persons/acts	X = Y because he did Z
Pragmatic	Y is a consequence of act X
Waste	Opportunities and efforts should not be wasted
<i>Establishing the structure of reality</i>	
Model	X is a person to imitate
Analogy	B is to A as C is to D
Illustration	Explaining a rule
Example	Establishing a rule
Dissociation	Term I vs. Term II

Table 1: Argumentative schemata in Perelman’s theory (Warnick & Kline 1992)

4 Global coherence in oral arguments

Oral arguments or court hearings take place in the case of a debated question when the proponent presents a petition on behalf of his client to the Supreme Court of the U.S. against the respondent. The lawsuit proceeds among the proponent, the respondent and the board of judges under the leadership of the chief justice. The justices question both the proponent and the respondent. In this way, they play the role of the opponent. Oral arguments are not completed by decisions; they are the result of a later procedure.

Plaintiffs brought a suit against Hertz in a California state court. Hertz removed the case to a California federal district court based on diversity jurisdiction alleging that the company's headquarters were in New Jersey, thus its principal place of business was in that state. The Plaintiffs argued that there was no diversity jurisdiction as Hertz's principal place of business was California. According to the Ninth Circuit a corporation's principal place of business is dictated not by the headquarters, but whether the business is significantly larger in the state. The U.S. Supreme Court disagreed, rejecting the Ninth Circuit in favour of the Seventh Circuit's 'nerve center test'. The Court held a corporation's principal place of business by reference to its headquarters (The Oyez Project. *Hertz Corp. vs. Friend*, 559 US).

The proponent's standpoint (on behalf of the petitioner) is offered in the Confrontation stage of the discourse. The Chief calls the proponent, who shortly informs the board about the problem of the case in question:

- (1) *Chief Justice Roberts: We will hear argument next in case 08-1107, the Hertz Corporation v. Friend..... Mr. Srinivasan.*
Mr. Srinivasan: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice, and may it please the Court: The diversity statute deems a corporation a citizen of, quote, "the State where it has its principal place of business," closed quote. The Ninth Circuit erred in holding that Petitioner Hertz is a citizen of California, even though Hertz is headquartered in New Jersey and conducts over 80 percent of its operations outside the State of California, and even though, under the court's approach, national corporations could regularly be deemed California citizens if they conduct operations in that State that are proportional to the state's population. (R:3)

In the Opening stage the opponent casts doubt on the proponent's standpoint. It is the point where the real debate begins.

- (2) *Justice Sotomayor: But let's posit the simpler situation. Headquarters in New Jersey, but everything else is in California. Your test would ignore completely that – and it depends on how you define "headquarters". If they have three corporate executives, that's the entire extent – or let's say one corporate executive who started*

the company and who lives in New Jersey, and he flies out to California and runs the business from there but happens to live in New Jersey, correct?

Mr. Srinivasan: We would, Your Honor. But let me – let me start first with accepting Your Honor’s premise, that in the situation of a multistate corporation with – with diverse operations, the principal place of business would be the headquarters. (R:5)

In the Argumentation stage the opponents (justices) ask questions in connection with the thesis and the proponent tries to defend his statement by clarifying his standpoint.

- (3) *Justice Sotomayor: Because I don’t know the difference between one headquarters and two places to do business or three, but I can still see that some factoring has to be done when the places of business are more limited.*

Mr. Srinivasan: Well, I – well, we think first and foremost that the headquarters’ role would apply even in Your Honor’s situation. (R:6)

In the Concluding stage the initial standpoint is not eliminated because the justices intend to hear the respondent’s arguments. Here start a rhetorically collateral Confrontation, Opening and Argumentation stages of the respondent. The final Concluding stage closes with the rebuttal argument of the proponent (counsel on behalf of the petitioner):

- (4) *Mr. Srinivasan: Your Honor, just one point and I will be brief.*

When a corporation decides to relocate its headquarters, it’s making a very important business decision about what is the location from which its direction and control is going to emanate. That’s a bona fide decision about where its headquarters are going to be located and where its most important decisions are going to be made. (R:47)

The Chief Justice closes the Oral Argument by thanking the proponent and claims that the above-entitled matter is submitted.

5 Local coherence in the oral argument

Quasi-logical schemata and schemata based on reality take part in the greatest number in the oral argument. These are: definition, example, whole-part, aims and means, comparison, cause and pragmatic schemata.

In the Oral Argument the problem is initiated by the proponent when he intends to define the legal position of a corporation. According to the diverse state jurisdiction in the U.S., it is necessary to define the concept clearly. Definitions belong to the quasi-logical schemata of reasoning offering a formal mode of argumentation.

- (5) *Mr. Srinivasan (proponent): Mr. Chief Justice, and may it please the Court: The diversity statute deems a corporation a citizen of, quote, "the State where it has its principal place of business", closed quote. (R:3)*

In his argumentation, the proponent intends to give an example to the justices to understand the function of the term 'headquarters'. In this way, he refers to reality and not to a codified rule. Thus, this kind of argumentation establishes the structure of reality according to Perelman's theory.

- (6) *Mr. Srinivasan: ...we would say that the headquarters controls. And let me give two – two principal reasons why. The first is that even if the operations are in one State and the headquarters are in a different State, the headquarters still is where the direction and control comes from. And I think the ordinary meaning of the phrase "principal place of business" in that situation would still direct attention to the headquarters. (R:9)*

At this point, the justice wants an even more precise formulation of the term by asking what constitutes 'headquarters'.

- (7) *Justice Sotomayor: So what constitutes headquarters?
Mr. Srinivasan: ...And I think the place I would look first and foremost is: Where does direction and control for the corporation come from? That is the situs at which the headquarters would be found.
And I would look also to what a corporation itself identifies as headquarters in public filings. (R:10)*

Here, the properties of the parts (control and place) apply to the set that of the term 'headquarters'. According to Perelman's theory, this argument schema is based on the structure of reality.

6 Use of schemata by the proponent and the respondent

Proponent	
Part / whole	–
Whole / part	3
Comparison	–
Definition	3
Probability	–
Tautology	1
Reciprocity	–
Incompatibility	1
Transitivity	–
Total	8
Respondent	
Part / whole	–
Whole / part	1
Comparison	2
Definition	3
Probability	–
Tautology	1
Reciprocity	–
Incompatibility	–
Transitivity	–
Total	7

Table 2: Association, quasi-logical schemata

Proponent						Total
Causality	Direction	Aims and means	Persons/ acts	Pragmatic	Waste	
–	–	1	–	–	–	1
Respondent						Total
Causality	Direction	Aims and means	Persons/ acts	Pragmatic	Waste	
2	–	1	–	1	–	4

Table 3: Schemata based on structure of reality

Proponent				Total
Model	Analogy	Illustration	Example	
–	3	–	6	9
Respondent				Total
Model	Analogy	Illustration	Example	
–	–	–	5	5

Table 4: Establishing the structure of reality**Dissociation**

No example was found for dissociation.

As we can see from the data above, the proponent uses slightly more quasi-logical schemata in his arguments than his counterpart (8:7). The respondent uses more schemata based on the structure of reality (4:1), especially the explanatory ones (causality, pragmatic). In the schemata of establishing the structure of reality the proponent uses more examples (9:5) and applies more analogies than his counterpart (3:0).

Concluding, we can claim that the proponent seems to be more active using 18 schemata in his argumentation than the respondent with 16 schemata. Although this rate is not significant, the analysis of the distribution of the schema types may be more characteristic of the present Oral Argument.

According to the data, the focus of the discourse lies in defining a term by the proponent (definition: 3; whole/part: 3), the respondent's contribution is detailed (definition: 3; whole/part: 1; comparison: 2). The respondent uses more explanations (causality: 2; pragmatic: 1) showing his interpretative attitude to the issue. The references of the proponent and the respondent (Examples 6:5) illustrate the professional attitude of both parties.

7 The sequential organisation of argumentation

Dialogue is a collaborative communicative situation in which speech partners exchange questions and answers to reach a desired consensus. The dialectical analysis of argumentation emphasizes not only the challenge-response dynamism, but also the collaborative character of the issue in question. Collaboration is manifested in obeying the rules of argumentation and reaching consensus by the end of the conversation.

According to the general analyses by Walton (2000), the rules of argumentation are manifested in four basic elements in any formal dialectic system:

- (1) two parties called proponent and opponent
- (2) the types of moves in a form of speech-acts that the parties make to take their turn to speak
- (3) the sequence of moves where a move is consequence of the previous one
- (4) the goal of the dialogue

From the perspective of his analysis, three kinds of moves are essential in argumentative dialogues: (1) making of assertions, (2) asking questions and (3) defending assertions. The participants's actions in the argumentation may be viewed as means-ends or problems-solutions sequences to attain their communicative goals. In argumentation these sequences are manifested in adjacency pairs, they are revealed in a question-answer or assertions-conclusions forms. This level of discourse belongs to actions that transform the mode of interaction by rules of speech acts giving the force of arguments and events in the investigated discourse types. Investigating dialogue from the perspective of speech acts, Walton (1992) claims that a dialogue can be considered coherent if the exchange of speech acts manifested in turn-taking sequences are aimed at a collective goal. On the other hand, the dialogue is coherent if speech acts correspond to each other to contribute to the goal.

The present Oral Argument is set up on the basis of the above analysis. The Oral Argument starts with the proponent's assertion, which is followed by the justice's question or counterargument. The sequence is closed by the proponent's defence. The three-part sequence is characteristic of institutional talk, as Coulthard proposed it in classroom exchanges (1977) or Mishler (1983) in health care interviews.

The Oral Argument can be characterised by statements and questions only. Although the sequence consists of these three speech acts only, the structure of the sequence (statement, question, answer) follows the authentic rhetoric set up (making of assertions, asking questions and defending assertions). Thus, the speech acts in the argumentative sequence should be considered as coherent.

- (8) *Mr. Srinivasan: ...And the dictionary definitions that we identified in – in our brief and every Federal and State law that defines the term “principal place of business” defines it at headquarters – as headquarters, without any exception for the hypothetical situation that Your Honor posits. But the other – (statement)*
Justice Sotomayor: So what constitutes headquarters? How many executives has to live there? And what is the default rule if those things don't exist? (question)
Mr. Srinivasan: Now, by and large, the headquarters is relatively straightforward... And I think the place I would look first and foremost is: Where does direction and control for the corporation come from? That is the situs at which the headquarters would be found. (answer) (R:9-10)

8 Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to show that not only the inherent properties (deductiveness, axiomatisation, consistency and completeness) of the legal system, but also the linguistic characteristics of argumentation, such as the presence of conversational stages, the use of schemata and the organisation of the most commonly used speech acts into particular sequences may reveal global and local coherence in forensic or court discourse.

This paper is a contribution to the understanding of the mutual collaboration, structured and coherent discourse of the participants in institutional settings.

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CONCESSIVE SCHEMATA IN JUDICIAL ARGUMENTATION: A DIALOGUE IN A MONOLOGUE?

Magdalena Szczyrbak

Abstract

While concessivity has been approached from various perspectives, the semantic-syntactic model being the most frequent one, the situational context of this linguistic phenomenon seems to have received little attention. Drawing on the interactional tripartite concept of Concession, the author contributes a genre-based analysis of this discourse-pragmatic relation in the context of dialogicality of legal decision-making. The study focuses on monologic Concessive schemata found in judicial argumentation as well as the interactional functions of two Concessive moves: acknowledgments and counterclaims. As expected, the findings suggest that judges, like speakers, are aware of and follow the dialogic pattern of Concession found in spoken language.

Key words

concession, legal discourse, judicial argumentation, EU discourse

1 Introduction

While some linguists and philosophers believe that the fundamental function of language is to convey information, others maintain that language is used primarily to establish and maintain social relationships and that as such it needs social interaction to become meaningful. Thus, as claimed by the latter group, the main role of a text, whether written or oral, is that of an exchange; a dialogue between its producer on the one hand and its receiver on the other (Halliday & Hasan 1985: 11).

Associated mainly with the unedited mode of language, interaction is not, however, confined to spontaneously produced conversations. It may also be recognised in written discourse, typically thought of as static and monologic, sometimes even in the absence of overt signals of collaboration. Such is the case of judicial argumentation, in which the court presents multiple viewpoints oriented towards contradictory conclusions. For that reason, even though judgments are instantiations of monologic discourse since they are produced by one arguer (i.e. the court), they may well be referred to as interactional.

The above claim is corroborated especially by use of one argumentative strategy, which is frequently employed by judges, namely Concession. While this linguistic phenomenon has been approached from various perspectives, the model of Concession adopted in the present study is that of a discourse-pragmatic relation realised in a tripartite interactional sequence (cf. Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson 1999, 2000; Barth-Weingarten 2000, 2003) as opposed to the semantic-syntactic approach focusing on the relation holding between the propositions of the main clause and the subordinate adverbial clause of concession¹ (cf. Rudolph 1996; König & Siemund 2000; Verhagen 2000).

It is assumed that writers (judges), by analogy to speakers, follow the three-move pattern of Concession recognised in spoken discourse and, further, that judicial argumentation can be described as interactional, despite the fact that the arguer (the court) is temporally and spatially detached from its audience (cf. Ford 1994 in Barth-Weingarten 2003). Obviously, it would be unwise to argue that judgments, being written records, are characterized by the same degree of dialogicality as, for instance, courtroom interaction where the interlocutors cooperate in a face-to-face setting; nevertheless, it may be indisputably claimed that they exhibit limited interactivity whose signals remain tangible.

In light of the above, the ensuing analysis is concerned with collaborative devices that are observable in the case of non-prototypical realisation of Concession in judicial argumentation exemplified by six monologic Concessive schemata involving one direct participant, that is the court, and indirect participants, including referring courts, governing bodies, private enterprises and legal professionals, whose standpoints are reported and referred to by the court. Thus, the paper seeks to address the question of dialogicality and interactivity of the judgments under analysis and to provide sufficient grounds for judicial argumentation to be viewed as dialogic discourse.

2 Non-prototypical realisation of Concession

It should first be reiterated that prototypically, in the case of talk-in-interaction, Concession is realised by two interactants: the first interlocutor triggers the Concessive sequence by stating something or making a point (X), whereas the other acknowledges the validity of this statement or point in the conceding move (X'), only to refute it in the successive countermove (Y) (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson 1999: 30). Understandably, the Cardinal Concessive Schema referred to above (i.e. X X' Y), which vastly outnumbers other Concessive patterns found in spoken data (cf. Barth-Weingarten 2003), is absent in written monologic discourse as the latter involves one disputant only. Accordingly, all the moves are produced by the arguer that either adopts an opposing view (X) with the

intention to acknowledge it in the conceding move (X') and contest it in the countermove (Y) or the initial 'disagreement-relevant' move is inferred from the following segments of the text (0). In total, five distinct Concessive moves can be identified: *implicit claim*, *claim*, *acknowledgment*, *counterclaim* and *return to the counterclaim*, which interpreted within the whole Concessive pattern contribute to its overall effect.

As can be predicted, the moves occur in various arrangements, be it monadic patterns, where the initial claim is implicit and has to be inferred from the context, or pseudo-dyadic schemata, in which case disputants temporarily adopt arguments that might be advanced by their opponents, before they produce a contrastive move, expressing their preferred viewpoint. Relying on the framework described by Barth-Weingarten (2003), which has been slightly modified for the purpose of the current analysis, the following classification of monologic Concessive schemata, realised as three monadic patterns and their pseudo-dyadic counterparts, has been adopted: Monadic Concessive Schema (M) – 0 X' Y; Reversed Monadic Concessive Schema 1 (rM1) – 0 Y X' Y; Reversed Monadic Concessive Schema 2 (rM2) – 0 Y X' as well as Pseudo-Dyadic Concessive Schema (PD) – X X' Y, Reversed Pseudo-Dyadic Concessive Schema 1 (rPD1) – X Y X' Y' and finally, Reversed Pseudo-Dyadic Concessive Schema 2 (rPD2) – X Y X'. The last schema (rPD2) was not included in the original classification proposed by Barth-Weingarten; however, it will be included in the following discussion, as it has been identified in the data under analysis.

3 Data and method of analysis

The research was based on an 89,604-word corpus composed of 25 judgments issued by the then European Court of Justice (now: the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJ)) in the period of 2006-2008, which were accessed via the online EU law database available at: <http://curia.europa.eu/jurisp/cgi-bin/form.pl?lang=en>. The judgments were selected randomly and they are believed to be representative enough for the analyst to draw conclusions regarding the context-sensitive realisation of Concession in the studied genre.

A closer examination of the generic structure of CJ judgments revealed eight distinct moves, out of which only one step of the argumentative move, i.e. Step 2 (Findings of the Court) of Move 5 (Arguing the case) has been selected to compile the corpus (Table 1).

MOVE	FUNCTION
Move 1 – Identification of the case	Informative
Move 2 – Identification of the scope of proceedings	Informative
Move 3 – Reference to Community law and/or national legislation	Informative
Move 4 – History of the case	Informative
Move 5 – Arguing the case, Step 2 – Findings of the Court	Argumentative
Move 6 – Settlement of costs	Performative
Move 7 – Pronouncement of the judgment	Performative
Move 8 – Signatures	Performative

Table 1: Generic structure of CJ judgments

The analysis was carried out according to methods applied in corpus linguistics and it involved methodical reading of the plain texts of judgments. An account was also taken of the assumptions underlying Interactional Linguistics, and the conversation analytic practice of relying on talk-in-interaction was adapted to accommodate the needs of the current study, even though the above models of inquiry were clearly designed for the study of spoken discourse.

Contrary to what might be expected, the data were not derived by way of an automated process, as computerised counting of lexical and grammatical items would most likely have ignored pragmatically relevant signals that co-occur with the relation under investigation. Given the above, it was necessary to manually identify relevant linguistic devices and annotate examples of Concessive moves and signals in order to verify them against the adopted interactional concept of Concession, and to provide sufficient evidence for judicial argumentation to be approached as dialogic discourse.

4 The Court of Justice of the European Union and its role

When placed within a general discussion of judges' participation in a dialogue with the rest of their discourse community, judgments may be viewed as a tool thanks to which the CJ communicates – as part of its institutional practice – its decisions designed to regulate the behaviour of the composite audience across the EU, including those interested in the development of the law (legal audience),

those indirectly affected by judicial decision-making (general audience) and the parties involved in the proceedings pending before the court (litigant audience).

A note concerning the role of the Court of Justice, being the highest EU court, seems to be in order here. Since its task is to review compatibility of the national legislation of Member States with Community law and the general principles of law, including fundamental rights, with a view to ensuring their equal application across all EU Member States, the CJ, in its judgments, refers to Community legislation or to that of the respective Member State(s), thus dialoguing with the submitted arguments in order to successfully resolve the legal questions submitted by referring courts. Importantly, the CJ's decisions are final and may not be challenged by other courts. However, since it falls outside the scope of the current study, the legal dimension of judicial dialogue has been excluded from the analysis; instead, it is the linguistically constructed collaboration with the judgments' addressees that is subject to scrutiny.

5 Collaboration in dialogic and monologic discourse

At the outset it seems justified to present the notion of collaboration in a broader context. Generally, as believed by advocates of the collaborative view of language, it is first and foremost the responsibility of the producer, even though the receiver can also contribute to mutual cooperation by trying to identify the attempts made by the producer and by considering these collaborative signals when interpreting the message (Tanskanen 2006: 5). Naturally, face-to-face dialogical interactions abound in such signals instantiated by feedback between the interlocutors in the form of completions, echoed pieces of information, clarifying questions or other forms of acknowledging the message conveyed by the co-participant (*ibid.*: 24).

Interestingly enough, collaboration is palpable also in the case of monologic written discourse, with the writer producing arguments and imagining the addressee's reaction (Brown & Yule 1983: 5) in order to anticipate and forestall possible objections. Thus, as observed by Linell (1998: 267), monologic collaboration takes the shape of cognitive negotiation between the producers' own mental representation of the message and their mental representation of what they assume the recipients know. It should further be pointed out that while the writer formulates the text, interacts with the text so far produced, and guides the receiver towards a certain interpretation of the message, the reader is expected to assign meaning to the text, activate semantic potentials of words or segments of the text that are relevant in a given context and for a given purpose and, finally, to look for linguistic devices that will help him or her to interpret the message conveyed by the producer (Linell 1998: 268).

Obviously, given the contextual constraints of the written mode of language, such as lack of access to immediate feedback or to paralinguistic resources that are available to speakers, for example, facial expressions, posture, gestures or voice quality (Brown & Yule 1983: 4) as well as the fact that spoken and written inputs are produced and processed differently, it is by no means unusual that collaboration that is discernible in monologic discourse takes place at two subsequent stages, unlike the here-and-now of the production of a face-to-face conversation. Accordingly, it is realised first at the production stage – when the writer interacts with the implied or anticipated receiver, and next at the interpretation stage – when the receiver looks for signals of collaboration encoded in the message by the writer (Tanskanen 2006: 26).

6 Dialogicality of Concessive schemata in judicial argumentation

Somewhat surprisingly, transfer of certain dialogical features typically found in spontaneous utterances may be observed in the case of Concessive sequences produced by the court in its written argumentation. As might be predicted, among the most frequent collaborative signals one can find those that cue anticipatory rebuttal in the acknowledging move (X'). These obviously constitute evidence of the court's awareness of the need to accommodate the implied addressee's reaction and, further, they serve to preempt disagreement before a counterargument is actually advanced by the opponent.

As aptly observed by Schwenter (2000), investigating concession on the semantic-syntactic level, in the case of this relation, the points of view evoked by the writer cannot always be ascribed to a particular individual or entity; they may simply be linked to violated expectation based on our general knowledge about the world (*ibid.*: 257). In the corpus data analysed, however, the viewpoints referred to by the court, which it does not necessarily subscribe to, can in most cases be attributed to specific individuals or bodies. Thus, the indirect participants whose voices can be heard in the court's argumentation include: other courts (e.g. *Court of First Instance*), governing bodies and offices (e.g. *Commission of the European Communities*), private enterprises (e.g. *British Airways*) and legal professionals (e.g. *Advocate General*). Reported acknowledgments and counterclaims are also derived from sources of EU law, referred to as, for instance: *settled case-law* or *Community law* and other sources (e.g. *case-file* or *available evidence*).

As indicated by the data investigated, the percentage of reported acknowledgments recognised in judicial argumentation greatly outnumbers those recognised in spoken discourse (cf. Barth-Weingarten 2003, Lyda 2007). Thus,

acknowledgments made by the CJ itself with regard to the dispute in question represent 87 per cent of all the acknowledgments identified in the corpus, whereas reported acknowledgments account for 13 per cent.² As can be seen, CJ judgments show polyphony of voices, and they include a fair share of reported concessions that are present in argumentation by way of reference, along with those made by the court in the present case.

Such multiple viewpoints serve as a point of departure for Schwenter (2000: 260), who offers an interesting analysis of their argumentative function in the context of concession (see Table 2 below). He maintains that monological viewpoints are those that are argumentatively parallel and that are oriented towards the same conclusion. Further, he observes that dialogical viewpoints, conversely, are argumentatively opposing and hence they lead to conflicting conclusions. In light of the above distinction, the court’s argumentation under analysis, being a monologue produced by one arguer, may be described as dialogical, since it accommodates multiple argumentatively opposing viewpoints (cf. monologically organised dialogical and polyvocal texts in Linell 2005: 83).

No. of speakers	No. of viewpoints	
	ONE (monological)	TWO (dialogical)
ONE physical speaker (monologue)	monologue/ monological	monologue/ dialogical
TWO physical speakers (dialogue)	dialogue/ monological	dialogue/ dialogical

Table 2: Monologic v. dialogic discourse

As regards the sequential arrangement of Concessive moves, it allows the court to juggle the arguments it presents in various combinations. Remarkably, as indicated by the data, the rM1 schema, accounting for 53 per cent of all the instantiations of Concession recognised in the corpus, is the most frequent pattern (see Table 3 below). It can therefore be posited that judges show a preference for a sequence that enables them to embed anticipatory rebuttals in their own, more persuasive, counterarguments, with the ultimate goal of causing the opponent to accept the point of view propounded by the court. On the other hand, the role of the rPD2 sequence in the architecture of judicial argumentation, representing a mere two per cent of all the Concessive schemata identified in the data, appears to be negligible. This particular pattern may not be preferred by judges as it ends with an acknowledgment in which the court backs down and admits the validity of the opponent’s standpoint.

What appears to be at issue here is the fact that acknowledgments articulated at the end of a Concessive sequence (rPD2) are more strongly pronounced than concessions which are ‘sandwiched’ between the court’s preferred viewpoints (rM1), and thus they are not the court’s favourite choice. Instead, the CJ opts for a pattern that seems structurally best suited for it to forestall a possible objection before it is explicitly stated (rM1). In fact, such anticipatory rebuttal is by far the most frequent function of the acknowledging moves found in the corpus (representing nearly 11% of all the functions).

Schema	% share of all schemata
rM1 (0 Y X' Y)	52.44%
M (0 X' Y)	15.85%
rPD1 (X Y X' Y')	15.85%
rM2 (0 Y X')	7.32%
PD (X X' Y)	6.10%
rPD2 (X Y X')	2.44%

Table 3: Concessive schemata recognised in the corpus

7 Interactional functions of Concessive moves in judicial argumentation

Noteworthy is the fact that acknowledgments and counterclaims perform a number of functions that “co-operate” and thus contribute to the overall effect of the whole Concessive sequence (Barth-Weingarten 2003: 162). As stated above, forestalling a possible objection figures prominently among all the functions that can be attributed to Concessive moves. Due to space limitations, however, the question of discourse functions in the context of Concession may only be touched upon in this contribution. Suffice it to say that – in line with the Hallidayan (1970) division into ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions (with the first two corresponding to what Brown & Yule (1973) term transactional and interactional functions) – the majority of functions performed by the analysed Concessive moves are interpersonal ones and they account for 57 per cent of all the functions attributed to acknowledgments and counterclaims, with the ideational and textual functions represented by 31 per cent and twelve per cent, respectively.

For analytic convenience, the interpersonal functions associated with acknowledgments and counterclaims have been divided into the following strategies: *downgraded agreement*, *backing down*, *depersonalization*,

preempting disagreement, *contrastive zigzagging* and *insisting*. While the first four categories are alignment strategies aimed at lessening the distance between the addressor and the addressee, *contrastive zigzagging* is perceived as adopting a neutral stance, whereas *insisting* allows the court to express disalignment by stating a contrastive point of view. Interestingly, *insisting* is the most frequent function in the corpus (31%) and it is found in counterclaims, while *preempting disagreement* is the second most frequent function (11%) and it is recognised in acknowledgments (Table 4).

Interpersonal function	% share of all functions (ideational, interpersonal and textual)	Move
INSISTING	30.89%	Y Y'
PREEMPTING DISAGREEMENT	10.84%	X'
DOWNGRADED AGREEMENT	6.83%	X'
DEPERSONALISATION	3.77%	X' Y Y'
BACKING DOWN	3.30%	X'
CONTRASTIVE ZIGZAGGING	1.41%	X' Y Y'

Table 4: The most frequent interpersonal functions of acknowledgments and counterclaims

It should be stressed here that the classification of interpersonal functions of Concessive moves proposed by the author may by no means be regarded as exhaustive or complete. Obviously, it should also be remembered that the functions are never performed in isolation; however, in the analysis, the author chose those that – in her view – came to the fore in a particular Concessive move and that she deemed to be relevant in the context of the present analysis. Finally, a detailed analysis of the ideational and textual functions, which have also been recognised in the corpus, falls outside the scope of this study and therefore, it has not been included in the current discussion.

The two most frequent functions of acknowledgments and counterclaims that have been recognised in the corpus, i.e. *insisting* and *preempting disagreement* respectively, can be seen in the instantiations of two Concessive patterns presented below (rM1 and rPD1), in which it is evident that while arguing its case, the court clearly follows a three-move sequence typical of spoken dialogues (Examples (1) and (2)). Obviously, the moves recognised in spontaneously produced talk-in-interaction differ syntactically and lexically from those produced in written discourse. Markedly, in the case of the latter, the moves are more syntactically complex (with the predominance of hypotactic rather than paratactic relations typically found in the spoken mode) and, accordingly, they are cued by signals

that are less frequently encountered in speech (e.g. *even assuming, even though, save where, in principle or while*). Still, certain parallels between the edited and unedited mode of language do exist and hence the argumentation in question may deservedly be termed dialogic.

In the first of the two examples shown below, which represents the rM1 schema, the court produces a counterargument (Y) being a response to an implied claim (0) that has to be inferred from the context and that would normally be stated by the other interactant in a face-to-face conversation. The main role of the countermove is the court's insistence on its preferred line of argument, which, however, includes an embedded concession (X'), in which the court admits an opposing point view, whereby attempting to forestall an anticipated objection which might otherwise be made by the other disputant. Eventually, the court concludes the sequence with its counterclaim, deciding that it is more valid than the claim it conceded in the acknowledging move.

Reversed Monadic Concessive Schema 1 (rM1) – 0 Y X' Y'

- (1) 0 [*Implied claim: The operations referred to in the provisions at issue are governed by specific national legislation.*]

Y- *In the present case,* [INSISTING 1/2]

X'- even assuming, as the Italian Republic argued at the hearing, *that the operations referred to in the provisions at issue are also governed by the national legislation on the carrying out of public works, such as the construction of embankments and tunnels,* [PREEMPTING DISAGREEMENT]

-Y' it is sufficient to observe in that regard that that type of works and the materials used in them do not, as a rule, come within the exception from the directive's scope under Article 2 (1) thereof. [INSISTING 2/2] (ESch-66)

In Example (2), being an instantiation of the rPD1 pattern, conversely, the court triggers a Concessive pattern by assuming an opposing point of view and stating it explicitly (X), only to counter it in the following contrastive move (Y) which, however, envelops – like the rM1 schema above – an acknowledgment intended to rebut a possible objection. Still, the court ends its argument by insisting on the validity of its counterclaim and thus distances itself from the proposition embedded in the conceding move (X'), however, without entirely rejecting it.

Reversed Pseudo-Dyadic Concessive Schema 1 (rPD1) – X Y X' Y

- (2) *X* It is not clear from the documents before the Court whether Article 13 of the Law of 1995 requires broadcasters to be established in Belgium in order to obtain must-carry status.

Y Nevertheless, [INSISTING 1/2]

X' even if that provision were to be construed as **not expressly** reserving that status to broadcasters established in Belgium, since it represents, as the Belgian Government has itself stated, an instrument of cultural policy, the essential purpose of which is to guarantee Belgian citizens access to local and national news and to their own culture, [PREEMPTING DISAGREEMENT]

-Y' it is **more likely** to be granted to broadcasters established in Belgium than in Member States other than Belgium. [INSISTING 2/2] (ESch-68)

As can be observed in the examples provided above, Concessive patterns enable the court to avoid straightforward rejection of arguments it disagrees with. At the same time, they provide space for the arguer to accommodate such viewpoints, while advancing arguments aimed at differing conclusions. Therefore, Concession may be seen as an effective argumentative strategy helping to avert conflicts rather than inflame them.

8 Conclusions

As follows from the preceding sections of the article, Concession is a discourse-pragmatic relation thanks to which outright clashes between viewpoints are avoided. As the data under investigation indicate, judges, like speakers, follow the tripartite interactional pattern found in talk-in-interaction and they willingly employ this strategy in the construction of written argumentation, probably because it is well suited for them to accommodate argumentatively opposing claims and, at the same time, to accentuate the point of view preferred by the court. Consequently, since judges' arguments are sequenced in the manner typical of face-to-face interaction, they may be validly referred to as a dialogue in a monologue.

Notes

- ¹ Whenever the term 'Concession' or 'Concessive' is capitalised further in the article, it applies to the discourse-pragmatic relation defined in the interactional model; however, when the interclausal meaning or the very act of conceding is referred to, the forms 'concession' and 'concessive' are used instead.

- ² The figure representing reported acknowledgments includes both third parties' acknowledgments and those that the court itself made on a different occasion, not directly related to the present case.

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CHAPTER 5 MEDIA DISCOURSE

PALPATED, PHONENDOSCOPED, X-RAYED AND TOMOGRAPHED: THE STRUCTURE OF SCIENCE NEWS IN GOOD SHAPE

Jaromír Haupt

Abstract

Given the growing importance of science popularization, the genre of science news has received relatively little attention so far. The present study attempts to help to fill the gap by investigating the generic structure of science news. To obtain a more comprehensive picture, the structure is examined from three different points of view, using move analysis, van Dijk's description of news structure and the study of coherence structure focusing on contrastive relations. The results of the three approaches are confronted and integrated. The analysis shows various correlations which are accounted for with reference to the purpose of the genre.

Key words

coherence, genre, news structure, popular science

1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to compare and integrate several perspectives on the structure of popular scientific reports. The thinking behind this aim is that the application of several analytical methods, accompanied by the confrontation of the results they yield, is likely to provide a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon studied, in this particular case the structure of science news.

The observations and explanations presented here are but a selection of the most interesting results obtained within a dissertation-length study. Hence, some of the results and analyses will be taken as background for the main point of the study, although they may be intriguing and/or problematic enough to deserve a paper of their own. The same holds for the theoretical aspects of the procedure – neither the theoretical justification nor the explanation of the correspondences between other types of structure will be discussed in detail.

The approaches confronted in this paper include: move analysis as used by Swales (1990), news schema categories introduced by van Dijk (1988) and coherence structure as described by Rhetorical Structure Theory. The study will be conceived as genre analysis, the first of the approaches being thus considered an overall framework.

The use of several perspectives is not a new idea and was employed for example in Taboada (2004). However, the present study takes the idea even further to include a number of approaches not previously considered together. Another goal lies in the analysis of the particular genre accompanied by a functional explanation. It follows that this study is largely qualitative in its nature – it consists in the confrontation of typical patterns along with an explanation with respect to the purpose of the genre.

On a more theoretical level, the idea of integrating generic structure with other approaches is justified by Gruber and Muntigl (2005), who examined the relationship of coherence structure as analyzed by Rhetorical Structure Theory with generic structure as described by Systemic Functional Linguistics. Gruber and Muntigl found various correlations, most importantly that in a given generic stage certain coherence relations are more likely to appear than others, either depending on the genre of which it is part, or independently in various genres. Their explanation is that coherence structures are realizations of generic purposes (*ibid.*: 107).

The present paper starts with a characterization of the genre of science news, including related genres and the main values contributing to the newsworthiness of science news. Next the notion of generic structure and its elements are briefly described, followed by a similar description of the remaining approaches to the organization of text. Apart from a brief comment on corpus and methodology, the results section mirrors the organization of the background section in the order of approaches considered. The results yielded by the individual approaches, are being incrementally added and confronted, culminating in the final explanation of how contrastive relations relate to the overall structure of science news.

For the reasons of space, examples demonstrating the overall structure of text will not be presented. Instead, several extracts are adduced, these being concentrated in Section 4.4, in which the results of all the approaches used will be integrated.

2 Science news as a genre

In order to successfully perform the task of studying the structure of a particular genre, it is requisite to define, contextualize and characterize the genre under analysis. For the purposes of the present paper, which focuses on science

news (also referred to as popular scientific reports), the framework developed by Swales (1981, 1990) was chosen.

Using Swales' general definition of genre (1990: 58) as a "class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes", popular scientific reports will be defined here as a genre whose purpose is to inform the general non-professional public about recent discoveries in a brief, (more or less) balanced, positive and (more or less) entertaining manner. Although the definition follows the general conception of genre in being formulated with relation to purpose, it simultaneously highlights additional aspects of the genre.

As demonstrated by Martin and Rose (2008), it seems quite revealing to consider genres in relation to each other rather than in isolation. For this reason, it is useful to consider science news in relation to three genres or groups of genres. This will also help to illustrate other aspects included in the purpose-based definition.

First of all, it should be kept in mind that science news constitutes a subgenre of news. What distinguishes science news as a subgenre is the specification of the content as discoveries, as well as a positive tone accepting the plausibility of the discovery which is being reported. Other features, mainly the audience, as well as the relative balance and the entertainment value of the report are roughly the same as for other type of news.

Another genre related to science news is the research article. The relationship is drawn on the fact that news reports tend to be based on a source text (van Dijk 1988: 114). In the case of science news, the source text is usually a research article. These genres share certain aspects of content; however, in other respects they are rather different.

Also, the genre of popular scientific reports has to be distinguished from popular scientific articles. These also serve to disseminate scientific knowledge but do not have a news-like format since they are not based on recent discoveries, do not display the structure typically found in news as well as contain a larger amount of background information.

When examining popular scientific reports as a subgenre of news, it is essential to consider the factors contributing to their newsworthiness. These factors which may also be viewed as explaining the entertainment value pointed out in the definition. Fahnestock (1985) explains the newsworthiness of science news by two major appeals: 'deontological' and 'teleological'. Deontological appeal (also called 'wonder appeal') is based on associating a phenomenon with a category which has a recognized value in and of itself. The deontological appeal of a news item can thus draw on references to the marvels of nature or scientific accomplishments which are remarkable in themselves. Also, this category subsumes the news value deviation described, for example, in van Dijk (1985).

Teleological appeal, on the other hand, is based on the fact that a discovery can lead to further benefits – usually to practical applications. For this reason, it is also referred to as ‘application appeal’.

Other features of the genre (including the rather popular subject of the linguistic features of popularization) will not be discussed here since they are not directly relevant to the present paper. In the next section, the approaches employed in this paper will be briefly introduced.

3 Approaches to the structure of news

3.1 Move analysis

The first approach to the structure of genre developed by Swales (1981) within the field of English for Specific Purposes, is commonly referred to as ‘move analysis’. Following this approach, a text is seen as consisting of series of rhetorical moves defined as sections of text performing a specific purpose contributing to the overall communicative purpose of the genre. Moves can be further divided into smaller units called steps, but for the reasons of space these smaller units will not be considered in this paper.

Being centered on purposes, move analysis is one part of the same framework within which in the previous section popular scientific news is defined as a genre. In the same way as purposes shape the overall linguistic characteristics of the genre, the purposes of individual moves influence the linguistic features occurring therein. Such linguistic features characteristic of individual moves will be referred to as their linguistic signals.

The generic structure of science news within the move analysis framework has only been examined by Nwogu (1991). His analysis has revealed the following generic structure (steps have been deleted from the list):

Move 1: Presenting background information

Move 2: Highlighting overall research outcome

Move 3: Reviewing related research

Move 4: Presenting new research

Move 5: Indicating consistent observations

Move 6: Describing data collection procedure

Move 7: Describing experimental procedure

Move 8: Explaining research outcome

Move 9: Stating research conclusions

The order is relatively stable, with slightly more freedom between moves three and seven. Despite the overall plausibility of the results, an independent analysis was carried out for the purposes of the present paper. The reason is the relatively small size of Nwogu's corpus (15 texts) and the fact that his study focuses exclusively on medical news.

3.2 Van Dijk's news schema

As pointed out in the section on genre, popular scientific reports can be considered a subgenre of news. Therefore, it is fully justified to include an approach which captures the structure of news in general. To this end, van Dijk's (1988) notion of news superstructure will be employed. Although its elements are conceived as cognitive categories, they can be expected to correspond to the generic structure of science news.

According to van Dijk, the global organization of news items is based on the hierarchical superstructure shown in Figure 1 in combination with two important principles explained below. The labels in the diagram are self-explanatory. Note that not all of the terminal node categories have to be realized – in fact, the only obligatory categories are **Headline** and **Main Event**. Note that the **Headline** and **Lead** categories have not considered in this study, since they require special treatment.

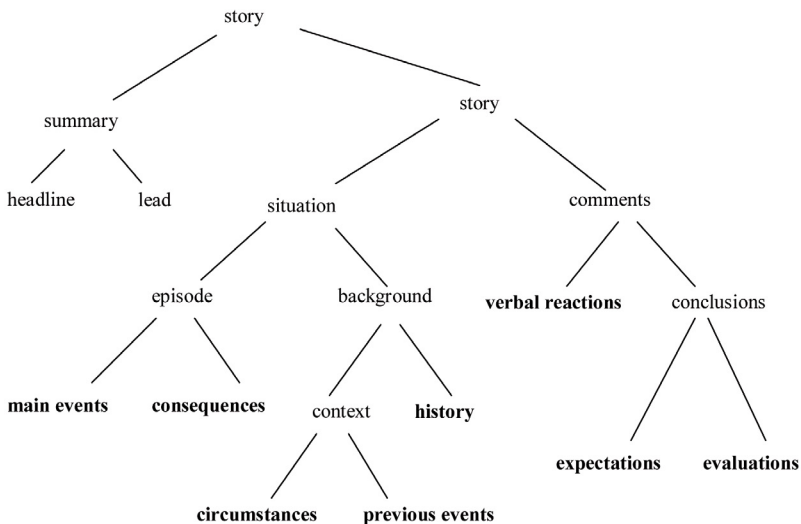


Figure 1: Van Dijk's superstructure of news

The actual realizations of the superstructure displayed above are much more complex, this complexity being the result of the operation of additional principles of news organization. They include the top down principle of relevance governing news discourse and the principle of discontinuous realization of news topics. This principle of top down relevance stipulates that the most important information should appear first in the news story, making it possible (or even desirable) to reorder the categories of the superstructure in order to front the most important item of information.

Partly resulting from the top down principle of relevance is the principle of discontinuous realization of news topics. It means that the categories in the news structure displayed above may be realized in installments, with each further installment bringing additional (and less relevant) details.

Together with the principle of relevance and the optional character of some categories, the discontinuous realization of topics allows for an immense variety of ways to organize news stories. Thus, the diagram represents only a basic pattern from which the structure of particular news reports can be obtained by various transformations, such as recycling, omission or reordering.

4 Findings

4.1 Corpus

The corpus used for the study consisted of 77 popular scientific reports from eleven online sources. These were selected randomly in the period between 2005 and 2010. The sources ranged from online versions of newspapers or magazines (the *Guardian*, *Time*) to websites exclusively devoted to science popularization (*Popsoci*, *NewsScientist*, *Sciencedaily*, *Scitech*, *Discovery News*).

4.2 Move analysis of science news

The first and the most important perspective used to examine the textual organization of science news was that of genre analysis and move structure. The analysis of the corpus has revealed that the generic structure of popular scientific reports consists of the following stages, listed in typical order of appearance:

Move 1: Motivation contains background information which is negatively evaluated or requires a response and thus prepares the ground for the following move.

Signals: interrogative clauses, *wonder*, *mystery*, *debate*

Move 2: Finding announces the discovery and thus contains the main gist of the story.

Signals: present perfect, *news, find, reveal, show, now, new*.

Move 3: Significance explains why the news is newsworthy, the main point of wonder or application appeal.

Signals: superlatives, epistemic modality, *rare, only, unique, lead, use, promise, suggest*

Move 4: Background provides information about the science before the discovery, or background information not presented as result of previous studies. This move may be divided into two, but the two types of information are usually intertwined.

Signals: negation (lexical and grammatical), *refer to* (in definitions)

Move 5: Research Context provides information about the participants of the study and the institutions involved.

Signals: apposition, reporting verbs

Move 6: Source indicates the publication in which the study was featured.

Signals: *appear, publish*

Move 7: Procedure describes the procedure which leads to the Finding. This may vary considerably depending on the scientific discipline of the source research and the method used.

Signals: purpose and manner clauses, relative clauses, comparatives, past tense, *compare, sift, look for, result*

Move 8: Interpretation provides an interpretation of the results introduced in Move 7.

Signals: *suggest, show, indicate, sign, evidence, be, surprising, conclude*.

Move 9: Explanation accounts for the discovery reported.

Signals: *why, explain, reason, cause, affect*.

Move 10: Evaluation evaluates the plausibility of the study or the feasibility of its applications, usually quoting comments provided by scientists not involved in the reported study.

Signals: reporting verbs, *unprecedented, make sense, plausible, enigmatic, idiosyncratic, breathtaking, intriguing, limitation, concern, in line*.

Move 11: Conclusion concludes the report by summarizing the news, settling contradictive opinions or evaluations, predicting future developments of the phenomena studies, indicating areas of further research or providing recommendations.

Signals: *fascinating, important, impact, need, should, future, further.*

Most of the moves are obligatory (Finding, Significance, Institutional Context, Procedure, Source, and Conclusion). Background and the Procedure and Evaluation are optional, but they occur in a majority of articles. Explanation and Motivation appear less frequently. Variations in the ordering of the moves are possible, but are mostly restricted to the Significance stage occurring in the initial position. The results roughly correspond to the structure of medical science news as described by Nwogu (1991).

As far as linguistic signals appearing in the individual stages are concerned, each move was found to contain some of an array of grammatical or lexical signals. Among these, only evaluative signals related to the newsworthiness of the report will be further relevant for the present paper. The strongest positive evaluations can be found in the Significance and Evaluation and Conclusion moves, while negative evaluations are found in Motivation, Scientific Context and Evaluation moves.

4.3 Generic structure of science news and the structure of news

The first set of findings based on confronting several approaches to text structure consists in the comparison of the above described generic structure of science news with the structure of news as described in general. Note that the present study ignores the Headline and Lead categories, as well as the pictures and links, since these categories deserve separate treatment.

- Motivation has been found to correspond to the category Circumstances, although the Circumstances category has to be understood quite broadly to include, for example, questions addressed to the reader.
- Finding corresponds quite closely to Main Event.
- Significance may correspond to Consequences. The correspondence here depends on the kind of appeal which is ascribed to the Finding. If the significance of the discovery reported consists in its applications, or if it is based on negativity, then the correspondence indeed obtains. Nonetheless, unlike in other types of news which often report consequences which actually occurred, the consequences in application based science news are as a rule hypothetical.

On the other hand, discoveries which are reported for their wonder appeal usually have no consequences at all, being interesting in and of themselves. Thus the Significance move which points to wonder appeal has no direct counterpart in the schema science news.

- Scientific Context, Research Context, as well as Source all correspond to Circumstances, or partially overlap with Previous Events.
- Procedure corresponds to Main Event, describing the Finding in greater detail.
- Evaluation as a move corresponds to Verbal reactions, as other scientists are asked to express their judgment about the study.
- Conclusion as a move corresponds to the Conclusion category; however, it contains not only expectations or a summary of evaluations, but also recommendations.

Concerning the correspondence of the two sets of categories, the comparison shows a considerable amount of overlap. This rather general finding is hardly surprising: science news as a subgenre of news reports can be expected to inherit the properties of other news, including structure. This is corroborated by Swales' observation that "the structure of the medical news item takes on the organizational form of journalistic genres" (1990: 125). However, there seem to be two respects which distinguish science news from other types of news. First, there is the incongruent relation between Significance move and Consequence stage. This is due to the fact that the significance or relevance of science news does not usually consist in consequences. The second difference consists in the amount and source of evaluation, which tends to appear as Verbal Comments. Following Urbanová (2009), who suggests that the label Verbal Comments merely signals the presence of other voices and that the category actually functions as one of the other categories, it can be said that in science news Evaluation does, after all, correspond to Verbal Comments, reducing the discrepancy between the two patterns.

As stated above, the structure of news allows for a great variety of particular realizations, thus an interesting aspect of the results is the view of generic structure as a particular realization of news structure. As far as incremental structure is concerned, the generic structure of science news seems to consist of two installments: the first installment is centered around the Finding (Main Event) followed by the Significance (Consequences) and Background (Context). The beginning of the second installment is clearly marked by the Procedure stage. This describes the Main Event in greater detail, which makes this stage less relevant and explains the relegation of information therein to the second installment. In the same way as the highly relevant Significance (~ Consequences) move comments on the highly relevant Finding in the first installment, in the second installment the less relevant Interpretation and Evaluation moves comment on the less relevant plausibility of the Procedure (and of the whole discovery as a result). Note, however, that the correspondence is far from complete since the Background and Motivation moves do not appear in the second installment, while the Conclusion move is present only in the second installment.

Category/ Installment	Circumstances	Main Event	Consequence/ Evaluation	Circumstances	Evaluation
1	Motivation	Finding	Significance	Background	-----
2	-----	Procedure	Evaluation	-----	Conclusion

Table 1: Two installments in the generic structure of science news

On the whole, it can be said that the generic structure is a realization of news structure, or more technically, the generic structure can be obtained by transformations of the superstructure described in Section 3.2 and specification of the content categories. As shown in Table 1, the generic structure can be fitted into two installments which mirror each other to a certain degree, especially in the correspondence of the Finding and Procedure as the first and second realization of the Main Event category.

4.4 Coherence relations

The last aspect of text structure studied was coherence structure. As mentioned above, Gruber and Muntigl (2005) have shown a strong relationship between generic structure and coherence structure as described by Rhetorical Structure Theory. However, rather than providing the comprehensive tree diagrams of RST structure, the present paper focuses on one particular type of relation, namely contrastive relations. The aim here was to establish which moves are typically linked by contrastive relations, and within which moves is the relation usually contained. The occurrences of contrastive relations observed will now be classified according to the content they link.

The first type of contrastive relations, labeled as Discovery Contrast, was found to link Discovery with either Motivation or Background, or to appear within the Significance move. The contrast here obtains between the discovery and the situation before it, which is sometimes, though not necessarily, presented as insufficient or problematic. Thus, the contrastive relation helps to emphasize the newsworthiness of the discovery and plays an essential role in the genre. Example (1) shows the Discovery contrast contained within the Significance stage where the discovery is contrasted against the state of art which is not evaluated negatively:

- (1) *Psychologists have long known people have an “optimism bias”, but the new study offers new details. (Brain’s Optimism Center Is Identified)*

Another type of contrast emphasizing the newsworthiness of the report is Deviation contrast. Unlike the previous type, deviation contrast is based exclusively on wonder appeal and obtains between a phenomenon presented within the Background move which is normal and relatively well-known, and a newly discovered phenomenon which markedly deviates from the norm and is presented in Finding, as demonstrated in Example (2):

- (2) *Until now, the record for the ‘most genomes’ in a bacterium was held by *Buchnera aphidicola*, which is found in aphids and ants around an average of 120 genomes. But Esther Angert... and her colleagues now report... that *Epulopiscium*, a gargantuan bacterium that lives in the intestines of unicornfish, contains up to 200,000 copies of its genome. (Giant Bacterium Carries thousands of genomes)*

The next type of contrast occurs within the Procedure move and will be referred to as Result contrast. It is based on the fact that Procedure often describes an experiment which typically involves a comparison of two groups of experimental subjects (or objects), and these groups display a marked difference in the values of the dependent variable. These differing results are often contrasted with each other in science news. As they constitute the scientific basis of the discovery, contrasting them again helps to support the validity while sometimes also contributing to wonder appeal. The following example shows a coherence relation contrasting the behavior of rats (dependent variable) in two different situations (independent variable):

- (3) *The addicted rats preferred the light chamber even though rats normally prefer dark places. But when their insula [part of the brain] had been shut down they reverted to a preference for the dark chamber. (Rats yield clue to part of brain behind addiction)*

Up to this point in the structure of science news, all of the typical contrasts helped to support either the wonder or application appeal, increasing the newsworthiness of the study. At this point, however (pun inevitable), the Evaluation move follows which presents the comments of other scientists on the plausibility of the study, its conclusions or applications. These are not explicitly negative, but they usually serve to reduce the enthusiasm of the previous stages, thus producing a contrast with the previous part of the report.

- (4) *Rundle believes that there is good reason to think that earthquake forecasting is not hopeless, but he suspects it will be a “big slog” to do it by starting from the basic mechanics of rock. (A broad view of quake ‘prediction’)*

Finally, in order to end on a positive note (remember the definition of the genre), the article returns to evaluate the study more positively, often allowing the authors of the study to provide a final comment.

Note that apart from the Result contrast appearing in the Procedure stage, all the contrasts help to emphasize wonder or application appeals, or the plausibility of the discovery. By doing so, they also help to emphasize the newsworthiness and plausibility judgment of the discovery, contributing to the fulfillment of the generic purpose. The contrastive relations can be thus viewed as realizations of purposes, providing evidence about the close relationship between generic and coherence structure.

On the level of linguistic realization, the contrasts are reflected not only in contrastive conjunctions, but also in the presence of evaluative linguistic signals carrying opposite values and being in the relation of evaluative antonymy. However, rather than being a classic cohesive relation of lexical antonymy which may be established without the consideration of context, the opposition is based on evaluations which are context and genre dependent: for example, the lexical item *discover* is perceived as positive in the genre of science news. Notably, the order in which the above listed contrastive relations appear tends to be fixed, as a result of the relatively fixed order of the moves to which the relations are bound. The order of contrasts is also bound to the order of evaluative signals forming a pattern typical of the genre.

5 Conclusion

The analysis has revealed strong correlations and a relatively high degree of correspondence between the results of various approaches to the structure of science news. At the same time, some discrepancies have been found which point to the specific character of science news. The analysis of contrastive relations has shown distinct types of contrast bound to particular stages of the generic structure. The relation between various types of structure has been explained with reference to the purpose of the genre. The comprehensive analysis of science news has also led to the theoretical implication that there is a strong relation between the examined aspects of text structure.

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WORD-ORDER AS A MEANS OF RESOLVING AMBIGUITY

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Abstract

English word-order performs a variety of functions: some of these have received considerable attention while others have remained relatively underexplored. The dominant function of word-order in English is to signal the syntactic function of an element through its position in the sentence. Consequently, the linear arrangement of clause constituents is much less variable than in Czech, for example, where the signalling role is performed by inflections. Nevertheless, even the English word-order is not absolutely rigid. Deviations from the canonical word-order may be motivated by factors such as the functional sentence perspective, the relative length and structural complexity of the respective clause constituent, as well as by the need to achieve cohesion of the text.

This paper looks at deviations from the grammatical word-order which might be motivated by the need to avoid potential ambiguity, i.e. at cases where a more usual ordering of clause constituents is open to more than one interpretation. Most attention is given to potential ambiguities of scope occurring in newspaper discourse.

Key words

word-order, ambiguity, scope, FSP, newspaper discourse

1 Introduction

The present paper explores the relationship of word-order and ambiguity in present-day English. Word-order, i.e. the sequential arrangement of components constituting the sentence, is the inevitable consequence of an essential property of language – linearity. The actual ordering of constituents results from the simultaneous operation of a hierarchically ordered set of principles, among which that of indicating the grammatical structure of the sentence asserts itself most prominently in English. Ambiguity, for the purpose of this paper, is understood as a phenomenon naturally occurring in language communication, arising in situations where a sentence contains a field of relations potentially open to more than one interpretation (Dušková 1999: 199). In addition, ambiguity is treated as a phenomenon associated with perception, i.e. interpretation of language, rather than production, since a vast majority of ambiguities arise unintentionally, and, moreover, a large proportion of potentially ambiguous structures remain undetected by the interpreter. Quirk et al. (1985) outline a variety of situations

and structures where ambiguity may arise, such as comparison, coordination, modification, negation, etc. While ambiguities may clearly be prompted by a variety of factors, the present study will only deal with those relating to word-order.

Although ambiguities are not restricted to any single style, register or discourse, it is to be expected that different types of texts will show varying degrees of conscious avoidance of structures which can be interpreted in alternative ways. The need to minimise possible ambiguity will therefore be most urgent in written discourses, where the absence of contact between the writer and the reader excludes the possibility of subsequent clarification, and among these particularly in those presenting complex information in a concise manner while aiming at maximum clarity and accuracy. Unsurprisingly, a number of the authentic examples discussed in this study come from media discourse, particularly from news reporting and commentaries.

2 Neutralisation of word-order

In spite of the fact that, from the perception perspective, word-order distinguishes between the separate sentence types and assigns grammatical structure to utterances, thus preventing possible alternative interpretations, there are instances where this function is rendered inoperative by neutralisation of word-order.

(1) *How much remains to be done*

In the admittedly rather unnatural absence of prosody and punctuation, the word-order alone cannot distinguish between a *wh*-interrogative sentence with the Q-element functioning as the subject, and an exclamatory sentence (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 918). On the other hand, the use of punctuation symbols renders the separate alternatives unambiguous. It is worth noting that in this particular example the role of prosody in disambiguation is not particularly clear, with both the interrogative and the exclamatory sentence possibly sharing one intonation contour.

(1a) *How much remains to be done?*

(1b) *How much remains to be done!*

The limitations on the syntactic role of the Q-element as the subject do not apply in dependent clauses, since the difference between S-Op inversion in

interrogative sentences and the non-inverted order in exclamatives is effectively neutralised, at least in strictly grammatical language:

- (2) *The supervisor wonders how much has been done/they have done.*

Similarly, neutralisation of word-order in dependent clauses blurs the distinction between the modal and non-modal uses of *have*, as demonstrated by the following examples (cf. Dušková 1988: 178, 568-569).

- (3) *She had something to say.*
(4) *She had to say something.*
(5) *I wonder what she had to say.*

3 Ambiguity scale

From a different perspective, ambiguity may be viewed as a scalar phenomenon, the scale depending on the relative degree of difference between the separate interpretations. One end of the scale may be represented by newspaper headlines such as those below, retrieved from the internet (<http://www.putlearningfirst.com/language/06senten/ambiguity.html>), where the alternative interpretations yield completely different meanings and require a completely different analysis:

- (6) *Teacher strikes idle kids.*
(7) *Kids make nutritious snacks.*

Some of the potential interpretations have a humorous effect, and one of them is typically rather implausible. In the first of the examples above, a possible clue is lost due to the absence of articles in newspaper headlines. Needless to stress that the indeterminacy of structure cannot be avoided by manipulating the word-order alone; once the form of the clause has been chosen, the word-order is part of grammar and therefore obligatory; this is particularly so in dependent clauses.

On the other hand, there are a number of ambiguities which can be resolved, among other means, by the choice of a different linear arrangement of the constituents. These occupy the middle position on the scale and are typically associated with the concept of scope, i.e. the extent of validity of a

given component, or, as Huddleston and Pullum broadly define it, the semantic analogue of syntactic constituent structure, which has to do with the way the meaning of sentences is built up from the meanings of their parts (2002: 668). Quirk et al. define the concept of scope in relation to negation, but the definition can easily be extended to other items involving this concept, as “the stretch of language over which the negative item has a semantic influence” (1985: 787).

(8) *He told me you wanted it yesterday.* (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 781)

The example above is ambiguous, because the adverbial *yesterday* in the final position may be interpreted as a constituent of the matrix clause or the subordinate clause, respectively. This ambiguity is made possible by both grammatical and semantic compatibility of the adverbial and the predicate verbs, which both refer to past time; cf. the unambiguous *He has told me you wanted it yesterday* or *He told me you wanted it tomorrow*. Moving the adverbial before the subordinate clause is believed to remove it from its scope, making it part of the matrix clause instead.

(8a) *He told me yesterday you wanted it.*

(8b) *Yesterday he told me you wanted it.*

Finally, the opposite end of the ambiguity scale is occupied by examples concerning differences in the information structure, i.e. a potentially different distribution of FSP roles of the separate constituents. Admittedly, some of these ambiguities, though not all, may be resolved by context or, in spoken language, by intonation. A case in point might be the FSP role of a final adverbial of time or place (thematic or rhematic) compared with one in the initial position (largely rhematic).

(9) *He told me yesterday.*

(9a) *Yesterday he told me.*

It is often difficult to separate the different levels of ambiguity strictly from one another, since a single operation of word-order may serve two interrelated purposes, e.g. adverbial fronting simultaneously indicates that the adverbial is typically non-rhematic and that its scope normally extends over the rest of the sentence.

4 Problems in the analysis

A closer look at ambiguity yields a somewhat more complex picture. Consider the following examples: the intended structural boundaries may be indicated by the insertion of a conjunction, or, in writing, by punctuation, yet it is difficult to specify which prosodic clues would be used to distinguish between the alternative interpretations of (8a).

(10) *He told me that yesterday you wanted it.*

(10a) *He told me – yesterday you wanted it.*

(10b) *He told me yesterday you **wanted** it.*

(10c) *He told me **yesterday** you wanted it.*

The placement of the intonation nucleus on *wanted* and *yesterday* respectively, as in the last two examples, marks these elements as rhematic but does not assign the adverbial unambiguously either to the matrix or to the dependent clause. Similarly, even the initial position of *yesterday* in the examples below, whether thematic or rhematic, does not disqualify it as a constituent of the clause *you wanted it* as long as the intervening structure *he told me* is considered as parenthetical.

(11) *Yesterday, he told me, you wanted it.*

(11a) *Yesterday, (at least that's what) he told me, you **wanted** it. (= now you don't)*

(11b) **Yesterday**, (at least that's what) he told me, you wanted it. (= not last week)

On closer inspection, ambiguity may be traced at even deeper levels, occurring in simple structures, which have so far been treated as unambiguous.

(12) *You wanted it yesterday.*

Verbs like *want* (similarly also *wish*, *expect*, *plan*, etc.) may be seen as consisting of two distinct semantic components, either of which the adverbial might complement: the mental state, and an implied subsequent event or phenomenon wished for. The adverbial may therefore be interpreted as conveying the time of the mental state or the time of the expression of it on the one hand, or conveying the time of fulfilment of the event/phenomenon, etc. desired, on the other. Let us suppose that *it* refers to the act of *waking somebody up at seven*. The complete structures would then read as follows:

(12a) *Yesterday you wanted/asked me to wake you up at seven (the following day/s).*

(12b) *(Some time earlier) you wanted/asked me to wake you up at seven yesterday.*

5 Scope ambiguities

Let us now consider the operation of word-order in multiple modification and complementation. Where two prepositional phrases modify a head noun, an *of*-phrase typically precedes prepositional phrases involving other prepositions, on the grounds that the *of*-genitive is more firmly integrated with the head noun.

(13) *Studies of the effect of caffeine on Parkinson's disease and cognitive decline are fascinating because they suggest that caffeine acts differently in men and women.*
(http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/health/article3260049.ece)

This canonical order may, however, be changed if the *of*-phrase is substantially longer than the other postmodification or complementation, in order to minimise the distance of the latter from the head noun and thus to maintain clarity of the structure and ease of interpretation.

(13a) *Studies of the **effect on** Parkinson's disease of caffeine and other chemical substances naturally occurring in food are fascinating...*

In addition to the length of the element, such alteration of the usual word-order could be motivated by the effort to avoid a potential ambiguity, where the *on*-phrase might be associated with a different head noun occurring in the intervening section of the text. In the following examples, *on Parkinson's disease* may be interpreted as relating to either *effect* or *report* in (13b), but only to *effect* in (13c):

(13b) *Studies of the **effect of caffeine** and other chemical substances described in the report on Parkinson's disease are fascinating.*

(13c) *Studies of the **effect on Parkinson's disease of caffeine** and other chemical substances described in the report are fascinating.*

For similar reasons, short adverbials of time or place intervene between the head of a NP and the *of*-genitive. The NP heads are typically nouns denoting events, activities, etc., i.e. those conveying essentially verbal meaning. Unsurprisingly, these examples of constituent ordering are commonly found in newspaper texts,

particularly in news reporting and commentary, i.e. in types of discourse which present complex information about events, along with their spatial, temporal, circumstantial and other specifications, and where clarity and conciseness are important factors.

- (14) *As you would expect, Mr Brown was cross-examined at the hearing about the **resignation on Wednesday** of his adviser, Sir James Crosby, as deputy chairman of the Financial Services Authority.*
(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/matthewd_ancona/4623810/As-Rome-burns-Gordon-Brown-keeps-passing-the-buck.html)

Here, the position of *on Wednesday* before the *of*-genitive reduces the scope of the adverbial to the noun *resignation*. Alternative positions would yield different interpretations:

- (15) *As you would expect, a) on Wednesday Mr Brown was cross-examined b) on Wednesday at the hearing c) on Wednesday about the **resignation of** his adviser, Sir James Crosby, as deputy chairman of the Financial Services Authority d) on Wednesday.*

Positions a) and b) relate the adverbial to *was cross-examined*, c) to *hearing*, and the final position in d) is ambiguous because, theoretically, the adverbial may relate to any of the lexical items in the sentence that are semantically compatible with it: *was cross-examined*, *hearing* and *resignation*. Admittedly, this range of alternative interpretations is reduced by the fact that *was cross-examined* and *hearing* are understood as simultaneous.

Similarly common are adverbials occurring before infinitive structures. In (16) the position of *last November* reduces its scope to *decision*, while other positions might equally relate it to the verbs *cut* and *alter*, as in (17).

- (16) *The strikes stem from BA's **decision last November to** cut cabin crew pay and alter staffing levels on its flights.*
(http://www.telegraphindia.com/1100608/jsp/foreign/story_12541573.jsp)
- (17) *The strikes stem from BA's decision to cut cabin crew pay a) last November and alter staffing levels on its flights b) last November.*

In addition to limiting the scope of these adverbials to the preceding noun, the position between the noun and the infinitive marks the adverbial as thematic. An analogy may be found in the position of adverbials between an auxiliary and a lexical verb, or, in the case of the so-called split infinitives.

- (18) *The board voted to immediately approve building it.* (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 582)

As the authors point out, the split infinitive unambiguously modifies *approve*, whereas other options are less clear:

- (19) *The board voted a) immediately to approve b) immediately building it c) immediately.*

The first of these may modify either *approve* or *vote*, position b) relates to *building*, while in the final position in c) the adverb may modify any of the three verbs, and, on the FSP level, may be interpreted as possibly rhematic.

Therefore, despite the traditional stylistic objections to the use of split infinitives, mainly based on the prescriptive tradition of grammar, these structures seem an organic component of actual language use, which, among other functions, may serve the purpose of avoiding ambiguity, and it is therefore no surprise that they commonly occur in authentic language data.

- (20) *Unlike her predecessors, who focused on dramatic but mysterious remains such as the massive stone heads made by the Olmec in their major cities, she believes that the best way to understand this ancient civilization is to carefully examine the mundane habits of those who lived outside the bustling cities.*
(<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/specialsections/innovators/vanderwarker.html>)
- (21) *Purnell was the first of the five ministers to openly criticize Brown and ask him to step down.* (<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,525085,00.html>)

6 Contradictory tendencies

The examples explored so far have demonstrated the power of even the relatively constrained English word-order to disambiguate meaning. However, it is fair to say that this potential often remains unexploited, i.e. the variation of word-order, though available, is not used to discriminate meanings, as in the case of the focussing adverb *only*. According to the prescriptive tradition, the adverbial should be placed immediately before the element being focussed. While such instances are frequent and clearly unambiguous, in actual language use, the adverb also commonly occurs in the *not-position*, i.e. between the subject and the lexical verb, or between an auxiliary and lexical verb. The focus may then fall on any element in the sentence, which, in spoken language, is identified by

the placement of the intonation nucleus. This, however, does not restrict the *not-position* of *only* to spoken language; there is abundant evidence of such word-order options in exclusively written texts. The potential ambiguity is typically resolved on the grounds of plausibility.

(22) *I only saw Granny at carefully spaced intervals.* (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 582)

In this example, outside rather specific contexts, neither *saw* nor *Granny* are plausible candidates for the status of focus, reserving thus this role for the final adverbial. A somewhat more problematic situation occurs when there are more plausible candidates for the status of focus, as in the following example, where either of the postverbal complements may carry the intonation centre:

(23) *Last Christmas he only gave money to his children.* (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 582)

7 Conclusions

The discussion above demonstrates two contradictory tendencies in the use of word-order as a disambiguating device. On the one hand, structures like the split infinitive or instances of unusual ordering of modifiers and complements manifest a considerable potential of word-order in resolving ambiguity, even within the constraints imposed by the nature of the English language. On the other hand, the fact that some word-order variations, though available for the purpose of disambiguation, remain unexploited shows that this potential need not always be used. This suggests that among the diverse functions of English word-order, disambiguation of meaning occupies a relatively peripheral position, and even when it is employed, it typically operates along with other, more important principles governing the choice of a particular word-order. The extent to which manipulation of word-order is used as a disambiguating device therefore substantially depends on the style, on the linguistic competence of the speaker/writer, and also on the degree of accuracy of expression aimed for. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect this role of word-order to assert itself more strongly in formal written texts containing a high proportion of long and complex sentence structures (e.g. in the examples of newspaper discourse analysed in this study) than in informal spoken language.

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FAITHFULNESS/VERBATIM REPRODUCTION IN DIRECT REPORTED FORMS: AN OVERVIEW

Zuzana Urbanová

Abstract

The paper is concerned with the concepts of faithfulness and/or verbatim reproduction in relation to various forms of representation, especially direct forms. These concepts have been traditionally applied with the aim to define and differentiate between direct and indirect forms. Furthermore, different approaches seem to employ the two notions to refer to different aspects of the presumed original. Subsequently, a number of opposing views have sprung up, criticising the concepts as untenable for various reasons. The paper tries to at least partially present an overview comparing both views. It will be shown that faithfulness is more a pragmatic and functional concept and cannot be applied indiscriminately to all reporting contexts. As a result, it should not be understood as a distinctive criterion in delimiting various forms of presentation. Instead, formal criteria seem to be a more reliable and applicable option.

Key words

direct and indirect reported forms, faithfulness, verbatim reproduction, deictic centre, genre, function

1 Introduction

Reported language has received much attention of philosophers, linguists, sociolinguists as well as discourse and literary analysts. Forms of reported language have been studied from a myriad of angles and different linguists have focused on different aspects, ranging from purely theoretical and conceptual, formal to semantic and pragmatic. Consequently, nowadays reported language represents a well-researched area in linguistic and literary studies, offering innumerable and often conflicting approaches and insights into the topic. Its function in different contexts relies heavily on the exploitation of its communicative potential based on its formal and semantic properties, with different degrees of relevance of these features to different communicative purposes and strategies. Not surprisingly, indiscriminate generalization or transfer from one context to another may result in misunderstanding and context-insensitive treatment of the issue.

One of the notorious bones of contention in the study of reported language has been the notion of faithfulness or verbatim representation of the original, traditionally applied in order to distinguish direct forms of representation

(speech, writing, thought) from indirect or free indirect ones (Coulmas 1986, Banfield 1973, Semino et al. 1997, Semino & Short 2002). However, a number of opposing views have sprung up (Sternberg 1982, Vandelanotte 2009, Tannen 2007, Ikeo 2009), criticising the concept as untenable on grounds of its inapplicability to a number of situations. The reasons speaking for abandoning the concept relate to the conditions of production and perception of discourse, limitations on human memory, absence of the original, re-contextualization and the overall subordination of direct forms to the communicative purpose of the reporting context. This paper focuses on direct forms, presents an overview introducing both sides of the argument and tries to reconcile both views and interpret the concept of faithfulness/verbatim reproduction in connection to genre and communicative purpose.

2 The concept of faithfulness/verbatim reproduction: proponents

In more traditional accounts, the notion of faithfulness/verbatim reproduction is often applied to differentiate between direct and indirect forms of representation. Direct forms are defined in terms of faithfulness to or verbatim reproduction of form and content; in the case of indirect forms, on the other hand, the notions are applicable to content only. The concept of faithfulness/verbatim reproduction is captured by various labels. For example, in referring to direct forms Quirk et al. (1985: 1021) talk about “exact words that someone (who may be the reporter) utters or has uttered in speech or writing” and Coulmas (1986: 42) refers to the reporter’s commitment to “faithfully rendering form and content of what the original speaker said”.

Among the more recent proponents of the concept belong Semino et al. (1997) or Semino and Short (2002). In their approach to reported forms of speech, writing and thought scales, they extend the assumption of faithfulness beyond form and propositional content, and include in their treatment also the claim of faithfulness to speech act value. More particularly, direct forms are marked for the presence of faithfulness claims to form and structures used, propositional content and speech act value; indirect forms are marked for the presence of faithfulness claims to propositional content and speech act value only (cf. Semino et al. 1997: 23). The faithfulness claims pose problems in their application especially to thought-scale since the concept of faithfulness seems to presume an existence of prior discourse. But as will be shown later, even writing and speech scales are not unproblematic. In the following paragraphs more comments will be made on the applicability of faithfulness to direct forms used in various communicative contexts.

3 The concept of faithfulness/verbatim reproduction: opponents

Due to the amount of attention devoted to the phenomenon of direct forms of presentation, one cannot wonder at the disagreement on various issues. The objections raised relate mainly to the concept of faithfulness/verbatim reproduction and point to a number of differences in the approaches adopted. Some studies (cf. e.g. Sternberg 1982) embrace a broader understanding of the concept, including, for example, phonic/graphic features whose reproduction is only partially attainable, especially if the media of the (presumed) original and subsequent report differ. Others like, for example, Semino and Short (2002) seem to distinguish between faithfulness and verbatim reproduction; faithfulness to form is reduced only to lexico-grammatical features, whereas verbatim reproduction may also include “where communicatively relevant, contrastive stress and other speech/writing production factors” (Semino & Short 2002: 328). They, however, do not treat these aspects systematically and do not incorporate them anyhow in their faithfulness claims. Unless used specifically in Semino and Short’s (2002) sense or in Sternberg’s (1982) sense, faithfulness and verbatim reproduction/representation are employed here interchangeably without specification as to what kind of features the terms embrace. The decision also reflects the functional approach adopted here.

Sternberg (1982) points out a number of contexts where verbatim representation is untenable. Let me adduce only a few examples taken from BYU-BNC: The British National Corpus supporting his objections.

- (1) *Wycliffe was unresponsive; his look said: “Are we getting there?”* (BNC/GWB)
- (2) *A man came and said to me, one will come with money and you will do thus and thus.* (BNC/HTX)

Example (1) can be classified as the so-called ‘semiotic transfer’ (Sternberg 1982: 89-93). The concept of verbatim reproduction proves untenable here since there is clearly no prior verbal discourse to be represented in any form, making the concept inapplicable. Consequently, the use of direct quote must be explained by recourse to other than (verbatim) reproduction. The quote in this context seems rather to interpret or translate between two different semiotic systems (ibid.: 90); in this case, the meaning expressed by means of a facial expression is rendered via the system of the English language. Example (2) pertains to a class of phenomena generally labelled by Sternberg as ‘reportive deparicularization’ (ibid.: 93-100). Here the use of direct speech cannot be explained by the need

to report faithfully since this aspect is overtly undermined by employing *thus and thus* in the last clause of the quote. In this case the function is to summarize rather than to offer a word for word reproduction (cf. Clark & Gerrig 1990: 780-781). Looking at the two examples above, the fact that verbatim reproduction can be in some cases unattainable, and even unaimed at, is beyond doubt. It is not without interest to note that although the above forms cannot purport to reproduce faithfully, they all share the ability to express certain interpersonal meanings (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004) in a manner achievable also in non-reported, primary discourse. This, as will be mentioned briefly below, seems to be of primary importance for the function of direct discourse.

A textual and pragmatic perspective is offered by Ikeo's (2009) inspiring research into direct quotations (originally literary reviews) printed on paperback covers of literary works, demonstrating the interaction between the reported direct form and the reporting context. His aim was to examine how Semino and Short's (Semino et al. 1997; Semino & Short 2002) faithfulness claims described above are adhered to in the passages excerpted from the reviews and presented as direct quotes on paperback covers, praising or highlighting some positive aspects of a given title. He focuses on the way the process of structural modification, such as omission of language material, and the process of re-contextualization affect the final interpretation. Though his study offers examples of structures ranging from phrases, clauses, whole sentences and series of sentences, only one example will be offered here for consideration (Ikeo 2009: 1011).

- (3) *"His prose sparkles"*
Scotsman (Amis, 2004)
- (4) ... *His prose sparkles*. *But it's an essayist's prose, or the prose of an upmarket journalist. It's not a good prose for a novelist, any more than his hero Nabokov's was ...* ('Has Amis gone to the Dogs?', Scotsman, September 6, 2003)

Example (3), a quote printed on a paperback cover of one of Amis's works, shows how a complete sentence found to be faithful to the original (Example (4)) the aspects of words and structures used as well as propositional content undergoes – once re-contextualized – a major reinterpretation of its illocutionary force. In the review, the quoted sentence, itself a praise, is functionally subordinated to the more general macro-speech act (criticism); when, however, placed into a macro-speech act of a new context (praise), the interpretation is significantly altered (Ikeo 2009: 1012). The new meaning is arrived at in the most straightforward and relevant way and in the light of the new context changes to praise. It is then clear that faithful rendition of form and meaning cannot guarantee conformity to faithfulness to speech act value (ibid.: 1014-1015).

The following example illustrates the use of direct speech in an informal conversation between two friends discussing their experience of motherhood.

- (5) DAISY *The minute the kids get old enough to do these things themselves that's when*
MARY *"You do it yourself."*
DAISY *Yeah that's when I start to say ...*
→ *"Well, I don't think I'll go in the water this time.*
→ *Why don't you go on the ferris wheel.*
→ *I'll wave to you."*

The excerpt, taken from Tannen (2007: 113), is worth mentioning for two reasons. First, it points to the inapplicability of the concept of faithfulness. Second, Tannen offers a social and pragmatic perspective on the use of direct quotes, covering aspects of reinforcing a mutual relation based on shared experience and appreciation. As for faithfulness, neither Mary's, nor Daisy's quotes seem to refer to any particular situation(s) (ibid.: 113, 117) and seem to correspond to one kind of Sternberg's (1982) reportive deparicularization in that they are stripped of their concrete spatial-temporal specification and summarize or typify actual and uniquely occurring interaction between parents and children. Interestingly, the pronouns *you* used in Mary's and Daisy's contributions do not refer to speech participants, i.e. Daisy or Mary, but to Daisy's children. This is important especially for the interpretation of Mary's contribution. By using the quote as she does, Mary seems to speak for Daisy and her turn relies on shared experience and appreciation of Daisy's point of view (Tannen 2007: 117). Keeping Tannen's perspective on the issue, direct speech should not be viewed as a mere report, but an "active, creative, transforming move which expresses the relationship not between the quoted party [e.g. Daisy] and the topic of the talk [e.g. *You do it yourself*] but rather the quoting party [e.g. Mary] and the audience [e.g. Daisy] ... [but it] is not to say that it was necessarily not uttered by the speaker to whom it is attributed" (ibid.: 111). If we attempt to compare Tannen's perspective with, for example, that of Semino et al.'s (1997), it becomes clear that Tannen's approach is applicable irrespective of the existence of prior discourse since she interprets direct quotes not in terms of faithfulness but is concerned rather with what the quote *says* about the participants' relationship and socio-cultural standing. In different contexts such as scientific writing or newspaper reports, expressing appreciation of and respect to the quoted party may, on the contrary, hinge on the expected conformity to propositional content, speech act value or even words and structures used.

A different approach to faithfulness in direct quotes is offered by Clark and Gerrig (1990). They view direct quotes as demonstrations, i.e. in using a quote reporters demonstrate or “illustrate by exemplification” the previous discourse (Clark & Gerrig 1990: 764, Note 2). One of the most important aspects and the one with far-reaching repercussions for the concept of faithfulness as such is their principle of selectivity (ibid.: 768-769, 774-780). According to this principle, reporters are selective in what they present as direct quotations. The aspects chosen for demonstration may relate to various features of communication, such as the language, dialect or register used. Also, reporters are free to present as demonstration, in dependence on their communicative purpose, different types of acts: propositional content, illocutionary force, locution or features of utterance act and delivery aspects of spoken/written language, such as voice pitch or quality (ibid.: 775). The following examples illustrate their treatment.

- (6) *General Mattis, of the Marine Corps, told an audience five years ago: “Actually, it’s a lot of fun to fight. You know it’s a helluva hoot. I’ll be right up front with you. I like brawling.”* (The Times, July 9, 2010)
- (7) *Gen Mattis was reprimanded at the time by the Marine Corps for telling a conference in San Diego, California: “It’s fun to shoot some people. I’ll be right up front with you, I like brawling.”* (The Daily Telegraph, July 8, 2010)

The above quotes were published in newspaper reports in *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* and represent a controversial view of the fighting in Afghanistan, expressed by general Mattis during his lecture at a conference in San Diego. Since the quotes show a considerable degree of overlap, it can be assumed that they represent an identical speech event, which is corroborated also by the quotes employed in other newspaper reports. Apart from minor differences in vocabulary (*fight* in (6) vs. *shoot some people* in (7)) and the combination of the last two separate sentences in (6) into one sentence in (7), Example (6) is more extensive, containing items edited out of Example (7), for example, discourse markers *actually, you know*, the modifier *a lot of* in *a lot of fun* and the slang expression *a helluva hoot*. In the light of these alterations, it may be assumed that *The Times* quote is closer to the spoken original than the one employed in *The Daily Telegraph* report. Applying the concept of selectivity, we can find a noticeable difference in how style and register are handled. In *The Times* quote, these aspects were deemed relevant and intentionally demonstrated. Furthermore, by using unconventional spelling in *a helluva hoot* the reporter demonstrates one aspect of the utterance act, namely the original pronunciation. None of these options have been made use of in *The Daily Telegraph* quote, which exemplifies common journalistic practice of tidying up direct quotes so that they match the style of the report. It is generally known that these corrections are mostly related

to the level of formality, features of interaction and on the spot production, whereas ideational meaning is more likely to be preserved.

The concept of selectivity naturally leads to the question of motivation for the differences in what is demonstrated. There are many reasons for which direct quotes are employed in the discourse of newspaper reports. Those often enumerated are, for example, persuasiveness, newsworthiness, evidentiality, personalization, objectivity, reliability and credibility (Waugh 1995, van Dijk 1988). Like in this case, direct quotes are also especially convenient for presenting controversial or unpopular views, but they may also serve as a means of portrayal of the reported speaker. This example also shows that what the reporter selects as demonstration and what not is a purposeful decision, a decision subordinated to the overall communicative intention and resulting in interaction between primary (reporting) and secondary (reported) discourse and manipulation of the latter.

The inclusion of the notion of selectivity in the treatment of direct quotations seems to avoid the problems approaches like, for example, Semino et al. (1997) and other similar studies face because of low flexibility and too sweeping a character of the delimitation of direct forms. Consequently, defining direct quotes in terms of the three faithfulness claims makes it impossible for them to account for cases which show different degrees of conformity to faithfulness on the one hand, or, on the other hand, seem to demonstrate aspects not addressed systematically in their treatment. In Clark and Gerrig's (1990) approach, however, faithfulness is selective and covers only those aspects which are intended for demonstration. Thus, it can be said that direct quotes are always faithful since the aspects which have not been selected are automatically excluded from consideration. If we define faithfulness of direct quotes in terms of selectivity, the resulting concept may seem more elusive or under-defined but at the same time more flexible and able to reflect contextual factors such as communicative purpose and conventional peculiarities of genre, its requirements and expectations.

4 Faithfulness and genre

In our discussion we have briefly touched upon the connection between faithfulness and genre. The following paragraphs will focus more on what "counts as faithful" (Semino & Short 2002: 353) in the realm of newspaper reporting, more specifically in newspaper headlines. Consider the following examples:

- (8) *Failure to recognise state 'is unjust and unfair'*
- (9) *"Spain, Greece and the others kept telling us they were waiting for the ICJ opinion. Now it is extremely clear. Not recognising Kosovo now is unfair and will unjustly delay our European perspective."* (The Times, 28 July, 2010)

Examples (8) and (9) are the headline and a more detailed quote excerpted from the body of the report respectively. The headline exemplifies a combination of primary discourse and secondary discourse, in this case, however, with no overtly marked attribution (cf. Clark & Gerrig 1990, Waugh 1995 or Semino & Short 2004). The material enclosed in quotation marks seems to correspond to the last sentence of example (9); the quotes show, however, only a minor overlap based on the items *unjust/unjustly* and *unfair*. As mentioned before, direct quotes in newspaper reports frequently undergo minor stylistic improvements. As Short (1988: 69) shows, the quoting practice applied to headlines seems to be even more relaxed compared to the body of the text itself. Quotes in headlines seem to show a greater propensity for not following to different degrees the three faithfulness claims, instead summarizing the content of the original discourse (if applicable) but at the same time retaining the dramatic and eye-catching effect. This is naturally connected to different functions that headlines and the rest of the report perform. In addition, a degree of imprecision in combination with no overt attribution protects the reporter from libel, without impinging on the intended rhetorical effect.

The preceding paragraphs have focused mainly on showing that the concept of faithfulness cannot be applied indiscriminately to all uses of direct discourse. We have seen the effects of re-contextualization, functional subordination and assimilation of the original to the style of the reporting context with concomitant breach of faithfulness/verbatim reproduction. At the same time, a genre may evince different tendencies in adherence to or breach of faithfulness in dependence on what part of the generic structure a quote is employed in, in other words, to what function it is put to. In some contexts *reporting* function can be overridden by the function of summary, interpretation or maintenance of social relationship. This is not to say, however, that faithfulness should be done away with completely, since there are a number of contexts where faithful reproduction is of vital importance, for example, legal or academic discourse or to a certain extent also newspaper reporting. In a more fact-based discourse the odds of faithful rendition are much higher since it is precisely (what normally in the given context amounts to) faithful rendition that can show one's appreciation of the findings or views of others' or that is needed for a fair and objective treatment in the case of disagreement. If, then, verbatim reproduction and/or faithfulness cannot be applied to distinguish generally between direct and indirect forms, a need arises of a more reliable and less context- and function-bound criterion that would allow a more satisfactory and general application. This issue is addressed in the following paragraphs.

5 The role of deictic centre in distinguishing direct and indirect forms

This section aims to argue for a more reliable criterion than faithfulness/verbatim reproduction is for the delimitation of direct forms of representation. It draws mainly on Sternberg (1982) and Vandelanotte (2009) since their views are considered to a degree compatible and offer fruitful contribution to the topic. Nevertheless, for the purpose of explanation it might be convenient to return to one of the proponents of verbatim reproduction. Banfield (1973: 9) notes that “... the different types of clauses that co-occur with direct and indirect speech suggest that the former must be considered as a word for word reproduction ... while the latter should not”. This quote is interesting since in her view on direct speech Banfield seems to bring together two different perspectives. By referring to “different types of clauses” she raises the question of restrictions on the reported clause in indirect forms, such as mood or interrogative structure. These restrictions may be extended to include also exclamations, vocatives, interjections, discourse markers or incomplete sentences, i.e. phenomena serving to express interactive, interpersonal meanings connected to the *I – you* axis of the original speech situation (Banfield 1973: 6-10, 27, Vandelanotte 2009: 41-50, Sternberg 1982: 108-112). All these are, however, permissible in the direct reported clause. Apart from her view of word for word reproduction, Banfield was right in laying emphasis on structures expressing interpersonal meanings since they are crucial for the functional differentiation of direct and indirect forms and some authors consider them decisive in the delimitation and definition of different forms of reported language. The meanings expressed on the *I – you* axis naturally lead us to the problem of deictic centre.

Deictic centre, as understood by Vandelanotte (2009: 60), comprises the whole “situatedness” of one participant in a speech situation, and plays a vital role in the function of direct and indirect forms. In direct speech, the original deictic centre and the deictic centre of the current/reporting speaker are clearly separated, the former being left *uncontaminated*, preserving its speech-functional responsibility (ibid.: 188). As a result, in direct reported clause the deictic centre retains its “full operativity” and the reported clause “re-enacts” (ibid.: 240) fully the original speech situation, expressing independently speech function and other interpersonal meanings. In indirect speech, the deictic orientation of reported clause (as well as reporting clause) is geared to the orientation of the current speaker (ibid.: 188), leaving the interpersonal level of the original situation accessible only via the reporting situation. In other words, the operativity of the original deictic centre is very low, reducing independent speech function re-enactment to zero (ibid.: 240).

Deictic centre is upheld as essential also by Sternberg (1982: 110-112), who like Vandelanotte, lays emphasis on the difference between single-centredness of indirect forms and double-centredness of direct forms. The deictic autonomy of reported clause in direct forms then allows the occurrence of the above mentioned structures. Sternberg (ibid.: 111), however, explains that deictic independence is by no means to be equated with communicative autonomy evinced by non-reported, primary discourse. In that he alludes to the subordination of direct forms to the communicative purpose of the reporter. Let us now look at the examples discussed in the preceding sections, using the concepts of deictic autonomy resulting in full operativity of the deictic centre and the original speech function re-enactment on the one hand and the absence of the communicative autonomy on the other.

All examples illustrate deictic autonomy of reported element by retaining the original (if applicable) or at least different spatial-temporal and personal coordinates from those found in the reporting clause. Moreover, Examples (1) and (5) contain re-enacted question/suggestion in interrogative form (*Are we getting there? Why don't you go on the ferris wheel.*); Example (5) also re-enacts a request in imperative mood (*You do it yourself.*); and Examples (5) and (6) contain discourse markers (*well, actually, you know*). Thanks to the high degree of operativity of the original deictic centre and full re-enactment, the speech function and other interpersonal meanings remain intact and can be exploited, for example, for their vividness, immediacy or dramatic and enlivening effect. It will have been noticed that these effects are not diminished by the non-existence of prior discourse in one or five. Even though (5), for example, has been deparicularized from a unique speech situation, the “incongruence” (Sternberg 1982: 111) of reporting and reported deictic centres has not been affected. In (2), the items *thus* and *thus* affect the meanings expressed on ideational rather than interpersonal plane (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004). The reduction of propositional content in Example (2) contributes to an irrevocable impingement upon the communicative (though not speech-functional) independence of the reported structure. All these examples testify to deictic duality and re-enactment and show the way the reporting speaker exploits direct speech for his/her communicative purpose: to interpret in (1); summarize in (2), (5) and (8); praise in (3); or express recognition and agreement in the process of maintaining relationship in (5). This functional differentiation points out to a necessary “penetrable [and thus] manipulable” nature of the reported structure (Sternberg 1982: 111), leading to its communicative dependence. In other words, as long as the deictic centres of the reporting and reported structures are kept apart, the *presence* of the reporting speaker in the reported element offers cues as to the function of direct forms in the text and help to explain how the reporting speaker employs a given form to achieve his/her communicative purpose.

6 Conclusion

The preceding sections have tried to show that the concept of faithfulness/verbatim reproduction should be handled with care and always considered in connection with genre and function. Examples were given of instances where it has proven inapplicable; on the other hand, certain degree of faithfulness can be expected in contexts where direct forms are employed for the function of objectivity or evidentiality. As such, however, faithfulness/verbatim reproduction cannot be relied upon in delimiting direct forms conceptually. Also, various approaches view direct forms from different angles, but it is assumed they can be brought together under the common denomination of function. Thus, a reporter selects features that he/she wants to demonstrate, which makes an act of quoting a creative and active process. This selection is, however, governed by his/her communicative intention and expected conventions of a given genre or text-type. The overall subordination to and interaction with the reporting context and its aim do not detract from the advantages offered by deictic duality of direct forms, deictic autonomy enjoyed by direct reported clause and all the pragmatic consequences. On the contrary, these can be actively exploited irrespective of whether faithfulness is applicable or not. They enrich discourse by a number of rhetorical effects indirect forms cannot achieve, be it vividness, dramatization, personalization or, for that matter, faithful reproduction, objectivity and credibility.

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PERSONAL AND PREFERRED PARTNER CHARACTERISTICS IN PERSONAL ADVERTISEMENTS: WITH REGARD TO APPEARANCE

Věra Zouharová

Abstract

In the modern world personal advertisements play an important role in finding a potential partner. When compiling an advertisement people want to draw attention to themselves and their personality and they usually put a great emphasis on self-presentation. Nevertheless, they also focus on preferred partner characteristics. Previous studies revealed and confirmed what is generally believed: that men prefer an attractive partner and emphasise this item in their advertisements. Women are probably acquainted with this fact because they do not hesitate to mention their attractiveness. On the other hand, women usually do not put emphasis on partner's attractiveness, they prefer, for example, success or education.

The present paper explores the choice of vocabulary for indicating personal and preferred partner characteristics as far as appearance is concerned; it considers to what extent the age influences the way people present themselves and how they describe their potential partner. The corpus used for this analysis comprises 100 personal advertisements from British newspapers, 50 written by women and 50 by men.

Key words

personal advertisements, preference, description of appearance, personal characteristics, partner characteristics

1 Introduction

Advertising has become part of everyday life and nowadays it can be seen everywhere, typically in media such as radio, television, magazines and on the Internet. It is an easy way of providing information about a product or service.

Personal advertisements are a way meeting new people. In the modern world, especially as a result of the technical innovations introduced over the past years, a great number of personal ads have started appearing on the Internet; nevertheless, they still find their place in newspapers and magazines, too (Morgan et al. 2010).

Despite being relatively new, the genre of personal advertisements is attractive as it deals with meeting people with a view to a relationship. To establish a relationship or friendship via advertisements people have to communicate, i.e. to use language; it follows that “there is a close inter-relationship between language and society” (Trudgill 1983: 14).

2 Communication, language, society and stereotypes

Language performs various functions in communication (Vestergaard & Schroder 1985). One classification of functions was suggested by Jakobson (1990). Besides the referential function, which accounts for the meaning, i.e. conveying information, reporting, describing or requesting, the conative function and the poetic function are also important. In the conative function, language is used to persuade and influence the addressee’s attitudes, beliefs or actions. In the poetic function, language is focused on playing with words, which is a typical feature of any advertisement (Jakobson 1990, Vestergaard & Schroder 1985).

Society is influenced by various stereotypes. We share understandings about how men and women are supposed to behave and which social roles are ‘natural’ to men and women (Goddard 2000). As Lakoff claims, “stereotypes gain power and credibility through wide use in everyday talk and texts as a result of the fact that they are well-understood or easy-to-perceive” (as quoted in Goddard 2000: 57).

3 Advertising and its language

The word ‘advertisement’ comes from the Latin verb ‘advertere’ and means ‘turn towards’ (Goddard 2002). This suggests making people turn towards advertisements since the primary aim of any advertisement is to draw one’s attention, to inform, influence and persuade (Vestergaard & Schroder 1985). Advertisements usually aim at a particular target group, not at a single reader even if the texts are constructed in order to provide a feeling that they talk to ‘you’ and any person reading the ad does not feel excluded (e.g. Goddard 2002, Cook 2001).

Advertising has its special language. It must be persuasive, it has to influence and sometimes even shock. As Cook claims, “ads use fictions, word play, compressed story-telling, stylized acting, photography, cartoons, puns, and rhythms in ways which are often memorable, enjoyable and amusing” (Cook 2001: 3); it follows that advertisements are then catchy and easy-to-remember. As far as the graphological devices are concerned, advertisements use pictures

and other visual aspects, different fonts or sizes, etc. Personal advertisements are quite limited in using those eye-catching devices, they have to rely on words only, i.e. on language.

As with any other kind of text, advertising has its own structure. Lund (as quoted in Vestergaard & Schroder 1985) summarizes the ultimate task of advertising: attract attention, arouse interest, stimulate desire, create conviction and get action. Vlčková slightly simplifies this task and develops personal advertisements strategy called AIDA: attention, interest, desire and action (Vlčková 2000); it follows that mentioning appearance in the advertisements (being considered in the present study) is consistent with this strategy because described attractiveness will probably draw reader's attention and may lead to the desired action.

4 Personal advertisements

As mentioned above, the personal advertisement is a special kind of advertisement dealing with relationships between people. Shalom (as quoted in Goddard 2000) suggested that "personal ads pages are a kind of supermarket where people are trading what they have for something they want" (Goddard 2000: 43). As Vestergaard and Schroder claim, "in the communication situation of advertising there are three main participants: the advertiser, the product and the prospective buyer" (Vestergaard & Schroder 1985: 27). This can be applied to personal advertisements, too. The product may signify what the advertisers demand – relationship, friendship, contact, company, etc. The prospective buyer is represented by a reader and, ultimately, the person who really answers.

5 Psychological and sociological background of the study

In social psychology there are numerous publications on mate preferences concerning namely sex differences and similarities in mate attraction (Furnham 2009). Previous studies focusing on 'lonely hearts' often rely on evolutionary theory. Based on a study by Young and Burrough, who analysed 98 advertisements, there is an evidence of the so-called sexually dimorphic strategies in personal advertisements, i.e. women offer attractiveness and seek resources and men offer resources and seek attractiveness. These results were also confirmed by Furnham's (2009) study. He questioned 250 participants about mate selection and, as he claimed, females rated intelligence, stability or education significantly higher than males who preferred good looks higher than females.

Research has also focused on factors influencing self-presentation as well as mate selection, i.e. age, sexual orientation, gender, sometimes even religion is considered. Legenbauer tried to assess whether one's own body image may influence preferences of attractiveness in a partner in German-speaking people. It was revealed that those women who wish to be thinner have lower preference for attractiveness in a partner (Legenbauer et al. 2009). This might explain why some women do not emphasize a partner's attractiveness in their advertisements since as Legenbauer suggests the individuals who are not satisfied with their weight or shape may believe they cannot compete with better-looking people and seek less attractive partners from the outset (ibid.).

As has been already mentioned above, discoveries within evolutionary theory are important for understanding human behaviour, communication between men and women, gender differences and similarities. They help us to understand better, for example, stereotypes typical for members of each gender. According to Wiederman (1993) there are gender differences in mating strategies because of different emotional or psychological mechanisms in men and women which is shaped by natural selection. Trivers proposed that "the primary force behind sexual selection was the relative degree of parental investment devoted by members of each gender" (as quoted in Wiederman 1993: 332). That is, the gender investing less in offspring would probably seek a greater number of sexual partners. In the society it is usually men who invest less in offspring and thus men tend to prefer sexual relationships and a greater number of sexual partners. It is claimed that while "a successful mating strategy for men would have involved quantity, a successful mating strategy for women would have been based on more careful selection of mates" (ibid.). Evolutionary theory is thus concerned with reproductive success: females focus on the social and material provisioning for offspring while males seek out fecundity (Furnham 2009).

6 Aims of the study

The present study strives to explore the choice of vocabulary for indicating personal and preferred partner characteristics as far as appearance is concerned and intends to consider to what extent variables such as age and gender influence the way people present themselves and describe their potential partner. The structure of personal advertisements will be mentioned, too. It is expected that the present study will confirm the results of previous research, i.e. that men will prefer attractiveness in their partners but they will not offer their appearance much, while women will offer their attractiveness and will demand resources or education since it is likely that both sexes know what the other wants (Furnham 2009).

7 Material and method

The sample used for this analysis comprises 100 personal advertisements published in one issue of British newspapers, 50 by women and 50 by men. The authors of the advertisements were aged from 20 to 79 and the proportion of each age category is different since the advertisements were chosen randomly (Table 1). Concerning the methods used, the advertisements will be analysed from a discourse analytical and sociolinguistics point of view.

Age	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	total
Women	3%	6%	36%	36%	18%	2%	100%
Men	0	10%	30%	22%	28%	10%	100%
Altogether	1%	8%	33%	29%	23%	6%	100%

Table 1: Age category of authors' of personal advertisements

8 Data

8.1 Structure

Before providing the data of the present study it would be appropriate to mention the inner structure of the personal advertisements under analysis, i.e. if they are compiled according to a pattern or a model. Previous and present studies reveal that there is a basic structure of personal advertisements which could be described as the following pattern: self-description – verb – partner-description – intended relationship (Vlčková 2000). The pattern will be explained more thoroughly: First, the advertisers usually provide some information about themselves, their gender, age, appearance (sometimes even including exact height and weight), qualities and interests, then they use one of the verbs expressing a desire to meet, e.g. *seek*, *look for*, *would like to meet* (always as the abbreviation *WLTM*), etc. After that the advertisers express what they prefer in a partner, i.e. appearance, qualities or interests. Sometimes they do not describe their dream partner at all but they limit themselves to ‘someone similar, with similar interests’, etc. The advertisement concludes with a statement of the relationship they desire, i.e. to share a life together, LTR (long-term relationship), sexual

relationship or even friendship. One example of the above-mentioned pattern is: *Attractive lady, loving, sophisticated, young-55, with own business, seeks sincere, romantic gentleman, with GSOH, for life long, happy relationship*. Not all of the advertisements are constructed according to this model as sometimes the advertisers omit their or their partner's description or they do not provide precise information about the intended relationship. Such advertisements seem to be more interesting and different since they do not express exactly what the advertisers demand or offer. One example can be mentioned: *Beauty and brains, prettier than Penelope Cruz, global insurance lawyer; 40, 5'3, long dark hair; brown eyes, loves to travel*.

8.2 Women's advertisements

8.2.1 Personal characteristics

The description of appearance uses a relatively wide range of vocabulary; it is not restricted to adjectives, as nouns are often used, too. The women concentrate most on four 'items' of their appearance: overall impression, figure, hair and eyes (Table 2). The average number of adjectives or nouns describing their appearance ranges from two to three.

overall impression	figure	hair	eyes	other	not described
92%	46%	28%	4%	2%	8%

Table 2: Proportion of the most frequently described 'items'

The most frequently used words are: *attractive* (the overwhelming majority), *beautiful, pretty, sexy, fit, good-looking*. A lot of adjectives are pre-modified, which endows them with greater importance, for example, *unbelievably attractive, extremely good-looking, very attractive*, etc.

If a woman uses the adjective *pretty*, it usually occurs in the fixed phrase *pretty woman*, probably as the association with the heroine of the well-known film, as in the following example: *Pretty woman seeks Richard Gere*. Since almost everyone has seen this film, the phrase *pretty woman* may convey more attributes, not only the attractiveness of the advertiser but that the woman is looking for an educated and especially wealthy man to look after her.

As far as the description of their figures is concerned, women most often use adjectives such as *slim*, *tall*, *leggy* or *great*. There were no advertisements mentioning ‘short figure’, which allows us to assume that tall figures are considered more attractive and sexy. This is quite interesting since according to previous studies, men prefer shorter women than themselves (Frederick et al. 2007). This preference for the male-taller norm was more strongly enforced by women than men, which is surprising because the results of the present study show that the women do not hesitate to mention that they are tall.

As mentioned above, some of the women use nouns of comparisons to describe their appearance, as in:

- (1) **Julia Roberts look-alike**, 40, professional...
- (2) *Beauty and brains*, **prettier than Penelope Cruz**, global insurance lawyer, 40, long dark hair, brown eyes...
- (3) *Sweet, petite and curvy like Kylie*, 42, youthful...
- (4) **Lord Spencer’s ex wife (Victoria) look-alike**...

Such advertisements are quite different and they still fulfil the primary role of any advertisement which is to draw the attention of its readers or even to shock them.

The women aged 50-59 describe themselves as being attractive more often than the women belonging to other age categories. Eighty-nine per cent of women aged 50-59 use the word *attractive* to describe themselves and 80 per cent mention their slim figures, as well. Their vocabulary is the richest – besides the traditional adjective *attractive* they use, for example, *sexy*, *ex-model*, *classy*, *ballet dancer*, *willowy*, etc. Within other age categories, attractive appearance does not vary systematically with the age; a 29-year-old woman uses the adjective *attractive* or *beautiful* as does a 72-year old one.

8.2.2 Preferred partner characteristic in women

The description of partner’s appearance is not really very important for women when looking for an ideal partner; moreover, 70 per cent of the women do not mention partner’s appearance at all regardless their age (Table 3). Those who include a partner’s appearance in their advertisements usually prefer taller men. These findings support the results of the previous study of preference for the male-taller norm, which is more strongly enforced by women than men (Frederick et al. 2007).

Preferred partner characteristics seem not to be influenced by age, since there are no considerable differences concerning age when related to mate

preferences. As Furnham claims “offers of, and demands for, financial security varied systematically with age, but concerns about appearance and character did not” (Furnham 2009).

overall impression	figure	hair	eyes	other	not described
10%	12%	0%	0%	2%	78%

Table 3: Proportion of the most frequently preferred ‘items’ by women

8.3 Men’s advertisements

8.3.1 Personal characteristics

According to previous studies, men do not put emphasis on mentioning their appearance or even describing it in detail. However, the results of the present study revealed that a lot of men do put emphasis on their appearance in the advertisements, with as many as 82 per cent of them using at least one adjective to positively describe their figures and some of them even the colour of their hair and eyes or the exact height, although to a lesser extent than the women (see Table 4). The fact that more men mention their height may have several reasons. First, men are probably acquainted with the fact that women prefer tall partners. According to Frederick et al.’s (2007) study about factors influencing preferences for height, both sexes preferred relationships where the woman was shorter. Secondly, “there is a widespread norm that encourages men to display masculinity, power and dominance” (ibid.: 205) and taller men are perceived as more powerful and dominant. Therefore, height is considered an important feature of male attractiveness (ibid). These reasons might explain why the men mention their exact height and why the women prefer taller men in their advertisements.

Both men and women use comparisons to famous people when describing themselves:

- (5) *Al Pacino look-alike, early-60s, with a zest for life...*
- (6) *Michael Douglas look-alike, loving...*

As far as age is concerned, the men aged 60-69 mention their appearance more often than those belonging to other age categories, but the difference is not remarkable. Similar vocabulary is used within all the age categories: common

adjectives such as *attractive*, *handsom*, *good-looking*, *fit*, *sexy*, *youthful* and *pleasant* (appearance).

overall impression	figure	hair	eyes	other	not described
46%	82%	8%	11%	4%	22%

Table 4: Proportion of the most frequently described ‘items’ by men

8.3.2 Preferred partner characteristic

As mentioned above, men are more likely than women to seek attractiveness and emphasise women’s appearance and they also indicate this preference in their advertisements, as well. What is quite surprising in the present study is that it seems that appearance is not important for the men; about 60 per cent of the men do not mention this criterion at all.

Frederick et al. (2007) attributes this to the fact that men probably want to maximize their mating opportunities by omitting any partner characteristic.

If men describe their potential partner, they usually focus on figure with a preference for *sexy*, *slender*, *slim*, *sporty* or they use the general adjective *attractive*.

overall impression	figure	hair	eyes	other	not described
48%	35%	2%	0%	4%	51%

Table 5: Proportion of the most frequently preferred items

Much like the women, men’s preferred partner characteristics seem not to be influenced by age for the same reasons, that is men of all age categories prefer an attractive partner.

9 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to focus on personal and preferred partner characteristics with regard to appearance and to consider whether these characteristics are modified by variables such as gender and age. The choice of vocabulary was also considered.

According to previous studies and based on general stereotypes, it was hypothesized that men do not put emphasis on their own appearance in their personal characteristics but will seek attractiveness in a partner, while women will mention their attractiveness in the advertisements but they will not require attractiveness in their potential partner characteristics.

In accord with previous studies it was found that the women offer attractiveness and do not seek it much but unlike previous studies the men in the present study put emphasis on description of their figures and do not often request attractiveness in their potential partners. The reason for this disagreement might be that men want to maximize their mating opportunities when they omit any partner characteristic concerning the appearance (Frederick et al. 2007).

As emerges from the present study, age does not influence personal and preferred partner characteristic as far as the appearance is concerned because “physical characteristics are important to those in all age groups” (Morgan et al. 2010).

As has been the case with all other studies, this one also has its limitations. The advertisements were chosen randomly from a single newspaper and it would have been better to analyse more advertisements published in different newspapers or websites on the Internet. Also, other variables should be considered, not only age and gender but also, for example, social class, cultural similarities and differences, or even religion. All these factors may have a great impact on mate selection. Furthermore, there may be a difference between what people advertise and what they really demand because advertisers usually understate what they prefer and overstate what they are able to offer (Frederick et al. 2007). Nevertheless, this study can perhaps serve as a source and suggestion for further research into personal advertisements and mating strategies.

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CHAPTER 6 POLITICAL DISCOURSE

VAGUENESS IN BRITISH POLITICAL INTERVIEWS

Jana Adámková

Abstract

The present paper aims to contribute to the field of communication and pragmatic studies. It attempts to examine and describe the way in which interviewers (IRs) and interviewees (IEs) in British (Br) political interviews (PIs) use vague language (VL). By analysing two interviews, first between Jeremy Paxman (JP) and Michael Howard (MH) and second between JP and Tony Blair (TB) the paper aims to explore what communicative strategies and effects both participating parties (IR and IEs) try to achieve by means of vague reference to numerical quantity and semantically empty nouns and phrases. The present paper is theoretically anchored mainly in Channell's seminal work called *Vague Language* (1994).

Key words

communication strategies, pragmatics, vague language, political discourse

1 Introduction

This paper is a partial study which is going to become a part of my prospective dissertation thesis called *The Multifaceted Nature of the British Political Discourse* that deals with a variety of communication strategies (CSs) used by interviewers (IRs) and interviewees (IEs) in political interviews (PIs). This contribution is a development of my previous pilot studies on indirectness. It aims to describe what communication effects and strategies IRs and IEs try to achieve by means of vague language (VL), which is looked upon here as a concept closely related to indirectness.

2 Theoretical background and approach

The theoretical sources for this paper are anchored in pragmatic studies by Leech (1983), Levinson (1983), Grice (1999) and Thomas (1995). The inspiration for dealing with vagueness in connection to indirectness came from Cheng and Warren's (2003) article 'Indirectness, Inexplicitness and Vagueness Made Clearer' delineating the three respective terms; and from the seminal work on *Vague Language* by Channell (1994).

Since the study works with authentic spoken language data the approach to the analysis is based on the methodology of discourse analysis (DA). A question may arise whether it is not better to work with methods developed by the conversational analysis (CA). Since this paper focuses on the analysis of the segmental level and is not focused on the prosodic features or turn taking mechanism of the interviews, which are in the centre of attention of CA, the DA approach seems appropriate for the partial study in question.

The study is also inspired by the functionalist approach of the Prague school, as it searches for the connection between the language form and its function.

3 Perspective

As it has been already mentioned above, VL is looked upon with regard to indirectness – the perspective that is illustrated in the following schema inspired by Cheng and Warren's article:

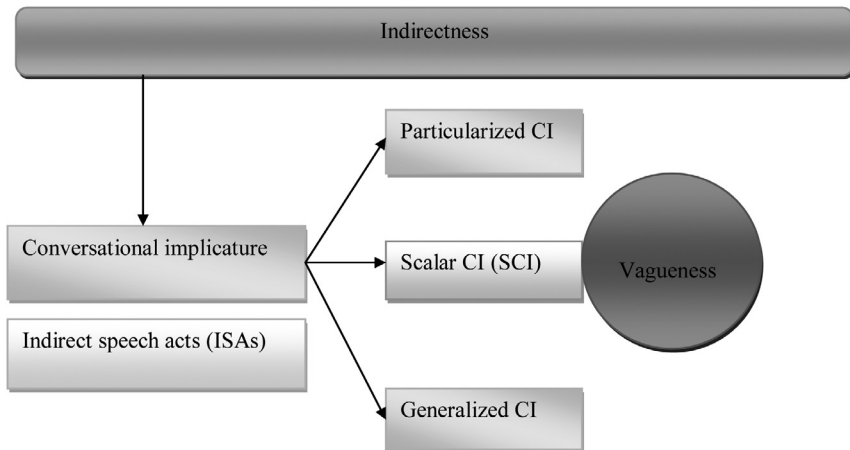


Figure 1: Perspective of vagueness with respect to indirectness

Indirectness is for the purpose of my study referred to as a communication strategy (CS) which is realized in the discourse by ISAs and the three types of conversational implicatures. Vagueness seems to be very closely related to indirectness via SCI, which is, thus, referred to be the meeting point of indirectness and vagueness (Channel 1994: 95-100, Cheng & Warren 2003: 394, Levinson 1983: 134). Despite the closeness between the two, vagueness differs from indirectness as it is manifested by distinct language items.

4 Assumptions and goals

Let me outline the assumptions that gave birth to the analysis. Channell (1994) finishes her seminal work by identifying ten uses of VL and stating that "...many examples show a number of different conversational effects, and it is often impossible to sort out quite what the effect is" (ibid.: 165). In my opinion, Channell could not distinguish the effects because of the great variety of data she used for her analysis as she worked with COBUILD database and with written texts as well. Therefore, I assume that narrowing the scope of study on the transcripts of PIs can help me to overcome the problem of identifying the individual communication effects as both the IR and IEs play certain roles in the PIs that are socially constrained (Clayman & Heritage 2002, Hutchby 2006).

Thus, taking into account the roles of both participating parties (IR) and (IEs) in PIs, it can be assumed that the use of VL is connected with:

- 1) the IR's effort to remain unbiased and polite to the extent prescribed by the social constraints of his role in the PI. Otherwise the use of VL would be inconsistent with IRs' 'speak to the point macro-communication strategy' by which he tries to make politicians speak.
- 2) IEs' effort to avoid answering unpleasant questions, i.e. to be indirect and to save face.

Based on the assumptions mentioned above, it can be expected that the use of VL will be more frequent in IEs' than in IRs' turns. Thus, it is even more interesting to find out which particular communication effects Jeremy Paxman uses VL for.

5 Data

This paper is based on the comparative analyses of two face-to-face interviews broadcast in the programme called *Newsnight* in the British pre-electoral period in 2005. Both of these interviews were conducted by the same interviewer Jeremy Paxman. The first interview with the then Prime Minister

Tony Blair lasts 28 minutes and contains 87 turns. The second interview with the then leader of the Conservatives Michael Howard lasts 28 minutes and contains 104 turns. The interviews as well as their transcripts were downloaded from the official BBC websites. The transcripts were modified for the research purposes.

6 Analysis

The analysis is inspired by the vague language schema derived by Tárnyiková (2009: 122) on the basis of Channell's study (1994). The following chart presents my modified version of the network reflecting the findings in the studied data. While the skeleton of the vague reference to quantity matches the original, the skeleton of vague reference to semantically empty nouns, which occurred in the sample frequently, replaced the original vague reference to placeholder names (i.e. *whatsisname* or *thingy*) and time (*always, often*).

Vague reference to non-numerical quantity seems to encompass the sets of items e.g. *<a bit, somewhat, quite, very, extremely>* which speakers select one item from and thus break the maxim of quantity and trigger SCI – the meeting point of indirectness and vagueness. The bold characters in the schema below indicate the focus of this study.

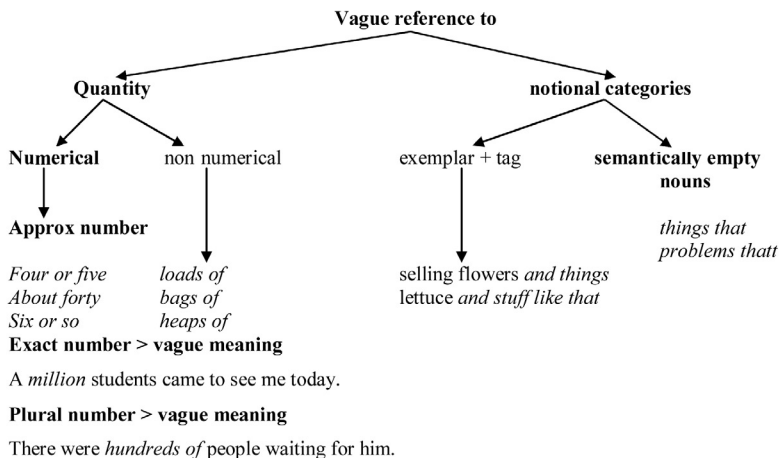


Figure 2: Vague language schema

As the schema above shows the concept that is being referred to here as VL embodies a great variety of language units. This paper aims to describe what

communication effects and strategies Jeremy Paxman, Michael Howard and Tony Blair achieve by the deliberate use of these language units. The following sections present the instances of IR's and IEs' use of vague reference to numerical quantity (see Section 6.1) and vague reference to semantically empty nouns and phrases (see Section 6.2) All instances are accompanied by the analyzing comments.

6.1 Vague reference to numerical quantity

The lines below present an extensive example of the use of vague reference to numerical quantity of all three types (i.e. number with an approximator, exact number with vague meaning and plural number with vague meaning) that are presented in the schema in Section 6. The vague language items in question are underlined.

(1) Topic – Immigration

51. JP: *Let's look at immigration. That's another area in which you've changed. You're proposing a total limit on immigrants to this country including asylum seekers. What's the number?*

MH: *We haven't got a number yet that's because*

56. JP: *You say there's going to be a numerical limit. You say you don't know what that limit will be. And yet you said did you not, in an advertisement in the Sunday Telegraph, a matter of a few weeks ago, it would be somewhere between ten and twenty thousand.*

MH: *No no, that was, that was for asylum seekers. That – that for genuine refugees...*

58. JP: *Well the Prime Minister is quite able to tell us roughly what number of economic migrants we need. He's told by business, perhaps it's a hundred and thirty thousand. Now if business come to you and say we need a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand perhaps, economic migrants a year, you would deny them would you.*

MH: *We would talk to them. We wouldn't necessarily accept what they say, we would have a dialogue with them; that's what consultation means. We want to find out what they think.*

62. JP: *Do you think that limit is going to be in the tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands.*

MH: *I think it will be less than the number of people who come in to the country today, which is, which is about a hundred and fifty thousand, which has gone up three times under Labour, it's tripled under Labour without anybody being consulted...*

63. JP: *So it's less than a hundred and fifty thousand but more than a hundred thousand.*

MH: *I can't give you a precise figure. Less than a hundred and fifty thousand. We will consult...*

These five turns were taken out of the total of thirteen turns in which Paxman and Howard were dealing with immigration. Let us first look at the communication strategy Paxman uses the vague numerical quantifiers for.

Paxman starts the section on immigration by asking a direct question about the number of immigrants that Howard would allow to enter the country in case he was in the government. After four unsuccessful attempts to get the answer (turns 52-54), Paxman uses Howard's own vague estimation presented in the newspaper to attack him by Howard's own words. Since Howard still does not say any number, Paxman refers to the third source – Prime Minister's estimation in the 58th turn and combines it with a suggestive alternative of numbers *a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand perhaps* to make Howard speak but again unsuccessfully.

In the 62nd turn Paxman's use of vague language escalates by using the most vague estimation of all so far used – *in the tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands*, by which he again suggestively gives Howard two numerical options. Finally, Paxman manages to get some number from Howard and immediately tries to make him answer more precisely offering him two concrete estimations *less than a hundred and fifty thousand but more than a hundred thousand*.

To sum up, Paxman uses vague numerical quantifiers consistently with his 'speak to the point macro-communication strategy'. First, he uses them as a means enabling him to attack Howard via reference to Howard's own words (turn 56) and via reference to the third source information (turn 58). Then by using them as suggestive alternatives (turns 62, 63) in which the vagueness of the numerical quantifiers escalates, he tries to make Howard reveal at least some number. The evident gradation of the turns is a part and parcel of Paxman's thoroughly elaborated communication strategy.

Let us now look at the Howard's communication strategy. The fact that he is attacked by his own estimation from the *Sunday Telegraph* is interesting itself. Politicians mostly avoid mentioning numbers or estimations as part of their self-defence CS; exactly for the reason of not being attacked for saying this or that number. Thus, here Howard's strategy failed and he remains evasive for eleven turns. It is only in the 62nd line in which he gives a very careful estimation for the first time and at the same time he tries to shift the topic further by attacking the Labour. The fact that he postpones answering the question to the last possible moment in which he says *I can't give you a precise number* also indicates that he not only wants to evade answering the question but also keeps the audience and the interviewer in an artificial suspense.

6.2 Vague reference to notional categories

This section presents two examples of the use of semantically empty nouns *thing(s)*, *issues* and one extensive example of the semantically empty phrases with *things*, *problems* and *challenges*.

(1) Topic – reference to Howard’s past mistakes

6. JP: ...you opposed the national minimum wages. You said it would cost two million jobs. It hasn't, has it?

MH: Well hang on. We, we won't just talk about things. We won't start things and not finish them. We won't pussy foot about, we'll actually do the things we're promising.

The semantically empty noun *thing* is used here by Howard as a ‘woolly’ filler by which he refers to abstract range of issues his party should probably do. He exploits the vague character of the word and creates ‘wooliness’ in his answer.

(2) Topic – Foreign affairs

34. JP: Just while we're on foreign affairs, there's a new Pope appointed. Do you agree that

TB: Now that's one election I can't comment on I'm afraid.

JP: Do you agree that condoms prevent the spread of aids.

TB: Yes I do.

35. JP: Would you be prepared to tell the Pope that.

TB: Jeremy, I mean, you know, I've, I don't know. If I ever have this conversation with him, I'm sure we will talk about how we can do lots of things to help the world, but I, I don't want to, I've got enough issues in my own election, without getting in to his.

Several false starts with discourse markers in Blair's first utterance show how much taken aback he is by such a question. The semantically empty noun *thing* and very general plural *issues* help him to cope with this surprising and unexpected question. Though vague language items are very often used for this ‘gap-filling’ CS, in the case of Blair's interview such use is fairly exceptional.

(3) Various topics

1. JP: Now, Michael Howard, why would anybody want to bring you back in to government.

MH: Because we will take action on the things which matter to the country and the things

which matter to people, and that's why we've been spelling out our plans to bring to this country school discipline, clean hospitals, more police, controlled immigration, lower taxes; the things that people really do care about and the things that are important for the country's future and unlike Mr Blair who talks a lot but does very little, we will carry out the promises we make.

4. JP: *We all know what Blairism is, we knew what Thatcherism was. What is Howardism.*

MH: *Howardism, if, if you want to use that word is a, a practical programme for dealing with the challenges facing this country. For changing the direction of the country and for putting in place things which really matter to ordinary people in their lives...*

11. JP: *So if we vote for you, we get what, Major Part Two.*

MH: *No, if you vote for the Conservatives at this election, you'll get a government that will take action on the challenges that face the country and on the things that really matter to people and I'll give you one example – crime. Let me give you another example – clean hospitals...*

104. JP: *You need a miracle to win this election.*

MH: *...we've been putting forward serious proposals to deal with the problems facing the country, and with the problems which people are interested in being dealt with. We will act to deal with those problems, that's why I'm actually very confident about the outcome of this election.*

In all four turns above, Paxman's questions give Howard enough space to express himself and he makes use of it. As this extensive example shows, Howard exploits the vague character of the nouns *things*, *problems* and *challenges* by repeating them to that extent that I dare to call it a double vagueness, i.e. he uses vague language items in a very vague way. This is the reason why e.g. the noun *challenge(s)*, whose semantics is definitely not so vague as that of the noun *thing(s)* is perceived as vague here.

Howard repeats the structures beginning by *things*, *problems* or *challenges* so many times that they leave the impression of learned phrases that are deliberately used as easily remembered slogans for the audience. The main communication strategies behind these phrases are woolliness (turn 10), smoke-screening (turns 4, 11, 104) as well as time-gaining CS. The table below shows the ten phrases from the turns above and divides them into two groups according to content of the message specified in the syntagmas.

Group 1	
the things	which matter to the country
the things	that are important for the country's future
the challenges	facing this country
the challenges	that face the country
the problems	facing the country
Group 2	
the things	which matter to people
the things	that people really do care about
the things	which really matter to ordinary people
the things	that really matter to people
the problems	which people are interested in

Table 1: Vague phrases

Howard's answers also violate Grice's maxims of Quantity and Manner and serve him also to save his face as their information load is so low that they seem to be completely unharmed and neutral.

7 Conclusion

The paper has described the way Jeremy Paxman uses vague numerical quantifiers in a very much elaborated way in consistence with his 'speak to the point macro-communication strategy'. It has also described the way in which semantically empty phrases with nouns such as *things*, *problems* or *challenges* are used by MH and TB for the purpose of smoke-screening, woolliness and gaining time.

However, I have to agree with Channel's claim that many communication effects and strategies are hard to depict. I dare say that in the case of this partial study, it is due to the complexity of the studied data, in which the individual communication effects and strategies are mutually interconnected and as such they tend to overlap. Thus, the assumption that narrowing the scope would help me to identify the individual CSs more clearly has not been fulfilled.

Though this study did not intend to draw any statistical conclusions, I cannot help mentioning the fact that the comparison of the two interviews has showed an apparent discrepancy in the frequency of vague language items, which is almost three times higher in MH's interview. The findings revealed by this partial study will be used in my dissertation thesis.

Note:

Transcript symbols:

JP – Jeremy Paxman

MH – Michael Howard

TB – Tony Blair

underlined expressions – indicate the vague language items in question

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THREAT PERCEPTION IN THE SPEECHES OF GEORGE W. BUSH AND B. OBAMA: A COMPARISON

Jana Svobodová

Abstract

Public speeches delivered by the Presidents of the United States show similarities with regard to their length and basic features, such as the opening and closing sentences or references to the U.S. traditions, mission, etc. However, their content is highly dependent on the actual domestic and international situation.

Besides the comparison of the quantitative data (the length of the speeches, the number of sentences/paragraphs/words/characters), the main focus of the article is to analyze and compare how threat to the United States is expressed in the speeches of G. W. Bush and B. Obama. The analyzed speeches were chosen according to their type (Inaugural Address, 9/11 Address, UN Address, State of the Union Address) as well as according to their date of delivery in order to show the changes between the speeches of G. W. Bush preceding or following the 9/11 attacks and the speeches delivered several years later by B. Obama.

The results show that there are threats to the United States which have not changed over the years; however, both Presidents address the threats rather indirectly, showing the uncertainty the United States has faced since the end of the Cold War.

Key words

U.S. Presidents, threat perception, speeches, threat to the United States

1 Introduction

Until there is a new way of communication established in the world, politics is inevitably bound up with language. As Fairclough (2000) put it, political differences have always been constituted as differences in language, and political struggles have always been partly struggles over the dominant language (ibid.: 3).

Before the proper analysis, it would be useful to briefly address the question of political rhetoric. According to Reisigl (2008), rhetoric can be defined as “the practical science and art of effective or efficient speaking and writing in public” (ibid.: 96). It seems that efficiency is the key goal of such an occasion. Yet, speaking and writing in public does not have to be efficient in the way that it raises money for charity or gains votes for a politician. Efficiency could also

mean an increase in prestige or in support for one's project. Efficiency can be highly subjective – success for one person does not always imply success for another.

One has to bear in mind that politicians delivering a speech do not do it as individuals, but rather as representatives of political parties, governments or nations. As Schäffner (1996) points out, they are limited in what to say and how to say it (*ibid.*: 203). So, although a speech delivered during a presidential political campaign is intended to gain votes for the particular politician, such a politician, for example, in the United States, must express ideas which are in agreement with the ideas of a party which nominated this candidate. Whereas Schäffner stresses what speakers cannot do (they cannot “go against the crowd”, the crowd being a political party, for example), Chilton (2004) stresses the humans' possibility to do so, although at the same time he stresses the fact that people are probably afraid of it.

The article deals with four types of speeches of the U.S. Presidents: the Inaugural Address, the 9/11 Address (a speech delivered on September 11), the UN Address (a speech delivered by the U.S. President on the soil of the United Nations) and the State of the Union Address. Bush's speeches are from 2001 with the exception being the State of the Union Address which was delivered in 2003. Obama's speeches are from 2009 with the exception being also the State of the Union Address which is from 2010. The focus of the analysis is on perception of threat by the U.S. Presidents and how threat to the United States is expressed in their speeches. Before describing the results of the analyses it would be useful to address briefly the changes which occurred in the international arena after the end of the Cold War.

The article is based on the author's diploma thesis successfully defended at the Department of English Language and Literature, Masaryk University, Brno.

2 Changes in the international environment after the end of the Cold War

The planes attacking the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, the Flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania and the target of which could have been the White House or the Capitol – all of these events have shown that the United States is not secure on its own soil anymore. Up to September 11, the United States was not (with exceptions) a target for terrorist groups and it was not forced to deal with imminent threat of international terrorism to the United States and its citizens.

The events of 9/11 demonstrate that there have been major changes in the international arena which were brought with the end of the Cold War. During the Cold War the world was a bipolar stage with two superpowers at each pole, the

United States and the Soviet Union. The threat to the United States was clear at that time – every second it could expect a disastrous attack with nuclear weapons from the side of the Soviet Union, which would probably lead to World War III, as the United States did have capabilities to survive a first attack and to counter-attack. At the same time, because the opponents were aware of the fact that the other side had capabilities to survive a first attack and to counter-attack, neither of them was prepared, or rather willing, to start a nuclear war.

With the decline of the Soviet Union and its gradual dismantling the nature of the international arena experienced a major change. The threat from the Soviet Union was successfully replaced by the rogue states such as North Korea or Iran, as well as non-state actors, i.e. terrorist groups. A symmetrical conflict of the Cold War was replaced by an asymmetric conflict of the 21st century.

The crucial aspect of the new threat is its capability to attack the United States within its borders from a remote region. Such a capability was formerly connected in particular with Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) in the possession of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the danger nowadays lies in the fact that the ICBMs could be acquired by terrorist groups and also by particular states which have resources and the will to acquire them.

The following part will show the results of the analyses. It will address the basic parameters of the speeches, the use of keywords and the lexical items used by the Presidents to describe the threat to the United States.

3 Results of the analysis

3.1 Comparison of the basic parameters in the speeches of G. W. Bush and B. Obama

Table 1 shows the number of paragraphs and sentences in the speeches and also the average number of sentences per paragraph.

	Number of paragraphs	Number of sentences	Average sentences/ paragraph
Bush Inaugural	49	95	1.9
Bush 9/11	13	36	2.8
Bush UN	42	173	4.1
Bush State of the Union	86	284	3.3
Average Bush	47.5	147	3
Obama Inaugural	35	112	3.2
Obama 9/11	14	41	2.9

Obama UN	63	230	3.7
Obama State of the Union	111	421	3.8
Average Obama	55.8	201	3.4

Table 1: Comparison of the number of sentences and paragraphs

Based on the analysis of the speeches and the content of the paragraphs in the speeches we may claim that every paragraph deals with a certain topic (and a topic can be dealt with in more than one paragraph). Thus the more sentences in a paragraph, the more complex the discussion about a particular topic. Table 1 shows the average number of sentences per paragraph. Bush's average is 3 sentences per paragraph; Obama's average is 3.4 sentences per paragraph. On the basis of the earlier assumption we may say that Obama devotes more space to a certain topic, as his paragraphs are longer, and thus his discussion about certain topics is deeper than Bush's. In general, Obama's speeches are longer in both the number of paragraphs and the number of sentences.

Table 2 shows the number of words in the speeches, and also the average number of words per sentence.

	Number of words	Number of sentences	Average words/sentence
Bush Inaugural	1,585	95	16.7
Bush 9/11	593	36	16.5
Bush UN	2,479	173	14.3
Bush State of the Union	5,391	284	19
Average Bush	2,512	147	16.6
Obama Inaugural	2,399	112	21.4
Obama 9/11	782	41	19.1
Obama UN	5,135	230	22.3
Obama State of the Union	7,268	421	17.3
Average Obama	3,896	201	20

Table 2: Comparison of the number of words per sentence

We may assume that more words in a sentence may indicate more information provided. From Table 2 it results that Obama's average is 20 words per sentence and this indicates that his language is more complex than Bush's, whose average is 16.6 words per sentence. This claim about complexity of Bush's and Obama's

language may be supported by Flesch's (n.d.) research on readability and plain English. Flesch argues that a higher number of words per sentence indicates more difficult readability for the reader (although his research focused on written language, we may apply it to the speeches as well, as they were originally written and only after that produced orally). According to Flesch's table, both Bush's and Obama's speeches are rather difficult to read. The estimated readability score for Obama is 37 and for Bush approximately 45, which makes Obama's speeches more difficult to read than Bush's ones. For a comparison Flesch also mentions examples of the reading material which he tested. Whereas standard auto insurance policy text has the readability score 10, i.e. it is very difficult to read, readability score for *Reader's Digest* is 65, i.e. it is plain English. Both Bush's and Obama's results are similar to the results for the *New York Times*, which scored 39, and also the *Wall Street Journal* with the readability score of 43.

To sum up the results from Tables 1 and 2, the type of the speech corresponds to the number of paragraphs, sentences and words.

3.2 Analysis of keywords

The analysis also focused on the keywords occurring in the speeches of the U.S. Presidents. The keywords are divided into three groups. The first group contains the words representing the greatest threat to the United States as it results from the analysis of events published monthly in *Mezinárodní politika*, a Czech journal published by the Institute of International Relations Prague. The second group consists of words of positive value for the United States (*freedom, democracy, etc.*). The third group, on the other hand, contains words with negative connotations for the United States (*war, terrorism, etc.*). The words in the second and third group were chosen subjectively by the author. Table 4 shows the results for the first group of keywords:

	Iran (and other forms)	North Korea (and other forms)	Weapon	Weapons of mass destruction
Bush Inaugural	0	0	1	1
Bush 9/11	0	0	0	0
Bush UN	0	0	3	1
Bush State of the Union	3	4	28	5
Obama Inaugural	0	0	0	0
Obama 9/11	0	0	0	0

Obama UN	2	2	9	0
Obama State of the Union	3	1	3	0

Table 3: Occurrence of keywords in the speeches – Group 1

As Table 3 shows, there is a total congruence in case of the 9/11 Addresses. Neither Bush, nor Obama used any of the words in his speech. In case of Bush it can be induced by the fact that the speech was delivered in the evening of the day the attacks occurred, thus it was not completely clear who was behind these attacks. Obama's speech had the form of commemoration in which there is no place for discussion about politics or addressing the imminent threats to the United States.

The UN Address and the State of the Union Address differ considerably. Whereas in Bush's UN Address there is no mention of Iran or North Korea, Obama refers to these countries twice in his UN Address referring to them in one sentence in connection with nuclear weapons and also with threats they possess.

Table 4 shows the results for keywords connected to the U.S. values (words like *freedom*, *democracy*, etc.).

	Freedom	Peace	Justice	Security	Democracy
Bush Inaugural	5	1	3	0	2
Bush 9/11	3	2	2	2	0
Bush UN	2	6	4	0	0
Bush State of the Union	4	9	1	4	1
Obama Inaugural	3	4	0	1	0
Obama 9/11	0	1	0	0	0
Obama UN	2	23	3	12	2
Obama State of the Union	1	2	0	9	2

Table 4: Occurrence of keywords in the speeches – Group 2

Overall, it results from Table 4 that *freedom* and *peace* were the most important values mentioned by Bush in his speeches, whereas Obama emphasized *peace* and *security*. Moreover, *peace* is a highly discussed word in Obama's UN Address, in which he used the word 23 times (and 12 times the word *security*). Bush used *peace* nine times in the State of the Union Address. The reason why

Obama used the word *peace* 23 times may be found in his presidential campaign. During the campaign he put himself into the position of a candidate who wanted to end the war in Iraq and demanded the withdrawal of the U.S. forces. Thus *peace* is used as an opposition to *war*.

It is also interesting that although being the ultimate principle of the United States in the past, as well as at present, the word *democracy* is used only scarcely.

	Terrorism	War	Attack	Danger	Evil	Al Qaeda
Bush Inaugural	0	1	1	1	0	0
Bush 9/11	1	1	6	0	4	0
Bush UN	1	5	2	1	3	1
Bush State of the Union	3	11	6	5	4	8
Obama Inaugural	0	2	0	2	0	0
Obama 9/11	0	0	0	0	1	1
Obama UN	0	5	2	3	0	2
Obama State of the Union	1	7	1	1	0	2

Table 5: Occurrence of keywords in the speeches – Group 3

Table 5 shows the results for keywords connected to the threat to the United States (words like *danger*, *terrorism*, etc.). We clearly see Bush’s inclination toward words with negative meaning. Although in his Inaugural Address he uses these words minimally (as well as Obama), the 9/11 speech shows a wider use of the words *attack* and *evil*. There is of course a reason for the use of the word *attack*, as the speech was delivered a few hours after the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. This action was immediately seen as an evil which landed on the United States. The frequency of the word in the following speech remained practically the same (3 times in the UN Address and 4 times in the State of the Union Address). On the other hand, Obama used the word *evil* only once in the 9/11 speech, where he emphasized renewing *the human capacity for good, not the human capacity for evil*.

3.3 Comparison of Threat Perception by George W. Bush and Barack Obama

Based on the analysis of individual paragraphs in the speeches, Table 6 shows the occurrence of the ‘threat paragraphs’ in the speeches of G. W. Bush and B. Obama.

	paragraphs total	paragraphs addressing threat	percentage
Bush	190	23	15.26 %
Obama	223	15	6.73 %

Table 6: Threat perception – ‘threat paragraphs’/total paragraphs ratio

Although the total number of Obama’s paragraphs in his four speeches is higher than Bush’s, he addresses threat only in 15 paragraphs, i.e. in 6.73 per cent of the speeches. Bush devotes 29 paragraphs to threat perception, i.e. 15.26 per cent of his speeches. We may assume that with the terrorist attacks of 9/11 Bush was forced to deal with the issue of threat to the United States, whereas Obama emphasizes cooperation in the international arena which would not gain much support if Obama was talking about threats and dangers the international community may expect in the future.

We may divide the lexical items reflecting threat perception in speeches of both Presidents into three groups – lexical items which directly name regimes, people, etc., lexical items which indicate means with which a possible attack can be performed, and lexical items which refer indirectly to threats, and theoretical concepts.

The results of the first group are as follows:

G. W. Bush	B. Obama
Group 1: <u>directly addressed regimes, people, etc.:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iraq and its armament program, brutal dictator, Saddam Hussein, who aids and protects terrorists, including al Qaeda • Iran, its government pursuing weapons of mass destruction, and supporting terror • the North Korean regime and its nuclear program 	Group 1: <u>directly addressed regimes, people, etc.:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • al Qaeda and its extremist allies • North Korea • Iran

<p>Group 2: <u>means for a possible attack:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weapons of mass destruction • chemical, biological, nuclear weapons • smallpox • ballistic missiles • nuclear material around the world • missile technologies • one vial, one canister, one crate 	<p>Group 2: <u>means for a possible attack:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nuclear weapons • nuclear materials
<p>Group 3: <u>indirectly addressed threats, theoretical concepts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the enemies of liberty and the United States • everyone trying to keep that light from shining • scattered network of killers • outlaw regimes • terrorism • terror and lawless violence • bioterrorism • challenge • new horrors • further attacks • threats of new era • aggression and bad faith • evil • danger and enemy • man-made evil of international terrorism • ideology of power and domination 	<p>Group 3: <u>indirectly addressed threats, theoretical concepts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • far-reaching network of violence and hatred • adversaries • new threats that demand even greater effort • nuclear threat • warming planet • those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents • extremists, conflicts, genocide, mass atrocities • nations with nuclear weapons • climate change, poverty, pandemic disease • proliferation • nuclear arms race • wars, acts of terror, conflicts • countries avoiding IAEA inspections and ignoring UN demands • terrorists • nations that insist on violating international agreements in pursuit of nuclear weapons • bioterrorism, infectious disease

If we compare Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3 lexical items as used by the presidents, we find certain similarities, as well as differences in how Bush and Obama address threat. With regard to Group 2 lexical items, Obama's remarks about threat possessed by generally nuclear weapons and nuclear material are similar to Bush's; however, Bush mentions nuclear weapons in the broader sense of weapons of mass destruction. Bush also mentions ballistic missiles and ballistic technologies which may be the result of his effort to build national missile defense which would protect the United States and its allies against the threat of nuclear weapons delivered by such missiles. Thus by mentioning it as threat Bush asked

for support in his effort. In the case of Group 3 we may find similarities in the meaning of certain phrases addressing the threat. For example, Bush's *enemies of liberty and the United States* can be linked to Obama's *adversaries*. Similarly, Bush's *scattered network of killers* does coincide with Obama's *far-reaching network of violence and hatred*.

It is necessary to mention that there are no profound differences between threats as perceived by Bush and Obama. Thus it is possible to say that the issue of security of American people and American territory is common to all Presidents and is independent of the party the President belongs to.

In Group 1 we see that Bush mentions as threat, besides Iran and North Korea, particularly Iraq and Saddam Hussein, Obama fears mostly the non-state actors – al Qaeda and its extremist allies. With regard to Group 2, Bush is more concrete in what might endanger the United States. Besides Obama's nuclear weapons and nuclear materials, he mentions weapons of mass destruction as such, but also concrete biological 'weapon' – smallpox, and means how to deliver biological or nuclear weapons (one vial, one canister, one crate, ballistic missiles and missile technologies). In Group 3 there are not differences in who or what is the threat to the United States, as it results from Group 1 and Group 2 that there are not enormous differences in the threat, but rather in the words the Presidents use to describe the threat. For example, Bush's *everyone trying to keep that light from shining*, or *man-made evil of international terrorism* show rich language, as he could have said "everyone threatening us", or just "international terrorism". On the other hand, Obama uses quite specific and concrete words to describe what he is actually talking about – *extremists, conflicts, nations with nuclear weapons, nuclear arms race, countries avoiding IAEA inspections and ignoring UN demands*, etc. But he does not avoid rich language completely – he uses, for example, *far-reaching network of violence and hatred*.

Nevertheless, there is a difference in several topics Obama addresses and Bush does not – *climate change, warming planet, poverty, proliferation, genocide, mass atrocities*, etc. The reason for Obama's remarks on the environment issues may be his personal beliefs, as well as current trends in the world where there is an emphasis on the issues of environment or sustainable resources.

4 Conclusion

The article focused on comparison of threat perception in the speeches by George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Even though the times of the Cold War are over and people around the world do not live in danger of a sudden nuclear war between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, there is still much to fear. It is possible to draw several conclusions from the analysis

of the eight Presidential addresses included in the corpus. First, the length of a speech depends on the occasion, or rather on the type of the speech. Thus, the 9/11 speech is the shortest, whereas the State of the Union the longest speech.

Second, from the length of sentences and paragraphs, and based on the assumption that the longer sentence/paragraph, the more information provided, Obama provided the hearers with more information than Bush. Also, Obama's speeches were longer than Bush's speeches, which resulted from the comparison of the individual speeches (Bush's Inaugural Address compared to Obama's Inaugural Address, etc.). The biggest difference in length of the speeches based on the number of words was in the UN Addresses. Whereas Bush addressed the UN General Assembly with 2,479 words, Obama used 5,135 words. The conclusion which may be drawn from this is that Obama positioned himself as President of a country which is equal to all the member states of the United Nations, and as a President who wants his country to cooperate with the rest of the world. Thus a longer speech was necessary to persuade the member states that his intentions were firm.

Third, how threat is perceived by Bush and Obama and how much space they both devote to remarks about threat depends on the international situation. Both Bush and Obama address threat in three paragraphs in their Inaugural Address. In the case of Bush, the threat to the United States was still unclear at the time of the speech. In the case of Obama, there were no signs that the United States would face another attack. In the 9/11 speech Bush addresses threat three times, whereas Obama only once.

Fourth, even though both Bush and Obama address threat directly by mentioning Iraq, Iran, North Korea and al Qaeda, they both prefer to use indirect names for the threat (*the enemies, the terrorists, outlaw regimes, etc.*). The result of this is that their language seems to be richer; however, to the detriment of comprehension. It is up to the hearer whom to imagine under *aggression* and *bad faith, challenge* or *adversaries*.

To sum up, even though Bush and Obama have different political background, social background, experience, origins, and they are members of a different political party, their perception of the threat to the United States is predominantly the same. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the question of national security of the United States is independent of factors which otherwise influence other areas of politics of the United States.

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CHAPTER 7 SPONTANEOUS AND PREPARED SPOKEN DISCOURSE

ON THE STRUCTURE AND USE OF COMPLIMENTS IN PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH

Jana Švárová

Abstract

The investigation deals with one of the positive politeness devices – compliments. The issue of compliments has been subjected to extensive research (Manes & Wolfson 1981, Holmes 1995, Hatch 1992) considering various aspects of paying and receiving compliments. The paper rather focuses on a relatively unexplored area of spoken language in which compliments frequently occur – the popular genre of sitcom, which is represented in the study by three British and two American sitcoms broadcast after 2000.

The detailed analysis of the corpus data (735 compliments) offered a number of surprising conclusions regarding notably the syntactic structure of compliments, various functions that compliments fulfil as well as the ways compliments are exploited in everyday interactions. The validity of the suggested conclusions is limited by the extent of the corpus data and the fact that fictional discourse was used. Nevertheless, the material under investigation reflects the basic features of real spoken communication and hence the conclusions can be considered, at least to a certain extent, relevant to present-day language.

The present paper is based on a diploma thesis successfully defended in June 2010 at the Department of the English Language and Literature, Masaryk University, Brno.

Key words

compliment, compliment responses, subjects of compliments, speech act, positive politeness, spoken interaction, situation comedy

1 Introduction

'Twas never merry world since lowly feigning was call'd compliment.'
~William Shakespeare~

The present paper focuses on the structure and use of compliments, one of the many positive politeness devices. Since extensive linguistic research on this topic

has been conducted, the investigation focuses rather on a relatively unexplored area of spoken language in which compliments frequently occur – sitcoms. To begin with, it is necessary to delimit the notion of compliment, the definition of which seems to be a moot point in linguistics. From different approaches and theories to the issue, Holmes' (1995) definition appears to be most elaborate and precise which is the reason why I chose it as a background for further analysis. Holmes designates a compliment as follows:

Compliment is a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some "good" (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer. (1995: 485)

Nonetheless, my corpus also contains compliments paid to oneself, as I am convinced such compliments also contribute to the development of rapport between conversation participants and to the general positive atmosphere which frequently frames conversational situations. Moreover, it is a fairly common phenomenon in my corpus data which deserves attention.

Apart from certain referential function of this speech act (i.e. compliments convey certain information), the primary function of a compliment is affective and social (Holmes 1995). This basic function means that compliments offer solidarity, friendship or togetherness, or, to put it differently, are bonding instruments. However, Manes and Wolfson (1981) suggest that compliments fulfil other (additional) functions, too, when they are used, for instance, to greet or to thank someone. Similarly, Holmes (1995) maintains what she calls "secondary functions" such as to express envy or desire for hearer's possessions or to verbally harass. All of these potential functions of compliment were explored on the linguistic material. Both form and function shape a compliment and are hence inseparable components.

The goal of the paper is to investigate the structure and use of compliments in fictional discourse and compare the results with the findings of distinguished linguists interested in the area (notably Manes & Wolfson, who claim that compliments can be called formulas for their formulaic nature, 1981). As the aim of the study is to capture the nature of compliments complexly and profoundly, the analysis investigates successively the syntactic and semantic structure, various functions, as well as the subjects of compliments, compliment responses, gender contrasts in using compliments, and potential cultural differences in using compliments between British and American speakers of English.

2 Material under investigation

The frequency of occurrence of compliments is significantly higher in everyday spoken interaction than in written discourse. I likewise focused on spoken utterances and chose five sitcoms broadcast after the new millennium since the focus of the paper is on the most recent language. Three British (*The IT Crowd* (all three seasons), *Black Books* (all three seasons), *Coupling* (seasons 1, 2, 3) and two American (*The Big Bang Theory* (seasons 1 and 2), *How I Met Your Mother* (season 1)) sitcoms were selected for investigation, the result of which is a corpus comprising 735 compliments.

American sitcoms	62 episodes	372 compliments
British sitcoms	58 episodes	363 compliments
Total	120 episodes	735 compliments

Table 1: Corpus data

Sitcoms are a prime representative of spoken language variation with all the features of spoken interaction. Both real and sitcom dialogues are attached to immediate context of time and place. The language is often informal since the characters find themselves in natural settings among their friends, peers and work colleagues. It should be noted, though, that all the sitcoms were first written and only after that took the spoken form which is reflected in the style (lack of false-starts, fillers, lexical density, etc.). The language used is extraordinary in using hyperboles, puns, apt comments, humorous comparisons or in creating new words. This playfulness and inventiveness makes the sitcoms so appreciated not only because these are often a source of verbal humour but also because the overall language used is fresh and topical.

3 Methods applied

The methods used for my analysis were predominantly qualitative as well as quantitative analysis of the corpus data, i.e. a close-up on the frequency of occurrence of compliment structures, functions, subjects of and responses to compliments were provided in order to reveal general tendencies that speakers manifest when complimenting. Qualitative analysis, on the other hand, was applied to consider different features concerning content of compliments that discourse participants employ. The analysis also attempts to map the functions of compliments in different contexts. For this purpose, functional analysis was applied in sections concerning the different possible purposes of paying

compliments or speakers' illocutionary forces, as suggested by Holmes (1995) and Manes and Wolfson (1981). Compliments were also analyzed from discourse analytic point of view, i.e. the stretches of language in which compliments appear were taken into consideration since these whole units (rather than isolated phrases or utterances) assist to recognize and analyze compliments as such. Some tools of phonologic analysis (intonation, pitch level, tone contour) were taken into consideration as well.

4 Results of the investigation

4.1 Syntactic and semantic analyses

To begin with, syntactic structures surprisingly do not follow syntactic patterns suggested by Manes and Wolfson (1981), who claim that the most preferred structures by native speakers of American English are:

- (1) NP (*is, looks*) (*really*) ADJ (e.g. *Your hair looks nice.*);
- (2) *I (really) /like, love/* NP (e.g. *I love your hair.*);
- (3) PRO *is (really) (a)* ADJ NP (e.g. *That was really a great meal.*).

Together with their findings concerning the semantic nature of compliments, Manes and Wolfson put forward the opinion that compliments should be called formulas since their structures follow a significantly limited number of structural categories and the content of compliments (especially the positively loaded items) is extremely repetitive and unoriginal. Yet, compliments in sitcoms seem to be either too complex or too simple to fit the suggested categories and can be pigeon-holed into a wide range of syntactic structures, the most popular of which are three considerably simpler structures:

- (1) ADJ (NP)! (e.g. *A superb choice! Hot top, bro!.*) – 19.24 per cent of the corpus data;
- (2) *You are (really, so)* ADJ (NP) (e.g. *You are so witty.*) – 13.16 per cent;
- (3) PRO *is (really)* ADJ (e.g. *That was hilarious.*) – 11.14 per cent.

These syntactic patterns comprise almost a half of my corpus data. This finding could be explained on the basis of economy and spontaneity; such simple adjectival compliments are easily and readily formed and retain the sense of impromptu remarks, which is highly recommended when complimenting. If

such a compliment is highlighted by an interjection, the effect on the addressee is even stronger and compliment is perceived as spontaneous and thus sincere. As mentioned above, sitcom protagonists are prone to be creative, which is reflected in their introducing untypical features to structures such as ellipsis which contradicts the very nature of compliments as the crucial structural part of this speech act is its positively semantically loaded word (e.g. A: *You look... You look...* B: *So do you.*), wish clauses (e.g. *Well, I'm very jealous. Wish I could get into those jeans.*), *if*-clauses or pseudo-cleft sentences. Complicated framing clauses drawing attention to compliments are not an exception (e.g. *Penny, let me take this opportunity to point out that you are looking particularly ravishing today.*).

The semantic analysis has confirmed the findings of the previous research. Adjectival-type compliments (i.e. an adjective carries the positive semantic load) infallibly prevail over the other types (67.52% of the corpus data). Positively semantically loaded adjectives found are both general (e.g. *nice, good*) and specific (e.g. *impressive, terrific, magnificent, perfect, brilliant, remarkable, smart, witty*) or even newly created (e.g. *Hey, you look Fran-tastic* paid to a girl named Fran). Instances of positively loaded verbs (e.g. *I admire your fingering.*), nouns (e.g. *You're a catch.*) and adverbs were found as well as two examples of a positively loaded numeral, the possible existence of which has not been mentioned by linguists so far (e.g. *It's fine. No, you were shaky on your landing, I give you a 9.2.*). Even though other word classes can carry the positive semantic load of a compliment, these instances occur rather sporadically and thus it may be stated that compliments seem semantically determined.

4.2 Function

The prime function of compliments, as highlighted above, is to facilitate the process of communication, to set a positive atmosphere in an interaction and rapport. The collected compliments wholly support this statement – 89.78 per cent of all compliments seek to fulfil the primary function. Nonetheless, compliments are not always employed as social lubricants. Besides the primary functions and uses of the compliments, there are secondary functions which are not necessarily less important or interesting. Compliments are used for strengthening a greeting phrase (e.g. *Well, hi, cutie pie. I was hoping you'd show up.*) or for expressing gratefulness (e.g. *Oh, thank you. You are a lifesaver.*) – 4.56 per cent of the corpus data. The form of a compliment is also used for the purpose of verbal harassment, i.e. for ridicule, criticism, ironic and sarcastic remarks (5.66%). Compliments have also been used in order to change the topic of a conversation (especially when one desires to escape the current topic for personal reasons)

and to make someone notice their impolite behaviour. Having in mind the genre in which the research was carried out, compliments are also used as tools for creating jocularly comments and jokes but one can easily imagine encountering such a compliment in a real dialogue. These minor functions occur rarely in the selected dialogues. Nevertheless, I believe that these ‘tertiary’ functions prove that compliments recognized chiefly as positive politeness devices can be exploited in a wide range of ways.

4.3 Subjects of compliments

Compliments as other speech acts and politeness devices reflect cultural differences for different cultural backgrounds recognize different values. Therefore, it is logical that the choice of subjects of compliments differs in different regions since various items or their characteristics are considered to be worth appreciating. The same logic is followed by sitcom characters whose choice of subjects of compliments depends predominantly on the items a particular community values a lot. This is the reason why the leading characters of *Coupling* compliment most frequently on appearance (e.g. *Wow, you’re looking good today.*), while the leading protagonists of all the other four sitcoms prefer ability- and performance-oriented compliments (*Can I just say, you were fantastic back there.*). Especially women are complimented on their appearance when wearing new dresses, wedding dresses or any items of clothing that make them look beautiful and physically attractive. Moreover, other aspects of ideal appearance – as perceived by western cultures – such as slimness, nice smell or height are often noticed and commented on. The characters are constantly ensured that the mutual friendships are valued and that qualitative relations are not taken for granted (*Anyway, my friends have always been my real family.*). It can be stated that possessions in general do not seem to be appreciated, or at least not openly and not via compliments. If such an instance occurs, it is frequently supplemented by a remark that the item would lose its extraordinary value if deprived of its owner. Table 2 summarizes the overall distribution of compliments regarding the subject.

Subject of compliment	percentage
appearance	20.9
ability/performance	41.86
possessions	10.92
personality/friendliness	26.32

Table 2: Subjects of compliments

4.4 Compliment responses

As far as responses to compliments are concerned, the majority are acknowledged (56.88%) by a *thank-you* (e.g. A: *You look great in it, absolutely great. It really suits you.* B: *Oh, thank you.*) or other agreement phrases, or even by a non-verbal gesture – a nod or flattered smile. Almost a third of compliments are evaded (29.68%) and only a small proportion is rejected (e.g. A: *Sheldon, you are a smart guy.* B: *I am 'smart'? I'd have to lose 60 IQ points to be classified as 'smart'!*) – 8.92 per cent. These findings are not surprising as polite behaviour in most European countries and the USA dictates to accept a compliment or a positive evaluation. More interestingly, though, the data suggest that there is a certain correlation between the function and compliment responses. If a complimenter seeks to express positive evaluation or praise, and this function is correctly recognized by the addressee, then the compliment is almost always accepted. Whereas when the intention of the complimenter is to verbally harass, such a compliment is predominantly evaded or rejected. Where more sarcasm and irony appear, more tokens of evasion and rejection appear, too, as in the American sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*. There is another correlation easily traceable from the corpus data. The more complicated the structure of a compliment, the higher the probability that such a compliment would be evaded. By using complicated grammatical structures and scholarly lexis when complimenting, people risk that the compliment will not be comprehended and thus evaded. Moreover, such a compliment may cause embarrassment or even faux pas.

4.5 Gender contrasts

As far as gender contrasts are concerned, it cannot be positively stated that women or men pay more compliments. The number of tokens is affected by the gender of the leading characters that are given considerably greater space (e.g. Ted in *How I Met Your Mother*). Furthermore, certain trends in depicting men and women in the selected sitcoms affect the structure and use of compliments (e.g. women in *Coupling* are portrayed as strong, independent, efficient and skilful whereas men as weak, insecure and often inept). Social status also has to be taken into consideration as the position in hierarchy influences verbal behaviour (e.g. Many in *Black Books* is Bernard's employee). Since so many variables influence the problem of gender, rather a mathematical model would be able to capture the mutual connections, mere observation is not sufficient. Nevertheless, some tendencies concerning the choice of subjects of compliments have been revealed, though. Women favour to be complimented on appearance more than men and men rather prefer to be complimented on possessions (e.g. *You've got a brilliant car.*) as well as their personalities and good qualities are

often highlighted (e.g. *That's your badge of honour; your warrior's wound, if you will. I was wrong. Minstrels will write songs about you.*). Women in dialogues demand to be complimented on their appearance especially when wearing new/expensive dresses and do not hesitate to elicit compliments when no one is ready to pay one to them. Variations in responding to compliments or compliment structures were not analysed in this paper in detail.

4.6 Cultural differences

There is no clear-cut difference in syntax, semantics, subjects or responses regarding the speakers' origin. The only traceable variation in the speech of British and American speakers of English was the choice of vocabulary. Americans prefer certain expressions that cannot be found in British sitcoms, for instance *awesome, smooth, Holy smokes!, good for you*. Interestingly enough, the high involvement conversational style of the American speakers does not affect the number of compliments paid in the selected sitcoms; in a comparable number of episodes of approximately the same length, compliments seem to be evenly distributed between the British and American speakers (see Table 1 above).

4.7 Compliments in interaction

Similarly to compliments in everyday interaction, compliments in sitcoms are naturally incorporated in the dialogues, too. Compliments occur in social interactions and, as has been proved in the analysis, compliments are conducive to social harmony. A merit of face-to-face communication is that it offers the participants both an immediate feedback and space for negotiation. While being part of constant interactions, people negotiate the scope of a compliment and its interpretation, since different individuals perceive compliments personally, which means differently despite the existing communication stereotypes. Surprisingly enough, the issue of complimenting is also discussed in sitcoms. For instance, characters in *How I Met Your Mother* highlight the fact that people are often hypocritical or two-faced when paying a compliment. Sally (in *Coupling*) states that it is her duty to pay compliments and that she feels obliged. Leonard explains that paying compliments (no matter how insincere these might be) is the "social protocol" (*It's the social protocol. It's what you do when you have a friend who's proud of something they really suck at.*) and Howard (both in *The Big Bang Theory*) even invents a wholly new concept of a negative compliment (*A neg is a negative compliment that throws a pretty woman off her game, like "Normally, I'm not turned on by big teeth, but on you, they work."*). Sitcom characters are well aware of the different functions of compliments and hence exploit them at large.

Moreover, certain patterns occur in all the sitcoms such as paying compliments to oneself (e.g. *Aw, I am so beautiful. Oh, don't say how much it costs, just snap my neck now, so I can die this pretty.*), paying compliments to people who are not present in the conversation, introducing break-up speeches and phone-calls with compliments or using compliments as jocularly comments. Characters occasionally elicit compliments if they feel they deserve one. Both clichés and innovative approaches to compliments have been observed in the corpus data. There are also two speech events in the data in which people are complimented in different languages than English. Howard in *The Big Bang Theory* uses Russian (*Ты очень красивая девушка.*) and Lily in *How I Met Your Mother* makes use of Spanish to compliment her fiancé on his appearance (*Oh, muchos sexy, yo quiero, Marshall.*). Complimenters use figures of speech (especially simile and metaphor) and allude to fairy tales, natural sciences, cinematography or even poetry.

5 Conclusion

Interestingly enough, it has been found that compliments are not so unoriginal. Complimenters use a certain level of creativity when paying a compliment. This fact can be demonstrated on the findings on all levels of the analysis, starting from the form and ending with the content. The leading characters exploit compliments fully, introducing various syntactic structures and content features as well as adding other minor functions to the speech act under scrutiny. It would be foolhardy to think, though, that ordinary people in everyday interactions express themselves as creatively as the characters in sitcoms. Nevertheless, sitcoms are human products that reflect the way we think and use the language. The present analysis has proved that compliments are not necessarily formulas, and furthermore, that they can be powerful instruments without which spoken interaction would be far poorer.

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NOW AS A DISCOURSE MARKER

Petra Zmrzlá

Abstract

The present paper concerns the expression *now* when used as a discourse marker and its occurrence in different contexts. The discourse marker *now* will be described, classified, and its discourse function contrasted with its adverbial meaning and use. Discourse markers (DMs) are mainly connected with spoken language, but it is possible to find them in written texts as well. Nevertheless, *now* is one of the discourse markers predominantly used in spoken language. It is usually not considered a typical example of a discourse marker and as such it is sometimes omitted by the authors dealing with discourse markers in general. The analysis in this pilot study is based on six spoken texts taken from the London-Lund Corpus (LLC) – three surreptitious private face-to-face conversations and three non-surreptitious and more formal public radio discussions.

Key words

now, discourse marker (DM), adverb, frame, topic opener, shift of topic, focus, delay device, comparison device

1 Introduction

Discourse markers have recently come into a focus of researchers approaching their language data from the viewpoint of pragmatics and discourse analysis. There is no unified definition of discourse markers and discourse as such, and so different studies vary in what to regard as a discourse marker and how exactly to label this special category.

A deep analysis of discourse markers, their use, functions and categories was provided by Schiffrin (1987), who defines discourse markers as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk” (ibid.: 31). The present paper has a more modest aim; it concentrates on the range of the use of a single discourse marker – *now*.

Now in its role of a discourse marker is predominantly used in spoken language and often connected with a certain level of formality and impersonality. This aspect of its meaning is sometimes underestimated, as it is surpassed by the adverbial use of the word. Schiffrin (1987) suggests that the deictic meaning of *now* influences its use on several different discourse planes and has an impact on its use as a discourse marker.

It is not always easy to identify unequivocally the adverb *now* from the discourse marker, but there are some formal aspects (e.g. the co-occurrence with

other lexical and grammatical units) as well as context, stress and intonation. The result can be subjectively influenced by the preference and expectations of the hearer. Anyway, it is certainly possible to say that *now* does not necessarily express only one meaning at a time in a discourse and the analyst should take into account all aspects, since “words and phrases which are discourse markers are often ambiguous, sharing the discourse marker function with an adverbial function” (Biber et al. 1999: 1086).

2 Discourse markers

2.1 General characteristics

Discourse markers are usually dealt with within the scope of pragmatics and discourse analysis, whose objectives can be specified as the language in use, i.e. coherent sequences of sentences, propositions, speech acts or turns-at-talk. Although DMs are primarily discussed in spoken language, according to Swan only some of them “are used mostly in informal speech or writing; others are more common in a formal style” (1995: 151).

To a listener/reader a DM signals some intention of a speaker/writer. This can be a boundary in discourse, focus of attention, contrasting thoughts, etc. (see Section 2.2 below). Among the most common DMs in English are listed, for example, *well, you know (y'know), actually, I mean, yeah, OK, so, now*, but nothing like a generally accepted list of discourse markers exists in English. Their occurrence, importance and frequency of use differ immensely.

Discourse markers are sometimes called ‘discourse particles’, but this term sometimes refers to different phenomena occurring in other Germanic languages, e.g. German (*ja, doch*), Dutch or Norwegian. Jucker (1993) also mentions the terms ‘discourse connectives’ or ‘pragmatic markers’ used by other authors, while Leech et al. (2002: 13) consider expressions ‘interactional signals’, ‘discourse particles’, ‘backchannels’ and ‘inserts’ synonymous to discourse markers. The pitfalls of this problem are discussed in detail, for example, in Povolná (2008), who herself opted for the label ‘discourse markers’, further specified as ‘interactive discourse markers’, “since one of their main characteristics is given by the fact that they occur frequently in spoken discourse, where they perform important pragmatic functions” (ibid.: 121).

For Biber et al. (1999: 1086), who discuss DMs in the chapter on the grammar of conversation, they are a subcategory of inserts, which should combine two roles in conversation: to signal a transition, and the interactive relationship between speaker, hearer, and message. According to Stenström (1994) “discourse markers are used to organize and hold the turn and to mark boundaries in the discourse”

(ibid.: 63). In addition to their role as organizers, turn holders, or boundary markers, the author mentions them as slot fillers often found in turn slots.

Discourse markers can also contribute to politeness in spoken English, as mentioned, for example, in Povolná (2010), they “not only contribute to the smooth flow of interaction and the establishment of coherence, but they also tend to be used when the current speaker wants to indicate to the current hearer(s) that some of Grice’s conversational maxims may be flouted” (ibid.: 145). Thus they can serve as part of politeness strategies.

2.2 Classifications of discourse markers

Recently DMs have been a matter of interest of many linguists. They occur in many different functions and contexts and various classifications can be found.

According to Swan (1995: 151-160) there are twenty-one categories of DMs, such as focusing and linking, emphasising a contrast, similarity, dismissal of previous discourse, change of subject, return to previous subject, generalising, logical consequence, gaining time, or persuading.

Jucker (1993) introduced four main uses of the discourse marker *well*, which can serve as a source of inspiration for the classification of DMs in general: (1) a marker of insufficiency, (2) a face-threat mitigator, (3) a frame marking device, and (4) a delay device. *Now* is mentioned as a frame marking device and a delay device.

A general classification of DMs can be found in Schiffrin (1987: 316), who distinguishes between planes of talk in which markers function as: (1) exchange structure, (2) action structure, (3) ideational structure, (4) participation framework and (5) information state. *Now* occurs in (3) and (4).

A different approach to DMs was suggested by Stenström (1994: 67), who classified interactional signals and markers according to their functions as appealer, acknowledge, evaluate, uptake, answer, frame and staler. *Now* fits into one category only, namely that of a frame.

3 *Now*

3.1 *Now* and its uses

A study of a word such as *now* should probably start with its meaning. Strictly speaking, most of the semantic words in the English language are polysemic, since we can hardly ever attach the word to one single meaning or thing – perhaps with the exception of special terms and function words which perform mainly a grammatical function.

Now is a very common temporal adverb and can be found in any grammar book mentioning adverbs and adverbials. It is also often discussed within the chapters on deixis and temporal anaphora (e.g. in Huddleston & Pullum 2002). Biber et al. (1999) in the section on adverbs state that “in addition to the categories specified above, adverbs occasionally realize other meanings” (ibid.: 560) and *now* is further listed among the transition linking adverbials which should “mark the insertion of an item that does not follow directly from the previous discourse. The new information is not incompatible with what it is linked to ... but rather it is signalled as only loosely connected, or unconnected” (ibid.: 879).

Admittedly, “although the categories of adverbs and discourse markers are clearly different, it is not always easy to decide in which category a particular token of *now* is functioning” (Schiffrin 1987: 230). Still, there are some formal features which can help distinguish between the different uses of *now*. One of them is the category of tense. With a DM, unlike the temporal adverb, different tenses can be used (e.g. *Now this girl was different.*). A double occurrence of *now* (*Now now don't worry.*), a co-occurrence with *well*, or combination with *then* (*Now then what else do we have here?*), even though they normally build a contrasting pair – these are all cases that also signal that it is probably a DM we deal with.

Apart from the formal aspects mentioned above there are other features of a discourse that come to the aid of the analyst, like context, stress and intonation. For example, Stenström mentions that “when *now* and *well* are used as <frames>, they occur in a separate tone unit” (1994: 64).

3.2 *Now* as a discourse marker in previous research

Now as a DM is usually used in spoken discourse. Most commonly it marks a boundary within longer speeches and as such it is used in more formal and impersonal style, e.g. lectures or public speeches. Nevertheless, it can also serve as an introduction to a new topic or a means to gain attention to the following information in a discussion. It helps the speaker's progression through the discourse. Sometimes it can be found as a means of comparison.

The approach to and recognition of discourse markers is far from unified. In some materials DMs as such do not occur at all. For instance, Quirk et al. (1972) only study anaphoric and cataphoric discourse reference and its devices; Huddleston and Pullum (2002) consider *now* as an adverb and in terms of anaphoric reference or temporal deixis. Even in materials dealing with discourse markers *now* is sometimes considered only marginally or not at all. In Swan's *Practical English Usage* (1995: 153-154) *now* is mentioned as a means of changing subject and its use is restricted to indicating a new section in lectures or instructions.

Among other DMs, *now* has been labelled by Biber et al. as “an utterance launcher [that] seems to have the function of clearing ‘a bit of conversational space’ ahead. It often marks a return to a related subject, and at the same time a new departure” (1999: 1088). The word ‘often’ here implicitly suggests that the specification of the use of *now* as a DM as presented by the authors is not complete.

In Schiffrin (1987) *now* is given a lot of attention together with its adverbial counterpart *then*. It is in this book that the function of *now* as a means of comparison can be found. Schiffrin also mentions – perhaps problematic for an analyst, but definitely interesting – overlaps in adverbial use of *now* and its function as a DM. Apart from the means of comparison (temporal, spatial, points of view) she recognizes the role of *now* in the progression of ideas, the metalinguistic marking of a new idea, or a reason, and shifts in participation framework.

3.3 Classification of the discourse marker *now*

In the following classification, which is based on different classifications and uses mentioned in the materials referred to in this paper (e.g. Schiffrin 1987, Jucker 1993, Biber et al. 1999, Crystal & Davy 1969), the functions of the discourse marker *now* do not necessarily exclude each other. By contrast, the overlap is often possible.

A Frame

1 Topic opener

Now as a topic opener indicates that a new topic is being introduced. It is often used as an opening formula to a monologue.

Example (A1a): ***Now***, our today’s task is...

Stenström (1994) mentions *now* as a transition marker at the beginning of a turn, where it serves as a means of introducing a new topic and changing the direction of the discourse.

Example (A1b): “***now*** what was I going to do seize a ***cigarette*** –” (Stenström 1994: 21)

2 Shift of topic

In this function *now* does not only allow the speaker to introduce a new topic, but it actually helps them to close the original one in order to proceed in the discourse. This function corresponds to what Swan (1995: 151-160) labels as

a 'change of subject'. The new topic is often derived from the original one.

Example (A2a): "*...well now*". *I'd like to turn now to ...*" (Crystal & Davy 1969: 230)

Very common is the shift from a general statement to a more concrete application:

Example (A2b): *These things don't depend on social background. Now there was this family...*

3 Focus on what follows

The speaker wants to draw the listener's attention to the following statement.

Example (A3a): "*... purely administrative . now . I don't want to cause any offence here ...*" (Crystal & Davy 1969: 231).

By drawing the hearer's attention to what will be said, the speaker can thus gain or hold the ground in the "turn-taking struggles" as Schiffrin (1987) calls them.

Example (A3b): "*That don't make any difference. Now listen to me. Take a lead eh eh a chisel, and hit it.*" (ibid.: 241).

B Comparison

Schiffrin (1987) also recognizes the function of *now* as a comparison device.

Example (B1): "*They aren't brought up the same way. Now Italian people are very outgoing, they're very generous. When they put a meal on the table it's a meal. Now these boys were Irish. They lived different.*" (ibid.: 70).

The implicit comparativeness can also be present in one's expressing a certain point of view, feelings and beliefs. *Now* usually serves to stress a contrast (not necessarily a disagreement) with someone else's views and internal cognitive states.

Example (B2): "Jack: *Now y'see your age wouldn't appreciate Overcoat*. Debby: *Well I saw it...about six or seven years*- Freda: *She enjoy-enjoyed it! She thought it was fine!* Jack: *But you'd have t'understand the background...*" (ibid.: 236).

C Delay device

While using *now* as a topic opener or a shift of topic, it can also serve as a delay device (e.g. when the lecturer is looking into their notes for hints or showing a new page on a data projector). In this sense, the function of *now* as a delay device can be seen as concomitant with the functions A1 and A2 mentioned above.

Also while comforting a person by using *now now*, the speaker is gaining time to find the right words and also giving time to the listener to calm down.

4 Analysis

4.1 Material under investigation and methods

Altogether six texts were analysed for the purposes of the present research; each text comprises 5,000 words. Three texts represent spontaneous private face-to-face conversations among British speakers. These texts taken from the LLC are also included in *A Corpus of English Conversation* (1980) by Svartvik and Quirk. The recordings were surreptitious and the speakers were unprepared.

The other three texts, which represent public radio discussions, have also been taken from the London-Lund Corpus (for more information, cf. Svartvik 1990). In contrast to the first set of texts, the speakers were prepared in advance, the whole discussions were planned and their recordings were non-surreptitious. Within the discussions the turn of each speaker is considerably longer than in the private face-to-face conversations; also, it can be stated that several monologues of the participants are included.

The aim of the analysis is to find all the occurrences of *now* in the texts, consider their frequency, determine their role in the texts (adverbial or discourse marker) and distinguish between the possible functions of *now* as a discourse marker. The results will be compared – share of the individual categories in each text, in each genre, and differences between the two genres.

A problematic point is how to deal with ambiguous cases of overlapping functions. For the purposes of the present analysis and comparison the individual occurrences of *now* were classified according to their prevailing function depending on the context and used as such in the table and summaries. In a more thorough description of each case of occurrence all possible interpretations and overlaps should certainly be mentioned, discussed and justified, but the scope of the present paper does not allow this.

4.2 Analysis of private face-to-face conversations

4.2.1 Text S.1.5 (1967)

There are four participants, but the conversation is held mainly between two of them. A new member of the department tries to gain some basic information about her work and studies, as she is to do both. Together with other two participants they are discussing administrative affairs as well as the staff of the school and rumours and gossip concerning them.

Out of seven tokens of *now* found in the text only two bear characteristics of the use of *now* as a DM. One is a shift of topic, and the other one is a focus on what follows.

Example (1):

B: *and then you may get your you know you may not quite . think . quite agree with their system*

A: *yea*

B: **now** *even as a non-english person at times sort of wanting to say*

Example (1) illustrates the function of *now* as a DM, namely when expressing a focus on what follows. Speaker B wants to emphasise a new point of view on the topic discussed.

4.2.2 Text S.1.6 (1964)

There are two participants. The speakers are talking about their friend, his life and studies, about their jobs and situation at the university, about students and teachers.

There are only four instances of *now* in the text, three of them are adverbials; one is a DM, which expresses a shift of topic.

Example (2):

A: *dear old Sandy Paterson ooh I want to see him . now I wonder if he's in today – oh I'd better not go round at lunch time*

The speaker shifts from a general overall statement into a concrete situation – quite a typical example of a shift of topic. Admittedly, the temporal deixis is traceable here (the overlap of functions), on the one hand intensified by *today*, on the other felt as redundant thanks to the same word.

4.2.3 Text S.1.7 (1972)

There are three participants, one of whom is a non-surreptitious speaker who encourages the progress of the conversation. The two surreptitious speakers are talking about normal everyday things, like drinking tea and different kinds of beer. Then they start to work on recording for educational purposes (they are both teachers).

Out of ten occurrences, *now* was only once used as a DM.

Example (3):

A: *well that's the idea you see but so far it only recognizes people whose accents are ... fairly Queen's English type you see because they're the accents it's been trained to recognize the idea now is to*

B: *programme it . to programme it*

Speaker A is not referring to the immediate context, but rather attracts the attention of his colleagues. That is why this case is classified as a DM – focus on what follows.

4.3 Analysis of public radio discussions

4.3.1 Text S.5.1 (1959)

There are five participants. They discuss their opinions on several questions from the forum. They concern rock and roll singers, the army, publicity, tenants in council houses, celebrations of the birth of Robert Burns, and the support of the Krupp Empire.

There are twelve occurrences of *now* in the text; six of them are adverbials, six discourse markers. Most adverbials were used when the speakers talked about the support of the Krupp Empire – they commented on the post-war development and relevant topics at the time when the war was still very well remembered. The instances of the DMs were three tokens of the shift of topic, one delay device and two tokens of a focus on what follows.

Example (4):

JL: *and . a great many miners and I'm glad about that too . are . inhabiting council houses in in in Derbyshire . now . I should have thought this was a very curiously low figure*

The use of a DM *now* as a delay device here is implied by the hesitation before and the pauses around *now*. No new topic is being introduced. The speaker might also have drawn the attention of the audience to his opinion.

4.3.2 Text S.5.2 (1958)

There are five participants. The topic of the discussion is very wide; the participants speak about mathematics, theology, heraldry and language, about the human, inhuman and absurd sciences.

Within the analysed text, *now* has occurred in eleven cases, only two of them were adverbials. By far the most frequently used function of the DM *now* was a shift of topic (5 cases), then a means of focus (2 cases), a topic opener and a delay device.

Example (5):

M: *I should say ninety-nine percent of people . Scottish people . descend from Malcolm Canmore not all but almost all . now [pi? pi?@] . people say what's it what's that signify*

Gaining time is the leading incentive for using the DM *now* in Example (5), taking into consideration the hesitation which follows and also the grammatical clumsiness of the following clause. It is quite a rare instance of a delay device, since it is mostly a concomitant feature.

4.3.3 Text S.5.7 (1970)

There are four participants. The speakers discuss literature, politics, argumentation, teaching, and communication.

There are twelve instances of *now*; ten of a DM and only two of an adverbial. The functions of the DM were: topic opener (2 cases), shift of topic (3 cases), focus on what follows (3 cases), and comparison (1 case).

Example (6):

A: *the kind of things that are going down the channels **now** this . obviously is totally untrue with a great many very good journalists*

The following statement directly continues and points back to the previous text. It is an example of a focus on what follows, although, in fact, by using anaphoric *this* the focus is also on what preceded the DM *now*.

4.4 Results

The tentative results of the present analysis are summed up in the following table.

	Private face-to-face conversations				Public radio discussions				Total
	S.1.5	S.1.6	S.1.7	Total	S.5.1	S.5.2	S.5.7	Total	
Discourse marker	2	1	1	4	6	9	10	25	29
Frame: Topic opener	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	3
Frame: Shift of topic	1	1	0	2	3	5	3	11	13
Frame: Focus	1	0	1	2	2	2	3	7	9
Comparison	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Delay device	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2
Adverb	5	3	9	17	6	2	2	10	27
Total	7	4	10	21	12	11	12	35	56

Table 1: The frequency of occurrence of *now* as a DM in all the texts analysed

5 Conclusions

Now is one of the discourse markers used predominantly in spoken language, but is often connected with more formal style, as, for instance, public speeches, lectures, etc. Its use in the discourse is thus characterized by a certain level of formality and impersonality.

The different functions of the DM *now* have been classified and exemplified on the basis of the studies provided by the renowned researchers in this field (e.g. Schiffrin 1987, Jucker 1993, Biber et al. 1999, Crystal & Davy 1969). The resultant classification has been used for the analysis of the texts from LLC: three private face-to-face conversations and three public radio discussions, in which the number of occurrences of *now* in its different functions has been compared.

In the texts analysed we can see that the adverbial use of *now* surpasses its role as a DM in surreptitious unprepared private face-to-face conversations analysed, since it tends to be more bound to the immediate context. On the other hand, within the non-surreptitious prepared public radio discussions analysed in this paper, *now* has been found as a DM in most cases, the reason being perhaps that the participants of the discussions were speaking for a longer period and they had their space in the discussion granted. It was also necessary for them to arrange their thoughts better since they knew they were being listened to by a large number of hearers and, at the same time, that they were being recorded.

Based on the comparison of six texts of the same length, it can now be concluded that *now* as a DM is more common in non-surreptitious public radio discussions than in private face-to-face conversations.

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SUMMARY

This volume presents the results of research into the interpretation of meaning in different types of English discourse, both written and spoken, with focus on the specificities of particular discourses and genres and the influence of these specificities on the communicative intentions of the participants. The studies explore different aspects of the interpretation of meaning in academic, fictional, learner, legal, media, political, and spontaneous and prepared spoken discourse.

In Chapter One various areas of Academic discourse are explored, such as contrastive and resultive conjuncts (Vladimíra Ježdíková), non-finite clauses (Zuzana Kozáčíková), hedging devices in literary criticism research articles (Martina Malášková), modality in academic discourse with focus on epistemic verbs in research articles (Melanie Marcinkowski) and lexical cohesion in popular and theoretical scientific texts as compared by Radek Vogel.

In Chapter Two dealing with interpretation of meaning in Fictional discourse Jolana Kaštovská investigates the textual realization and interpretation of lists in contemporary prose and Renata Šimůnková studies modal expressions of necessity in English and Czech fiction.

Chapter Three comprises contributions focusing on Learner discourse. Reima Al-Jarf's study is concerned with the influence of background knowledge on auditory comprehension in interpreting courses designed for students at Saudi College, Saudi Arabia. Lenka Slunečková presents the results of a study investigating the problems that Czech ESP students face in Czech-English and English-Czech translations with focus on the word order in the two languages. Makrina Zafiri outlines the possibilities of language skills development in tertiary education in Greece, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

In Chapter Four concerned with Legal discourse Monika Gyuró studies coherence in court arguments as manifested in the individual stages of argumentation in this type of discourse. Magdalena Szczyrbak presents a study into Concessive schemata in judicial argumentation, namely monologic Concessive schemata and the interactional functions of two concessive moves, i.e. acknowledgements and counterclaims.

Media discourse is the focus of Chapter Five. Jaromír Haupt deals with the genre of science news and its generic structure in particular. Using examples from newspaper discourse Vladislav Smolka illustrates the role of word order in resolving ambiguity in meaning. Zuzana Urbanová studies faithfulness and verbatim reproduction in direct reported forms in news discourse. In Věra Zouharová's contribution personal advertisements from British newspapers are explored with focus on appearance as part of preferred partner characteristics.

In Chapter Six on Political discourse Jana Adámková examines the use of vague language by interviewers and interviewees in British political interviews

and Jana Svobodová provides a comparison of speeches of G. W. Bush and B. Obama with focus on threat perception.

Chapter Seven on Spontaneous and prepared spoken discourse presents a contribution by Jana Švárová on the structure and use of compliments in contemporary British and American sitcoms and a research study of Petra Zmrzlá into the use of the discourse marker *now* in spoken language.

The volume is a valuable contribution to the study of meaning in various types of spoken and written discourse and reflects the diversity of the current research into this intriguing area, as carried out by Czech, German, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Saudi Arabia and Slovak linguists and researchers.

Renata Jančaříková

Editor

Index

A

- academic
 - prose 7, 11, 13, 25, 47
 - writing 27, 28, 32
- acknowledgment 147, 149, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 158
- adverb 12, 36, 40, 48, 49, 50, 51, 57, 92, 112, 113, 114, 182, 235, 241, 244, 250
- adverbial 12, 27, 31, 92, 110, 112, 113, 115, 117, 118, 148, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 241, 242, 244, 245, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251
- advertisement 9, 105, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 213, 253
- ambiguity 9, 82, 83, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 182, 183, 184, 253
- argumentation 8, 9, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 142, 143, 144, 145, 152, 153, 156, 157, 253
 - judicial 147, 148, 150, 152, 153, 154, 253
- auditory
 - discrimination 97, 98, 99, 101, 103, 105, 107

C

- clause
 - dependent 25, 26, 29
 - finite 29, 30
 - non-finite 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 77, 78, 253

- coherence
 - global 133, 136, 138
 - local 133, 136, 137, 139, 144
- cohesion
 - cohesive chain 61, 64, 65, 66, 68, 71, 72, 73
 - cohesive device 12, 21, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72
 - lexical 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 68, 69, 71, 73, 253
- collocation 61, 62, 63, 67
- communicative dynamism 110, 114, 117, 119
- compliment 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 254
- concession
 - concessive move 147, 149, 150, 153, 154, 155
 - concessive schema 147, 148, 149, 152, 153, 154, 156, 157
- condensation 30, 32, 63
- conjunct 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
- coordination 26, 28, 176
- counterclaim 147, 149, 152, 154, 155, 156, 253
- critical discourse analysis 75, 77, 81

D

- deictic centre 185, 193, 194
- discourse
 - academic 7, 8, 11, 25, 28, 29, 32, 33, 73, 192, 253
 - EU discourse 147
 - forensic 133, 134, 135
 - legal 6, 7, 8, 133, 147, 253

marker 9, 80, 126, 159, 190, 193,
194, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245,
247, 251, 254
monologic 147, 148, 151, 152
newspaper 9, 175, 183, 253
political 7, 9, 209, 229, 253
written 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 25, 26, 27,
45, 73, 84, 147, 151, 155, 176,
233, 254
downtoner 40, 47, 49, 50, 52, 54, 55,
56, 57, 58

E

enumeration 75, 76, 82
evidentiality 48, 49, 58, 59, 191, 195

F

face-to-face conversation 152, 156,
238, 241, 247, 250, 251
frame 241, 243, 245, 250
functional sentence perspective 111,
114, 115, 117, 119, 175

G

generalisation 61, 63, 66, 67, 68, 71,
72
genre 6, 8, 9, 13, 45, 47, 65, 66, 73,
127, 133, 134, 147, 149, 161,
162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 170,
172, 173, 185, 186, 191, 192,
195, 198, 231, 236, 247, 253

H

headline 107, 165, 168, 177, 191,
192
hedge 7, 8, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39,
40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 253
content oriented 34, 35, 36, 37, 39,
40

participant oriented 34, 35, 36, 37,
38

I

indirectness 209, 210, 211, 212, 218
interaction 25, 29, 30, 35, 37, 61,
106, 134, 143, 147, 148, 150,
151, 155, 157, 158, 188, 189,
191, 195, 231, 233, 235, 238,
239, 243
interpreting skill 97

L

learning process 122, 124
listing 13, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82,
83
literary prose 75

M

metadiscourse 33, 37, 44
modality
deontic 88
epistemic 47, 48, 49, 53, 58, 59, 85,
88, 91, 92, 167

N

necessity 16, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91,
92, 93, 94, 95, 253
news structure 161, 166, 169, 170

P

phoneme 97, 100, 101, 102
political interview 9, 209, 253
popular science 8, 61, 64, 65, 73,
161, 253
positive politeness 231, 236
pragmatics 31, 33, 35, 39, 40, 45,
58, 81, 85, 134, 137, 139, 141,
142, 147, 148, 157, 158, 185,

188, 189, 195, 209, 210, 239,
240, 241, 242, 251

R

register 6, 13, 28, 32, 58, 62, 68, 176,
190
reiteration 61, 62, 63, 66, 67
repetition 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68,
69, 70, 71, 72, 76, 126, 196
reported form 9, 185, 186, 253
representation 83, 98, 135, 136, 151,
185, 186, 187, 193, 196
research article 11, 28, 29, 33, 37, 38,
39, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 52, 54,
56, 57, 58, 59, 65, 163, 253
rhematic 110, 111, 115, 116, 117,
178, 179, 182

S

science news 9, 161, 162, 163, 164,
165, 166, 168, 169, 170, 171,
172, 253
second language learning 121, 122,
128
speech
act 49, 133, 143, 144, 186, 188,
189, 231, 232, 235, 239
spoken interaction 30, 231, 233, 239,
252
stance 37, 47, 49, 50, 155
strategy
argumentative 148, 157
cognitive 98, 106
communicative 185, 209, 240
structural parallelism 75, 79, 84
subordination 26, 28, 186, 192, 194,
195
synonym 62
synonymy 61, 63

T

thematic 61, 66, 110, 115, 116, 117,
178, 179, 181
threat perception 219, 226, 228, 254
translation 8, 10, 31, 37, 85, 88, 90,
92, 94, 97, 100, 105, 109, 111,
112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117,
118, 119, 120, 124, 130

V

vagueness 58, 209, 210, 211, 212,
214, 216, 218
verb
epistemic 8, 42, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51,
52, 54, 56, 57, 58
lexical 36, 38, 41, 42, 48, 49, 50,
89, 91, 93, 94, 181, 182
verbatim reproduction 9, 185, 186,
187, 188, 192, 193, 195, 253

W

word order 8, 9, 29, 104, 109, 110,
111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116,
117, 118, 119, 253

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