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CONTENTS

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ESP Across Cultures is a refereed international journal that publishes theoretical, descriptive and applied studies on varieties of English pertaining to a wide range of specialized fields of knowledge, such as agriculture, art and humanities, commerce, economics, education and vocational training, environmental studies, finance, information technology, law, media studies, medicine, politics, religion, science, the social sciences, sports, technology and engineering, tourism, and transport. The journal addresses a readership composed of academics, professionals, and students interested in English for special purposes particularly from a cross-cultural perspective. The aim of the journal is to bring together scholars, practitioners, and young researchers working in different specialized language domains and in different disciplines with a view to developing an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach to the study of ESP.

ESP Across Cultures is covered in *Linguistics & Language Behaviour Abstracts*, *MLA International Bibliography*, *Translation Studies Abstracts* and *Bibliography of Translation Studies*.

Foreword

Welcome to volume 6 of our journal. As you will see, there are eight papers in this volume. We thought readers might be interested in knowing a little more about how we arrived at this particular selection of articles. Following our 'Call for papers' we received around 35 abstracts of which we chose 23 that we considered to be of sufficient interest or relevance to ask for a full paper. In the end we received a total of 20 papers, all of which were sent anonymously to two 'blind' referees. The eight papers which make up this volume are the ones that successfully got through the rigorous refereeing process.

As ever, we wish to express our gratitude to the members of the editorial board who have acted as referees for the numerous papers we continue to receive. In vol. 4 (2007) of our journal we published a list of the names of colleagues who were not members of the editorial board but who had kindly acted as referees for some of our papers. Since then a number of colleagues who are not on the editorial board have also refereed papers for us. We are extremely grateful to the following:

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Academic and socio-cultural identities in English dissertation acknowledgements of Arab writers*

Mohammed Nahar Al-Ali

Abstract

The present study analyses the generic structure of English dissertation acknowledgements written in humanities and social sciences by Arab non-native speakers of English to find out what discourse genre components the writers employ to articulate the communicative purpose of these acknowledgements. It also attempts to examine the academic and socio-cultural norms and etiquette that govern their acknowledgement behaviour. A corpus of 100 acknowledgements accompanying 100 PhD dissertations was subjected to the form of generic structure analysis proposed by Hyland (2004). The results showed that this genre was built around eight strategic components, six of which are 'Thanking' moves and two are optional ('Reflecting' and 'Expressing responsibility'). These component moves communicate a lot of information about the academic, socio-cultural, and personal identities of the writer encoded in the rhetorical and organizational components of this type of genre. The writers of acknowledgements were found simultaneously in the position of negotiating and presenting their own socio-cultural norms and values, and of needing to communicate effectively with members from the academic community, as well as of reflecting their personal identity.

1. Introduction

Acknowledgements in theses and dissertations are part of academic practice in that they allow students to reflect their gratitude for any kind of help received from others during the process of writing. They share the tendency of reflecting reciprocal gift giving for all kinds of contributions (mental, physical, etc.).

Genres in the real world do not exist in isolation but are often seen in relation to other genres (Bhatia 2004); they form intertextual networks or systems (Bazerman 1994) linked to each other synchronically and diachronically. Swales (1996) categorized the academic genre system into three groups according to the audience: *primary* or research-process genres developed for peer-communication, *secondary* or pedagogic genres, and *occluded* genres, which are produced for private use in the exchange of material, advice and information between academics and publishers to support the research process. According to Hyland (2003: 243), acknowledgements are "neither strictly academic nor entirely personal"; they seem to fall through the cracks of the third category and represent a 'Cinderella' genre. Most often they are assigned a separate space at one of the initial pages marked with Roman numbers at the beginning before the content pages of MA and PhD dissertations, but sometimes they follow the main body of the research article texts.

Since acknowledgements are described as a 'Cinderella' genre (Hyland 2003) and genres are defined as recognizable communicative events, characterized by a set of communicative purposes (Swales 1990: 58; Bhatia 2004: 23), acknowledgements are thus communicative events. They emerged in scientific research articles in 1940 but only became a regular feature in the 1960s (Bazerman 1988). Before the 1940s, published acknowledgements took various forms. The acknowledgements of the 1890s, for example, were 'personal testimonials' to friends, the author's family members and mentors, but those of the 1920s were more veered towards institutional loyalty (*ibid.*). Nowadays acknowledgements are commonly used in dissertations and books, and have an increasing presence as a part-genre of published research articles (Giannoni 2002) as they appear in half of these academic articles (Cronin, McKenzie & Stiffler 1992). Brodkey (1987: 23) thinks of acknowledgements as "formal properties of scholarly texts", and part of "the cultural repertoire of all academics". This well-established practice in scholarly writing describes contextualized social relationships and academic connectedness between communities of scholars, as it includes expressions of thanks to peers, family members, friends, technicians, mentors, and supervisors.

This kind of genre exhibits a rich mix of identities reflecting personal, social and academic collaboration and interactions that establish and shape social, academic and personal identities. Identity formation, according to Mantero (2004: 157), "does not follow a predetermined path of movement that is devoid of joined activity in communities of practice". By the same token, identity is not a static or deterministic construct, but is "co-constructed, negotiated, and transformed on an

ongoing basis" (Duff & Uchida 1997: 452). Pennycook (2001: 147) points out that the work on identity tends to portray the social and cultural as interlinked and the formation of our identities as produced in a dynamic relation between fixed pre-given categories of identity and the different contextual discourses we encounter. Cronin (1995) maintains that the issue of acknowledgements exhibits information about the writers' academic and social loyalties and the company they are keeping.

The construct of a multiple and negotiated identity becomes central to the writers' social, academic and personal identities presented later in Section 6 as writers interact within different communities, social and academic. Identity is multiple in the sense that the individuals' attributes and loyalties come into play as one encounters a multiplicity of roles in a particular communicative context. At the same time, identity is negotiated in the sense that it is far from static; it can be manipulated and exploited in order to respond to novel contexts and to convey multiple intentions for socially communicative purposes. Accordingly, a person takes up different positions within different communicative events as s/he is occupied with the challenge of having to guide his/her identities through social, professional or academic contexts. By way of illustration, a writer may be simultaneously in the position of representing his/her own socio-cultural norms and values and in the position of needing to communicate effectively with expert members of the discourse community. As Scollon & Scollon (2001: 284) observe:

> [w]e speak and communicate the way we do largely for the purpose of expressing particular identities with which we are very deeply connected, even if we are not always comfortable with them. We change our identity very slowly and we would argue that *any communicative change is a change in identity*.

2. Literature review

Acknowledgement behaviour has been studied by scholars from different disciplines such as information and social sciences, and applied linguistics. For information and social scientists, Cronin & Show (1999) examined research article acknowledgements in terms of gratitude related to funding sources, authors' nationalities and the citedness of published articles. Bibliometric studies have been conducted to compare article acknowledgements with citations as measures of trusted assessorship (Chubin 1975), and others have documented why academics read the acknowledgements accompanying articles (Cronin & Overfelt 1994). While Cronin (2001) has confirmed the centrality of acknowledgements as an institutionalized element of the scholarly communication process, Salager-Meyer *et al.* (2006) have argued that acknowledgements should be used as bibliometic indicators in a researcher's academic audit process.

Bibliometricians such as Mackintosh (1972), McCain (1991), and Cronin (1991) examined acknowledgement typology in terms of the kind of assistance received from others. Mackintosh (1972) describes the acknowledgement types in

the *American Sociological Review* as consisting of three broad categories: (i) facilities, (ii) access to data, and (iii) help of individuals. McCain (1991) identifies a more detailed pattern of acknowledgement behaviour in genetics comprising five categories: (i) access to research-related information, (ii) access to unpublished results, (iii) peer interactive communication, (iv) technical assistance, and (v) manuscript preparation. Likewise, Cronin (1991) develops a separate acknowledgement scheme including six categories: paymaster, (ii) moral support, (iii) dogsbody, (iv) technical, (v) prime mover, and (vi) trusted assessor. Although information and social scientists have shown an interest in acknowledgements, none of their studies has gone further to analyse the linguistic and generic features of these acknowledgements.

For applied linguists and genre analysts, research article acknowledgements and those of dissertations have been analysed in different publication contexts for their move component patterns and lexico-grammatical patterns. Giannoni's (2002) cross-linguistic analysis of the move structural patterns of acknowledgement in English and Italian research articles revealed how writers organize and textualize their debts and gratitude to their peer academics. In their study of the Spanish and English research article acknowledgements in three different contexts, Salager-Meyer *et al.* (2009: 2) demonstrated how the publication contexts play an important role in the way the politics of exchange is conveyed in medical research and to what extent the "socio-cultural conventions of academic contributorship are language and context-dependent".

Hyland's (2003, 2004) research on MA and PhD dissertation acknowledgements written by non-native English-speaking students at Hong Kong universities demonstrated how acknowledgements offer writers a unique rhetorical space to convey their debt for the intellectual and social assistance received from others. He found that instances of this genre consist of three-move components: an optional reflecting move, a main obligatory thanking move, and another optional announcing move realized by two constituent steps: 'Accepting responsibility ' and 'Dedicating the thesis'. In a subsequent study, Hyland & Tse (2004) explored the lexico-grammatical patterns used to realize the component moves of acknowledgement texts. Gesuato (2008) has also examined the lexico-syntactic and semantic features of the acknowledgement moves in PhD dissertations written in English and shown that the acknowledgement moves are encoded through the use of various lexico-syntactic resources.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution towards providing further illumination on how the academic, socio-cultural and personal identities are conveyed in acknowledgements "whose importance to research students has been overlooked in the literature" (Hyland 2004: 306). Furthermore, this genre has been referred to as a "minor and largely overlooked academic genre" (Giannoni 2002: 9) in spite of its high frequency of occurrence in scholarly texts in general and in MA and PhD dissertations in particular. I hope that this endeavour will provide graduate students with further awareness and understanding of the generic struc-

ture of this widespread genre from which they learn the rules and practices of academic values and social community-oriented ethos that should apply in this regulated activity of academic practice. I hope, also, that the results of this research will be of social significance for sociolinguists and academics in providing further insights not into the writers' academic practice but into their personal and social practices, and interactions in the social space where they practise repaying institutional, technical, financial, and moral support received from persons or institutions. In that sense, acknowledgements "constitute a potentially rich source of insight into the rules of engagement which define the bases of collaboration, social exchange and interdependence within academia" (Cronin 1995: 108). Furthermore, although the acknowledgement section is a widespread academic practice, to the best of my knowledge no study has been carried out on the acknowledgement behaviour of Arab non-native speakers of English to identify the generic components common in a variety of English dissertation acknowledgements, and to reflect on how these strategic components convey the academic, socio-cultural and personal identities of Arabs as a distinct cultural group. Such studies could provide interesting socio-cultural and rhetoric-pragmatic contrasts with other context-specific acknowledgement practices (Hyland 2003; Hyland & Tse 2004; Cronin & Franks 2006; Salager-Meyer *et al.* 2009). Therefore, this research is an attempt to throw some light on Arabs' behaviour in this contextual socio-cultural practice.

3. Corpus and methods

The purpose of the present study is to examine the generic structure of acknowledgements written in English by doctoral Arab students. As far as data collection is concerned, a total of 200 authentic PhD dissertation acknowledgements were selected from 200 PhD dissertation sections written in English by Arabic native speakers from different Arab countries. The texts were collected by twenty MA students, as part of the requirements of an elective English course in discourse analysis at Jordan University of Science and Technology. I asked each student to collect at least 10 PhD dissertation acknowledgements from different disciplines written in English by Arab students who graduated from Western universities. All the texts collected were in paper-written format, most of which were collected from the Dissertation Depository Center in the main library at Jordan University. For the purpose of this study, 100 acknowledgement texts were randomly selected from the total 200 collected texts. The acknowledgements were written in English by Arabic native speakers from Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Half of those PhD holders graduated from American universities, one third from British universities, whereas the rest graduated from Canada and Australia in the years 1962-2004. The disciplinary focus of these acknowledgements covered the following disciplines of humanities and social sciences: Linguistics (no.=10), Education (no.=10), Translation (no.=8), Literature (no.=8), Psychology (no.=8), Sociology (no.=8), Political

Sciences (no.=8), Geography (no.=8), Anthropology (no.=8), Management and Marketing (no.=8), Business Studies (no.=8), and Economics (no.=8). The texts vary in length, ranging from 114 to 850 words; the average was 345 words. Extracts were made from this set of acknowledgement sections. The writers' names as well as those parts revealing their identities were omitted.

In addition, I interviewed seven writers from Jordan chosen from seven different disciplinary areas. The major criteria guiding their selection were 'accessibility' of the participants (Pindi 1988) and willingness to participate. The half-hour qualitative interviews conducted by the researcher revolved around the process of writing PhD dissertation acknowledgements. In a tape-recorded open-ended interview, the writers were asked questions on whom they acknowledge, the order in which they present their acknowledgees, whether they had used previous PhD dissertation acknowledgements as guides and to what extent they relied on those in the process of writing, and whether they consult their supervisors or native speakers to edit their acknowledgement texts. During the interviews, I had the opportunity to ask follow-up questions for further clarifications or exemplification. All the respondents opted to speak in English. The whole interviews cannot be presented here due to their length. Those parts that have been used to support an argument in the thesis have been reprinted in full.

4. Analytical framework

My analytical method describing the schematic structure of the dissertation acknowledgement texts drew on genre analysis that identifies prototypical moves or functional components that are used to articulate the communicative purposes of a particular genre. It is mainly based on Swales's (1990) well-known CARS (Creating a Research Space) model for article introductions, which has been extended by Hyland (2004) to the dissertation acknowledgement genre. Swales (1990: 58) defines genre as a "recognized communicative event" having a communicative purpose which is mutually understood by members of the academic community, or the people "engaging in purposeful goal oriented activities" (Martin 2001: 163).

A genre is the set of texts produced as part of recurrent social interactions, each of which has a communicative purpose shaping the schematic structure of the genre. This recurrent pattern of generic structure, which consists of a sequence of moves standing for the overall purpose of a particular social phenomenon, is the result of the social interaction conventions of the members of the academic or professional community.

Genre analysis tends to offer not only a linguistic description but also socio-cultural explanations from the context which has given rise to the communicative interaction (i.e. genre). Martin (1985), too, anchors genre to the social goal of human communication. He thinks of genre as a staged goal-oriented purposeful communicative activity in which participants engage as members having a simi-

lar culture. In other words, he links genre to culture. Mauranen (1993: 37) also thinks that a written genre is a cultural object; she points out that culture consists of some "regular social practices characteristic of a group of people, and it influences our writing habits". However, there is variation within human culture in terms of norms and conventions which constrain the social and behavioural practices of the members of professional and academic communities (Bhatia 2004). Therefore, when writers engage in a particular genre to express their private intentions, which are usually a reflection of their conventions, beliefs and preferences, one expects to find variations in their writing system, which can be sometimes modelled to achieve private intentions, as long as they do not conflict with disciplinary or professional objectives (Bhatia 2004: 131).

To identify the genre components that are used to realize the generic structure of the dissertation acknowledgement texts, I used the rhetorical moves developed and applied by Hyland (2004) to dissertation acknowledgements. The component moves which appeared most frequently in Hyland's (2004: 308) analysis of graduate student acknowledgements are listed below; each of these moves can be further divided into steps as is shown in Figure 1.

I. Reflecting Move
II. Thanking Move
   1. Presenting participants
   2. Thanking for academic assistance
   3. Thanking for providing resources
   4. Thanking for moral support
III. Announcing Move
   1. Accepting responsibility for possible shortcoming in the data
   2. Dedicating the thesis

Figure 1. Hyland's move structure of dissertation acknowledgements

However, I have made some changes because of some cultural differences related to social-cultural affiliations. For example, I added one step (Step 1. 'Thanking Allah'). Furthermore, I split Hyland's 'Thanking for providing resources' into two steps, which came to be termed 'Thanking for data access, clerical and technical support' and 'Thanking for financial support' for explicitness. After that, I categorized the component steps which mainly drew on Hyland's analytical procedure into three groups representing the several identities that come into play as addressees encounter a multiplicity of roles expressed in the same piece of discourse: *professional identity, social identity,* and *individual identity* (Bhatia 2004: 158), as is shown in Table 1. Then I related the component steps of the acknowledgement genre to the role of the broad socio-cultural context (i.e. the influence of academic and broad social actions) in expressing, shaping and negotiating the writer's identity or identities.

The identification of the boundaries of the individual rhetorical components was mainly based on lexical items or phrases that reflect the propositional content of each text segment since each component is a "functional semantic unit whose length depends on writer purpose" (Dubois 1997: 6). In making the boundaries to these components, I found it difficult to base genre analysis on formal linguistic clues because these components vary in size; a component may be realized by one sentence or more and sometimes by a unit of analysis below the sentence level, as noted by Al-Ali (1999; 2006), Dubois (1997), and Swales (1990). For the identification of the components, I examined the acknowledgement texts for their functional components. I assigned a function for each text segment; each functional segment is differentiated from its following contiguous text segment in that the latter has a different major function. Assigning a function is mainly guided by the explicit lexical items and phrases signalling information contained in each text portion (i.e. move). To illustrate, most of the 'Thanking for academic assistance' moves are signalled lexically in indicative phrasal expressions, such as "indebted to my *supervisor Professor* X and *examining committee members* for their ...". The 'Thanking for financial support' moves are indicated lexically by clauses, such as "Thanks goes to X university for their *financial support*", or "... for their *research grant*". The 'Thanking Allah' moves are recognized by the occurrence of the lexical words *Allah, God, our Lord Allah*. Likewise, most of the 'Thanking for moral support' moves are commonly signalled by lexical items, such as *encouragement*, *love*, *moral support,* etc. Lexical clues such as *dedicate* are utilized to express the 'Dedication of the thesis' moves; and expressions, like *confess responsibility*, and *responsible for the shortcomings* are commonly employed to signal the 'Accepting the responsibility' moves. Assigning functions involves "a degree of subjectivity that is perhaps unavoidable" (Holmes 1997: 325). On a check of the reliability of identifying the functional components, I asked two other trained raters who had already been acquainted with such criteria to code 20 (20%) randomly selected acknowledgement texts for their rhetorical components. I had an agreement rate of 90% in identifying and categorizing the components of the coded texts with both raters.

5. Results of data analysis

The results of the generic structure of PhD dissertation acknowledgements revealed the component strategic steps that tend to occur in the corpus texts analysed (see Table 1). As is shown in Table 1, the steps are categorized into three main groups reflecting three multiple identity roles (academic, socio-cultural, and personal). That is to say, an acknowledgement writer, for instance, may find himself/herself simultaneously in the context of needing to communicate effectively with members of the target academic community ('Thanking supervisors and other academics', 'Thanking for data access, clerical and technical support', and 'Thanking for financial support'), and of sticking to his/her own socio-cultural values as reflected in 'Thanking Allah', 'Thanking for moral support', and

'Dedicating the thesis', and of conveying personal identity ('Reflecting', and 'Accepting responsibility').

Table 1. Identity realization in dissertation acknowledgements

Identity role	Component steps of Arab dissertation acknowledgements	No. of moves	Frequency %
Academic identity	• Presenting participants	40	40%
	• Thanking for academic assistance	100	100%
	• Thanking for data access, clerical and technical support	70	70%
	• Thanking for financial support	40	40%
Socio-cultural identity	• Thanking Allah	29	29%
	• Thanking for moral support	84	84%
	• Dedicating the thesis	6	6%
Personal identity	• Reflecting	8	8%
	• Accepting responsisbility	9	9%

Each individual identity role together with its realization steps will be described and exemplified by instances from the corpus. What follows is a presentation of the manifestation of these identities and the component steps realizing each.

5.1. *Academic identity*

The textual construction of the academic identity of the writers is evident in the strategic gratitude addressed to supervisors and other academics, technicians, and sources of financial support. These strategic components mark the writer's interaction with members of the academic community who helped in the following areas: contribution to the work, collaboration during preliminary investigations, helpful comments on the work, advice on experimental design and statistical techniques, computer programming, experimental methods, access to data, scholarships, and grants. By acknowledging the debt of help received from academics, acknowledgement writers present themselves as prospective members of the academic community who are able to display an allegiance to a particular community, and establish a credible writer's ethos. The following are the component steps constituting this role.

5.1.1. *Presenting participants*

The corpus data analysed showed that this step has a textual function (Hyland 2004), as it provides a means of introducing the academics to be thanked. It always introduces each of the three thanking component strategies reflecting the writer's academic identity. This step was present in 40% of the texts in the corpus.

> 1) I would like to thank the following for their assistance, support and friendship during the course of my doctoral studies (Statistics 41).

> 2) This thesis would not have been accomplished without the help of the following individuals (Education 38).

5.1.2. *Thanking for academic assistance*

This component is meant to show that the writers are grateful for any kind of intellectual help they received from members in the academic community who have been influential in stimulating or nurturing the reported research, or shaping the reported work through their ideas, insights, feedback, or critical analysis. The acknowledgers include gratitude paid to their principal dissertation advisors, doctoral committee members, senior academics, and instructors. This step can be considered an obligatory constituent and the backbone of this genre since it is the only step that has been found in all texts. Supervisors are always mentioned before the doctoral committee members and other academics (citation 3). The corpus also yielded interesting evidence related to the naming practices as the acknowledgers tend to exploit elaborate and deferential forms of address to address their supervisors and the examining committee members (citation 3). The acknowledgers typically used address forms such as (*Doctor*, *Professor Doctor*) followed by academic titles to address the acknowledgees. The following excerpts from the corpus illustrate this:

> 3) First, I am indebted to Professor Doctor [...] for her unselfish commitment of time, trusted conscientious advice, sound guidance, sincere efforts, and constant support. Second, I want to thank Professor Doctor [...], Professor Doctor [...], and Dr. [...], the committee members, for their constructive suggestions and comments on the dissertation (Linguistics 23).

When I asked the interviewees why they mentioned their supervisors before other academics, they gave responses such as this one:

> 4) The supervisors play a major role in guiding, supporting, encouraging, and helping the graduate student step by step to complete his project. Therefore the supervisors should be given the most mention and primacy as they are a source of intellectual, academic, and moral support. But thanking other academics, such as the examining committee is just a formality or a ritual because they only give marginal help in the research (Sociology interview).

5.1.3. *Thanking for data access, clerical and technical support*

This strategic component collates acknowledgements for support received from officials and colleagues in such areas as routine data capture, entry and analysis or use of institutional facilities, including equipment, and libraries. It also embraces access to clerical support and proofreading. This step was found in 70% of the acknowledgements. All of the acknowledgees were introduced by titles (*Dr.* or at

least *Mr.* or *Mrs.*: see citation 5). The writers also tend to attach 'honorifics' such as *His Excellency* before the acknowledgees' names and cite them with full position whenever they have any (e.g. *Legal Councilor, President of Yarmouk University*: see citation 6). The following extracts give an idea of this use:

> 5) I would like to thank the bank managers and those who coordinated the distribution of the questionnaire. Thanks are also due to Dr. [X] and Mrs. [X] for their help in proofreading and editing the English language of the thesis (Economics 12).

> 6) I am also especially thankful and deeply grateful to His Excellency Mr. [X], Legal Councilor of [X] for his cooperation and facilitating access to material of this study. I am also indebted to His Excellency, Professor Dr. [X], President of Yarmouk University for being kind enough and trying to help me in meeting His Majesty King Abdullah II to increase the credibility of this work (Translation 26).

5.1.4. *Thanking for financial support*

This component occurred in 40% of the texts. It embraces acknowledgements of grants and scholarships received by the writer either from universities, agencies, or elsewhere:

> 7) I am indebted to JUST University for supporting me financially (Linguistics 16).

> 8) I would like to thank the British Council for their financial support of the research (Management 23).

Our quantitative data regarding the source of financial support reflects the fact that it is the public sector that supports graduate students in the Arab World because graduate studies in Western universities are very expensive and cannot be pursued without funding bodies such as institutions, ministries or universities. For instance 75% of the participants are financed by public universities.

To sum up, the components identified and exemplified so far illustrate the manifestation of academic identity in the sense that they show that the writers have learned the academic conventions which in turn influence their textual choices. These texts are records of paying intellectual debts to their academic supervisors and peers for significant intellectual help, guidance and support. Acknowledging academics suggests that the writers are aware of the fact that their success is always embedded in the collaborative construction among the members of the discourse community. That is to say, they attempt to relate their success claims and identity to the contribution and help of others in the discipline without which their claims are unlikely to find recognition. Adherence to and reproduction of these norms ensures that all accounts of academics' help conform to the institutional behaviour that is expected by a community of established peers. Paying off debts, according to Ben-Ari (1987), occupies an important role in the writer's repertoire of duties towards the academic community.

5.2. *Socio-cultural identity*

Socio-cultural identity in the data analysed is realized by three component steps expressing thankfulness to Allah, indebtedness for moral support to deserving contributors (parents, wife, husband, children, brothers, sisters and relatives), and dedication of strong feeling of gratitude to family members. These rhetorical choices are intricately bound to the writers' concern with maintaining their religious and socio-cultural identity. The following three components with illustrative examples extracted from the corpus data represent this kind of engagement and inform the readers about the writers' benefactors, and why these are to be thanked.

5.2.1. *Thanking Allah*

This component occurred in 29% of the corpus. When it was employed, it occupied the first position in the texts analysed. It embodied a form of gratitude to Allah who is believed by Arab Muslims to be the source of inspiration, strength and confidence which make the completion of the PhD dissertation possible. Though not very common in the corpus, this step reflects and symbolizes Muslims' attitudes towards their religious beliefs as a number of verses in the Holy Quran call for Muslims to be grateful to Allah. The following excerpts from the written acknowledgement texts illustrate this component:

> 9) I am happy to acknowledge the inspirations of Allah (God), who gave me the confidence to pursue this work to its conclusion (Translation 10).

> 10) By God's will, aid, and support, the completion of this work has become a reality (Education 31).

Reference to God reflects religious affiliations which derive from the belief on the part of the writers that Allah has influence over every aspect of human life and the universe. Two of the interviewees who included this step in their dissertations made this explicit:

> 11) 'Since the main function of the acknowledgement section is to reflect personal appreciation of any kind of help received by the writer from individuals who have contributed to the dissertation, thanks and all forms of gratitude should go to Allah, the hidden influence, who guides such individuals and institutions to help me in one way or another as a writer. At the same time we should not forget the Prophetic saying: 'He who does not thank Allah does not thank people' (Translation PhD interview).

> 12) 'As a believer in our Lord Allah, I think we should not only be thankful for academics for their intellectual help, and institutions for financial support, but also be grateful above all to our Lord (Allah) who gave us the desire and strength to undertake the research. That is because Allah is the most important asset for any en-

deavour and the one who gives the health, and energy to pursue any work to its con-
clusion' (Psychology PhD interview).

On the other hand, the researcher asked one of the participants who did not include
this component to motivate his choice, considering that the 'Thanking Allah' com-
ponent is frequent in Arabic lexicon and in their daily interaction. His response was
"I think there is little space, even no space for religious expressions in the life of Eng-
lish speakers. They are people who have little respect for sacred things".

5.2.2. *Thanking for moral support*

Through this step, writers thank family members (father, mother, brothers, sisters,
husband, wife, and children) for their patience, understanding, sympathy and
care, and also their friends for their encouragement. This step, instantiated in 84%
of the texts, carries interpersonal considerations because it demonstrates how the
acknowledgers present themselves as active participants not only in their academ-
ic community but also in the wider social community. The following portions
from the acknowledgement texts illustrate the constituents of this step.

> 13) My special thanks are due to my father, mother, brothers [...] and sisters [...] for
> their continuous love, encouragement and patience. My heart-felt thanks are ex-
> tended to my uncle [...] and my faithful cousin [...] for their constant help and
> moral support. My deepest thanks are reserved to my supportive, faithful and pa-
> tient wife [...] and my children [...] whom I missed during my study. [...], my wife
> has provided the incentive and paved all the roads leading to success even when all
> seemed blocked (Sociology 78).

> 14) I would like to thank my friends in Edinburgh for their encouragement and
> their cooperative spirit and for the nice times we spent together (Psychology 84).

5.2.3. *Dedicating the thesis*

The writers who included this step in this genre felt they had something of great
value to offer, if only symbolical, to the 'addressee' as a way of showing respect or
a reward for a unique effort. All the six exemplar dedications encountered in the
data were restricted to family members:

> 15) This dissertation is dedicated to the spirit of my father and to my mother for
> their deep love and help in many ways (Geography 95).

To conclude, the component moves presented and exemplified in this section have
illustrated the manifestation of the writer's socio-cultural identity. The partici-
pants extend their gratitude beyond the boundaries of the discourse community
to thank Allah, family, relatives, and friends. In doing so, they are able to present
themselves as individuals with relationships with the social community they be-
long to, and affirm their commitment to the social conventions and their religious

affiliations. As indicated by the three component steps above, the socio-cultural identity encountered in the data analysed displays a kind of concern on the part of Arab non-native speakers of English for divine, and strong familial and kinship involvement. The religious affiliation realized by the 'Thanking Allah' step stands in contrast to the English rhetoric which, as noted by Kharrat (2002), is mainly secular and may display a lack of concern for divine involvement in the life of humankind. The inclusion of such a component can be explained with reference to a complex of religious and socio-cultural conventions reflecting the Arab users' identity and their attitudes. Although Arabic non-native speakers of English are aware of the fact that there might not be a place in English for the religiously reflective aspect, 29 percent of the writers maintain this convention as a reflection of their identity.

5.3. *Personal identity*

Allocating credit to external contributors, such as supervisors and other academics, does not exclude the writer's personal responsibility for the piece of research s/he has conducted. Therefore a few writers include one or two strategic components (e.g. 'Reflecting and Accepting responsibility') where they assert their authorial responsibility for the dissertation's content and present individual identities capable of coping with and overcoming the challenges that have been encountered during the process of research. 'Personal Identity' component steps have a marginal function as they occurred infrequently (17%) in the corpus in comparison to those components articulating the main communicative purpose of the acknowledgement genre (i.e. conveying gratitude).

5.3.1. *Accepting responsibility*

This marginal move, found in 9% of the texts, allows the acknowledgers to assert their authorial responsibility for the dissertation's imperfections and contents. "On the interpersonal plane, this step emphasized the contrast between collaboration and responsibility" (Giannoni 2002: 22):

> 16) I must confess in all humility and sincerity that only I am responsible for the shortcomings of this thesis (Marketing 63).

> 17) As is customary, the author assumes full responsibility for any errors or misconceptions (Economics 33).

5.3.2. *Reflecting*

This move refers back to the writer's research experience gained and the challenges that have been encountered and overcome. This component is peripheral to the genre's main communicative purpose as it occurred in 8% of the corpus. Examples:

18) The completion of a doctoral dissertation is a great achievement; however, it was a challenging and extremely slippery journey with the concept of genre because of the fuzziness of this concept (Linguistics 9).

19) Having written a dissertation myself, and I look back in retrospective, it is indeed a great accomplishment (Anthropology 36).

6. Discussion

So far I have identified, described, and related the generic components of the English acknowledgements written by Arab non-native speakers of English to three types of identity roles (academic, socio-cultural, and personal) enacted by the writers. Since discourse reifies and replicates social beliefs, academic values (Fairclough 1995) and the socio-cultural system (Foley 1997), I present, in this section, further discussion and justification for the socio-cultural and academic conditions which give rise to the genre components evidenced in this corpus.

The analysis reveals that there are altogether nine strategic components by means of which acknowledgements are structured, as shown in Table 1. The structure of these acknowledgements is quite similar to that of Hyland (2004). However, the present acknowledgement corpus showed an additional component (i.e. 'Thanking Allah') which was not observed in Hyland's corpus. These rhetorical components allow the writers to textualize a constellation of identities: academic, socio-cultural and personal.

The components offering thanks related to the academic sphere are: 'Thanking supervisors', 'Thanking for data access, clerical and technical support', and 'Thanking for financial support'. These functional components comprise not just a list of acknowledgees but also expressions of functional collaboration among scholars and members of the academic community, and revelations of the writer's perceptions of how best to address and interact with peers. The acknowledgers appear to be aware of the respect due to their heterogeneous audience. When addressing them, they use titles and honorifics that manifest deferential recognitions of the norms of their academic community (Giannoni 2002; Hyland 2004) and the hierarchies of their social roles.

A comparison between the English acknowledgements written by Arab PhD students and those written by the students at Hong Kong universities analysed by Hyland (2004) reveals considerable similarities in the type and frequencies of the strategic components reflecting academic affiliations. For example, 'Thanking Academics' is obligatory as all the acknowledgements in both types of data included this component. Likewise, the Arab writers use 'Thanking for access to data' in 70% of their texts, which is nearly as often as that of the Hong Kong students (66%). Such similarities, in certain generic component moves, and frequencies, are in a way justified for more than one reason. Firstly, it is worthwhile noting that all the texts analysed in the present study were written by Arab non-native speakers of English who graduated from English native-speaking countries, namely, the US, the UK, and

Australia. Therefore, it is presumed that the writers have benefited from the host culture and have been influenced by its academic values so they are less likely to be indifferent to these practices and values. The writers are likely to maintain the generic structure of acknowledgements irrespective of nativity (i.e. whether a writer is a native or non-native speaker) or cultural values in order to operate in a manner acceptable to the members of the academic community. As used by Johns (1997: 56-58), this community refers to academics who share some general academic discourses, values, concepts, textual practices, as well as other shared areas of interest for which they have been prepared. Thus, the Arab non-native speakers of English tend to adopt these shared textual practices and core organizational generic patterns since they think of themselves as prospective members of this community. Moreover, since the component patterns of the acknowledgement genre are an articulation of its communicative purpose, it stands to reason that each writer is expected to resort to these generic component options in the process of writing.

However, the data of the present study and Hyland's (2004) data yielded few differences in the type and percentages of the strategic components conveying socio-cultural identity. For example, 'Thanking for moral support' and 'Dedicating the thesis' occurred in these acknowledgements, both within and across the two cultures; however, they differ in frequencies. In terms of percentages, 84% of the Arab writers used 'Thanking for moral support' and 6% used 'Dedicating the thesis', while 71% of the Hong Kong students used the first component and 4% employed the latter. On the other hand, I identified an additional strategic component not present in Hyland's model, that is, 'Thanking Allah'. The use of this particular rhetorical option and the differences in the frequencies of occurrence of the others in the two types of data are not surprising because it is unlikely that common generic patterns will always operate on all texts belonging to the same genre (Al-Ali 1999).

The additional feature, 'Thanking Allah', reflects the Islamic impact on Arab identity. This behavioural strategic choice can be explained with reference to the Qur'anic and the Prophetic sayings and their influence on an Arab's social interaction. For example, Prophet Mohammed says: "He who does not thank Allah does not thank people". These 'Thanking' phrases are also pervasive throughout the Qur'anic verses prompting Muslims to be always grateful to Allah[1]. It is not surprising to find that Arab writers are driven by religious affiliations: this component move is also analysed in Al-Ali's (2010) study of acknowledgements accompanying Arabic PhD dissertations where seventy percent of the writers present their gratitude to Allah (God), 25 percent also initiate this genre with an

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[1] This is stated in (Surat al-bagarah, verse 172) *wa-shkuruu lillaahi inn kuntum ?iyyahu ta'buduun* [And be thankful to Allah if it is indeed He Whom you worship].
The following verse also provides basis for showing gratitude:
La?in shakartum la?azeedanakum wa la?in kafartum ?inna 'athaabe lashadeed
'If you are grateful, I [your Lord] will add more (favours) unto you; but if you show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed.'
(Surha 14: Ibrahim, v. 7)

'Opening' based on Qur'anic verses or Prophetic sayings, and 23 percent of the Arabic acknowledgements end with praises for Allah**.** Another favoured strategy that has been identified in Arabic acknowledgements is the 'Invoking of God's (Allah's) favours' upon acknowledgees. Al-Ali (2005; 2006) notes that religious influence is manifested not only in this type of genre but also in most aspects of Muslim life to the extent that in most Arab societies there is no separation between religion and social life. The occurrence of this component can also be related to the kind of pressure writers feel subject to throughout the period of writing their PhD theses. Thus, Arab writers may tend to resort to Allah to alleviate the amount of fear and pressure they are undergoing.

The data analysed showed that Arab writers tend to foreground their specific social identity by showing a higher degree of commitment to their kinships and the members of their extended family. For example, 'Thanking for moral support' received from family members and relatives was evident in 84% of the texts analysed. This can be related to the fact that there exists in the Arab world a particular type of society in which the extended family is a very basic cultural unit which exerts a lasting influence on Arab life. As is shown in Section 6.2.2 (example 13), parents were always given pre-eminence as they were mentioned before other members of the family. Brothers, sisters, wife, husband, and children were mentioned by name. This component move, therefore, reveals two types of relation: hierarchical and lateral; the hierarchical relationships are those between the acknowledgers and their parents, but the lateral relationships are those between the acknowledgers and their brothers and sisters. The high frequency of this component indicates that the writers are conscious of the deference owed to their parents and the responsibility carried out to their own children and spouses. Furthermore, they are also aware of the duty owed to their brothers and sisters expressed in the form of indebtedness. The Arab acknowledgers pay attention to the 'collectivistic' needs of their extended families in addition to those of their own (i.e. wives, husbands and children). From a collectivistic point of view, the acknowledger's face is the face of his/her group, whether that group is one's family, or one's cultural group (Scollon & Scollon 2001). Furthermore, mapping credits is also employed by the writers to reflect and cement their familial and social relations by presenting their awareness of the behavioural norms of the social community they belong to and relating their success to the sacrifices and encouragement of their families, relatives, and friends.

In contrast to the main 'Thanking' components that portray academic and social collaboration, the optional components 'Reflecting' and 'Expressing responsibility' strategies exhibit the writer's personal identity and the degree of self-confidence, especially when s/he asserts absolute authorial responsibility for any deficiencies in the dissertation. The 'Reflecting' component appeared in 19% of the PhD students' dissertations at Hong Kong University, but only in 8% of those of the Arabs. However, the 'Expressing responsibility' strategy occurs in nine per cent of the Arab students' data in comparison to seven per cent of the Hong Kong stu-

dents' data. Although these optional components were found to have a very low frequency of occurrence in the present corpus, the writers who include them seem to have additional subtle private intentions (Bhatia 2004). These peripheral components are employed to exhibit additional minor functions despite the fact that genre structure is guided by its main communicative purpose. In particular, they embody an aspect of promotional input. They are used by the writers to promote themselves as independent and responsible researchers, as well as hard workers who have been able to cope with and overcome the challenges of the research.

7. Conclusion and implications

The purpose of this article was to identify and describe the component moves found in PhD dissertation acknowledgements written by Arab non-native speakers of English and to show how their academic, socio-cultural and personal identities are conveyed in the acknowledgement genre. The analysis reveals that in addition to the primary function of conveying public gratitude for assistance, the acknowledgement texts communicate a lot of information about writers' socio-cultural practices, and personal and academic identities. Despite the observed similarities between the generic structure of the English acknowledgements written by Arab PhD students and that of the acknowledgements analysed by Hyland, I identified an additional strategic component (i.e. 'Thanking Allah') used to reflect the Arab writers' religious affiliations, or perhaps reflect or testify a kind of pressure writers feel subject to. In addition, differences were noted in the frequency of occurrence of the other components used to realize the writers' socio-cultural identity. The conclusion to be drawn from the paper is that since this type of genre is addressed to multiple and heterogeneous audiences, acknowledgements provide a valuable space for writers to present themselves as thankers, debtors, and academics having a professional and social identity. Acknowledgements provide an opportunity for the acknowledger to show that s/he is not limited to an academic persona but is promoted as having other important socio-cultural connections.

This genre deserves special attention because acknowledgements are seen as a 'practice of unrecognized and disregarded value' (Hyland 2003: 253), and considered as a neglected 'part genre' (Swales 2004: 31). Thus, it is often wise to raise dissertation writers' attention to the appropriate wording and staging of these 'special textual constructs' whose "formation is governed by conventions which are different from those of the main text" (Ben-Ari 1987: 79). Apprentices have usually not acquired situated knowledge of this type of genre and they may be handicapped in this respect by their education. They need to understand the whole process of text production. Therefore, in order to enable non-native writers to articulate the communicative aims of the texts they are producing, it is necessary to raise their awareness of the textual and contextual relationship between the personal, interpersonal and academic identity in the systems of genres. Thus, it is essential to put in place guidelines for this established practice that MA and PhD

writers will follow. This will ensure that writers are, hopefully, facilitated in using acknowledgements more appropriately. However, the present study reveals that the occurrence of certain strategic components and the high frequency of some components in the non-native speakers' texts can only be understood clearly in the context in which they occur. They demand from native speakers of English that they be interpreted as contextually and socio-culturally constrained practices in order to fully appreciate the richness of other varieties of English.

Since research of acknowledgement genres uncovers the social and academic life of academics, it remains to be seen whether there are distinct Arabic (i.e. national) features at work that constrain the shape, components, and the lexical expressions realizing the rhetorical options articulating this genre. Therefore, further contrastive research into acknowledgement writing practices in Arabic is needed, in order to have a realistic idea of the socio-cultural differences and practices which could facilitate intercultural communication.

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U-communities and the Taqwacores: towards the construction of a (neither) American (nor) Muslim identity

Paola Attolino

Abstract

As recent evolutions of E-communities, U-communities (ubiquitous communities, but also *you*-communities) are characterized by an increasingly active role on the part of their participants both in terms of access – thanks to the latest delocalized and personalized CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication) devices – and of the creation of contents as well as bottom-up rules of communication.

This paper focuses on the way people and events are represented in this new type of media and it analyses the ideologies and viewpoints resulting in acts of evaluation which contribute in reproducing or altering a shared system of values. The focus of the analysis is the use of *MySpace* U-communities by minority social groups, which have little or no space in more institutionalized media.

The key object of study is the Taqwacores, an emerging subculture of young American Muslims which, in the post-9/11 climate, rejects parts of both American and Islamic cultures under the flag of punk music. The small-scale case study observes how lexical choices, linguistic uses and the employment of pragmatic strategies are a vital component of the process through which these social groups articulate not only their sense of identity but also their perception and representation of Others.

1. Introduction

> *In this so-called clash of civilisations, Taqwacore is*
> *about sticking the middle finger in both directions.*
> Michael Muhammad Knight, *The Taqwacores*

In 2003 Michael Muhammad Knight, a young American convert to Islam, self-published his debut novel about a fictitious Muslim punk scene in Buffalo, New York (Abdalla 2007). The title was *The Taqwacores*, a blend of the Arabic word

Taqwa, which means 'god-consciousness', i.e. the Islamic idea of a constant aware-ness of God's omnipresence, and *(hard)core*, a term denoting a western music (sub)genre, which usually conveys a sense of anger and disaffection.

The novel inspired Kourosh Poursalehi, a young punk rocker from Texas, to set up the first Taqwacore band, which he called *Vote Hezbollah*, a provocative name that he had found in the book. Hezbollah – 'party of God' in Arabic – is in fact the name of several Islamic political and paramilitary organizations, the most popu-lar of which is based in Lebanon. It should be pointed out that on the band's *MySpace* page visitors can read as follows:

> Vote Hezbollah was formed in 2004 shortly after reading Taqwacores by Michael Muhammad Knight. The band name comes from the book and in no way repre-sents terrorism. Vote Hezbollah does not promote violence or support any violent organizations. Peace, unity, and truth are our only strengths[1].

Since then, a number of Muslim punk bands with the label *Taqwacore* have come on the scene. Their music speaks of the experience of being Muslim in America in the 21st century, emphasizing the fact that Taqwacore is not a coherent ideology in itself, but a rebellion against both the American and Muslim mainstream.

As minority social groups, Taqwacore bands have little or no space in what are customarily considered institutionalized or mainstream media, whereas they make large use of the so-called U-communities hosted by social networking web-sites, *MySpace* in particular.

U-communities (ubiquitous communities, but also *you*-communities) are il-lustrative of the new communicative practices of Web 2.0, an expression which refers to the 'second generation' of the World Wide Web. Recent developments in 'ubiquitous technology' have actually encouraged new forms of interaction that are possible anywhere and at any time. U-communities are in fact characterized by the increasingly active role of their participants both in the possibility of access – thanks to the latest delocalized and personalized CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication) devices – and in the creation of contents as well as bottom-up rules of communication.

The present paper[2] aims to investigate to what extent the way people and events are represented in a U-community is a reflection of ideologies and viewpoints re-sulting in acts of evaluation which contribute in reproducing or altering a shared system of values. The small-scale case study observes how lexical choices, linguis-tic uses and the employment of pragmatic strategies are a vital component of the process through which this social group articulates not only its sense of identity but also its perception and representation of Others.

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[1] At http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewProfile&friendID=8499342, accessed on 15/01/2009.

[2] This paper is part of an ongoing research project on New Media, Language and Identity fund-ed by the Department of Literary and Linguistic Studies, University of Salerno.

2. CMC and Blogspeak: an overview

The advent and spread of CMC has nourished the ongoing debate about standard and non-standard language. New media language uses have often been accused of "destroying literacy skills and the art of communication" (Cornbleet & Carter 2001: 120) because of the high occurrence of misspellings, ungrammaticalities, abbreviations, colloquialisms as well as the overuse of punctuation. On the other hand, language standardization has to be thought of as a tendency towards uniformity which is socially very highly valued, but in fact never wholly achieved (Milroy & Milroy 1985).

In order to give a definition of CMC's unique discourse type, Crystal (2001) coined the term *Netspeak*, but maybe the expression that best illustrates the idea of this new language as a Janus-faced variety is *Text-Talk* (Suler 1998), which defines a mode (Halliday 1985) of creative discourse cutting across the traditional modes of speech and writing. The notion of genre is a crucial concept for interpreting multimodal texts, in particular web-generated ones (Garzone 2007). Discourse features created by *Text-Talk* strongly affect changes in tenor (Halliday 1985), introducing new conventions in the communicative event. A salient feature of CMC discourse is that rules are stipulated bottom up, in other words the users are the authors of what is often referred to as *Netiquette*.

Blogs[3] are interactive online diaries, consisting of frequently updated webpages where entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order. Blogs embody multimodal meaning-making processes in that they may combine different modes of communication such as text, image, and sound.

Blogs employ, as a rule, a 'blogger-tailored style', which serves the purpose of showing off the blogger's own voice. On the other hand, they are a clear example of "Interactive Written Discourse" (Baron 2005): search function, cross-referencing and feedback systems enable readers to interact with the blogger, giving blogs the feature of an asynchronous dialogue. Besides leaving comments, a peculiar trait of interaction in several blogs – including the ones accessible via *MySpace* – is the so-called *kudos system*, through which readers are allowed to make praising remarks on every single blogger's post.

Blogs tend to be composed of discrete units. These units are separated by unpredictable lengths of time, hence the communication is discontinuous: it does not take place until the next unit is produced. This trait affects the "information game" (Goffman 1969) between the participants in CMC, with particular reference to the idea of the 'given' (or explicit) signals and the 'given off' (or inadvertent) expressions that permeate face-to-face interactions. As blogs are test-based CMC, the writer has both tools and time to control his/her expressions, so readers can hardly detect any 'given off' signals, because they lack essential channels such as facial expression, gesture and tone of voice.

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[3] The term *blog* is the fore-clipped form of *weblog*, a compound made up of the words *web* and *log*, the record book of a journey.

2.1. *Blogs and online identities*

When theorizing about identity, there is a common dualism between essentialism and social constructionism. Essentialist theories consider identity as a taken-for-granted concept, located 'inside' persons, whereas constructionist approaches view identity as a socially-constructed category, investigating "how people perform, ascribe and resist identity" (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 11-12). As the present paper focuses on a blog discourse community, a constructionist approach will be adopted. Thus special attention will be given to the negotiation of identity in this particular discourse context, in an attempt to investigate to what extent the idea of inner/outer selves is used to achieve social action. A highly significant function of CMC is, in fact, the social one (Baym 1998): virtual communities are often created by marginalized or powerless groups as a response to the loss of community in real-life contexts (Robins 2000).

As Suler (2002) reminds us, "one's online identity can be real-to-life, imaginary, or hidden", whereas people may use their blogs as "cyber-catharsis" (Noguchi 2005). Writing therapy is a consolidated practice, hence the idea of "blogging as therapy" is nothing new. However, there is an important difference between blogs and diaries: "Blog communities actually combine features of personal journaling and support groups" (Suler 2002). In other words, blogs are community-centric: they are written for an audience. They also tend to create a community of like-minded people. The conversational floor is held by the blogger, in that readers' comments reproduce a sort of top-down content hierarchy (Paganoni 2008) and, most importantly, they may be removed by the blogger.

3. Methodology and data selection

Blog data are investigated within the theoretical framework of *Computer Mediated Discourse Analysis* (CMDA), an interdisciplinary approach informed by Halliday's (1985) systemic-functional linguistics, which provides the methodological tools to analyse web hypertexts. According to Herring (2004), CMDA may be applied to four levels of language: structure, meaning, interaction, and social behaviour. The structural level includes the "semiotics of multimedia" (Lemke 2002), which integrates verbal, visual, aural, graphic and pictorial features. Meaning phenomena take account of the meanings of words, speech acts and functional units. At the interactional level, we find the means of negotiating interactive exchanges, such as topic development, and dialogic patterns (e.g. turn-taking). The social level includes linguistic expressions of play, conflict, power, as well as participation patterns – frequency and length of messages posted and feedback received – in Multi-User Domains (MUDs).

As the present analysis intends to be qualitative rather than quantitative, it has been carried out on a corpus covering a time-span of around three years (April 2005-March 2008) and consisting of the blog entries (about 18,000 words) currently available on the *MySpace* page of a Taqwacore band, namely *The Kominas*.

The choice is justified by the fact that the blogs of the other two Taqwacore bands available on the web, namely *Vote Hezbollah*[4] and *The Thawra*[5], are basically made of hyperlinks to newspaper articles about their music, whereas the duration, the frequency of blog posts and the topics dealt with make *The Kominas* blog sufficiently illustrative of the way these social groups articulate their sense of identity as well as their perception and representation of *Others.*

Despite the free access that public blogs have, there is some debate among researchers concerning the use of such materials (Benwell & Stokoe 2006). Some argue that researchers should explicitly seek authorization to analyse the data, whereas others assume such resources to be public, hence open to analysis. In the case of the present study, data have been observed, to some extent, 'from the inside'. Having a *MySpace* account myself, *The Kominas* accepted me as a *friend* on their *MySpace* page, I subscribed to their blog and I obtained written permission[6] to use their blog posts for analysis.

4. The Kominas MySpace Blog

The Kominas – a Punjabi word meaning 'bastards' – is today the best-known Taqwacore band. Its four members are American Muslims coming from the Boston area, whose Pakistani origins mockingly come into view as soon as visitors approach their *MySpace* page. The masthead, in fact, reports the mythical location *Bostonstan, Massachusetts* – a portmanteau of Boston and Pakistan – as their hometown. Their slogan reads *Keeping it Sunni side up since 2005*, which highlights their being Sunni Muslims, even if blog analysis will show that this idea of identity is not so straightforward, as is visually demonstrated by the image chosen for their avatar (see Figure 1).

4.1. *Posts and comments analysis*

Due to reasons of space, post analysis is limited here to a selection of crucial blog entries, chosen according to theme, one of the data sampling techniques available in CMDA (Herring 2004). In this particular case, threads have been selected for their embodying issues of identity. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are as they appear on screen. It is worth noting that most Internet users have developed a greater tolerance for *grammar slack*, a term applied to the deviant spellings, the

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[4] At http://blogs.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=blog.ListAll&friendId=8499342, last accessed on 14/07/2009.

[5] At http://blogs.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=blog.ListAll&friendId=161456047, last accessed on 14/07/2009.

[6] http://messaging.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=mail.readmessage&userID=107878605&type=Saved&messageID=303707503.

lack or abuse of punctuation and liberal use of contractions often encountered on the web.

When approaching *The Kominas* blog, the first questions to be posed are: is the blogger writing to someone in particular? Who is the intended/perceived audience? The answer is likely to be found in the very first post:

> (1) Monday, April 04, 2005
> Not dead yet!!! Bollywood fire comming your way!
> Uff, *yaar*!! We're still kicking! Do you know any *Dhol*[7] players? We can always arm our current drummers. Gotta get *Madhurri*[8] to marry me somehow, right? *Yaar*... it's almost spring time and my ... how do you say.. "*Shola*"[9], is burning bright. prepare for *Djinns*[10] and *Bhangra*[11]!!! ~ The Kominas [my italics]

At the meaning and interactional level (Herring 2004), the high concentration of what we may define as community-specific lexicon and dialogic patterns (e.g. direct questions, exclamation and question marks used as monitoring feature) suggests that the blogger is performing a cultural act of identity (Kramsch 1998). He is addressing the Desi community, the people of South Asian heritage, which is also confirmed by the fact that his addressee is a *yaar*, the Indian English term for 'buddy'[12].

Unlike other CMC spaces on the Internet, where reduced social cues may encourage people to disguise their identity, blogs tend to be a place for self-disclosure, where people speak about themselves, their *real* self. In fact, in numerous posts *The Kominas* articulate their sense of 'virtual' identity as coinciding with their real-life one. In addition, the bloggers use their full names rather than nicknames. The posts mentioned above tell about real-life stories, for example the one on Thanksgiving Day (2):

> (2) Friday, December 02, 2005
> Angry brown man on Thanksgiving
> Mood: Rancid
> I spent the last Thanksgiving at a mosque in Saginaw, Michigan. Its roof looked more like a White Castle burger joint than the onion-on-the-citadel look I'm used to praying under. [...] I remember in living in Lahore in 96 during a surge of Sunni

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[7] The *Dhol* is a double-sided barrel drum widely used in the Punjab region.

[8] *Madhurri* – misspelling of *Madhuri* – refers to Madhuri Dixit, an award-winning Bollywood actress.

[9] *Shola* is a type of high-altitude stunted evergreen forest found in southern India.

[10] In Islamic theology and folklore *Djinn* – also *Jinn* or *Genie* – is said to be a creature with free will.

[11] *Bhangra* is a folk dance which originated in the Punjab region.

[12] At http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/yaar, last accessed on 16/01/2009.

on Shia violence, and getting into the Quran to keep my peace of mind. [...] in MI[13], I fixated on civil liberties, culture clash, and the vocabulary white people have codified and used to diagnose and dissect what I live through day to day. I try to divorce my identity as a liberal arts student from the way I approach my culture, but it gets harder every year. I don't want to examine Islam, I'm supposed to be a *part* of it. I put my Sapara[14] down that day, and [...] I dailed Mike Knight's[15] phone number. He picked up.

"Yo Basim" [16]. "Mike, I'm having second thoughts about letting Liz Nord do the documentary. [...] In all seriousness, she asked me 'What's it like to be Muslim and know that there are terrorists out there that claim to be Muslim as well'" *"Dude... that's fucked!"* "Yeah, man. So I shot back 'What's it like to be <u>white</u> and have to sleep at night with the blood stains of Haliburton[17] and Enron[18] on your hands." *"HAH HAHA! Hell yeah."*

Seriously, the nerve... *What's it like to be Muslim and know there are muslim terrorists out there?"***!?** Well, what's it like to be White and read about slavery? [...] I discovered that the Kominas' track "Rumi was a Homo" was being studied academically by the Honor's Program at the University of Arkansas. See for yourself[19]. [...] In typical Imperial fashion, they've classified the class as Middle Eastern Popular Music, and say its a survey of Muslim music. [...] Arabs make up less than 1/5th of Muslims world wide. The largest Muslim country is Indonesia, and the largest segment of muslims in America are Black. Pakistanis, Iranians, and Turks are NOT Arabs anymore than Itallians are Norse. [...] So **fuck you, University of Arkansas**.

The title of post (2) is quite self-explanatory: the blogger defines himself as "angry" and "brown", two adjectives that juxtapose him with the White mainstream. At the structural level (Herring 2004), the message displays graphic features such as capitalization, underlining, italics and bold used to emphasize the blogger's point. The diary style of post (2) engages the readers by offering visual particulars

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[13] Postal code for Michigan.

[14] The blogger has previously reminded the reader that this term refers to one of the thirty books the Quran is composed of.

[15] Michael Muhammad Knights, the author of *The Taqwacores*.

[16] Basim Usmani – bass-player of *The Kominas* – is the name of the blogger.

[17] Haliburton – misspelling of Halliburton – is a US-based oilfield services corporation at the forefront of several media and political controversies in relation to its political ties and its corporate ethics.

[18] Enron Corporation was an American energy company involved in a famous financial scandal in 2001.

[19] The hypertext here provides a link to the related University of Arkansas' webpage (at http://www.uark.edu/misc/honors/honors.info/colloquiaSpring2006.htm, last accessed on 11/01/2009).

on the venue of the event, but above all on the feelings experienced by the blogger. Spatial metaphors in CMC contribute to the verbal construction of space and place (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 253): the mosque looks like a "White Castle burger joint"[20], an image that stresses the 'culture clash' between Islam and Western civilization, which is what the whole post is about. The blogger is discussing his identity crisis as an American Muslim, but at the same time he portrays the Others – Liz Nord (a documentary filmmaker and producer) and the University of Arkansas – as the embodiment of the White mainstream's stereotypical view of Muslims as terrorists or their identification, by a phenomenon of "diffusion" (Kramsch 1998), as Middle Eastern or Arabs.

The blogger's sense of belonging to Islam does not prevent him from looking at his religion with irony, which in other contexts of communication would have been, in all likelihood, censored. It is worth noting, for instance, that the UK edition of *The Taqwacores* (the novel) was partially censored[21]. An example of this ironic look on Islam is offered in post (3), which was written from Pakistan, where Basim (the blogger) went as a volunteer in the aftermath of the disastrous 2005 Kashmir earthquake:

(3) Wednesday, December 14, 2005
First blog entry from Pakistan
Mood: Bhangra
[...] Luckily, Islam is the ultimate religion of compulsive mastrubators. At five prayers a day, there's always the opportunity to bust out some rakkats[22] and du'a[23] my way back to spiritual health when I'm feeling worn and tarnished. Apparently I'm going to be living in a U.S MASH Camp for the relief work, as extra manpower and a translator. [...] Man, a MASH camp. All I know about MASH[24] are the reruns I'd accidentally watch when I was hoping to catch the A-Team. [...] I got my first pair of steel toed boots before I left. [...] On the airport in New York, there was a record number of Rabbis, young and old. I've been familiar with glares and Zionist hostility from the three Yamaka'd boys in Lexington highschool that gave me hell the first year I moved back to America from Lahore. This time, the Zionist hostility was much more managable. The Rabbis in the airport glared at me, and then at my boots, and then back at me. I just glanced at my steel toed boots, made eye contact and smiled. [...]

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[20] *White Castle* is the oldest American hamburger fast food restaurant chain (Hogan 1997).

[21] At http://autonomedia.org/taqwa_censorship, last accessed on 16/01/2009.

[22] Misspelling of *raka'ah*, one of the units Islamic prayers consist of.

[23] Supplication to Allah.

[24] Acronyms for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, the US Army medical unit serving as a fully functional hospital in a combat area, made famous by the homonymous American television series in the 1970s.

In the framework of CMDA, social behaviour emerges from post (3). The blogger establishes a sense of community through exchanging information in the form of personal narratives. A perception of difference, of otherness, lies behind the blogger's reports of his encounter with "the three Yamaka'd boys"[25] through which he first experienced what he calls "Zionist hostility" and with the Rabbis he met at the airport, who looked upset because of his wearing "steel toed boots", customarily a status symbol of racist skinheads worldwide (Knight 1997).

The constant struggle between the two identities – Muslim and American – reaches its peak in post (4):

> (4) Monday, December 19, 2005
> Peace with the Military
> [...] These folks were so amazing, these military folks. [...] I've never met a more resourceful set of people, and for that I've learned to appreciate *our vets* coming back to America even more. And what a motley crue they are. [...] There's a syndicated military channel here which broadcasts Football matches. [...] The Pats[26] were playing, and they kept cutting to a riverside view of Cambridge. I felt a little homesick, and isolated at the same time. I have nothing in common with the people of Cambridge [...]. I'm not interested in being a young professional, nor do I consider myself very intelligent. It's a totally seperate world from mine. That said, I haven't got much in common with **M*A*S*H**[27] folks. [...] I could give up on my present life to be a mujahideen one day, and give it up for a fix of poppy seed the next. *No goddamned identity is going to hold me down.* [my italics]

Being a medium with strong oral qualities, CMC makes large use of deixis as context-dependent markers: in post (4) the demonstrative determiner *these* – referring to the military people Basim is living with – signals nearness in both time and space, recreating the immediacy of a conversation. The possessive *our* referring to American veterans conveys a sense of belonging to the "motley crue" MASH is made of, until a rupture event occurs: the football match. According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1986), supporting a football team and gathering together with others to watch a match on television provides a sense of belonging, identification and inclusion within a larger group who share the same values and interests (Jacobson 2003), which is not the case of Basim.

American mainstream is often the target of the blogger's bitter criticisms. A crucial example is offered in post (5). The entry opens with the deprecation of the Israeli plan to build a "Museum of Tolerance" on Muslim graves and ends with the condemnation of American immigration policy towards Mexicans:

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[25] *Yamaka* is the misspelling of *yarmulke*, the thin, slightly-rounded skullcap traditionally worn by observant Jewish men.

[26] Clipped form of *The New England Patriots*, a popular American football team.

[27] In CMC asterisks are generally used to emphasize words or expressions (McDonald 2004).

(5) Tuesday, February 28, 2006
Living in Crackastan[28]
The Crackastani perspective: Remember that Simpsons' Halloween episode where Homer and co. move into a house built on an *ancient graveyard*? This is better! They are digging up Muslim graves in order to make space for a hundred and fifty million dollar "Museum of Tolerence". Why are they doing **that**?[29] Didn't racism go extinct some forty years ago? America doesn't need tolerence. We washed away our need for it in the waves of a hurricane. In fact, most of us are banking on an Earthquake to fix the situation in Southern California. We could save the cash we pay nine year old Mexicans for stitching up our Border Patrol uniforms. No more mexicans X-cept[30] the ladies... AWWWWWWWW SHIT!!! [...]

According to the participation patterns (use of direct questions, *we/they* distinction) that occur in (5), the main aim is to elicit readers' comments. The topical allusion to the Simpsons episode serves the same purpose: it is an ephemeral reference to an event, the background and relevance of which is not explained by the writer but which relies on the reader's familiarity with what is mentioned (Davies 2002). Not surprisingly, at the social level (Herring 2004) the feedback, compared to previously considered posts, is greater. Below I report some of the comments:

(5a) **sabatomi© said:** That's a fucking joke, right?

(5b) **The Kominas said:** What? Muslims for Bush? Naw! Sucks... I hope you're not asking about the post!!! I walk into walls, and realize it's sarcastic.

(5c) **The Only Dana Chisholm that Matters said:** That's funny, when I read the article I could of sworn it said this was happening in Jerusalem. Last time I checked Jerusalem was pretty far from America. *scratches head*

(5d) **Anonymous said:** you speak words of wisdom, but splain me this: why this picture?[31] and also you should tell people about this[32]

The crosstalk engages the users in a sort of sparring match, especially comments (5b) and (5d). The latter offers also a further example of cross-modal exchange, specifically in the interplay between text and referred images. Pragmatic norms in

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[28] *Crackastan* is a slang term for "Where the whites live" (www.urbandictionary.com).

[29] Hyperlink to http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-plans-to-build-museum-of-tolerance-on-muslim-graves-466028.html (last accessed on 14/01/2009).

[30] The use of non-standard homophones, where a letter or number stands for a longer word (X-cept = except) is very frequent in CMC.

[31] Hyperlink to http://www.muslimsforbush.com/common/photos/65.jpg, last accessed on 15/01/2009.

[32] Hyperlink to http://www.muslimsforbush.com/contest.html last accessed on 15/01/2009.

CMC are very different from face-to-face interaction (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 266-268). The communication goes beyond the individual exchange, focusing on the perceived identity of the group ("you should tell people") and its textual record (the hyperlinked determiner *this*).

A noticeable feature throughout *The Kominas* blog as it develops is that not only American but also Muslim mainstream is the target of the blogger's hard-edged comments. As to meaning phenomena (Herring 2004), criticism is often conveyed through the linguistic device of metonymy: Muslim mainstream is ironically referred to as "White Robes" or "Saudi dollar", as shown in post (6):

> (6) Tuesday, April 04, 2006
> Wahabis[33] build Public Toilets over Muhammad's house in Saudi Arabia
> It really disgusts me that the Saudis decided to cover Muhammad's house in sand and build public toilets over it. [...] As a wealthy minority among Muslims, the Saudi dollar seems to go a long way when it comes to destroying every Non-Arab's cultural identity. They don't give a shit about their own neighbours. Jedda's[34] streets have been silent about the attack on Iraq. The only protests I've read of have been regarding the cartoons[35]. [...] Now, the Saudi family is wealthy enough to take care of the Palestinians if they really wanted to. But they don't. [...] Meanwhile, Black Muslims in America are drowned in New Orleans, Tsunamis devestate South-East Asian Muslims, and the populations of Muslim countries in Africa are being wiped out by Aids. And Saudis have their **White Robes** in a bundle over *cartoons*?

The only comment to post (6) has been deleted by the blogger, who, in the online dialogue, exhibits his power over users' feedback: he holds the conversational floor and can prevent readers from perusing unwanted comments in order to maintain a shared system of values. In the whole corpus, the post with the highest feedback (26 comments) is (7), written by Shaj, another member of the band:

> (7) Friday, June 16, 2006
> Shaj's words
> Mood: ☹ spiteful
> So this is the first time I've ever really "blogged" in any way, shape or form. I just wanted to share something with you all which has been on my mind for the past few days. [...] Now, like many young Pakistani men, I was floored by the sounds of "our" first national band, Junoon. I immediatley began worshipping Salman Ahmad[36] [...] because HE KIND OF LOOKED LIKE ME. [...] Now, Salman is related to the infamous Hasan family (the creators of Muslims for Bush/America,

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[33] Members of a Muslim sect founded by Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792), known for its strict observance of the Koran and flourishing mainly in Saudi Arabia.

[34] Jedda(h) is the major urban centre of western Saudi Arabia.

[35] The blogger here refers to the *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad cartoons controversy which exploded in September 2005.

[36] A Pakistani musician and actor, leader of the band *Junoon*.

ridiculously wealthy "pharmaceutical Republicans"). I was really hurt for the first time to see somebody I respect, someone I admired [...] essentially team up with people who are HURTING AND CONTRIBUTING EFFECTIVELY TO THE RAPE of not just Muslims, but the poor and underprivleged worldwide. That is what the Hasan family represents to me, a betrayal of Pakistan. [...] – Shahjehan

At the structural level (Herring 2004), in the caption of post (7) the blogger communicates his mood not only with a verbal cue (the adjective "spiteful"), but also using the corresponding graphical device (the emoticon expressing disapproval), which in CMC constitutes a valid substitute for body language and tone of voice (McDonald 2004). In a mode that lacks non-textual social clues, such as gesture and prosody, emoticons play an important interpersonal role, suggesting to the reader how the message should be interpreted. The same attention-catching purpose is served by the massive use of capital letters to signify shouting (Danet & Herring 2007), together with vitriolic expressions such as "pharmaceutical Republicans" referring to the creators of the *Muslims for Bush/America* website[37], an organization founded in an attempt to conciliate Bush's 'war on terror' and Islamic culture in America. As for the readers' feedback, the most thought-provoking comment is consistent with the issue of American-Muslim identity:

> (7a) **m3psi said:** You know, I was at the screening of that Salman Ahmed film [...]. See, *the film* and Salman Ahmed *had a very loud, clear message: there is no contradiction between being Muslim and being American.* [...] First of all, that's bullshit. *I feel a tremendous antagonism between my background and the America in which I live*, and other people must feel it too. [...] most importantly, this message is dangerous [...] It is telling me that if I feel a contradiction between these two sides of myself, I am a traitor, I don't understand my Muslim or American sides well enough or something. That I'm siding with the critics of Islam. [...] after that film, I was thoroughly disturbed. Is this the person who wants to speak for me? Is this the person who claims to represent me? [...] So what to do? I do think punk is the way to go. It's rebel music about authenticity, integrity, and survival. [...] I'm too conservative and middle class and loved and classically-minded to be punk myself, but I'm rooting for you guys. Learn from Salman Ahmed's mistakes. [...] Whew. Sorry for the rant. But I guess that's been in me for a while and I didn't have anybody to rant to for whom this shit might matter. [my italics]

By using Speech Act Analysis, it is possible to detect that the teasing reply (7b) of *The Kominas*' has the illocutionary force of warning the writer of comment (7a) for flouting the maxim of relevance (Grice 1975):

> (7b) **The Kominas said:** But you post on Rudolph Mudock's[38] My Space? There's a difference between being a band who uses media outlets to spread their music, and

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[37] At http://www.muslimsforbush.com/muslims/index.html, last accessed on 04/08/2009.

[38] Misspelling of Rupert Murdoch, media mogul and *MySpace* owner.

a musician that gets paid off by politicians to support their cause. Plus, we never censored ourselves once. You're talking to legitimate, could be suicide bombers here.

In (7b) *The Kominas* affirm their use of *MySpace* as a "media outlet", a pulpit to launch their message and an alternative to the 'official' channels, which generally spread music that is 'with the system'. The dialogue seems to be taking a bad turn, until a hilarious comment (supported by humorous graphical cues) comes:

> (7c) **Oh snap said:** let ppl[39] claim whatever makes them happy... I have read about suifism[40] and the only thing that I dont understand is if they can "see" or "feel" the presentence of Allah or "talk" to him, then why dont they ask the meaning of life or tell the future? ☺ ...or why the world is full of ass wipes ☺

Not surprisingly, many of *The Kominas* blog's posts deal with their musical production. What is unexpected is the scanty feedback these posts receive. It is no coincidence that the very last post (8) available at the time of writing this paper seeks feedback on *The Kominas*' last released album. The assertion followed by the direct question that ends post (8) is provocative and thought-provoking at the same time. It sounds like a call for community unity against mainstream stereotypes:

> (8) Friday, March 28 2008
> But Guys, don't you love us anymore?
> Mood: ☹ anxious
> Do I look fat in this album? Did it burn a hole in your wallets, sugar-mommies and daddies? I would love your feedback and reviews, especially if you have a distributable media soapbox (blog, review site, whatever). I need to be judged, first by you, then by Allah.
> Or the terrorists win! Yay!???

5. Some closing remarks

Analysing a U-community blog can tell us a good deal about (sub)cultural worlds. As the above analysis has concisely illustrated, U-community blogs are not only a way to communicate, but also a means to reflect aloud upon issues of identity construction and representation with a degree of freedom mainstream media can hardly offer.

As blogs are mainly textual, data interpretation should take into account the limitations of textual evidence: text can only tell us what people do, and not what they really think or feel (Herring 2004).

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[39] CMC phonetic spelling for 'people' (Plastina 2007).

[40] Misspelling of Sufism. Much of the discussion stimulated by post (7) deals in fact with a website called *www.iSufiRock.com*, which is related to the above-mentioned Hasan family.

In *The Kominas* case, the blogger not only expresses his unease at being an American Muslim in the post-9/11 climate, but he also raises a dissenting voice towards both American and Islamic mainstream, trying to construct an identity that is neither isolated nor assimilated. The identity label of *Muslim Punk* may sound like an oxymoron, but it is actually a movement that is being driven forward by young American Muslims like *The Kominas*. Identifying themselves as *Taqwacore* means being true to themselves, having their own faith, giving up the feeling of being "too Pakistani to be American and too American to be Pakistani" (Butt 2007).

Overall, findings on language use show that *The Kominas* blog follows the informal register of CMC lingo: semantic use of italic and bold elements, interjections and capital letters, colloquialisms and abbreviations, overuse of punctuation. Speed writing as well as the lack of proofreading may explain the frequent misspellings and ungrammaticalities, though it has to be borne in mind that, as the blogger is a diasporic subject, English is not his first language.

Community-oriented lexical choices as well as in-group language serve the purpose of engaging the intended reader (the *Taqwacore* community) in an attempt to negotiate between the two identities (Muslim and American): reference to *A-Team* (post 3) or *The Simpsons* (post 5) episodes live together with names of Bollywood stars (post 1) as well as Islamic terms for prayers (post 3). "It's clear that Taqwacore is, or at least needs to be, a safe space for *everyone*", claims UpTheTaqx, webmaster of *Taqwacore.com*, a website completely devoted to *Taqwacore* forums[41].

U-community blogs may give voice to the voiceless. At least, as long as they are online.

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'National', 'international' and 'global' across British and Indian university websites

Luisa Caiazzo

Abstract

The World Wide Web has expanded to become the world's largest content delivery system and can be thought of in terms of a global hybrid where *glocal* identities interact, and where promotion as a communicative function plays a relevant role. One of the consequences of the globalization of higher education is that universities use the Web as an advertising forum to appeal to local and international students like many companies and organizations that consider their homepage a virtual gateway to the world.

This paper analyses a small corpus consisting of the verbal component in the 'About us' section of 160 British and Indian university websites focusing on the potentially evaluative function of the adjectives *national*, *international* and *global*. Although these adjectives cannot be considered evaluative in themselves, they seem to express to some extent the rhetorical act of *evaluation* conveying different meanings depending on the cultural background they are related to.

The analysis has been carried out using corpus analysis software in order to observe the behaviour of the investigated adjectives as well as the relation they enter into with other words around them in terms of contribution to meaning.

The preliminary results suggest that some distinctive features can be identified in the British and Indian subcorpora and that, in spite of the globalizing trends in promotional academic discourse, there seem to be differences between the two perspectives in the use of the adjectives analysed.

1. Introduction

'Promotional' culture increasingly permeates contemporary discursive practices, one of these being the marketization of higher education. The 'commodification'

of the process whereby universities have been induced to adopt a more entrepreneurial approach (Wernick 1991:158; Becher & Trowler 2005) is mirrored at discourse level by the increasing salience of promotion as a communicative function (Fairclough 1993). In this "educational arms race" (Graddol 2006: 40) the need for international visibility includes creating an appealing image of the institution in the University Website (UW).

UWs have been studied in terms of the common features that characterize them as a genre from both the user's (Astroff 2001) and the designer's (Zahir & Dobing 2004) standpoint, in terms of their graphic component (Callahan 2005), and as regards the use of evaluative adjectives for promotional purposes (Caiazzo forthcoming).

This study focuses on how British and Indian universities mediate their identities in the Web global context by analysing the verbal component of the UW section with the heading *About us*[1] (AB) and aims to investigate to what extent the adjectives *national*, *international* and *global* may contribute to a generally positive representation of the institution, although they cannot be considered evaluative in themselves (Thompson & Hunston 2000: 14-15), being commonly used to classify entities into types (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 440). However, the types they refer to can be particularly meaningful in a globalized landscape, since "everyone occupies a space of identification (a body, a room, a home, a shaping community, a nation), and how we individuate ourselves shapes identity" (Harvey 2008: 302). Moreover, in the World Wide Web context, promotional materials can be accessed at once from all over the world, thus deepening and accelerating interconnectedness in contemporary society (Dewey 2007: 333), but also bringing forth the complex relationship between local and global perspectives.

The adjectives *national*, *international* and *global* have therefore been chosen as an object of inquiry not depending on their frequency in the corpus, but with the aim of exploring the contribution they give and are given in terms of attitudinal meaning, in relation to the overall promotional environment that characterizes the AB sections (Caiazzo forthcoming) as well as to the Web global virtual space.

2. Semantic prosody

The phenomenon whereby many words and phrases tend to occur in a certain semantic environment (Sinclair 1991: 112) is referred to as semantic prosody by analogy with Firth's view of the sound system as prosodically organized (Firth 1957). The term was first used by Louw (1993) but attributed to Sinclair (1987, 1991) who developed the concept in later work (1996).

Starting from the consideration that words enter into meaningful relation with other words around them and in so doing they give a massive contribution to

[1] Other headings for this section are: *About*, *About the University*, *the University*.

meaning, Sinclair (1996) points out that semantic prosody is closely related to the function of an item and without it words "just mean", their normal semantic values being not necessarily relevant.

Recent developments in the use of corpora (Baker 2006; Mahlberg 2007; Stubbs 1996 and 2002) stress the potential of corpus linguistics methodologies for the study of social meanings and the construction of social reality. As Stubbs (1996: 172) points out: "words occur in characteristic collocations, which show the associations and connotations they have, and therefore the assumptions which they embody".

Among many others the term has also been used by Partington (2004: 153) who highlights the quality and strength of prosody as highly dependent on genre and domain, and by Hunston (2007: 258) who suggests that semantic prosody has to be considered as a discourse function of a sequence rather than a property of a word.

This view may also be related to the theory of lexical priming (Hoey 2005) where, besides taking into account the relationship between human agency and social structure, emphasis is laid on individual experiences. Since words become cumulatively loaded with the contexts and cotexts in which they are encountered, primings are highly dependent on domain and genre.

The present article explores the potential attitudinal meaning and the discourse function conveyed by the adjectives *national*, *international* and *global* in relation to both their cotext and the text type in which they are used, under the hypothesis that they may play a role in the interaction between local and global perspectives and provide insight into the social reality that they contribute to build.

3. Data and method

The analysis carried out has taken into account how the effect of prosody extends over stretches of text concentrating on one text type from a single domain and the adjectives *national*, *international* and *global* have been studied observing the role they can play in the construction of favourable meaning in relation to their 'glocal' cotexts.

The corpus analysed (65,000 tokens) consists of the verbal component of the AB sections of 160 British and Indian UWs. Data have been collected from 4International Colleges & Universities[2], an international higher education directory and search engine that includes worldwide education organizations officially accredited or recognized by national or regional bodies. The aim of the website is to provide an approximate popularity ranking of universities based on the popularity of their websites, which has been deemed useful given the purpose of the present study. The corpus analysed is still quite small and at a pilot stage, but even this small sample seems to be interesting. The texts collected so far have been

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[2] http://www.4icu.org/.

grouped into two subcorpora, 74 British (UK subcorpus) and 85 Indian UWs (IN subcorpus) representing roughly 40% of the most accessed websites listed in the above-mentioned directory.

For each subcorpus, which has been used as a reference corpus for the other, a word list has been obtained using the corpus analysis software *WordSmith Tools 5.0* (Scott 2007). Data related to the frequencies of the items under scrutiny have been retrieved and the differences in the proportions of UWs in which the adjectives occur in the two subcorpora have been tested using the software *Statistica 7.0* (Table 5 in section 4 below).

In order to identify patterns of use based on repetition, a search has been carried out using *WordSmith Concord Tool* (Scott 2007) and the concordance lines obtained for each of the three adjectives have been alphabetically sorted one place to the right, thus providing us with some preliminary information about the classified entities.

The concordances have then been mainly analysed by taking into account extended stretches of cotext (Baker 2006) to obtain further information on what is referred to as *national*, *international* and *global*. Thus the criteria followed have been a "combination of the repeated surface patterns and similarities in meaning that are not automatically visible through an exact repetition of a sequence of words" (Mahlberg 2007: 198-199). The groups of concordances identified on this basis have been given labels as an overall indication of what the adjectives refer to and a fine-grained analysis has been carried out to observe the semantic prosody of the investigated adjectives.

For the sake of space some of the groups are dealt with in detail in the following sections, others are commented on in section 4 where data are discussed. At the beginning of each section a table provides an overview of the groups and their frequencies.

3.1. *IN subcorpus: national*

The 113 occurrences of *national* in the IN subcorpus form 10 groups (Table 1). Group IN-N10 includes also 22 of the 41 occurrences of *international*, since *national and international* form a cluster.

3.1.1. *IN-N1: Accreditation*

In 14 examples *national* occurs in the names of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council and the National Board of Accreditation with reference to the universities or the programmes that have been accredited. The most common patterns to be found are *accredited at* + number of *Stars* + *level,* and *accredited with* + capital letter + *grade*. Extended cotext shows that official accreditation is often presented as part of the university description along with facilities, location and programmes offered, thus contributing to the positive representation of the institution:

IN-N1 (a) Accredited at the 4 Star level by the **National** Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) University Campus, Mangalagangotri, is located on a picturesque hillock, spread over 350 acres of land, 18 kms away from Mangalore city. The University has 25 Post-Graduate Departments on the Campus [...].

Table 1. IN subcorpus: *national*

Group	Label	No. of examples
IN-N1	Accreditation	14
IN-N2	Level	8
IN-N3	Initiatives	17
IN-N4	Institutes of national importance	7
IN-N5	The university and the country	12
IN-N6	Name	17
IN-N7	Education	8
IN-N8	Location	4
IN-N9	Facilities	4
IN-N10	National and international	22

3.1.2. *IN-N4: Institutes of national importance*

In seven examples *national* occurs in the phrase *of national importance* (the second most frequent cluster in the IN subcorpus after *national and international*), referring to the special status some institutions are given under the Indian Institute of Technology Act (2007). These are mainly institutes of Technology, which are to a large extent autonomous and entitled by law to design, develop and offer programmes which they consider relevant and appropriate for the national needs. Getting the status of 'institute of national importance' is therefore regarded as a noteworthy achievement in itself, proof of the pivotal role played by the institution:

IN-N4 (a) The Indian Institute of Technology - Roorkee is among the foremost of institutes of **national** importance in higher technological education and in basic and applied research. Since its establishment, the Institute has played a vital role in providing the technical manpower and know-how to the country and in pursuit of research.

3.1.3. *IN-N5: The university and the country*

In the concordances collected in this group no repeated surface pattern can be identified. However, both the nouns that *national* refers to and the wider verbal environment seem to convey a favourable meaning. The universities play a positive role by contributing to the growth of the national economy (line 3), to the building of a national identity (line 6) as well as to the improvement of standards in both teaching and research (line 5); it is an evolving scenario where the universities and the country share aspirations and perspectives (line 1). Extended cotext for lines 2 and 7 is given in the following examples:

IN-N5 (a) the Institute has, among other thrusts, made a significant contribution to policy, planning, action strategies and human resource development, in several areas, ranging from sustainable rural and urban development to education, health, communal harmony, human rights and industrial relations.

IN-N5 (b) To create an environment that shall foster the growth of intellectually capable, innovative and entrepreneurial professionals, who shall contribute to the growth of Science and Technology in partnership with industry and develop and harness it for the welfare of the nation and mankind.

Concordance IN-N5

1   institutes are built evolve and change with **national** aspirations, **national** perspectives
2   Professional response to **national** calamities, through relief, rehabilitation and disaster
3   priorities to studies of frontier problems concerning **national** economy, social development
4   major contribution of this centre of learning to **national** growth and development.
5   The concept of a **national** institution to act as a pace-setter and a testing
6   objectives embedded in the founding of the University, **national** integration, social justice,
7   every individual. Attention to issues of **national** relevance as well as of global concern

3.1.4. *IN-N10: national and international*

This group includes examples of *national and international*, the most frequent cluster in the IN subcorpus. Occurrences of *national/international* and of *international and national* have been included as well, since they have similar semantic associations with phrases that refer to research-related academic activities such as *journals*, *publications*, *conferences*, *seminars*, *events* or collaborations with both other universities and companies as expressed by the nouns *cooperation*, *links*, *linkages*, *networking*, and the verbs *collaborate*, *involve*, *participate*, and *engage*. The general idea conveyed is one of engagement in creating increasingly wider interactions (lines 2, 6, 7, 8), which is regarded as positive for university growth and visibility abroad. However, this objective can be difficult to achieve, as is suggested by the fact that academics are given *all possible* financial support (IN-N10 (a) line 3), and seems to be still at an initial stage when mention is made of *at least one national/international* event (line 9) or of *some* teachers who have been awarded or cited (line 10):

IN-N10 (a) **National** and International Seminars, Lectures and Workshops are regularly organized and faculty members are given all possible financial and academic backup to participate in such events at both the **National** and International levels (line 3).

Concordance IN-N10

1   are publishing their articles/research papers in reputed **national** and international journals.
2   establish academic links and scientific cooperation with **national** and international institutions

3   academic backup to participate in such events at both the **National** and International levels.
4   teachers are engaged in research activities and have attained **national** and international exposure
5   in IT problem solving and innovation. Major **national** and international IT companies
6   abroad every year and is the venue for many major **national** and international academic events.
7   with an emphasis on industry linkages and networking at **national** and international levels. This
8   a comparatively long term basis. To develop and promote **national** and international linkages by
9   Each department conducts annually at least one **National**/International Conference/Seminar
10 Some teachers have been honoured with international and **national** awards and citations.

3.2. IN subcorpus: international

The groups in Table 2 include 19 of the 41 occurrences of *international*; the 22 occurrences with *national* have been included in IN-N10 above.

Table 2. IN subcorpus: *international*

Group	Label	No. of examples
IN-I1	Collaborations	7
IN-I2	Reputation	4
IN-I3	Students	3
IN-I4	Name	3
IN-I5	Other	2

3.2.1. IN-I1: Collaborations

In this group *international* mainly occurs with nouns referring to collaborations with universities, companies or corporate partners (IN-I1(b)). The attitudinal meaning conveyed seems favourable on the whole, although in some cases the reference is to collaborations as a goal, in others to links already established as shown in the examples below:

IN-I1 (a) It is strengthening contacts and collaborative tie-ups with **international** universities and institutions and is in the path of growth as a global centre for generation of new knowledge in frontier areas of learning (line 4).

IN-I1 (b) The Institute has also been active in initiating as well as becoming a part of **International** ventures and tie-ups. It has collaborative arrangements with Universities in the USA, UK & Canada. It is an active member of the EAGER NETWIC Project of ASIA LINK programme of European Commission for establishing a world class academic network of Higher education in the rapidly growing field of Wireless and Mobile Communication between the five partner Universities.

Concordance IN-I1

1 spectacular feature. The University is having **International** Collaborations with Universities /
2 Biotechnology, with its funding from TIFAC and **international** corporate partners such as MDS
3 have been published in the last five years. **International** linkages and collaborative programs
4 strengthening contacts and collaborative tie-ups with **international** universities and institutions
5 also been active in initiating as well as becoming a part of **International** ventures and tie-ups.

3.3. *IN subcorpus: global*

Global seems to entail a wider scope in comparison with *international* referring to a worldwide scenario in terms of either actors involved (line 1) or large scale issues (IN-G (a), lines 3 and 4). The main idea that emerges in this group consisting of 12 concordances is one of being *in the path of growth*, meeting *economic challenges being thrown up by the rapid global IT revolution* in the effort to keep pace with *the rapid rate of technological advancement*, as shown by the example and the concordances below:

> IN-G (a) The **global** economic order, the rapid rate of technological advancement, the information revolution, all have opened new series of challenges as well as opportunities.

Concordance IN-G

1 expertise to enable the country to emerge as a leading player in the **global** arena.
2 institutions and is in the path of growth as a **global** centre for generation of new knowledge
3 meet economic challenges being thrown up by the rapid **global** IT revolution, which is
4 to raise the standards of teaching and research so as to measure up to **global** standards.

3.4. *UK subcorpus: national*

The number of occurrences of *national* in the UK subcorpus is quite limited compared to the IN subcorpus. The 32 examples found have been grouped as follows:

Table 3. UK subcorpus: *national*

Group	Label	No. of examples
UK-N1	Ranking	15
UK-N2	The university and the country	8
UK-N3	Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning	4
UK-N4	National and international	5

3.4.1. *UK-N1: Ranking*

Almost half of the 32 occurrences in the UK subcorpus are related to the university ranking in a number of national surveys, the most frequent being the National Student Survey, whereby final year undergraduates give feedback on their academic experience. Other reviews referred to are those provided by the Quality Assurance Agency, the Research Assessment Exercise and the League Tables published by *The Times* and several other newspapers. This group illustrates that the rankings are reported to prove high academic standards in a competitive environment where emphasis is laid on the position occupied by the university. Patterns include the verbs *rate* (lines 3, 6, 7), *vote* (line 5), *rank* (line 8) and *place* (line 10), the adverbs *firmly* (line 7) and *constantly* (line 4), which contribute to strengthening the idea of reliably high performance through time, or patterns like *amongst mainstream universities* (line 1), *number one position* (line 2), *at the highest level* (line 6), *tenth out of 136 institutions* (line 8), *at 28th* (line 3), *top three/top 20* (line 4), *top five* (line 5), *in the top 15* (line 9).

Concordance UK-N1

1   satisfaction in England amongst mainstream universities (**National** Student Survey 2007).
2   This is proven by our number one position in the UK's **National** Student Surveys. In 2007,
3   rated us at 28th in the UK for Student Satisfaction in the **National** Student Survey. We have
4   top three for student satisfaction according to the first **National** Student Survey and in the top 20
5   students voted Loughborough one of their top five universities in the **National** Student Survey
6   institutions having been rated at the highest level by our **national** review body, the RAE.
7   rated firmly in the premier league of UK universities according to the latest **national** surveys.
8   In the most recent **national** assessment Essex was ranked tenth out of 136 institutions
9   is consistently placed in the top 15 of all UK Universities in **national** league tables, confirming

3.4.2. *UK-N2: The university and the country*

In this group what is classified as *national* (*average*, *economy*, *leadership*, *level*, *reputation*) has to do with the significant contribution the universities give to the country in terms of development of the national economy, consultancy provided to executives and professionals and enhancing students' employability. The general idea is one of successful interplay between the institutions and the country's workforce, enterprise and economy, as the following examples show:

UK-N2 (a) We also have an outstanding reputation for helping our graduates secure good jobs, with 84% finding employment within six months of graduation, compared to a **national** average of 71% (2006).

UK-N2 (b) The University's Sunley Management Centre enjoys a **national** reputation for training, consultancy and development it provides to executives and professionals.

3.5. *UK subcorpus: international*

The groups in Table 4 represent 49 of the 54 occurrences of *international*, the 5 occurrences with *national* having been included in UK-N4 above.

Table 4. UK subcorpus: *international*

Group	Label	No. of examples
UK-I1	Students	13
UK-I2	Reputation	11
UK-I3	Teaching and research	9
UK-I4	Ranking	4
UK-I5	Collaborations	8
UK-I6	Events	4

3.5.1. *UK-I1: Students*

Although *students* cannot always be identified as the term occurring immediately one place to the right of the node, the main focus of this group is the presence of international students and its importance. All the concordances are characterized by reference to some kind of quantification to be found either in the left occurrences or in the wider cotext where it is expressed by numbers, percentages and by patterns such as *growing number* (line 5).

The presence of international students is associated with a positive representation of the institution in relation to the cultural environment, the quality of living and working, as well as the reputation enjoyed by the university within the international community:

Concordance UK-I1

1 top quality living and working environment. Our **international** focus creates a very
2 demonstrated by the 10,000 students worldwide studying on our **international** programmes
3 than 100 countries choose to study at Greenwich, part of an **international** student community
4 an international player too. We welcome over 700 **international** students from 100 different
5 as well as a significant and growing number of **international** students from over 50 countries.
6 around the world, as well as the value we place on our 2,800 **international** students.

3.5.2. *UK-I2: Reputation*

In this group *international* occurs mainly with the noun *reputation*, suggesting that being internationally renowned can be equated with being highly reputed. Reasons for high reputation are mainly related to high quality education, teaching and research. The positive prosody of the environment is also given by the adjectives *dynamic*, *modern* (line 4), *outstanding* (line 5), and the nouns *excellence* (line 1), *strengths* (line 2), and *innovation* (line 3).

Concordance UK-I2

1   University has an **international** reputation for excellence in teaching and research
2   Research strengths Huddersfield has an **international** reputation for History, Music, Social
3   forefront of innovation. Our size and **international** reputation enables us to offer one of the
4   dynamic modern University with an **international** reputation for providing high quality
5   System. We have an outstanding **international** reputation for the quality of the teaching
6   enhancing our reputation as a truly **international** university. Learning and teaching

3.6. *UK subcorpus: global*

The seven occurrences of *global* in the UK subcorpus show that the meaning of this adjective may in a few cases overlap with that conveyed by *international*; however it seems to have wider implications (lines 2 and 4) suggesting that the range of high-level features that universities can be proud of is multifaceted and has worldwide resonance. The whole environment is highly favourable and refers to objectives that have already been reached, as highlighted in the example and concordances below:

> UK-G (a) We are very much an international player too. We welcome over 700 international students from 100 different countries each year and enjoy a **global** reputation in many of our subject specialisms

Concordance UK-G

1   with intellectual excitement and achievement. It is a **global** academic base and a crucial
2   Each student is prepared for their role as '**global** citizens' through an international curriculum
3   Excellent sporting facilities, a busy calendar of social events and a **global** reputation for
4   We are a **global** university with a world-class research profile and an enterprising spirit

4. *National*, *international* and *global* across the two subcorpora

The analysis of the concordances shows that the investigated adjectives occur in a verbal environment that conveys a favourable meaning, although the point of view that is expressed varies depending on the context (Hunston 2007).

In the IN subcorpus the positive evaluative meaning that *national* conveys is above all related to the idea of working hard towards higher standards, economic growth and the building of a national identity. The "persuasive unitary sense" (Williams 1983: 213) seems more explicit in IN-N2 where emphasis is laid on *national* as opposed to *local*. Although these efforts involve the country as a whole, they are enhanced by a number of institutional initiatives as shown in most con-

cordances (IN-N1, IN-N3, IN-N4, IN-N9). The national dimension is moreover mirrored in the university name (IN-N6) and in references to *national education* as the realization of a long-time *dream* (IN-N7). However, this last group is an example of high redundancy, hence a potential source of bias.

Although to a lesser extent, the notion of 'working towards' positive aims characterizes also the prosody of *international* in that international contacts and visibility (IN-N1, IN-I2), as well as international students admission and faculty exchange (IN-I3), are regarded as noteworthy objectives that demand active commitment, and in some examples they seem to have been successfully achieved (IN-I2).

The few instances of *global* strengthen this perspective in that they widen the scope covered by *international*, but they also emphasize how challenging it is to keep pace with rapid worldwide changes (IN-G).

On the other hand, most of what is presented as an aim to be achieved in the IN subcorpus seems to be taken for granted in the UK subcorpus and is therefore just to be quantified (UK-N1, UK-I1, UK-I4) in an overall competitive environment where the point of reference of the improvements mentioned is in many cases the degree of excellence. When assessment bodies are mentioned, ranking (UK-N1) rather than accreditation (IN-N1) is foregrounded and is above all referred to in terms of *top* position. The international dimension is much more relevant in the UK subcorpus, where the notion of quantification is again quite widespread. In the UK subcorpus, UK-I2 and UK-I3 can be regarded as the 'key' groups since international reputation (UK-I2), which is closely related to high quality teaching and research programmes (UK-I3), both attracts students from abroad (UK-I1) and enhances partnerships (UK-I5). It is, moreover, the reason why the universities are top-rated (UK-I4) and host internationally relevant events (UK-I6).

As for *global*, the crucial role the university plays is even more in the foreground ranging from high reputation and *intellectual excitement* to the contribution given in preparing *global citizens* (UK-G) which, in comparison with *international*, adds a worldwide dimension.

The perspectives outlined above are also highlighted by the proportions of UWs (Table 5) in which the adjectives occur in the two subcorpora, which are significantly different for *national* (p=0.0154) and *international* (p=0.0386), whereas the difference for *global* is not significant (p=0.8129).

In conclusion both *national* and *international* play a relevant role in conveying a favourable representation of the institution. However what may be regarded as positive is mainly international in the UK subcorpus, whereas it is mainly national in the IN subcorpus, suggesting not only different ways of 'seeing', but also different ways of 'locating' themselves in the World Wide Web context. In addition the positive assumptions with which the adjectives are associated entail a different perspective, which might be summed up as follows: goals to be achieved (IN subcorpus) versus goals that have been achieved (UK subcorpus). The behaviour of *global* is similar in the two subcorpora in terms of proportions of websites in which it occurs and of meaning conveyed, although the global dimension is main-

Table 5. Number of occurrences, rank and frequency for *national*, *international* and *global*

node	IN subcorpus				UK subcorpus			
	no.	rank	% (tokens)	% (texts)	no.	rank	% (tokens)	% (texts)
national	113	44	0,25	52,94	31	89	0,14	33,78
international	41	129	0,09	29,41	54	53	0,24	44,59
global	12	476	0,03	10,59	7	385	0,04	9,46

ly presented as a goal achieved in the UK subcorpus and as a challenge in the IN subcorpus.

5. Conclusion

Globalization has many and diverse potential implications for higher education, one of these being a widespread entrepreneurial attitude that is mirrored in the Higher Education Discourse conveyed by the university websites, where the *About us* sections making up the corpus tend to convey a positive representation of the institution.

This paper has focused on the role played by verbal environment, text type and domain in the construction of meaning suggesting that corpus linguistics methodologies can be usefully employed to study cultural issues (Stubbs 1996). Exploring to what extent word meaning and discourse function may be dependent on use, the research has highlighted that the adjectives *national*, *international* and *global* express assumptions that go beyond those associated with their common meaning, when taking into account their semantic prosodies as well as the communicative function of the text type in which they are used. Thus in a global context where the very idea of location may be relevant also in evaluative terms, they seem to contribute to the general 'promotional prosody' of the AB sections.

The approach adopted has shown that the study of social meanings and the role language can play in the construction of social reality can be systematically carried out observing both collocational patterns and wider cotext. Moreover, working on a data set representative of one text type from a single domain allows us to carry out a fine-grained analysis of the variables that may contribute in shaping meaning.

The results suggest that in the interplay between local and global contexts the linguistic data analysed mirror different local realities, in spite of their surface similarities. Universities' ways of promoting themselves – in terms of *national*, *international*, and *global* – can be related to their different perspectives, as shown by the semantic prosodies of the investigated adjectives, which seem to take on topical meanings in their integration with both the verbal and the socio-cultural environment. Thus two main differences seem to emerge, one can be exemplified by the opposition 'achieved (UK) versus not yet/partially achieved (IN) objectives',

the other can be identified in what is given prominence to, which is national in the IN subcorpus and international in the UK subcorpus. *Global* is given similar (limited) relevance in both subcorpora and seems to further emphasize the opposition mentioned above, although mainly entailing a worldwide dimension.

Although the main focus of this study has been the potentially evaluative meaning of usually non-evaluative adjectives and their discourse function, some of the context-related features that have emerged from the linguistic analysis carried out may be worth further investigation, in relation to complex issues such as the place of locality in global cultural interactions (Appadurai 1996) or the striving towards the building of a national identity (Andersen 1991) that seems to be foregrounded in the IN subcorpus.

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Sense-related verbs in English scientific abstracts: a corpus-based study of students' writing

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Abstract

This study investigates potential differences in the lexico-grammatical patterning of English abstracts written by Brazilian graduate students as opposed to abstracts taken from published papers. The focus is on the following five sets of sense-related verbs: (1) *use/apply/employ*; (2) *show/present/demonstrate*; (3) *obtain/collect*; (4) *study/analyse/investigate*; and (5) *find/observe*. The data are drawn from two separate corpora of English abstracts. One corpus is made up of 159 abstracts written by Brazilian graduate students from the disciplines of pharmaceutical sciences, physics, engineering and computer science. The other corpus consists of 1,170 abstracts extracted from papers published by various leading academic journals. It has been designed to match the specifications of the corpus of students' abstracts in terms of disciplines and percentages of texts in each. Significant differences were found between the two corpora in relation to the lexico-grammatical patterning of the selected verbs. The findings offer useful insights for the development of teaching materials and can be an important contribution to pedagogic practice.

1. Introduction

Lexical patterning is usually said to play a key role in fluent linguistic production in a given genre. As Hyland (2008a, 2008b) explains, expert writers who regularly participate in a given discourse are familiar with the lexical patterns most frequently used by their discourse community and this is why their absence "might reveal the lack of fluency of a novice or newcomer to that community" (2008a: 5). In other words, gaining control of a new genre involves developing a sensitivity towards the preferences of expert users for certain sequences of words (Haswell 1991: 236; Hyland 2008a, 2008b).

Within the specific context of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), lexical patterning is an area which has attracted increasing attention. Thus, much effort has been devoted to describing distinctive linguistic features of academic discourse with a view to helping novice writers overcome the various problems that they may face when producing academic language (see, for instance, Bailey 2006; Swales 1990, 2004; Swales & Feak 1994). Invaluable contributions are also offered by Biber *et al.* (1999: 988-1036) and Carter & McCarthy (2006: 267-294), who have resorted to the use of electronic corpora to explore underlying lexical and syntactical regularities in academic prose as compared with other genres.

Corpus-based research on the phraseological preferences of English academic prose can be divided according to two main approaches. One approach looks at the language produced by native and/or expert writers. For example, Gledhill (2000) focuses on the investigation of the collocational patterns of grammatical words in the introductory section of 150 cancer research articles, all published by leading academic journals. The author finds that the selection of collocations is motivated by their rhetorical functions in this specific text section. Groom (2005) also examines the rhetorical motivations behind lexico-grammatical choices but restricts the investigation to the use of anticipatory *it*-patterns with adjective complementation (such as *It is clear that* and *It is important to*). The data is drawn from a corpus of research articles and book reviews from the disciplines of history and literary criticism and the findings indicate that phraseological patterns are directly associated with the communicative purposes of the genres and disciplines.

Most closely related to the present research are studies which place particular emphasis on the language produced by novice writers. Within this perspective, two different approaches have been suggested in the literature. One approach focuses on the language produced by novice writers who are native-speakers of English. For instance, Charles (2006, 2007) uses a corpus of theses from the disciplines of political/international relations and materials science to investigate similarities and differences in the lexico-grammatical patterning of *that*-clauses. Charles (2006) looks at reporting clauses with a *that*-clause complement that are used to make reference to others' research (*Skinner argues that ...* or *Sun (1990) showed that...*). Charles (2007) focuses on the stance functions of noun *that*-patterns (*the argument that...*). Differences between the corpora are related to the specific research practices of each discipline.

The other approach pays special attention to the language produced by non-native speakers. The main rationale behind it is that foreign and second-language novice writers "admittedly share a number of difficulties with novice native writers but they have also proven to have their own distinctive problems" (Gilquin *et al.* 2007: 320). Thus, as Granger (2002) points out, when it comes to identifying the main difficulties faced by second-language learners, the data provided by native corpora will not suffice and will need to be complemented with information extracted from learner corpora[1].

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[1] Learner corpora are defined as "electronic collections of authentic FL/SL [Foreign Language/ Second Language] textual data assembled according to explicit design criteria for a particular SLA/FLT purpose" (Granger 2002: 7).

Most studies based on learner corpora have focused on the comparison between texts produced by non-native speakers as opposed to texts produced by native or expert speakers. For example, Hyland (2008a; 2008b) examines the forms, structures and functions of four-word lexical bundles in MA/MSc and PhD dissertations written by Cantonese speakers studying at five Hong Kong universities in relation to published research articles from four disciplines. MA/MSc dissertations make the greatest use of cluster patterns and research articles the least. Differences are also seen with respect to preferred structures and functions. Hewings & Hewings (2002) focus on anticipatory *it*-patterns with adjective (*It is important*) as well as verb complementation (*It has been claimed*) in MBA dissertations written by non-native speakers of English studying at a British university as opposed to research papers published by three different journals from the field of Business Studies. The study discusses the main differences between the two corpora in relation to the rhetorical functions of *it*-clauses.

This study follows this last approach and sets out to investigate potential differences in the lexico-grammatical patterning of English abstracts produced by Brazilian graduate students in relation to abstracts taken from published papers from the same disciplines. In fact, it builds on the suggestion by Genoves Jr. *et al.* (2007) that errors related to lexical choices create major difficulties for Brazilian graduate students when writing abstracts in English. This is in line with, Dayrell & Aluísio (2008) who have found significant differences between abstracts written by Brazilian students and published abstracts with respect to the frequencies and lexico-grammatical patterning of five nouns: *work*, *paper*, *study*, *article* and *research*.

The present paper focuses on five sets of sense-related verbs, that is to say, verbs whose meaning is somewhat related even though they are not necessarily interchangeable. The following verbs are examined: (1) USE / APPLY / EMPLOY; (2) SHOW / PRESENT / DEMONSTRATE; (3) OBTAIN / COLLECT; (4) STUDY / ANALYSE / INVESTIGATE; and (5) FIND / OBSERVE. A detailed description of the methodological procedures adopted in order to select the five sets of verbs has been presented in Dayrell (2008; forthcoming). Briefly, the selection starts from the five verbs with the highest frequency of occurrence in a corpus of English abstracts written by Brazilian graduate students (hereafter EA-STS) and which also have a high frequency rate in academic discourse, namely: USE, SHOW, OBTAIN, STUDY and FIND. Near-synonyms are then chosen on the basis of the suggestions made by the *Collins Thesaurus* (2002). For the purposes of this paper, it is also established that suggested synonyms should occur no less than 10 times in the EA-STS. This last criterion is adopted for purely methodological convenience, based on the fact that the analysis of repeated patterns requires a sufficient body of data to yield useful insights. Also, it should be stressed that the analysis takes into account lemmas rather than individual forms of the verbs. For instance, the label STUDY includes *study*, *studies*, *studied* and *studying*.

2. Data

The data analysed in this paper are drawn from two independent and separate corpora of English abstracts. One is a corpus of abstracts written by Brazilian graduate students (EA-STS). It contains 159 abstracts (approximately 32,800 words) which were collected in seven courses on academic writing offered between 2004 and 2008 to graduate students from a Brazilian university. These are abstracts handed in at the very beginning of the course, before the inclusion of suggestions by instructors and colleagues. The size and composition of the corpus are determined by the number of abstracts handed in by students and their field of research (Table 1). Pharmaceutical sciences include the disciplines of pharmacology, chemistry and biology. Engineering refers to engineering-related disciplines (civil, production, material, etc.).

The other corpus consists of 1,170 abstracts taken from published papers (over 205,000 words) and it is referred to as the reference corpus of abstracts of published papers (REF-ENG). It has been designed to match the specifications of the EA-STS in terms of disciplines and percentages of texts in each (Table 1). All abstracts were extracted from papers published by various leading academic journals in the disciplines in question. This does not necessarily mean that they have been written by native English speakers but, rather, that they have been accepted by a recognized scientific body for publication and hence presumably meet the required textual quality. The vast majority of abstracts in the REF-ENG come from papers written by more than one author, while in the EA-STS abstracts are of single authorship.

Table 1. Composition of the corpus of English abstracts written by students (EA-STS) and the reference corpus of English abstracts (REF-ENG)

Disciplines	EA-STS		REF-ENG		Percentages of abstracts
	Number of abstracts	Tokens	Number of abstracts	Tokens	
1. Physics	79	19,368	585	88,737	50%
2. Pharmaceutical Scs.	38	7,418	281	62,136	24%
3. Computer Science	26	3,881	187	32,655	16%
4. Engineering	16	2,152	117	21,716	10%
TOTAL	**159**	**32,819**	**1,170**	**205,244**	**100%**

3. Retrieving lexico-grammatical patterns

Lexico-grammatical patterns are identified by first retrieving all instances of the verb being studied and examining the items in its surrounding context. The analysis starts from the EA-STS and any repeated continuous sequences occurring with at least 5% of the frequency of the search-verb is taken as a recurring

pattern. For instance, USE occurs 229 times in the EA-STS and hence the threshold is 11 occurrences. If 5% results in a frequency lower than three, a minimum frequency of three occurrences is adopted. In case no fixed continuous sequence stands out, I search for any other kind of regularity, be it in terms of different word-forms of the same lemma, grammatical class or semantic category. Once a given pattern has been identified, I check the remaining concordance lines and look for instances which could be regarded as variations of it. The next step is to check whether the identified pattern also occurs in the REF-ENG. The procedure is repeated as many times as is necessary until all occurrences have been examined. This includes going back to the EA-STS whenever a new pattern is identified in the REF-ENG. Instances which do not yield recurring patterns are grouped together under the category 'other'. All these procedures are carried out by means of the software *WordSmith Tools*, version 5.0 (Scott 2007).

One important point to be made here is that patterns may vary in a wide range of ways and it is not always easy to decide whether to treat a given instance as a separate pattern or as a variation of a given pattern. In order to introduce an element of consistency in the categorization of patterns, I have established that variations occurring with at least 5% of the frequency of the search-verb in one corpus are treated as separate patterns. For example, *BE used as* and *BE used in* represent 8% and 7% respectively of all occurrences of USE in the EA-STS. Repeated lexical items occurring below the cut-off frequency (*BE used for* accounts for 3% of instances in each corpus) are treated as optional as long as they represent at least 20% of the instances of that given pattern in one corpus. One example is *BE used (for)*, for which *for* occurs on the right of *BE used* in 25% of instances in the EA-STS and 41% in the REF-ENG.

Once all patterns have been identified, the next step is to compare their frequencies in the two corpora. The comparison is made taking into consideration percentages rather than raw frequencies. For the purposes of this study, in order to be deemed different, there should be a difference of at least five percentage points (5 pp) between the frequency percentages of a given pattern in the two corpora. In other words, if the difference is lower than 5 pp, I assume that the pattern occurs with similar frequency in the two corpora.

4. Data analysis

SET-1 – USE, APPLY *and* EMPLOY

USE occurs 229 times in the EA-STS and 1020 times in the REF-ENG and yields the patterns presented below. Pattern (i) includes all instances in which *using* is either preceded or followed by the passive voice (*is determined by using* or *Using xxx, yyy were developed*) as well as all instances in which *using* is either preceded or followed by the active voice (*we estimate it using* or *Using xxx, we compute*).
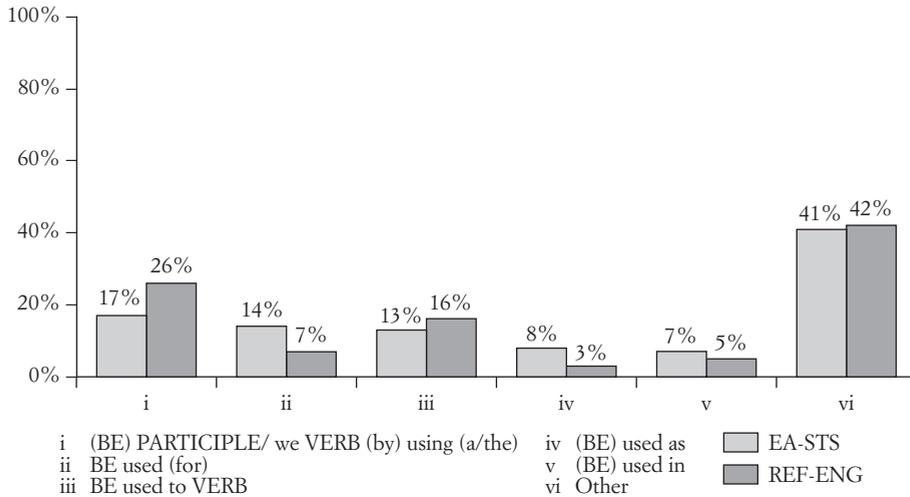
Graph 1. Recurring patterns of USE

APPLY occurs 18 times in the EA-STS and 138 times in the REF-ENG. Pattern (iii) includes all instances in which either the passive (*was obtained by applying*) or the active voice (*we solve the problem by applying* and *By applying xxx, we obtained*) occurs in the surroundings of the search-verb.
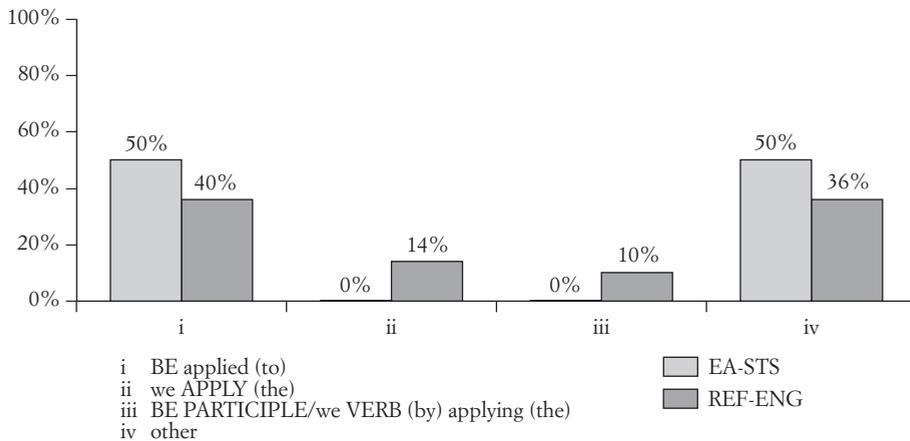
Graph 2. Recurring patterns of APPLY

As for EMPLOY, it appears 12 times in the EA-STS and 60 in the REF-ENG. Pattern (iii) refers to either *BE PARTICIPLE (by) employing* or *(by) employing xxx we VERB*.

i   BE employed
ii   BE employed to VERB
iii BE PARTICIPLE/we VERB (by) employing
iv   we EMPLOY
v   other
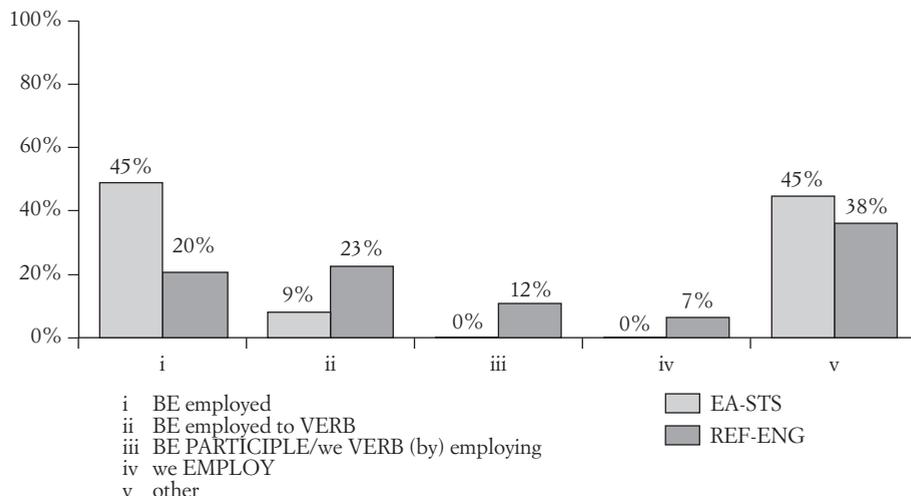
Graph 3. Recurring patterns of EMPLOY

SET-1: Discussion of results

Taking into consideration the verbs within set-1, we find that both corpora draw heavily on the passive voice, which overall accounts for 42% of USE, 50% of AP-PLY and 54% of EMPLOY in the EA-STS and 31% of USE, 40% of APPLY and 43% of EMPLOY in the REF-ENG. These high percentages do not come as a surprise given that the passive voice is a common feature in academic discourse (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 277). What is interesting to note here is that, for all three verbs, the passive voice is at least 10 pp more frequent in the EA-STS.

The pattern *we VERB/BE PARTICIPLE (by) ***ing* is much more frequent in the REF-ENG than in the EA-STS. For USE, it represents 26% of instances in the REF-ENG and 17% in the EA-STS (Graph 1). Within these, most instances in both corpora (85% in the EA-STS and 86% in the REF-ENG) use the passive voice on the left of the search-verb (*is determined by using*). For APPLY and EMPLOY, *we VERB/BE PARTICIPLE (by) ***ing* occurs in the REF-ENG only, 10% and 12% respectively (Graphs 2 and 3). In the case of APPLY, *we VERB (by) applying* accounts for 50% of instances in the REF-ENG and *BE PARTICIPLE (by) applying* represents 36%. As for EMPLOY, 86% of instances refer to *BE PARTICIPLE (by) employing*.

When the passive voice is followed by a verb in the infinitive form (*BE*** to VERB*), the three verbs display different tendencies. *BE used to VERB* (*were used to analyse*) occurs with similar relative frequency in the two corpora (13% in the EA-STS and 16% in the REF-ENG). *BE applied to VERB* is not a recurrent pattern in either corpus. *BE employed to VERB* (*has been employed to investigate*) occurs only once in the EA-STS (9%) and it is the most frequent pattern yielded by EMPLOY in the REF-ENG (23%).

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that the sequence *we **** only occurs in the REF-ENG and with the lemmas APPLY and EMPLOY – 14% and 7% of instances respectively (Graphs 2 and 3).

SET-2 – SHOW, PRESENT *and* DEMONSTRATE

SHOW occurs 104 times in the EA-STS and 557 times in the REF-ENG and yields the patterns displayed below. The semantic category <u>study</u> (pattern ii) refers to *studies*, *paper*, *work*, *study*, *project*, *research* and *review* and <u>analysis</u> (pattern iii) refers to *analysis*, *tests*, *experiments*, *investigation* and *investigations*.

i   results SHOW (that)
ii <u>study</u> SHOW (that/the)
iii <u>analysis</u> SHOW (that)
iv we SHOW (that)
v   it BE shown/showed (that)
vi BE (ADVERB) shown to (be)
vii Other
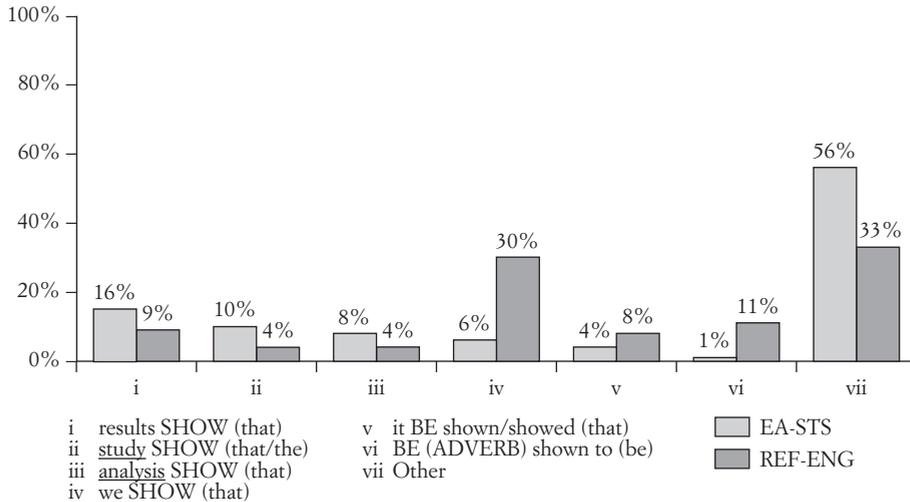
EA-STS
REF-ENG

Graph 4. Recurring patterns of SHOW

The following patterns are identified for the occurrences of PRESENT in the EA-STS (69 instances) and in the REF-ENG (310 instances), where <u>study</u> refers to *paper*, *work*, *study*, *research* and *technical note*.

i   this/the <u>study</u> presents (the/a)
ii we present (a/the/results)
iii BE (also) presented
iv Other

EA-STS
REF-ENG
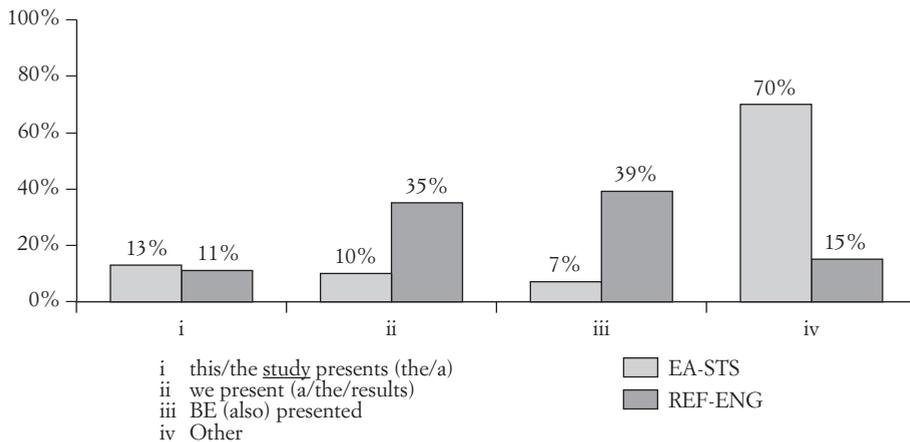
Graph 5. Recurring patterns of PRESENT

DEMONSTRATE occurs 11 times in the EA-STS and 200 times in the REF-ENG.
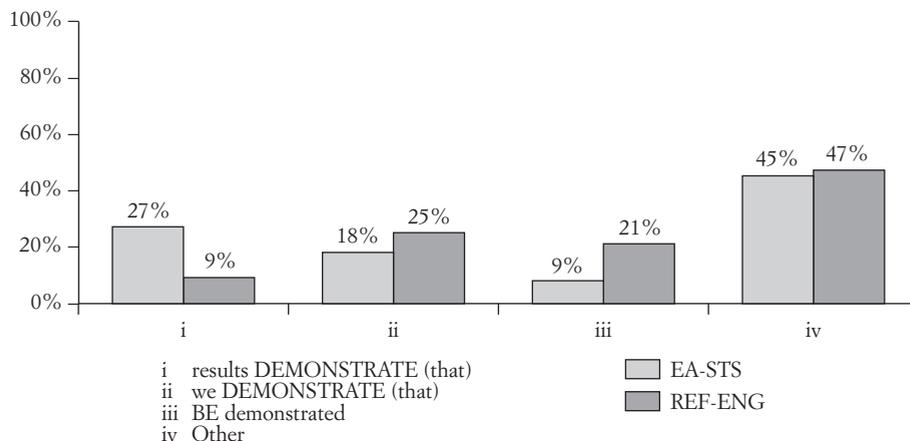
Graph 6. Recurring patterns of DEMONSTRATE

SET-2: Discussion of results

For the lemmas SHOW and DEMONSTRATE, the pattern *results *** (that)* is the most frequent in the EA-STS, representing 16% and 27% of instances respectively. In the REF-ENG, it is far less frequent, accounting for 9% of occurrences each. For PRESENT, we find two instances of *the results present* in the EA-STS (3%); this pattern does not occur in the published abstracts. Instead, the REF-ENG shows 12 occurrences of *results are presented* and 11 instances of *we present (ADJECTIVE) results* (4% each). These patterns are not shown in Graph 5 due to their low percentage of instances.

The pattern <u>*study*</u> *SHOW (that/the)* is the second most frequent pattern of SHOW in the EA-STS (10%) whereas it accounts for only 4% of occurrences in the REF-ENG. For PRESENT, *this/the <u>study</u> presents (the/a)* occurs with similar relative frequency in both corpora (13% in the EA-STS and 11% in the REF-ENG, Graph 5). However, in relation to the other patterns yielded by PRESENT, *this/the <u>study</u> presents (the/a)* is the most frequent pattern in the EA-STS and the least frequent in the REF-ENG.

The most striking difference between the two corpora is related to the sequence *we ****, which is very frequent in the REF-ENG and does not occur as regularly in the EA-STS. In the REF-ENG, it accounts for 30% of SHOW, 35% of PRESENT and 25% of DEMONSTRATE. By way of contrast, in the EA-STS, *we **** represents only 6%, 10% and 18% respectively. Differences are also seen with respect to the lexical items on the right of each search-verb. For SHOW, *that* is the most frequent item on the right of *we SHOW* in the REF-ENG (85%) whereas, in the EA-

STS, *we SHOW that* appears only once (17%). For PRESENT, *a/an* is the most frequent item in both corpora (*we PRESENT a/an* occurs in 71% of instances in the EA-STS and 52% in the REF-ENG). *We present the* appears in 29% of instances in the EA-STS but in only 6% in the REF-ENG. In the REF-ENG, we also find *we present results* in 11% of instances; no occurrences are found in the EA-STS. As regards DEMONSTRATE, *that* is the most frequent item on the right of *we* DEMONSTRATE in both corpora (all instances in the EA-STS and 49% in the REF-ENG).

The frequencies of the pattern *it BE shown/showed (that)* in the two corpora reveal no significant difference (4% in the EA-STS and 8% in the REF-ENG); instances of *it BE showed (that)* appear in the EA-STS only. In contrast, the pattern *BE (ADVERB) shown to (be)* appears only once in the EA-STS (1%) and accounts for 11% of occurrences in the REF-ENG. Within these, 52% show the verb *to be* on the right of *shown*. The patterns *BE (also) presented* and *BE demonstrated* are also far more frequent in the REF-ENG (39% and 21% respectively) than in the EA-STS (7% and 9%). It is worth pointing out that, for SHOW, PRESENT and DEMONSTRATE, the overall percentages of passive voice are higher in the REF-ENG than in the EA-STS.

SET-3 – OBTAIN *and* COLLECT

For OBTAIN, the following patterns are identified in the EA-STS (55 instances) and in the REF-ENG (234 instances).

i BE obtained
ii (BE) obtained by (GERUND)
iii results (BE) obtained (for)
iv (BE) obtained from
v (BE) obtained with
vi (BE) obtained (by) using
vii BE PARTICIPLE to obtain
viii (BE) obtained for
ix we OBTAIN
x Other
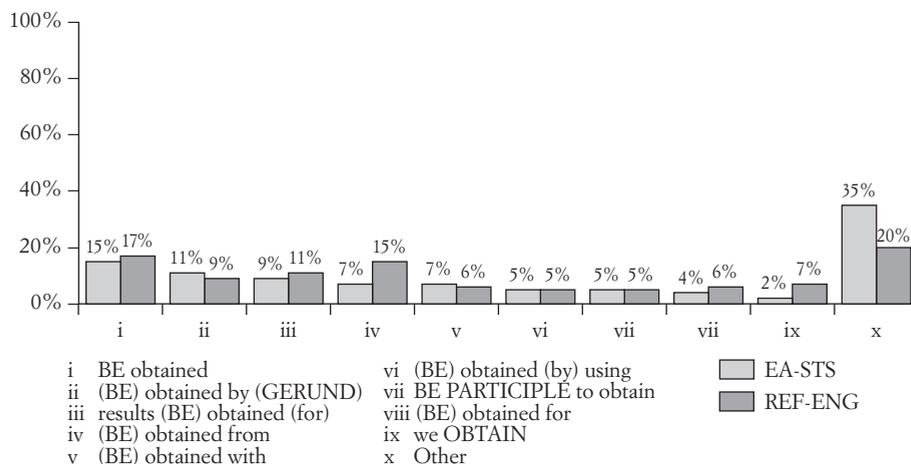
EA-STS
REF-ENG

Graph 7. Recurring patterns of OBTAIN

COLLECT occurs 10 times in the EA-STS and 15 times in the REF-ENG, forming the following recurring lexico-grammatical patterns:
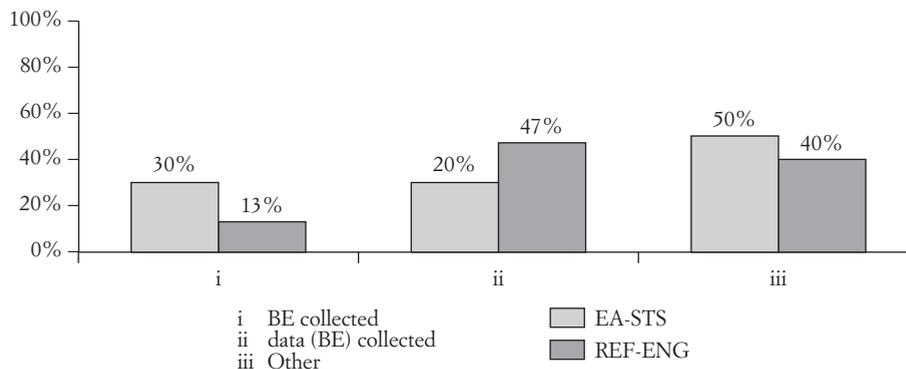
Graph 8. Recurring patterns of COLLECT

SET-3: Discussion of results

Both corpora tend to use OBTAIN and COLLECT in the passive form (*be obtained* and *be collected*). The only exceptions are the patterns *BE PARTICIPLE to obtain* and *we OBTAIN.*

One interesting point to mention here is that, apart from the patterns *(BE) obtained from* and *we OBTAIN*, which are more frequent in the REF-ENG (15% and 7%) than in EA-STS (7% and 2% respectively), all patterns yielded by OBTAIN occur with similar frequency in the two corpora. This finding may be interpreted as an indication that the EA-STS and the REF-ENG employ the lemma OBTAIN in a very similar way.

In contrast, clear differences are seen between the two corpora with respect to COLLECT. Published abstracts exhibit a strong preference for the pattern *data (BE) collected* (47%). This pattern occurs only twice in the EA-STS (20%) given that students opt for the use of the passive voice with no lexical repetition around it *(BE collected*, 30%*)*. *BE collected* accounts for 13% of instances in the REF-ENG.

SET-4 – STUDY, INVESTIGATE *and* ANALYSE

The following patterns are yielded by STUDY in the EA-STS (43 instances) and in the REF-ENG (188 instances). Pattern (ii) includes all instances in which *we VERB* occurs on either side of *to study* (*we set up xxx to study the* and *to study xxx we have applied*) as well as instances with *BE PARTICIPLE* on the left of the search-verb (*is applied to study the*).

INVESTIGATE appears 25 times in the EA-STS and 184 in the REF-ENG. Pattern (ii) refers to the sequences *BE PARTICIPLE to investigate* (*is carried out to investigate the)* and *we VERB xxx to investigate* (*we apply this method to investigate the*) as well as their variations.

i   BE studied
ii   we VERB / BE PARTICIPLE to study (the)
iii BE studied by (GERUND)

iv   BE studied using
v   we STUDY (the)
vi   Other
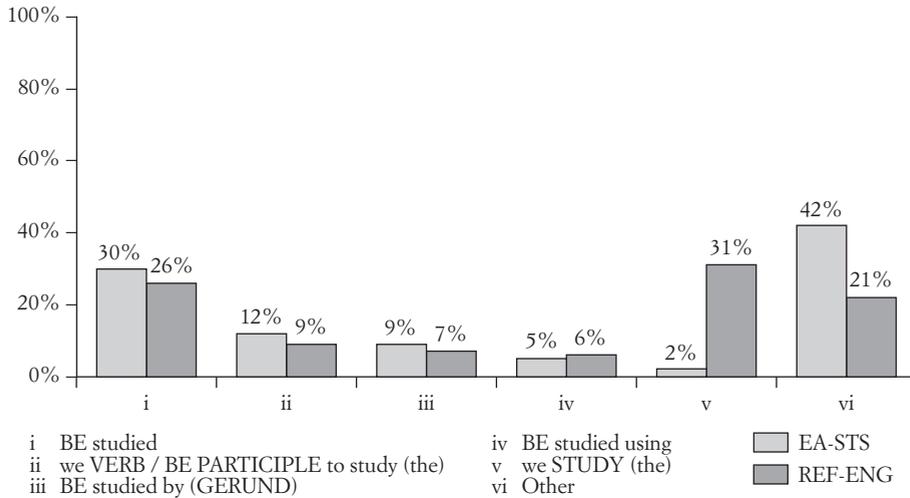
EA-STS
REF-ENG

Graph 9. Recurring patterns of STUDY

i   BE investigated
ii   we VERB / BE PARTICIPLE to investigate (the)
iii we INVESTIGATE (the)

iv   BE investigated by
v   BE investigated using
vi   Other
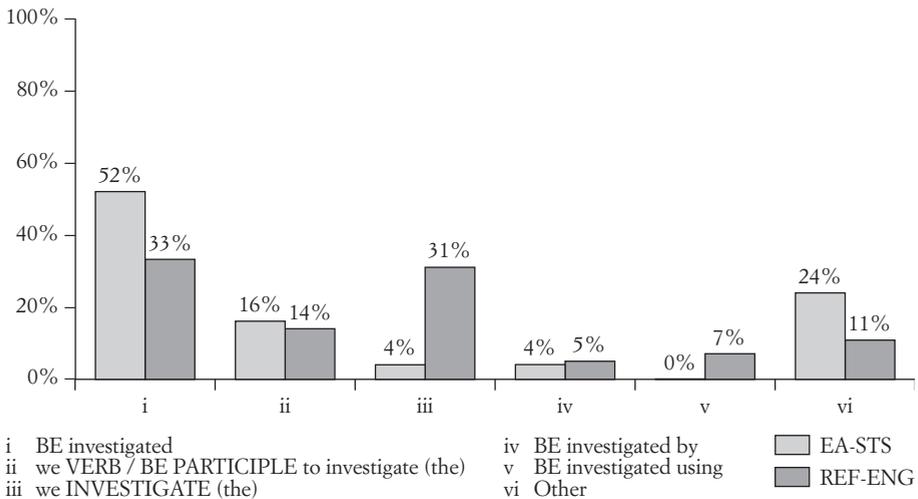
EA-STS
REF-ENG

Graph 10. Recurring patterns of INVESTIGATE

As for ANALYS(Z)E, it occurs 23 times in the EA-STS and 116 times in the REF-ENG. Pattern (iv) includes all instances of *BE PARTICIPLE by analys(z)ing the* (*are studied by analyzing the*) and *we VERB xxx by analys(z)ing (we show xxx by analyzing)*.

i   BE analys(z)ed   iv   we VERB/BE PARTICIPLE by
ii   BE analys(z)ed using   analys(z)ing (the)   ☐ EA-STS
iii we ANALYS(Z)E (the)   v   Other   ☐ REF-ENG
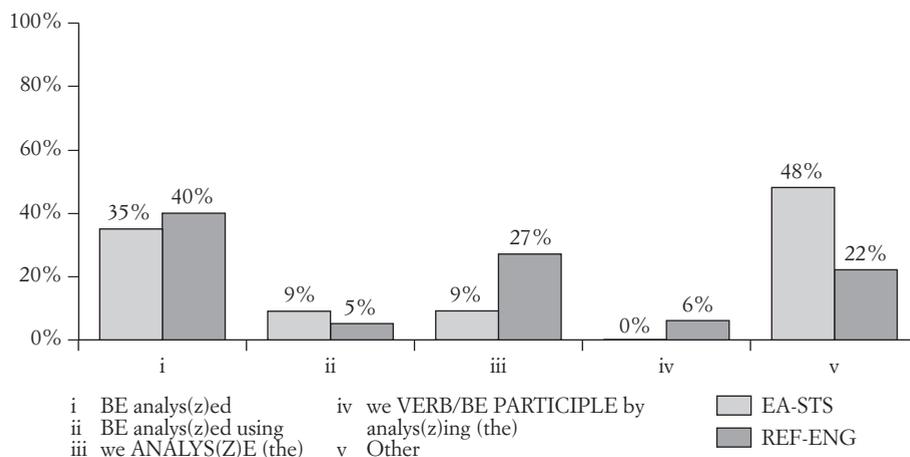
Graph 11. Recurring patterns of ANALYS(Z)E

SET-4: Discussion of results

For the verbs within set-4, the passive voice is often used and, here again, it is more frequent in the EA-STS than in the REF-ENG. For STUDY, the patterns *BE studied*, *BE studied by (GERUND)* and *BE studied using* represent 44% of instances in the EA-STS and 39% in the REF-ENG. Similarly, *BE investigated*, *BE investigated by* and *BE investigated using* account for 56% of instances in the EA-STS and 45% in the REF-ENG. The only exception is ANALYS(Z)E, for which the frequency percentages of *BE analys(z)ed* and *BE analys(z)ed using* together account for 44% of instances in the EA-STS and 45% in the REF-ENG.

The patterns *we VERB /BE PARTICIPLE to study (the)* and *we VERB /BE PARTICIPLE to investigate (the)* occur with similar relative frequencies in both corpora (Graphs 9 and 10). In the case of ANALYS(Z)E (Graph 11), the search-verb appears in the gerund rather than in the infinitive form (*we VERB /BE PARTICIPLE by analys(z)ing*) and this pattern is relatively more frequent in the REF-ENG (6%) than in the EA-STS (0%). The pattern *BE PARTICIPLE to analys(z)e* occurs five times in the REF-ENG (4% of instances) but it is not considered in the analysis because it does not reach the minimum frequency percentage of 5%. Taking into consideration the items on the left of the search-verbs, students display a stronger preference for the passive voice. In the EA-STS, *BE PARTICIPLE to **** appears in 60% of instances of STUDY and 75% of INVESTIGATE. In the REF-ENG, *BE PARTICIPLE to **** appears in 41% of instances of STUDY, 64% of INVESTIGATE and 71% of ANALYS(Z)E.

The most striking difference between the two corpora concerns the pattern *we **** given that, for all three lemmas, its relative frequency is considerably higher in the REF-ENG than in the EA-STS. *We STUDY* is 29 pp, *we INVESTIGATE* is 27 pp and *we ANALYS(Z)E* is 18 pp more frequent in the REF-ENG. For STUDY, this is in fact the only pattern which does not appear with similar relative frequencies in both corpora.

SET-5 – FIND *and* OBSERVE

FIND occurs 38 times in the EA-STS and 342 times in the REF-ENG.

i   BE found   iv it BE found that   ☐ EA-STS
ii   we FIND (that)   v   Other   ☐ REF-ENG
iii BE found to (be)
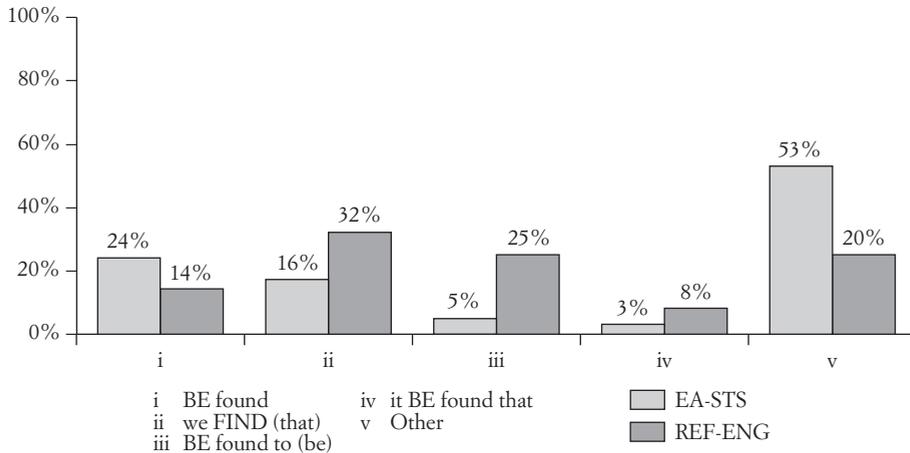
Graph 12. Recurring patterns of FIND

OBSERVE appears 35 times in the EA-STS and 149 times in the EA-STS.

i   BE observed   iv BE observed to VERB   ☐ EA-STS
ii   it BE observed that   v   Other   ☐ REF-ENG
iii we OBSERVED (that)
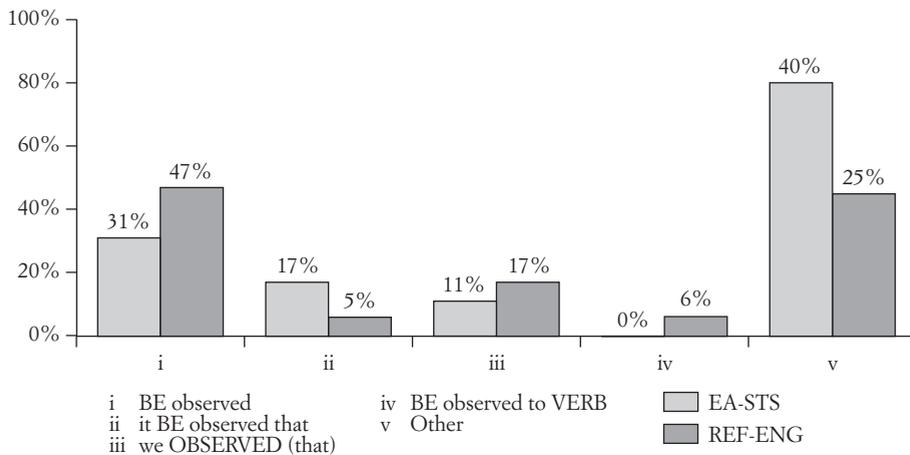
Graph 13. Recurring patterns of OBSERVE

SET-5: Discussion of results

Like the case of the verbs within set-2 (SHOW, PRESENT and DEMONSTRATE), the overall percentage of patterns in which FIND is used in the passive voice (*BE found*, *BE found to (be)* and *it BE found that*) is higher in the REF-ENG (47%) than

in the EA-STS (32%). However, a closer look at individual percentages shows that the pattern *BE found* is much more frequent in the EA-STS (24%) than in the REF-ENG (14%). On the other hand, *BE found to (be)* and *it BE found that* are not at all frequent in the EA-STS (5% and 3%) while in the REF-ENG they represent 25% and 8% respectively. In addition, *we FIND (that)* is twice as frequent in the REF-ENG (32%) than in the EA-STS (16%).

The overall percentage of patterns in which OBSERVE is used in the passive voice (*BE observed*, *BE observed to VERB* and *it BE observed that*) is also higher in the REF-ENG (58%) in comparison with the EA-STS (48%). However, as in the case of FIND, differences are also seen in relation to individual patterns. The pattern *BE observed* is 16 pp more frequent in the REF-ENG (47%) than in the EA-STS (31%) and *BE observed to VERB* appears in the REF-ENG only (6%). In contrast, *it BE observed that* occurs with a considerably higher frequency in the EA-STS (17%) in relation to the REF-ENG (5%). The use of *we* as the subject of the search-verb (*We OBSERVE (that)*) is again more frequent in the REF-ENG (17%) than in the EA-STS (11%).

5. Conclusions

Taking into consideration the 13 verbs analysed in this study, the results reveal that only two verbs (OBTAIN and STUDY) seem to be used in a similar way in both students' unpublished writing and academics' published abstracts. For all other 11 verbs, most patterns show significant differences between their frequency percentages in the two corpora.

An overall total of 57 lexico-grammatical patterns were identified in the EA-STS and the REF-ENG. Within these, the relative frequencies of 38 patterns (67%) are different in the two corpora and 19 patterns (33%) occur with similar relative frequencies. If we look at the 38 patterns whose relative frequencies in the two corpora are different, we find that 71% are relatively more frequent in published abstracts (27 patterns) and 29% show a higher relative frequency in student writing (11 patterns). From a different perspective, if we separate these 38 patterns according to the difference between their frequency percentages in the two corpora, we find that 23 patterns (61%) show a difference of at least 10 pp. Within these, 70% of the patterns (16 out of 23) are considerably more frequent in the REF-ENG and only 30% (7 patterns) are particularly frequent in the EA-STS but not in published abstracts.

The differences between the lexico-grammatical patterning in the two corpora may be due to various reasons. One possible explanation is that students may not be familiar with certain lexical patterns. For instance, this may be the case of *it BE found that*, which appears only once out of 38 instances of FIND in the EA-STS (3%, Graph 12). At the same time, *it BE observed (that)* occurs in 6 out of 35 instances (17%, Graph 13). Here, students' preference for the latter is perhaps due to the influence of their first language given that its corresponding translation (*Observa-se que*) is fairly frequent in academic Portuguese.

Lack of familiarity with the association of certain verbs with a given grammatical structure may also account for the differences between the two corpora. Five verbs yield the pattern *BE *** to VERB* but only one verb (USE – *BE used to VERB*) occurs with similar relative frequency in the two corpora (Graph 1). For the remaining four verbs (*BE employed/shown/found/observed to VERB*), the pattern is at least six pp more frequent in the REF-ENG (Graphs 3, 4, 12 and 13). Similarly, the pattern *we VERB/BE PARTICIPLE (by) using/applying/employing/ analys(z)ing* is much more frequent in the REF-ENG than in the EA-STS (Graph 1, 2, 3 and 11) whereas cases in which the search verb appears in the infinitive form – *We VERB /BE PARTICIPLE to obtain/study/investigate (the)* – occur with similar relative frequencies in both corpora (Graphs 7, 9 and 10).

Students' choices may also be related to cultural practices and preferences. For example, it is no coincidence that the sequence *we **** is considerably more frequent in the REF-ENG than in the EA-STS. Unlike English, the use of first person pronouns is somewhat discouraged in academic Portuguese, which tends to rely more strongly on impersonal writing such as the passive voice.

An important point to be stressed here is that I have only touched upon the possible influence of first language on the findings, and a large-scale corpus analysis of Portuguese abstracts would certainly help clarify the relation between the students' first language and their lexical choices. Another limitation of this study is the modest size of the student corpus. Clearly, further achievements could result from the analysis of a larger set of data. This would allow the researcher to reach firmer conclusions and obtain a clearer picture of the phraseological profile of English abstracts written by Brazilian graduate students. In addition, there is also an imbalance in terms of the number of texts from each discipline. This in turn suggests that further work is still needed in order to determine whether the tendencies identified here hold true within and across disciplines.

Despite these drawbacks, the findings offer useful insights for the development of teaching material and can be an important contribution to pedagogic practice. To start with, differences between the two corpora can be used to draw students' attention to recurring lexico-grammatical patterns that are regularly used within their academic discourse community as well as to alert them to the various available alternatives. In addition, learner corpora can also help identify deficiencies in student writing by pinpointing patterns which occur in a much higher frequency than they do in published writing. Another valuable contribution from this type of study is that a detailed description of published abstracts can provide instructors and students with the opportunity to enhance their understanding of the kind of text that students are expected to write. Last but not least, it is important to stress that, although this study has focused on the abstracts written by Brazilian graduate students specifically, difficulties related to lexical and syntactical choices in academic writing are not restricted to native Portuguese speakers. In fact, lexical patterning is a major issue for non-native English speakers and this is why it is worth careful investigation.

Acknowledgements

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Decoding evaluation in British and Italian TV news reports: the case of the Rome riot

Silvia de Candia & Marco Venuti

Abstract

As stressed by Martin & Rose (2007), evaluation is concerned with the attitudes and stances enacted in a text, particularly with the ways the values are introduced and voiced by various types of stances and how viewpoints can be enhanced or hedged within a text. As Stubbs (1996: 197) points out, utterances always convey a point of view and speakers can differently express the same meaning with different layers of illocutionary force. This can be observed by looking at different linguistic resources adopted by the text source such as propositional information, modality and concession, as well as specific lexical choice and syntactic structures. Such linguistic tools can be applied to the analysis of media texts, with special regard to news discourse – considered as a product rather than a natural phenomenon (Fowler 1991). Indeed, journalists' stance and viewpoints are encoded in textual strategies and grammatical phrasing, showing that news discourse is in fact a construction of reality rather than a value-free representation of events.

The present study analyses how British and Italian TV news programmes reported a clash that occurred between the Manchester United fans and the Rome police in April 2007. Although the verbal as well as the visual levels of resources are equally involved in the construction of the overall evaluative meaning since "[they] run in counterpoint rather than exactly in parallel" (Montgomery 2007: 75), it must be pointed out that in the course of the present study, our main focus will be on the verbal elements and only brief reference to the visual text will be provided, mostly by referencing to the position of the journalists towards camera.

1. Introduction

Over the past 30 years, much research has been devoted to the study of media discourse (e.g. Glasgow University Media Group 1980s; Hartley 1982; Fairclough

1989; van Dijk 1988; Fowler 1991). It has been argued that in news discourse it is possible to identify the more subjective voices of the broadcast's participants (e.g. news presenters, reporters, correspondents on location but also ordinary people and experts) by focusing on linguistic markers of evaluation, although objectivity and impartiality may be explicitly required by broadcasting regulations together with certain journalistic practices to make sure that the news stories are reported as objectively as possible (Harrison 2000). Following Stubbs's (1996) claim that utterances always convey the text source's stance, the present paper will investigate several indicators of evaluation and how these can affect the audience's opinion, through the analysis of an event reported in two Italian and two British newscasts in April 2007[1]. Briefly summarizing the event, which was described as "the Rome Riot" in the British press headlines, after the Roma team scored, some British fans tried to surge towards the barrier which divided the two groups of supporters; as a result, the Rome police weighed in using tactics which were strongly criticized. The clash resulted in injuries with some Manchester United supporters being taken to hospital.

The present study will attempt to offer some insights into the linguistic and cultural differences between Italian and British broadcasts, and answer the following research questions:

 • How did British and Italian TV news programmes discursively and linguistically frame the clash between the Manchester United fans and the Rome police?
 • What kind of linguistic and/or discursive resources are employed in the expression of stance towards the event?
 • How is the concept of 'foreignness' discursively represented across UK and Italian TV news programmes?

A two-level analysis will be carried out: firstly, some linguistic markers of evaluation will be investigated; secondly, a discursive analysis of the news structure and voices will be considered.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to illustrate the role of the single moving images and the rhythmic editing of the reports[2], although it must be pointed out that a visual analysis is always worthwhile, especially within the context of TV news, where both the visual and the textual components can mutually affect the audience's interpretation of the news stories.

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[1] The data analysed here were collected as part of a European project (Sixth Framework), *IntUne*, which investigates identity, representation and the scope of governance in the European Union. The project is divided into four main groups: élite, mass, experts and media. Within the media group, involving four European universities, a corpus of English, French, Italian and Polish media texts was collected in 2007.

[2] Van Leeuwen (1996) argues that the rhythm of filmic texts, which is the way its single moving images are edited and organized, creates a sort of meaningful dialogue between the screen and the viewers and affects their interpretation of the event depicted.

The paper is divided into four sections: firstly, a theoretical background on the language of media texts and evaluation will be outlined; secondly, the event will be described, followed by the linguistic as well as discursive analysis of our data, and finally some conclusions will also be drawn.

2. Evaluation and TV news discourse: theoretical background

TV news discourse is a genre in which journalists choose and report on items, according to a set of criteria for news selection, and fit the major topics into news items of a specific length which can vary according to the broadcast. Hartley (1982: 79) argues that bad news may be considered as good news in the sense that it is expected and unambiguous for the audience, it occurs quickly and is consonant because it matches certain expectations of the media industry. An agenda-setting process can offer an explanation to such well-established journalistic conventions, since it is concerned with competition among issues to gain the attention of professionals, the public, and policy elites (Dearing & Rogers 1996: 2). In particular, in media agenda-setting, decisions on news coverage are mainly based on the salience of events, in terms of the extent to which a news story is recognized as reasonably significant. Therefore, even if TV news language were an unbiased and factual reformulation of events, the process of selection necessarily implies a subjective choice on the part of the broadcaster.

It has been argued that TV news stories generally develop through "four narrative moments" (Hartley 1982; Haarman 1999)[3]. In the *Framing*, the news reader introduces the topic which is developed in the *Focusing* segment where the reporters or correspondents on locations give more details about the news stories; in the *Realizing* segment, the story reported is developed and 'made real' through the voices and images of other participants (e.g. people in the street, experts in the field) as well as video-recorded material which enhances the overall authenticity of the report. In the *Closing,* the report is ended but there is more than a mere conclusion: as Hartley (1982: 119) puts it, "closing does not refer to the 'end' of the story but to the discursive end in mind", since the audience will be left with possible interpretations of the event.

The news discursive functions described above will be adopted in the present study in order to interpret the journalistic stance embedded in discourse, since they convey possible readings for the recipients of the story reported.

Moving to the second level of analysis, the present study will be devoted to the linguistic realization of stance in text; following Fowler's (1991) belief that language in the news is far from being neutral and factual, some linguistic markers of evaluation will also be taken into account. Considerable research has been devoted to diverse aspects of evaluation: Hunston & Thompson (2000) provide an

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[3] Bell (1991) carried out an interesting comparison between the structure of news stories and Labov's (1972) elements of personal narratives, highlighting significant similarities and differences.

overview from different perspectives ranging from the role of epistemic, attitudinal and style evaluation in adverbs to the analysis of coherence and evaluative disjuncts in interactive negotiations between writer and reader. In Bednarek's (2006) study the combination of different approaches results in a useful framework of analysis by looking at what she terms "core" and "peripheral" parameters[4] that highlight interesting differences in the language of tabloids and broadsheets. A different perspective emerges from Martin & White's (2005) Appraisal System. Their systemic account is 'regionalized' in three main semantic areas, i.e. attitude, involvement and negotiations, all conveying interpersonal meaning in text. Notwithstanding the merit of all the approaches mentioned above, the present study will consider the Appraisal System as a framework to investigate the linguistic markers of evaluation in our data.

According to Martin & Rose (2007: 25), appraisal consists of "the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned". Their system is shaped around attitudes, graduation and engagement: attitudes are concerned with emotions and feelings towards both people and things. It is divided into three main areas of meanings such as affect, judgement and appreciation. Within the sub-area of affect, Martin & White include a set of "resources for construing emotional reactions" such as sadness, anxiety, and happiness. Judgement refers to positive or negative attitudes towards people's behaviour, in both personal (admiring or criticizing) and moral (praising and condemning) terms. With the term 'appreciation', Martin & White (2005: 43) identify "semiotic and natural phenomena, according to the ways in which they are valued or not in a given field", such as evaluation about concrete and abstract things.

The investigation of such micro-areas can offer fruitful results in the analysis of the lexical items employed by the text producer. The appraisal system includes not only explicit expressions of values but also more implicit references, so the qualitative analysis which will be carried out in this paper will enable us to accurately interpret the values and viewpoints in discourse.

The second sub-area that constitutes the appraisal system is graduation which focuses on graduation resources to estimate attitudes (e.g. intensifiers or lexical items to soften or emphasize such attitudes). Finally, the engagement sub-system enables us to identify the actual source of attitudes, whether this is merely the voice of the text producer (monogloss) or someone else's projected words (heterogloss).

The present analysis will only deal with the analysis of affect, judgement and appreciation, together with the graduation resources.

Following Iedema's (2001: 107) idea that social semiotics "centres on the issue of

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[4] Core parameters (e.g. comprehensibility, emotivity, expectedness, importance) express evaluative qualities about any aspect of the world, according to a scale of intensity, while peripheral parameters (such as evidentiality, mental state and style) do not express such an evaluative graduation but are connected to an evaluative meaning when they occur in some parts of a text.

how I, the viewer, am positioned [...] and how I see certain allegiances and values as being promoted over others", the language of the moving images of the reports analysed will also be considered in this paper through a social semiotic analysis, since it enables us to see how social reality is presented in the text, how the participants are depicted, and whether the audience can identify themselves with the images. In particular, the camera angle can create a meaningful dialogue between the viewer and the images, in line with van Leeuwen's assumption (1996: 89) that "the camera can make us look down on people, places and things, or look up at them".

A social semiotics analysis considers moving images as conveying three kinds of meanings, linked to the Hallidayan metafunctions:

- • ideational meaning: representation of what is going on in the world. When a process is represented in a visual text, the participants involved can be recognized as the actors who initiate it or the goals to which the process is addressed[5];
- • interpersonal meaning: the relations between the viewer and the images. Participants can be depicted in a frontal angle/profile angle, close up/long shot and this affects the audience's identification with the screen;
- • textual meaning: the combination of ideational and interpersonal meanings in a text. The way in which a filmic text is edited can create a meaningful dialogue that might affect the viewer's evaluation of the event (van Leeuwen 1996).

Notwithstanding the importance of such an analysis, this study will not focus on the single images of the reports, but will only make reference to the visual representation of the news story's participants.

3. Decoding evaluation: the case of the 'Rome Riot'

In the previous section some aspects of TV news discourse and the theoretical background about the language of evaluation have been outlined. The present section will be dedicated to the analysis of transcriptions of British and Italian TV news items about the report of the clash between some British supporters and the Rome police which occurred during the football match between Manchester United and Roma at the Stadio Olimpico on 5 April 2007.

This section will deal with the analysis of linguistic and discursive markers of evaluation in British and Italian TV reports, in order to highlight linguistic as well as cultural insights into their reporting practices. Italian data will be analysed in section 3.2 by means of actual transcripts as well as of back translations into English provided by the authors in footnotes. Some references to the visual text will also be made.

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[5] Actions are processes involving only one participant (actor) without affecting anybody or anything else, while a transaction is a process which has consequences for other entities (goals).

3.1. *Decoding evaluation in the British data*

Starting from the analysis of the linguistic markers of evaluation in ITV and BBC news data, the segments below show some linguistic choices adopted by the journalists to describe the event; the markers of evaluation analysed in the segments have been underlined for the reader.

> (1) <u>Even</u> for a club with <u>such a long history</u> there is a feeling in Old Trafford today that the violence carried out against United fans in Rome <u>was the worst</u> that they have seen for many years. Rome's chief of police has defended their actions, saying they had to go in strong. <u>But</u> images like this will ensure that is not the end of the matter. Next week there is a rematch at Old Trafford. Tim Rogers ITV News Manchester (ITV News)[6].

> (2) There is <u>no doubt</u>, George, that the Italian authorities <u>have been slow to recognise</u> their own <u>hooligan</u> problem. As Judy said there with focusing today on the problems in the Manchester United enclosure.
>   <u>But</u> remember, there were three British fans stabbed by Italian fans last night. There were bottles and flares thrown from the Rome end. And last month in Catania, we saw <u>rioting</u> which resulted in the death of a policeman and the suspension of the league. But I *think* they *also* have to look at the policing tactics. Because <u>very often</u> these police are <u>only dealing with a minority of idiots</u> in the stadium. And that is why parliament has met here in Italy this week to discuss tough new measures. Longer sentences for fans and tougher bans from stadiums. And there has to be a question about whether going in mob hounded, <u>batons flailing, is the right answer</u>. I <u>think</u> many who were in the stadium last night would be able to put a <u>very convincing argument</u> that they made <u>a problem much, much worse</u> (BBC One News)[7].

The ITV reporter emphasizes the long experience of the Manchester United club, and focuses on the violence, seen as the worst ever. This is highlighted by the use of the intensifiers *even* and *such* together with the strong evaluative meaning expressed by the superlative *worst*. Moreover, the word *but* signals the reporter's opinion contrasting with the previous sentence (conveying the justification of the Rome police), in line with Thompson & Zhou's analysis (2000) of the evaluative role of disjuncts in structuring discourse.

    In the second extract, the BBC correspondent uses many embedded and context-based evaluative clues in his report. After recognizing the existence of Italian hooliganism, he expresses his maximum level of commitment (by saying *there's no doubt*) when he asserts the Italian delay in admitting to their hooligan problem. Accordingly, the officers are described as lacking tough policing tactics which are normally required to prevent such urgent situations.

    The utterance of the BBC correspondent fairly explicitly conveys his viewpoint about the event, as his journalistic role is characterized by a broader 'freedom' of re-

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[6] Reporter Tim Rogers addressing the camera.

[7] Correspondent Christian Fraser reporting from Rome and addressing the camera.

porting, as correspondents are institutionally recognized as having a particular expertise in a specific field or about the locations they report from. This is in line with Montgomery's (2007) observation that correspondents often "comment or speculate" since they have a significant institutionalized status in TV discourse practices.

Additional markers of evaluation can be found in other participants' utterances, as follows:

> (3) <u>Even</u> in the cold light of day it's <u>still very shocking</u> what happened last night. I <u>think</u> we <u>felt</u> it was a <u>severe</u> overreaction to what was going on inside the stadium (BBC One News)[8].

The expert describes the behaviour of the Rome police as an overreaction compared to what actually happened. This is confirmed by the use of direct signals of evaluation such as *very shocking*, *severe*, *overreaction*, together with the adoption of verbs of mental state *think* and *feel* which express the expert's personal opinions. Even though a direct affiliation between experts and newscasts is not essential, their utterances play an important role in the reception of news, due to the professional status and knowledge of experts in providing the audience with details and background of the news stories, as is highlighted by Montgomery (2007: 170). Similarly, ITV journalist Tim Rogers's stance can be inferred from the previous segment, where he rather directly judges the Italian policing tactics as *brutal* and *uncontrolled*, and defines as insufficient the effort of the Italian officers in trying to stop the surging British supporters:

> (4) <u>They were warned there might be trouble</u>. But no one expected this. The charge of Italian riot police against Manchester United fans. <u>Brutal and apparently out of control</u>. Scenes <u>so shocking</u> that there is now to be an official enquiry. [...] Closer examination of what happened shows Italian fans charging towards Perspex barrier after Roma scores. But there were no police on that side and <u>little attempt</u> made to stop them. When United fans attempted to charge back, riot police who were positioned on their side weighed in (ITV News)[9].

Interestingly, the reporter's stance is also enhanced by the voiceover depiction, where the visuals amplify the verbal meaning in the extract analysed by repeatedly showing the Manchester United fans as the target of the police officers' violence.

Moving to the analysis of evaluation in ordinary people's utterances (indicated as VOX in our data), it is interesting to see how they express their viewpoints in the extracts below:

> (5) I do not know <u>what type of man</u> hits a <u>defenceless</u> person on the floor who has got no way of responding. So for me the Italian police are <u>cowards</u> (ITV News)[10].

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[8] Manchester United spokesperson Phil Townsend addressing camera.

[9] Reporter Tim Rogers Voiceover.

[10] VOX Manchester United fan addressing camera.

(6) <u>Scared to death</u>. I have got quite a bit on the back of the head. Am bruised, baton bruised all over. <u>I can't understand why they did what they did</u> (BBC One News)[11].

Ordinary people interviewed in our data are British fans who witness the clash in Rome. They both use explicit markers of negative feelings about people (*what type of man hits a defenceless person; Scared to death; I can't understand why they did what they did*), essentially in order to express shock for the unreasonable and unexpected behaviour of the Rome police officers. Witnesses affect the news consumption since they report what happened in the event and "what it felt like as it happened" (Montgomery 2007: 168), providing the audience with a double focus and thus affecting their interpretation of the news stories.

The British reports present several direct and indirect markers of evaluation: both channels represent the clash by focusing on the unexpected results of the event and the shocking consequences of the Rome police tactics. This is achieved through the use of evaluative lexis together with intensifiers and "volume-up" graduation words (Martin & Rose 2007). What emerges from this analysis is the significant use of markers of moral judgement in the reporters' and the experts' utterances, in particular criticizing the Italian authorities; whereas ordinary people tend to represent their concern by witnessing their bad experience and voicing negative emotions, notably expressions of affect or feeling about people.

From the discursive point of view, the British reports are structured in the following way, in line with Hartley (1982):

• *framing*: news readers summarize the unexpected results of the match and the Rome police's violent tactics;
• *focusing*: journalists report the event judging (implicitly and explicitly) the Italian policing tactics;
• *realizing*: experiential witness voices of beaten Manchester United fans (mainly negative expression of feelings about people and things) and institutional voice expressing concern;
• *closing*: reporters 'wrap up' the event stressing the imminent official investigation.

The structure of the British reports is set so as to affect the audience's interpretation of what happened, framing and focusing on the representation of the shocking consequences of the violence: both ITV and BBC news readers and reporters voice the indiscriminate use of heavy-handed measures in the framing and in the focusing segments; subsequently the shocking results are also uttered by experiential voices of supporters and experts. Finally, in the closing segments British journalists underline the imminent official enquiry.

Visually, the images of the British news items show the Manchester United fans as the victims of police brutality. From the interpersonal point of view, the British

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[11] VOX Manchester United fan addressing camera.

supporters and the reporters are depicted in a close-up, horizontal angle, conveying the highest degree of identification in social semiotics theory.

The remarkable degree of intelligibility between the verbal discourse and the rhythmic editing of the visuals strengthens the interpretation of the story reported, in line with van Leeuwen's idea (1985: 223) that "[W]ithout meaning anything in itself, rhythm is nevertheless a necessary condition for meaning".

3.2. *Decoding evaluation in the Italian data*

Moving to the linguistic decoding of evaluation in Italian reports, it is interesting to see how the news readers introduce the news item, as follows:

(7) Roma-Manchester di Champions League: poteva essere una festa di sport invece si è trasformata in una sorta di <u>incidente diplomatico</u> tra Inghilterra e Italia. Al centro delle <u>polemiche</u> il comportamento della polizia italiana[12] (TG1 RAI).[13]

(8) Buonasera, la prima a <u>criticare</u> e ad <u>attaccare</u> è stata la stampa britannica, poi è intervenuta la società sportiva, quella del Manchester United, tutte a <u>criticare</u> gli agenti di polizia. [...] alla fine <u>è diventato un caso internazionale</u> con Londra che chiede spiegazioni[14] (TG5 MEDIASET).[15]

Significant lexical choices can be observed in TG1 correspondent Giovanni Masotti's reports:

(9) I tifosi inglesi, agnellini al macello, <u>mai</u> esistiti gli <u>hooligans</u>, gli italiani invece romani e romanisti in particolare dei barbari. <u>Veleni dai giornali</u> di oltre Manica sulla partita dell'Olimpico e sugli scontri che l'hanno costellata, ma la *red rage*, la rabbia dei rossi, giocatori, dirigenti, supporter del Manchester United, ieri in tenuta bianca <u>contagia la politica</u>. [...] Il potente club che guida la Premier League chiama il Governo di Londra, risponde il Ministero dell'Interno riecheggiando le espressioni usate dall'ambasciata di Sua Maestà a Roma, definisce assai preoccupanti le scene viste sugli spalti e chiede spiegazioni; nel <u>mirino</u> la polizia italiana, la cui reazione <u>viene definita brutale e ingiustificata</u>[16] (TG1 RAI).[17]

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[12] News presenter Attilio Romita/Camera.

[13] Translation: The Champions League match Rome-Manchester United was supposed to be a great sports event, instead it turned into a sort of diplomatic clash between England and Italy. The behaviour of the Italian Police has been criticized.

[14] News presenter Annalisa Spieze/Camera.

[15] Translation: Good evening, the British Press first and then the Manchester United Club have criticized and attacked the police officers. [...] In the end it has become an international case, with the British Government asking for an account of what has happened.

[16] Correspondent Giovanni Masotti/Voiceover.

[17] Translation: The British fans have been described as innocent lambs, British hooligans have

(10) <u>Birra, birra a volontà per tutta la giornata</u> poi in serata i primi incidenti, Roma-Manchester in campo è uno spettacolo; sugli spalti nel settore riservato agli inglesi francamente no[18] (TG1 RAI).[19]

Both the TG1 and the TG5 transcriptions express moral condemnation of the British fans and press by using explicit markers of judgement. In particular the journalists repeatedly mention the behaviour of the British press in emphasizing the brutality of the policing tactics and also underline the violence of British hooliganism by referring to previous incidents and to their drinking habits.

This is achieved through significant lexical choices of verbs like *attaccare* (to attack), *criticare* (to criticize), *contagiare* (to infect), and many lexical references to the international consequences, such as *è diventato un caso internazionale* (it has become an international case), *si è trasformata in una sorta di incidente diplomatico* (it has turned into a sort of diplomatic incident).

The transcription below represents the account given by the Head of Rome police.

(11) Ho visto che ad un certo momento dopo il primo gol della Roma, un gruppo di supporter, la Questura mi dirà poi che erano <u>ubriachi</u>, di supporter inglesi si è <u>scatenato</u> verso il divisorio con la curva nord dove sono i tifosi della Roma, lanciando bottiglie e ricevendone altrettante, perché dall'altra parte non c'erano certamente dei santi. La fila di stewards che conteneva i supporter inglesi è stata <u>completamente travolta</u>, a questo punto è stato <u>doveroso</u> l'intervento delle forze dell'ordine.[...] Ecco nessuno registra che qui abbiamo avuto poco fa spagnoli, abbiamo avuto francesi, Lione, Milano ha avuto i tedeschi, non c'è mai stato un incidente, la manganellata in più se ci sarà stata, si pagherà[20] (TG5 MEDIASET).[21]

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never existed, on the contrary the Romans and the Rome supporters in particular have been represented as barbarians. Venomous words from the British Press on the Rome football match and the clash surrounding it. This time the 'red rage', typically associated with the Reds, their managers and supporters, has infected politics. [...] The powerful club that leads the Champions League has turned to the British Government; and the Home Office – echoing the words of Her Majesty's Ambassador in Rome – has answered expressing serious concern about the scenes from the stadium and has asked for an explanation. Criticism is aimed at the Italian police whose reaction has been defined as brutal and indiscriminate.

[18] Reporter Donatella Scarnati/Voiceover.

[19] Translation: Loads of beer during the day, the first clashes in the evening. The Rome versus Manchester United football match is spectacular on the pitch, frankly not at all in the area of the stadium reserved for the British supporters.

[20] Head of Rome police Achille Serra. Camera/voiceover.

[21] Translation: Suddenly after Rome scored, some supporters – allegedly drunk according to the Police Headquarters – some British supporters surged towards the barrier throwing but also receiving bottles from the Rome fans, who were certainly not blameless. The stewards in charge of dealing with the British supporters were swept away so the police had to weigh in. [...] Recently

(12) Questo mi induce ad una riflessione, recentemente sono venuti gli Spagnoli, sono venuti i Francesi, a Milano sono venuti i Tedeschi, non è mai successo niente, purtroppo questi episodi succedono spesso con gli Inglesi (TG1 RAI).[22]

Achille Serra uses the word *scatenato* (surged) to describe the behaviour of the British fans, and *completamente travolta* (swept away) to express the urgency of the situation, also mentioning that the British fans were reported to be drunk and emphasizing the peaceful relationships on previous occasions with supporters of other nationalities. By his use of negative evaluation (judgement), he explains the conduct of the Rome police, which is represented as a justified response to avoid an even worse problem.

From the discursive viewpoint, the Italian reports are structured in the following way:

- *framing*: the news readers introduce the event highlighting the diplomatic incident;
- *focusing*: the journalists report on the British press and the British government's reactions;
- *realizing*: experiential witness voices of a British supporter, Italian people in the street (mainly negative expression of feelings about people) and institutional voices expressing negative judgements about the English fans;
- *closing*: the journalists 'wrap up' the event underlining the incoming official investigation, as well as the justified response of the Italian police to avoid an even worse problem.

From the visual point of view, the Italian reports show the British supporters in long or medium shot, also connected to the police officers (images of the riot) reacting to the action initiated by the fans, whereas the Head of the Rome police and police officers are depicted in medium shots, and horizontal angles (high degree of connection between the screen and the audience). The editing of the reports visually confirms that the reaction of the Rome police was expected and necessary.

Overall, the discursive frame of the Italian reports provides the audience with a reconstruction of the event, starting from the international effects of the clash and the emphasis with which the British media reported it, moving to the representation of British hooliganism and their dangerous drinking habits in order to clarify the reaction of the Italian police.

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there have been the Spanish, the French, Lyon and German supporters in Milan and nothing like that has happened. Abuses, if any, committed by the Rome police will be prosecuted.

[22] Translation: This makes me wonder; recently there have been Spanish, French and German fans in Milan and nothing like that has happened. Unfortunately, these events often occur with the British.

4. Cultural representation of 'Italianness' and 'Britishness'

The present section will focus on the investigation of the discursive evaluation in the 'Rome Riot' news item which can offer some insights into the representation of the concept of 'foreignness' across UK and Italian TV news programmes.

As has been shown, the British news reports were centred on the representation of Italian policing tactics, criticizing the indiscriminate use of baton-flailing measures and voicing negative expression of feelings about people. Although this can give some clues about the representation of 'others' in the UK data, what is more significant is the whole idea that the British journalists try to represent: the stereotyped concept of lack of control and organization of the Italian authorities, thus responsible for exacerbating the problem. This idea is developed throughout the British news items analysed in the present study, but it is much more explicit in the closing segments, which affects the way the news story will be perceived by viewers.

Moving to the representation of Britishness in the Italian data, what emerges from the whole story is a stereotyped representation of bad drinking habits together with the overreaction of the British Press which are brought out by both TG1 and TG5, in particular by referring to previous episodes and also by highlighting the non-violent relationship with other countries' supporters.

5. Concluding remarks

Starting from the assumption that viewpoints are always uttered in discourse, the present analysis has attempted to investigate how the choice of particular lexical items by journalists can express their subjective positions and demonstrate how media language is far from factual and unbiased. The application of the Appraisal System (with special regard to the *attitude* category) to the extract presented has enabled us to show how the journalists linguistically and discursively expressed their attitudes, mainly through negative judgements about the event being reported.

Bearing in mind the discursive structure of the news stories, the analysis of the 'Rome Riot' news item has enabled us to reveal considerable discrepancies between the reporting practices adopted by the Italian and British newscasts, showing that the BBC and ITV news mainly focused on the 'physical' consequences of the clash, while the Italian journalists highlighted the international effects of the diplomatic clash. Furthermore, this analysis has revealed how the editing of news stories can create a meaningful dialogue with the audience and affect their interpretation of the stories reported in a subtle way, but it has also shed light on the cultural representation of 'others' showing, in the data analysed, how both the Italians and the British create a stereotyped representation of each other.

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Curriculum development: designing, implementing, and evaluating an ESAP course for students of the Department of Agricultural Sciences, Biotechnology and Food Science at the Cyprus University of Technology

Elis Kakoulli Constantinou

Abstract

This paper deals with the design, implementation, and evaluation of an ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes) course for students of the Department of Agricultural Sciences, Biotechnology and Food Science at the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT). The students were all first year Greek-Cypriot and Greek university students having passed an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) course in the first Semester of their studies, which focused on general language and academic skills. The whole curriculum development process is revealed and all the stages of the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the language programme are described. More specifically, the context is set, the techniques which were followed for analysing the learners' needs are described, the aims and objectives determined are mentioned, the content and tasks as well as the materials developed are described, and the techniques used for evaluating the course are also set out.

Despite the fact that the students were all native speakers of Greek, the effort was to design a curriculum which had a multi-cultural dimension in terms of certain topics and tasks. Therefore, in many cases students had to investigate and report the situation in other countries of the world, e.g. prepare PowerPoint presentations about agriculture in different European countries, investigate and classify the types of cattle which exist in different parts of the world etc.

Even though this ESAP course was successful, curriculum renewal and change is always necessary after the completion of any educational programme. Thus, the paper finishes with suggestions about how the curriculum for the specific course can be renewed. Special emphasis is given to the process of needs analysis, which should become more comprehensive for better results. In this way a more effective setting of aims and objectives, selection and grading of content, materials development and teaching practices can be achieved.

1. Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that the changes that have occurred worldwide in areas such as politics, economics, the environment, communication and technology during the last few decades have led to the realization that there is a strong need for intercultural communication among people all over the world. The ideas of linguistic diversity and lifelong language learning are strongly supported and sponsored by the European Union, which was founded on "the principle of diversity of cultures, customs and beliefs" (Europa 2008). The effects of this recognition of the importance of communication among cultures are obvious in all sorts of language programmes and undoubtedly in university language courses.

Unavoidably this turn towards the integration of culture in language teaching has led to the integration of culture into the language curriculum as well (Corbett 2003). According to Byram, Nichols and Stevens (2001: 1), "it is important to teach language-and-culture as an integrated whole" and "many syllabi and guidelines refer to the importance of cultural learning and more recently intercultural competence". Curriculum refers to "the totality of content to be taught and aims to be realized within one school or educational system" (White 1988: 4). The word *curriculum,* which stems from the Latin *currere* ('to run'), meant a race-course referring to the course of deeds and experiences through which children become the adults they should be (Smith 1996, 2000; Wikipedia 2008). Even though in the United States curriculum is often synonymous with syllabus, syllabus refers only to one aspect of the curriculum which is the selection and grading of content. Curriculum, on the other hand, is viewed as a comprehensive procedure; it involves the whole process of planning, developing, implementing, monitoring as well as evaluating an educational programme. Its existence is truly invaluable since it can ensure successful teaching and more manageable learning by providing better understanding of the context for teaching, better understanding of learners' needs and profiles, careful selection of content and tasks, better organization of time, and a clear view of the aims and objectives of the programme.

The idea of curriculum development in language teaching came to the fore in the 1960s. Of course, the idea of syllabus, that is, the specification of the content and the order in which each language element would appear in a course, existed. The syllabus was influenced by the different trends in language teaching methodologies which emerged from time to time. Some linguists even claim that the distinction between content selection, content grading and methodology is very difficult to sustain since all three are interconnected. Therefore, the various language teaching methods inevitably affected syllabus design (e.g. Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Structural Method, Reading Method, Audiolingual Method, Situational Method). Towards the end of the 1960s, it was made clear that language learning should be based on the needs of society. Communicative Language Teaching, a new method that appeared at the time, shifted the focus from the grammatical aspect of language to its communicative form. Therefore,

the communicative needs of the learner became the central concern of language programmes and, thus, a more holistic approach in the design of language courses was developed.

In this context of change and reformation, ESP (English for Specific Purposes) emerged, which basically involved learning the type of English learners would encounter in certain situations or in their occupation. This context of change that gave rise to ESP was governed by three parameters: a) the tremendous scientific and technical development which followed after World War II (business, medicine, engineering, manufacturing etc.), b) the realization by linguists that language should be studied as a means of communication, and c) the attention to different learning styles, strategies, needs and interests (Gatehouse 2001).

The emergence of ESP and the orientation towards learning English for a purpose enhanced the development of curriculum design as we know it today. Two divisions of ESP, according to Mo (2005), are EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes): this paper will be dealing with the latter.

More specifically, the paper discusses the design, implementation, and evaluation of an ESAP course for students of the Department of Agricultural Sciences, Biotechnology and Food Science at the Cyprus University of Technology. Special emphasis is placed on the effort to create a curriculum which would enable the students to acquire the appropriate language, academic and ICT (Information Communication Technology) skills that they would need in their future studies as well as in their future professional environment through a multicultural approach to tasks and activities.

2. Designing and implementing the ESAP course

The process of designing the course and generally of developing the curriculum was considered to be a series of processes that involved analysing learners' needs and the situation, the setting of aims and objectives of the language programme, the selection and grading of the content, the development of the appropriate materials to be used as well as effective teaching practices, and evaluation of the programme. All of these processes, according to Richards (2001: 41), are "forming a network of interacting systems": that is, one process affects the other. Moreover, it was generally accepted that more effective language curriculum development exists where this series of processes is not linear but cyclical. This means that the process of evaluation takes place at every stage of curriculum development. Thus, curriculum planners and teachers can be engaged in an ongoing process of renewal and change. As Graves (2000) argues, course designers can start anywhere in the cyclical curriculum framework that she provides, as long as it is logical.

The curriculum designed for the ESAP course for the Department of Agricultural Sciences, Biotechnology and Food Science was based on a set of theories of Second Language (L2) Acquisition which underlined and governed the

curriculum. One of these theories of language learning was that of Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, based on contextualized language, in other words on language introduced to students through meaningful situations instead of studying vocabulary and grammatical structures in isolation. The curriculum was also based on the idea of learner-centredness as well as the importance of engaging the learners in real-life tasks (Richards & Rodgers 1986). Furthermore, the instructors of the CUT Language Centre believed that, besides the development of all four language skills, sociolinguistic and cultural awareness is very important in order to acquire linguistic competence. It was also felt that it was important to always provide students with reasons for learning as well as with an organized and well-structured plan of the learning experience. Instructors likewise agreed that the classroom atmosphere and attitudes about the lesson and the instructor affect learning (Krashen 1985); therefore, this would be a factor that would guide the choice of teaching methodologies.

2.1. Setting the context

There were 18 students of the Department of Agricultural Sciences, Biotechnology and Food Science, 16 of whom were Greek-Cypriots while two students were Greek. The majority of students were female (14 female and 4 male students). The programme would be a three-hours-per-week ESAP course, the focus of which would be on the type of English students would need for their particular field of study. The syllabus for the course would be organized over 13 weeks, and the policy of the University was that, besides any assignments, students would be assessed through a Mid-Term and a Final Examination. The course would take place in a spacious computer lab with a computer for each student. In addition, the room was also equipped with a computer for the instructor, projector facilities, and a whiteboard. Hence, the opportunity to use technology very often in class was available.

2.2. Analysing students' needs

Considering all of the above, the design of the curriculum was initiated with the process of needs analysis. Accordingly, various methods were used to determine the students' needs as well as to identify the situation. At the beginning of the year (September 2007-2008), a questionnaire was given to the students to identify their profile in terms of their level of English (questions concerned years of study and certificates or diplomas acquired) and their computer skills. Apart from the Student's Profile questionnaire, a Diagnostic Test was given to the students to determine their level of language proficiency according to the Common European Framework of languages. 17 out of 18 students took the test. The test was comprised of the *Macmillan Straightforward Quick Placement and Diagnostic Test,* which consisted of vocabulary and grammar multiple choice questions, a personal interview, during which students' speaking skills were evaluated, as well as a

writing task through which their writing skills were tested. The results of the test appear in Graph 1:
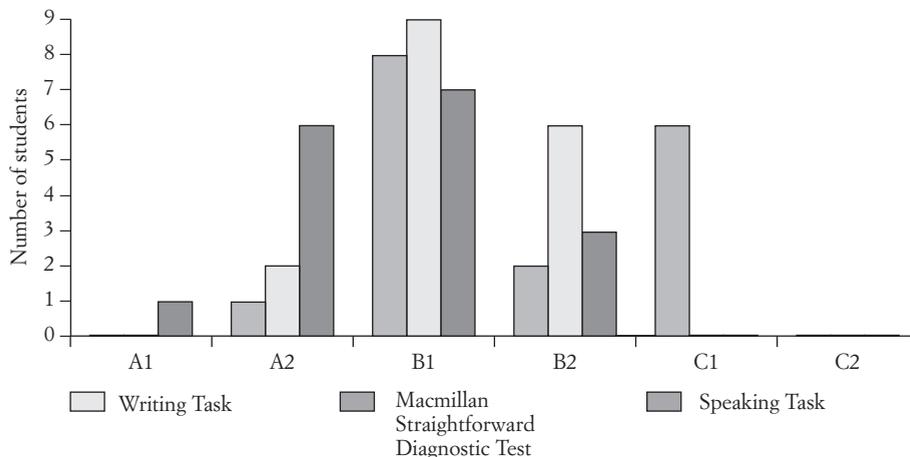
Graph 1. Results of the Diagnostic Test

Even though the performance of students varied from A1 to C1 levels, the majority of students were of B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Languages in terms of their performance in the Macmillan Diagnostic test, the Writing task and the Speaking task. It is worth mentioning that students' results were apparently better in the Macmillan Diagnostic Test (8 students reached B1 level and 6 students C1 level) while the worst results seem to be concentrated in the Speaking task (6 students achieved A2 and 7 students B1).

One other factor which was taken into account while designing the ESAP course was the fact that during the first Semester, all 18 students successfully completed an EAP course which basically concentrated on English for general Academic Purposes, and which prepared them for the second Semester ESAP course.

In terms of the students' language needs related to the course, information was also drawn from meetings with some of the professors of the Department of Agricultural Sciences, Biotechnology and Food Science of the University. The discussions with the professors of the Department helped significantly in specifying the kinds of language that learners would encounter in their academic life as well as in specific situations in their future professional environment.

2.3. Setting the aims and objectives of the course

The needs analysis procedure which was followed proved very useful in the setting of the aims and objectives of the course as they appear in Appendix A. Apart from developing students' language skills, the students' needs analysis process as well as the analysis of the situation indicated that the curriculum should also aim at the devel-

opment of certain academic and ICT skills. Having in mind the theories underlying the curriculum, as discussed in the previous section, academic and ICT skills would of course be practised in contextualized situations and always in relation to language.

2.4. The syllabus and its implementation

As far as the content of the course (i.e. the syllabus) is concerned, it was divided into three thematic units: Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Food Science. (Appendix B). Furthermore, the syllabus was organized into 13 weeks comprised of two sessions of 90 minutes each.

The course started with an Introduction which lasted for 2 weeks, during which important information and guidelines were given to the students. The first thematic unit, Agricultural Sciences, dealt with the topics of Agriculture: The Seed, Flower Morphology, Fruits, Photosynthesis, Classification of Birds and Cattle (Weeks 3-5). In the context of the second thematic unit, Biotechnology, students studied the topics of Genetic Engineering and its Benefits and Risks, Cloning of Humans, and Overuse of Antibiotics (Weeks 6-8 and 10). Finally, the third thematic unit, Food Science, was concerned with topics such as Food Chains, Microbes and Food, Food Preservation and Safety, and HACCP (Weeks 11-12).

Students were introduced to the topics through the use of audio-visual material (e.g. PowerPoint Presentations created by the instructor, YouTube videos, Online lectures etc.). All the articles and book extracts used were read and analysed in groups or in pairs, and usually students were asked to present the content of the text to the class. New vocabulary was explained by students themselves through the use of electronic dictionaries, and it was listed in electronic Word Journals created by each and every student. It is worth mentioning that for each topic students were requested to search the Internet for supplementary information.

Regarding the tasks assigned to the students as indicated in the syllabus, most were based on real-life situations in which students would most probably be engaged during their studies or in their careers later as professionals. Characteristically, some of the tasks students were requested to complete were to imagine that they were asked to present their papers at a conference and create PowerPoint Presentations, take notes while listening to lectures, write articles, take part in TV debates, write informative speeches etc.

Having set the promotion of cultural awareness as one of the objectives of the curriculum (Appendix A), many of the tasks students were assigned to do gave the syllabus a multicultural dimension. Despite the fact that the vast majority of the students were Greek Cypriots, as mentioned earlier, the demands of today's society dictated that multicultural values should govern the curriculum. According to the official website of UNESCO (2007), "[t]he quest for quality education today is inextricably bound up with the processes and impact of globalization".

One of the tasks assigned to students which had a multicultural dimension was

research on the topic of agricultural practices in Europe (Appendix B, Weeks 3-4). Students were separated into groups, and each group had to create a PowerPoint presentation on the agricultural system of one country. By the end of this task, all students had presented their assignments and had taken notes of what they had heard, thus acquiring knowledge about agriculture in many European countries. A similar task was the one on the topic of cattle (Week 5), in the context of which students were requested to investigate and classify the types of cattle worldwide. Moreover, during the weeks when the thematic unit of Biotechnology was being covered (Weeks 6-8), students dealt with global issues such as ethical concerns with Genetic Engineering and Human Cloning, and had the opportunity to watch videos and be involved in debates around the issue. In general, besides investigating and learning about the Cypriot context, students were encouraged to investigate practices in other places of the world, especially Europe.

The last aspect of the syllabus is that of assessment procedures. In order to evaluate their linguistic performance, the following grading policy was adopted by the CUT Language Centre:

Table 1. The CUT LC Grading Policy

Final Examination	40%
Mid-term Examination	30%
Class & Homework Assignments	20%
Class attendance/participation	10%

The Final Examination was the major means of assessment (40% of the total mark), while only 5% was given to class attendance and 5% to class participation. The mark allocation provided students with the opportunity to gather marks from different tasks and activities completed either as classwork or homework.

2.5. *Developing materials*

While designing the course, the problem of not having any ESP materials for the particular field of study was encountered. Unfortunately, research work concerning English language teaching to students of Agricultural Sciences, Biotechnology and Food Science is still very poor. Therefore, the instructor had to develop appropriate materials which were given to the students in the form of handouts. By the end of the semester, a course pack was developed in which all kinds of articles, reports, tasks, guidelines, etc. distributed to the students were included. Ideas for the compilation of this course pack were taken from academic books specialized in the particular field of study, articles, medicine leaflets, the Internet, TV programmes, dictionaries and many other types of reference material. For the practice of listening skills, online lectures and YouTube videos with relevant content were used, on which the instructor had to prepare worksheets and practice handouts.

2.6. *Evaluation of the course*

As was stated at the beginning, part of the process of curriculum development is the process of curriculum evaluation which would lead to curriculum innovation. For the evaluation of this ESAP course various methods were applied. First of all, curriculum evaluation was regarded as an ongoing process; hence, records of ideas for curriculum innovation were kept throughout the semester. Students' own feedback during classes was a very rich source of ideas along with their results in classwork and homework assignments.

Besides these, the students' results in the Mid-Term and Final Examinations were indicative of the level of success of the curriculum. No student failed the course; this proves that all 18 students gained knowledge from the programme, and most importantly they were encouraged to apply it and simultaneously be rewarded for doing it.

The fact that no appropriate ESP materials were found for the particular course could be regarded as a 'blessing in disguise' since this way the designer and instructor of the course had the flexibility to use more authentic, real-life materials and tasks in the curriculum.

Another source for evaluating the curriculum was a questionnaire given to the students by the University Student Services, which contained some questions which might prove useful when attempting to improve the curriculum.

Finally, a valuable source of acquiring feedback were the classroom observation sessions in which all the LC instructors including the LC Advisor/ Coordinator took part, visiting each other's classes, commenting on teaching procedures and exchanging ideas.

3. Conclusion

This paper was about the design, implementation and evaluation of the ESAP course for the students of the Department of Agricultural Sciences, Biotechnology and Food Science at the Cyprus University of Technology. The purpose was to specify all the procedures followed for the development of this curriculum having the confidence that English instructors dealing with students of this particular field of study will gain something from this creative and highly rewarding experience.

Even though the ESP movement has expanded in many areas during the last few decades due to the continuous and rapid changes that have occurred worldwide, there is still much to be done in many areas of study such as the one with which this paper deals. Despite its strong points, the ESAP course which was designed and implemented needs to be revised like every other completed language course. The immediate plans of the CUT LC are to continue with research on this matter, becoming engaged in a more comprehensive needs analysis procedure which will involve all the methods mentioned in section F, students' opinions, the

opinions of the professors of the Department as well as those of professionals in the particular field. Such practices will foster the design and implementation of a more comprehensive and successful ESAP curriculum.

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Appendix A

Aims and Objectives of the ESAP course for the Department of Agricultural Sciences, Biotechnology and Food Science of the CUT.

General aim:

The course intends to familiarize the students with relevant reading material. This will be used to acquaint the students with genre (reports, articles), and writing styles (classification, cause and effect, and comparison and contrast).

Furthermore, learners are expected to develop their listening skills and their speaking fluency by taking an active part in discussions, giving oral presentations, etc. Students are expected to develop a sufficient range of language, phonological control and sociolinguistic awareness to be able to express themselves with a degree of clarity, fluency and spontaneity.

Objectives:

Language skills
Listening
- Understanding conference lectures
- Understanding TV programmes and listening for general and specific information on topics such as *Genetic Engineering-Bioethics*
- Understanding informative TV programmes on *Food Safety*
- Understanding lectures on the *Overuse of Antibiotics*

Speaking
- Presenting chapters from academic textbooks on the topics of *Flowers, Seeds,* and *Fruits*
- Pronunciation practice
- Discussing and developing arguments in favour and/or against Genetic Engineering
- Presenting the qualities of different *Antibiotics*

Reading
- Reading for general and specific information on the topic of *Agriculture*
- Reading for general and specific information on the topics of *Flowers, Seeds,* and *Fruits*
- Comprehending Classification articles on topics such as *Birds* and *Cattle (Beef and Dairy cattle)*
- Reading for general and specific information chapters from academic textbooks on *Genetic Engineering*
- Reading for general and specific information chapters from academic textbooks on *Human Cloning*
- Reading for general and specific information articles on *Climate*
- Comprehending extracts from academic textbooks on *Food Spoilage*
- Eliciting information from *Medicine Leaflets*

Writing
- Developing well-structured paragraphs which have unity and coherence
- Writing Lab reports
- Writing Classification articles/reports
- Writing Cause-Effect articles

Academic and Professional skills
- Avoiding plagiarism
- Paraphrasing
- Referencing
- Note-taking
- Dictionary skills

• Summarizing (reviewing literature and re-organizing information)
• Developing Presentation skills

Vocabulary   • Getting familiar with the terminology on the topic of *Agriculture* (e.g. *organic matter, crops, livestock* etc.)
• Getting familiar with the terminology on *Flowers, Seeds, Fruits* (e.g. *down, embryo, sprout, wheat, stamen, pollen tube, exocarp* etc.)
• Being able to use *Transition Signals*
• Getting familiar with the terminology on *Cattle* (e.g. *steer, breeding, herd, pedigree* etc.)
• Getting familiar with the terminology on the topic of *Genetic Engineering* (e.g. *microbes, modified, chemical residues* etc.)
• Getting familiar with the terminology on the topic of *Human Cloning* (e.g. *nutrients, mammals, cell, genes, nucleus* etc.)
• Being able to use *Cause and Effect Signal words*
• Getting familiar with the terminology on the topic of *Food Spoilage* (e.g. *preservation, contamination, wholesomeness, semiperishable foods* etc.)

Grammar   • Being able to use *Conditional Clauses* in cause and effect organization patterns

ICT skills   • Being able to search the Internet
• Being able to create Power Point Presentations
• Using online reference materials (Dictionaries/encyclopedias)

Cultural awareness   • Becoming aware of differences concerning *Agriculture (Crops and Livestock)* in different parts of the world. Differences in terminology and practices

Appendix B

The selection and grading of content (organized in weeks) of the ESAP course for the Department of Agricultural Sciences, Biotechnology and Food Science of the CUT

The Syllabus

Week 1   Introduction
Session 1:
• Introduction to the topic (Agricultural Sciences, Biotechnology and Food Science) and the content of the course
Session 2
• Introduction of students to Internet searching

Week 2   Session 1:
• Plagiarism

• Different Reference Styles
• APA style (Citing/ Direct and Indirect Quotations/Paraphrasing/Bibliogra-

phy)
Session 2:
• Hands-on practice on APA Style of reference

Week 3   Agricultural Sciences
Session 1:
• Reading: *Agriculture* and Comprehension tasks
• Listing of useful terms in Word Journal
• Task 1: Internet searching on the topic of Agriculture in Europe
• Introduction to Power Point Presentations
• Task 2: (Pair Work). The Department of Agricultural Sciences,
Biotechnology and Food Science of the CUT is organizing a conference and
students have been asked to prepare presentations about the Agriculture of
all the major European countries, including Cyprus
Session 2:
• Reading: *Flowers, Fruits, Seeds and Civilization* and Comprehension tasks
• Listing of useful terms in Word Journal
• Task 1: (Group work) Note-taking and summarizing one of the papers
• Task 2: Paper Presentations: *The Seed*
                                    Flower Morphology
                                    Fruits

Week 4   Session 1:
• Writing: - Paragraph Structure
                - Unity and Coherence
                - Introduction to report writing
• Reading: *Photosynthesis, Air and Life* and Comprehension Tasks
• Listing of useful terms in Word Journal
Session 2:
• Speaking/Listening: Conference Presentations on the Agriculture of a
European country and note-taking

Week 5   Session 1:
• Writing: Introduction to Classification texts
• Reading (a sample text): *The Classification of Birds* and Comprehension
Tasks Reading: 1. *Beef Cattle*
          2. *Dairy Cattle* and Comprehension tasks
• Listing of useful terms in Word Journal
• Listening and Speaking: Pronunciation /θ/ vs /s/.
Session 2:
• Writing task: Write an article (re-organizing information)

Week 6   Biotechnology
Session 1:
• Introduction to Biotechnology

• Reading: *Genetic Engineering – Benefits and Risks* and Comprehension Tasks
• Listing of useful terms in Word Journal
Session 2:
• Listening: Watch video *Ethical Concerns with Genetic Engineering* and do Comprehension Tasks
• Internet searching and listing advantages and disadvantages of Genetic Engineering
• Speaking: Students pretend they are taking part in a TV programme, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Genetic Engineering

Week 7   Session 1:
• Reading: *Cloning of Humans?* and Comprehension Tasks
• Listing of useful terms in Word Journal
• Writing: Introduction to Cause and Effect organization
Session 2:
• Reading (sample texts of Cause and Effect Organization): *Women's Liberation and Factors that Lead to Success in College* followed by Comprehension Tasks and analysis of structure

Week 8   Session 1:
• Comparison and contrast of Block Organization and Chain Organization
• Reading (sample text of Cause and Effect Organization): *Climate* followed by Comprehension Tasks and analysis of One Cause-Multiple effects structure
Session 2:
• Cause and Effect Signal words

Week 9   Session 1:
• Mock Mid-Term Exam
• Revision for the Mid-Term Exam
Session 2:
• MID-TERM EXAM

Week 10   Session 1:
• Reading: Antibiotics and Comprehension Tasks
• Listing of useful terms in Word Journal
• Listening: Watch a video on the *Overuse of Antibiotics*
Session 2:
• Speaking: Presentation of an Antibiotic and its use to the class

Week 11   Food Science
Session 1:
• Introduction to Food Science
• Reading**:** *Interesting Facts about Food Chains* and Comprehension Tasks
• Listing of useful terms in Word Journal
Session 2:
• Reading: *Microbes and Food: A Menu of Microbial Delights*

        • Reading and note-taking: *A Glass of Wine*
                                       The Appetizers
                                       Of Salad and Bread
                                     The Main Course
                                     Dessert
        • Listing of useful terms in Word Journal

Week 12   Session 1:
        • Listening: Watch a video on *Food safety* and do Comprehension tasks
        • Listing of useful terms in Word Journal
        • Reading: *Food Preservation and Safety: the Competition* and Comprehension tasks
        • Listing of useful terms in Word Journal
        Session 2:
        • Investigation on the work of *HACCP* (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) and facts about the HACCP system in Cyprus
        • Writing task: Informative speech about HACCP in Cyprus

English words and phrases in radio commercials in the Netherlands: their use and effects

Dick Smakman, Hubert Korzilius,
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Abstract

The literature generally claims that English is widely used in product advertisements in countries where English is not the national language (e.g. Bhatia 1992; Piller 2003). The apparent assumption is that English is beneficial for the product image and the attractiveness of the text. It is also claimed that the English words or phrases will pose no comprehension problems. To test these two assumptions, we looked at the effects of the use of English in radio commercials.

Little empirical research has been done to determine the amount of English used in advertisements, and little experimental research exists that compares English in product ads in EFL countries with equivalent words and phrases in the national language. Martin (2006) points out the dearth of research of English in radio commercials in particular.

This article reports on a corpus analysis of English words in radio commercials as well as an experiment involving 122 secondary school students (aged 13-18 and from two educational levels) as participants, who judged commercials with Dutch words only and commercials in which English equivalents were used for certain Dutch words and phrases. Two fictitious commercials were used, with the same three speakers, but based on real commercials. We examined the effects of level of education on evaluations.

Our corpus analysis revealed that 39% of the radio commercials contained English words. The experiment showed that the use of English words and phrases did not affect company image, product image, nor the estimated intelligibility of the commercials. The use of English made one commercial more attractive and the other less attractive than its all-Dutch counterpart. Buying intention was higher for the all-Dutch version of one of the commercials, while for the other commercial there was no significant difference between the versions. Thus, in all, English never positively

affected the appreciation of the company, product or commercial for both commercials at the same time. As for actual comprehension, when the respondents were asked to write down what they heard, it appeared that they made more mistakes in a number of English words and phrases than in their Dutch counterparts. Education proved to be a relevant factor in the appreciation of English. For one of the commercials, the students with a lower level of education found the version with English more attractive than did students with a higher educational level. As was expected, the students with a higher level of education had more correct transcriptions and paraphrases of English words and phrases than those with a lower level of education. The findings are discussed in relation to the literature.

1. Introduction

1.1. *English in advertising in EFL countries*

The literature mentions several motivations for using English in advertising in EFL countries (countries where English is a foreign language). One such motivation is the alleged prestige of English (Friedrich 2002: 23; Griffin 1997: 38; Haarmann 1989: 234). Its use is said to enhance the product (or service) image (Takashi 1990: 329); this view is confirmed by interviews with Dutch advertising agencies (Gerritsen *et al.* 2000: 20).

The literature reveals two opposite attitudes on the use of English in advertising. On the one hand, there is the claim that English makes the advertisement more attractive (De Raaij 1997). The opposite view is that this English usage is irritating (Jansen & Rümke 1997).

The Dutch advertising agencies interviewed in Gerritsen *et al.* (2000) believe that everyone in the Netherlands understands English. Their experimental study, however, showed that English in Dutch television advertising is not only relatively poorly understood but also relatively negatively appreciated. Several experimental studies have shown that the use of English instead of Dutch on websites and in job ads does not result in differences in attitudes towards the product/job advertised, the organization, and the advertisement (Dasselaar *et al.* 2005; Renkema *et al.* 2001; van Meurs *et al.* 2004, 2006b). While van Meurs *et al.* (2006b) found no significant differences in the number of correct paraphrases of English and Dutch words and phrases in job ads on a Dutch job site, other experimental studies showed that the meaning of English phrases on websites and in print-medium job ads was more difficult to paraphrase than that of Dutch equivalents (Dasselaar *et al.* 2005; van Meurs *et al.* 2004).

1.2. *Radio advertising*

Radio is very popular in the Netherlands (Floor & van Raaij 2000: 462; van As 2000: 8). The wide range of radio listeners is a likely reason why many organiza-

tions decide to broadcast commercials on the radio. Another advantage is the relatively low costs of a radio campaign (Floor & van Raaij 2000: 463). Furthermore, people who listen to the radio seem to have the lowest "advertising avoidance" compared to other media (TMP 1997, as cited in van As 2000: 7).

Radio advertising also has a number of disadvantages for marketers. It is a fleeting medium, as radio is often merely used as a background sound while working or driving. Furthermore, the messages broadcast are relatively hard to remember, since there are no images to support them (Floor & van Raaij 2000: 462), nor can consumers control the way in which they process the messages (they cannot, for instance, go back to earlier parts of the message; cf. Pieters & van Raaij 1992: 288-290; Dijkstra *et al.* 2005: 378).

On the basis of these disadvantages of radio commercials, it may be expected that the impact of English words and phrases on comprehension and on attitudes towards the commercial, towards the sender of the advertising message, and towards the product advertised is greater in radio commercials than in print media and television commercials. With respect to comprehension, English in radio commercials may be harder to understand, because there is no visual support that aids the listener's understanding. In television commercials, on the other hand, there is such visual support, and spoken English may be subtitled, while in print media consumers can read back the message and thus understand the English better. As for attitudes, in radio commercials the listener's opinions about the commercial, the product that it advertises, and the organization that sells the product is for the greater part based on the spoken word (and occasionally on songs and music), which may make the effect of English used as part of the spoken message particularly salient. In television and print-medium advertising, on the other hand, the opinions of the viewers and readers are not only influenced by the language used, but also by visual images.

1.3. *Level of education and attitudes to English in advertising*

Sociolinguistic research usually deals with level of education as a component of social class, together with, for instance, income, occupation, and neighbourhood (cf. Boves & Gerritsen 1995; Spolsky 1998). We have looked at education as a separate variable.

Research into the effects of the use of English on listeners with different educational levels points in two directions. Gerritsen *et al.* (2000) found more favourable attitudes to the use of English on the part of highly educated Dutch participants. On the other hand, there are suggestions that the "least educated class" prefer loanwords because they associate them with more prestige, and they want to appear to have more socio-economic status than they actually have, while some more elite groups resent foreign loanwords as an indication that their native language and culture are inferior to the foreign language and culture (Ray *et al.* 1991: 93-94). In a study of the evaluation of the use of English versus Dutch words and phrases in a non-commercial setting, Withagen & Boves (1991) found that

while young respondents with a low education were impressed by English, young highly-educated respondents were not impressed by it and thought it exaggerated. Wetzler (2006: 238, 252), finally, found no significant differences in the attitude to English words in German product ads between participants with different educational backgrounds. It is clear that more research is needed in this area.

The experimental evidence available convincingly indicates that the more highly educated understand English in product advertising better than the less well-educated. Various studies carried out in Germany came to this conclusion (Fink 1975: 198; Fink *et al.* 1995: 133-134; Wetzler 2006: 218-220), and so did research in the Netherlands (Gerritsen *et al.* 2000). We can therefore assume that a higher level of education leads to a better understanding of English. Understanding may nevertheless be less important than is often claimed. Ray *et al.* were convinced that the value of borrowed words often resides solely in their prestige (1991: 93). This suggests that even if an English word is partly misinterpreted, the symbolic effect of the word remains.

1.4. *Purpose of the present study*

Martin (2006: 41) points out that most studies of English in the media in EFL countries have focused on print media and that very few studies have investigated radio commercials. Some exceptions are Pavlou (2003) and Van Gijsel *et al.* (2008), who analysed the use of English in radio ads in Cyprus and Flanders, respectively. Also, there seem to have been only a few studies into the effects of level of education on attitudes towards English in advertising. These few studies, moreover, show contradictory results. Our research specifically tries to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent are English words used in Dutch radio commercials?
2. What are the attitudes towards the company, the product, the commercial, and its language when English words and phrases are used?
3. To what degree are the English words and phrases used in the commercials understood by participants?
4. In what way does level of education affect attitudes towards the company, the product, the commercial and its language, as well as comprehension of English words and phrases in the commercial?

1.5. *Statistical analyses*

We used SPSS (Version 15.0) for the statistical calculations. For the corpus analysis, we computed frequencies, percentages, and means of English words in Dutch radio commercials. For the listening experiment, independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine differences between the means of the dependent variables for the respondents judging the all-Dutch and partly English versions of the radio commercials. In cases when the groups had unequal variances (tested with Levene's test),

t-test results with adjusted degrees of freedom are presented. Also, assumptions of normality were tested (by means of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test). All scales were normally distributed except for intelligibility for both the *Rainbow* and the *Fastweb* commercials (see Section 3.1). These variables were skewed, meaning that respondents assessed that they understood the commercial quite well. We checked whether Mann-Whitney non-parametric tests showed similar results as the t-tests. This was true in all instances, and therefore only the t-test results for these variables are presented. Chi-square tests were used to reveal the effect of language of the commercial on the actual comprehension of the commercial. Fisher's Exact Test was used when expected counts in the tables were too low. This test only produces a significance value and no formal test statistic (Fleiss 1981). To examine the interaction between level of education and the language of the commercial, a two-way ANOVA was carried out. In addition, the effect of level of education was analysed using t-tests and chi-square tests. For explanations of these statistical terms and notions, see, for example, Aron *et al.* (2005), Field (2009), and Hair *et al.* (2006).

2. Research Question 1: the use of English words in Dutch radio commercials

2.1. *Method*

The extent of the use of English in Dutch radio commercials was studied through a corpus analysis. The corpus consisted of 84 commercials broadcast by *Radio 1* and *Radio 3FM*, from Monday 23 February to Friday 27 February, 2004, just before and after the eight o'clock and nine o'clock news broadcasts in the morning. *Radio 1* and *Radio 3FM* were selected because these are two well-known national broadcasting stations with high listening ratings. The time slot was chosen because there is a peak in the number of listeners between eight and nine a.m. (van As 2000: 9). We selected commercials which promoted products or services for organizations other than the radio stations involved.

In a number of cases, a commercial consisted of two parts, which were separated by other commercials. These two parts combined were regarded (and counted) as one commercial. Commercials that were literally repeated on one day or throughout the week were analysed as though they were broadcast only once.

We applied three criteria used in earlier research to identify English words (e.g. Korzilius *et al.* 2006; van Meurs *et al.* 2006a). First of all, a word was considered English if it was found in an English dictionary (Pearsall & Hanks 2001; Wehmeier & Ashby 2000) or on an English website (www.google.uk). Secondly, English words included English proper names with a dictionary meaning (e.g. *Yacht*). Thirdly, words of English origin were not considered English when they were found in the most recent edition of the authoritative *Van Dale* dictionary of the Dutch language that was available at the time the commercials were broadcast (Geerts *et al.* 1999), because they were seen as integrated into Dutch (e.g. *week-*

end). If words which out of context could be Dutch occurred in a completely English utterance or phrase, they were considered English (e.g. *letters* is a Dutch word but it was considered English in the phrase *Dead Letters*).

2.2. *Results*

Of a total of 84 radio commercials, 33 (39%) contained at least one English word. Examples of English words and phrases used are: *date*, *technology*, *food*, *the power of dreams*, *mobile*, and *every inch of you, and beyond*. The percentage of English words in a commercial varied from 0% to 52%, with an average of 5%. This amounted to 2.77 English words per commercial on average (standard deviation = 5.57). When we analysed the use of English in various elements of the commercials, we found that 17% of the company names, 25% of the brand names, and 36% of the slogans contained English, and all of the songs played were in English. When we included English words found in Geerts *et al.* (1999), the percentage of ads containing English rose to 60%.

3. Research Question 2: the effects of English words and phrases on attitudes

3.1. *Method*

In a listening experiment, 122 secondary school students from two school types (high and low educational level) evaluated radio commercials of two fictitious companies.

For each company, two versions of a commercial were recorded: one with only Dutch words (henceforth called "the all-Dutch version") and the other with a number of the Dutch words of the other version replaced with English words (henceforth called "the partly English version"). Each participant listened to the partly English version of the commercial of one company and the all-Dutch version of the other company's commercial. On seven-point scales, the participants evaluated various aspects of the content and language of the commercial.

Both original commercials, taken from the corpus we analysed, contained English words, some of which were in Geerts *et al.* (1999). They were rerecorded with actors (one female and two male speakers with Standard Dutch pronunciation features, like the original speakers). The actors made a partly English and an all-Dutch version of the commercial of each company, i.e. a version with the original English words and a version in which these words were translated. The commercials with the two languages had a similar length and contained a similar number of words. The same actors were used for the partly English and all-Dutch versions, to prevent voice quality or accent from affecting the results. To prevent listeners from recognizing the company and basing their opinion on predefined ideas, we invented new English names and translated these directly into Dutch equivalents: *Rainbow* (partly English)/*Regenboog* (all-Dutch), a travel agency, and

Fastweb (partly English)/*Snelweb* (all-Dutch), a company selling Internet sub-scriptions. The reason for not using the original names is that known names may evoke positive or negative connotations in participants (Blauw 1994: 182). For the same reason, we invented a Dutch and English slogan for the companies.

Table 1. English words and phrases used in the partly English versions of the commercials

word/phrase	components	in Geerts *et al.* (1999) as a separate entry[1]
In Fastweb commercial:		
Fastweb	fast	No (but *fastback* and *fastfood* are separate entries)
	web	Yes (both as a word of English origin and as a Dutch word)
one and only	one	No
	and	No
	only	No
for free	for	No (but *for better for worse* and *for better and for worse* are separate entries)
	free	No
surf	surf	Yes (as the verb 'surfen')
Fastweb.nl	Fast	No (but *fastback* and *fastfood* are separate entries)
	web	Yes (both as a word of English origin and as a Dutch word)
In Rainbow commercial:		
trip	trip	Yes
Rainbow travel agency	Rainbow	No
	travel	No
	agency	No
vakantiebestsellers	bestseller	Yes
discountprijzen	discount	Yes
Surf	surf	Yes (as the verb 'surfen')
Rainbow.nl	Rainbow	No
Rainbow Travel agencies:		
the world within your reach	Rainbow	No
	travel	No
	agency	No
	the	No
	world	No
	within	No
	your	No
	reach	Yes

[1] All the words found in Geerts *et al.* (1999) were marked there as being of English origin with the label '[Eng.]'.

Table 1 shows the English words and phrases from the commercials used in the experiment. It indicates for each word whether it was found in Geerts *et al.* (1999). The reason for using a mixture of English words that were and were not included in this dictionary is that such a mixture was also found in the commercials in the corpus analysis (see Section 2.2). The question may arise whether the label 'English' is appropriate for these words. It is possible to argue that such words and phrases are not to be seen as English because they do not occur in fully English texts, but in largely Dutch texts. They could then be regarded as anglicisms which were borrowed in the form in which they occur in English, in other words, as anglicisms of the "direct borrowing" (Onysko 2004: 60) or "overt lexical borrowing" (Gottlieb 2004: 45) type. However, some studies of English in advertising would consider all the words listed in Table 1 as English. In a study of English in French advertising, Martin (2002: 9) defined English as follows: "the term 'English' is used to describe any word, phrase or sentence recognizable as belonging to any native or non-native variety of English". Similarly, in his study of English in Polish magazine advertisements, Griffin (1997: 36) defined an English word "as any word that is a word in English – even if it is also a word in French, German, etc. – as long as its use fit an English definition of the word". In line with the definition of English used for the corpus analysis (see Section 2.1), we would argue that the words in Table 1 that were included in Geerts *et al.* (1999) can be seen as words of English origin that are accepted as part of the Dutch language, while words which were not in this dictionary are not accepted as part of the Dutch language, but are English (see van Meurs *et al.* 2006a: 108). An even stronger case can be made for calling words English when they were part of English phrases, i.e. phrases in which all the words could be found in an English dictionary and which adhered to the rules of English grammar and syntax, such as the words in "*Rainbow* Travel agencies: the world within your reach", "one and only" and "for free".

For the all-Dutch versions of the radio commercials, the English words and phrases were translated into Dutch. To check that the translations were proper synonyms, the so-called "translate-translate back method" (see Hoeken & Korzilius 2003: 295-298) was used. A Dutch university teacher of English translated the Dutch translations back to English. The original version and the version that was translated back to English turned out to be highly similar. The text of the partly English and all-Dutch versions of the two commercials used in the experiment can be found in the Appendix.

The level of English proficiency of Dutch secondary school students depends on their educational level – the higher the secondary school type, the higher students' English language proficiency (Bonnet 2004: 139; van Hest & Staatsen 2002: 3-4). Most Dutch children can enrol in one of three levels of education: low, intermediate, and high. The high level is called *Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs* ("*vwo*"), which translates as "pre-university education". The low level is called *Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs* ("*vmbo*"), which translates as "pre-vocational training". To determine in what way level of education affects the evaluation of partly Eng-

lish commercials and their all-Dutch counterparts, our experiment compared high-level (*vwo*) and low-level (*vmbo*) students. We did not include an intermediate level, because such a level would show overlap with the two more extreme levels.

Our participants were students at a secondary school in the city of Nijmegen (which is in the east of the Netherlands) and the town of Wijchen (which is in the vicinity of Nijmegen). A total of 122 students participated in the listening experiment: 70 girls and 52 boys; 74 (61%) were students at the lower educational level and 48 (39%) were students at the higher educational level. The average age was 15.55 (standard deviation = 1.21; ages ranged from 13 to 18). The two combinations of one all-Dutch and one partly English commercial were evaluated by 59 and 63 respondents, respectively. With these numbers, power was .80, at nearly medium effect size (d = .51), and alpha = .05, meaning that "an effect likely to be visible to the naked eye of the observer" (Cohen 1992: 156) can be detected with the statistical tests[1].

To test the effects of choice of language in the commercials on attitudes towards the company, the product, and the commercial itself, balanced scales were used. We calculated the internal consistency of the scales in terms of Cronbach's α. This statistic denotes the degree to which different items measure the same concept; values of Cronbach's α range between 0 (low) and 1 (high). For each scale with an a of .70 or higher, we calculated the average scale scores (cf. Hair *et al.* 2006: 137). Results on scales with lower alphas will not be reported. For all scales, low scores indicate a positive attitude or better intelligibility. The scales were:

1. Five semantic differentials about *company image* partly borrowed from Maes *et al.* (1996: 209): reliable/unreliable, professional/unprofessional, modern/old-fashioned, sympathetic/unsympathetic, traditional/trendy. For both the *Rainbow/Regenboog* and the *Fastweb/Snelweb* commercial, Cronbach's α was .71.
2. Four semantic differentials about *product image*: nice/not nice, old-fashioned/trendy, unattractive/attractive, and of good quality/of poor quality. For the *Rainbow/Regenboog* commercial, Cronbach's α was .80, and for the *Fastweb/Snelweb* commercial it was .81.
3. Four semantic differentials about the *intention to buy the product*, which were based on a questionnaire used by the Stichting Ether Reclame, a foundation dealing with radio and television advertising (Marije Andela, 2003,

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[1] A brief explanation of these statistical terms is given below (for more information, see e.g. Aron *et al.* 2005 and Cohen 1992). Power is the degree to which existing differences can be traced by a statistical test; .80 is a conventional value (Cohen 1992). Effect size is a measure of the difference between populations or groups. The greater the difference between two means, the greater the effect size. Cohen distinguishes small, medium, and large effect sizes. Alpha is statistical significance, the probability of how unlikely a result must be, to reject the null hypothesis of no effect.

personal communication): booking a trip with *Rainbow/Regenboog* (or taking a subscription with *Fastweb/Snelweb*) I find wise/I find unwise; is something I definitely want to do/is something I never want to do; I recommend to friends/ I do not recommend to friends; really appeals to me/really does not appeal to me. Cronbach's α was .83 for the *Rainbow/Regenboog* commercial and .86 for the *Fastweb/Snelweb* commercial.

4. Five semantic differentials about the *attractiveness of the commercial*, which were partly borrowed from Maes *et al.* (1996: 209) and research by the Stichting Ether Reclame (Marije Andela, 2003, personal communication). The participants were asked to what degree the commercial was: nice/not nice, boring/fascinating, not original/original, fetching/not fetching, attractive/unattractive. Cronbach's α was .77 for the *Rainbow/Regenboog* commercial and .78 for the *Fastweb/Snelweb* commercial.

5. Four semantic differentials about the *intelligibility of the commercial*, which were partly borrowed from Maes *et al.* (1996: 209): incomprehensible/comprehensible, easy/difficult, unclear/clear, complicated/simple. Cronbach's α was .74 for the *Rainbow/Regenboog* commercial and .70 for the *Fastweb/Snelweb* commercial.

6. Three semantic differentials about the *naturalness of the commercial* were used. The participants were asked to what degree the commercial was: strange/not strange, not deviant/deviant, and natural/unnatural. Cronbach's α was .33 for the *Rainbow/Regenboog* commercial and .52 for the *Fastweb/Snelweb* commercial. The results for these scales will not be reported.

7. Five semantic differentials about the *language in the commercial* were used, partly based on Gerritsen *et al.* (2000). The participants were asked to what extent the language in the commercial was: functional/not functional, beautiful/ugly, pretentious/not pretentious, modern/old-fashioned, and irritating/nice. Cronbach's α was .61 for the *Rainbow/Regenboog* commercial and .71 for the *Fastweb/Snelweb* commercial. The results for these scales will not be reported.

The radio commercials were played on a mini-disc player through loudspeakers to groups of 20 or fewer students. The participants filled in a paper questionnaire, without knowing what the object of study was. After briefly explaining how the questionnaires needed to be filled in, the test started with two test fragments and test scales, to familiarize the participants with the task. After that, they filled in the questions and scales regarding the all-Dutch version of one commercial and the partly English version of the other. To prevent order effects, four versions of the survey were used: *Regenboog* (all-Dutch) and *Fastweb* (partly English); *Rainbow* (partly English) and *Snelweb* (all-Dutch); *Fastweb* (partly English) and *Regenboog* (all-Dutch); and *Snelweb* (all-Dutch*)* and *Fastweb* (partly English).

The set of questions was split up into three subsets: 1) questions dealing with attractiveness/intelligibility/naturalness of the commercial, the image of the serv-

ice, the image of the company, and the intention to buy the service; 2) questions dealing with the language of the commercial; 3) transcription tasks, in which the participants were asked to write down a number of words and phrases from the commercials. For each subset, one commercial was played, after which the participants answered the questions, and subsequently the second commercial was played and the participants answered the same questions again. For the third subset, the commercials were played twice.

3.2. *Results*

Table 2 shows the average evaluation scores on the basis of the all-Dutch and partly English recordings of the commercials for the travel agency (*Regenboog/ Rainbow*) and the Internet company (*Snelweb/Fastweb*).

Table 2. The effects of the use of English words and phrases on the evaluation of the product, organization, and the commercials

Variable	Company	Language of Commercial	Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	p
image of the organization	Travel agency	all-Dutch	4.00	0.97	1.50	120	.14
		partly English	4.27	1.07			
	Internet company	all-Dutch	4.30	1.18	1.80	114.31[a]	.08
		partly English	3.97	0.88			
image of the product	Travel agency	all-Dutch	4.18	1.16	1.61	120	.11
		partly English	4.56	1.43			
	Internet company	all-Dutch	4.22	1.52	0.15	116.57[a]	.88
		partly English	4.18	1.19			
intention to buy the product	Travel agency	all-Dutch	4.35	1.10	2.45	120	.02*
		partly English	4.90	1.35			
	Internet company	all-Dutch	4.89	1.46	1.36	114.18[a]	.18
		partly English	4.57	1.09			
attractiveness of the commercials	Travel agency	all-Dutch	4.81	1.19	2.45	120	.02*
		partly English	5.33	1.16			
	Internet company	all-Dutch	5.78	0.97	2.43	112.86[a]	.02*
		partly English	5.31	1.17			
intelligibility of the commercials	Travel agency	all-Dutch	2.26	1.04	0.47	120	.64
		partly English	2.17	1.15			
	Internet company	all-Dutch	2.24	1.30	0.36	120	.72
		partly English	2.31	1.11			

Note. Travel agency: all-Dutch = *Regenboog* (n = 59), partly English = *Rainbow* (n = 63); Internet company: all-Dutch = *Snelweb* (n = 63), partly English = *Fastweb* (n = 59). For all variables, low scores indicate a positive attitude or better intelligibility; t is the t-value from t-tests, which assess the statistical significance of differences between the means of two groups; df is degrees of freedom, the number of observations that is free to vary in statistical tests; p is probability, the likelihood that the null hypothesis of no effect is incorrectly rejected. [a]Groups had unequal variances (tested with Levene's test); therefore t-test results with adjusted degrees of freedom are presented; *p < .05.

Table 2 shows the following differences and similarities in the evaluation of the commercials. The intention to buy a trip was significantly higher with the (all-Dutch) *Regenboog* commercial than with the (partly English) *Rainbow* commercial. There was no significant difference in this respect between the *Snelweb* (all-Dutch)/*Fastweb* (partly English) commercials.

The participants considered the (all-Dutch) *Regenboog* commercial significantly more attractive than the (partly English) *Rainbow* commercial. This was the other way round for the two Internet companies, as the (partly English) *Fastweb* commercial was considered more attractive than the (all-Dutch) *Snelweb* commercial.

There were no significant differences between average scores for image of the companies, and no significant effects were found for product image either. There were also no significant differences between the intelligibility of the two fully Dutch commercials and their partly English counterparts.

4. Research Question 3: actual comprehension of English words and phrases

4.1. *Method*

The question whether participants understood certain parts of the commercial was measured by a gap-filling task and a task in which the participants paraphrased the meaning of phrases (cf. Gerritsen *et al.* 2000). The words and phrases were the same for the two tasks. For the gap-filling exercise, participants listened to the commercials and were asked to write down (*transcribe*) words that were missing in the written script of the commercial. The transcriptions were assessed individually by two of the authors of the current article and qualified as 'correct' or 'incorrect'. A transcription was considered incorrect if any of the words was not transcribed or transcribed wrongly (e.g. 'travelorensie' for *travel agency*); spelling errors (e.g. 'travelagensie' for *travel agency*) were not considered to be incorrect transcriptions. The interrater reliability, i.e. the degree to which raters agree with each other corrected for chance, was measured by means of Cohen's Kappa (*K*), which can vary between 0 (low) and 1 (high). The different values of Cohen's Kappa per transcription were between .93 and 1.00, which is classified as "excellent" by Rietveld & van Hout (1993: 221).

In a second task, participants were asked to *paraphrase* the meaning of the phrase that they had filled in. Two researchers independently decided whether these paraphrases were correct, slightly incorrect, entirely incorrect, or missing. A paraphrase was considered slightly incorrect if it did not fully cover the meaning of the phrase (e.g. the paraphrase 'Internet' for the phrase *surf naar*). A paraphrase was considered entirely incorrect if it did not cover the meaning of the phrase at all (e.g. the paraphrase 'That the organization is very popular' for *Travel agency*). Again, the interrater reliability was measured by Cohen's *K*. The reliability was between .78 and .90 ("excellent" or "good" in terms of the classification of Rietveld & van Hout 1993).

In total, the participants had to transcribe and paraphrase the meaning of six words and phrases (for a list, see Table 3).

Table 3. The number (percentage in brackets) of correct and incorrect transcriptions ('Trans') and paraphrases ('Para') of Dutch ('Dut') and English ('Eng') words

Trans/ Para	Word / Phrase	Correct		Incorrect		χ^2 (df = 1)	p
		Dut	Eng	Dut	Eng		
Trans	All words / phrases	53 (90)	45 (76)	6 (10)	14 (24)	3.84	.05
Para	All words / phrases	55 (92)	53 (88)	5 (8)	7 (8)	0.37	.54
Trans	Reisbureau - Travel agency	59 (100)	54 (87)	0 (0)	8 (13)	a	.006**
Para		55 (95)	54 (92)	3 (5)	5 (8)	a	.72
Trans	De scherpste prijzen - Discountprijzen	45 (76)	52 (83)	14 (24)	11 (17)	0.74	.39
Para		58 (100)	55 (92)	0 (0)	5 (8)	a	.06
Trans	Ga naar - Surf naar	52 (90)	45 (71)	6 (10)	18 (29)	6.31	.012*
Para		47 (81)	55 (87)	11 (19)	8 (13)	0.90	.34
Trans	Reisbureaus: de wereld binnen handbereik - Travel agencies: the world within your reach	44 (75)	18 (29)	15 (25)	44 (71)	25.10	< .001***
Para		52 (93)	40 (66)	4 (7)	21 (34)	12.94	< .001***
Trans	De enige - The one and only	62 (98)	54 (92)	1 (2)	5 (8)	a	.11
Para		58 (95)	56 (97)	3 (5)	2 (3)	a	1.00
Trans	Eén maand gratis - Eén maand for free	62 (98)	56 (95)	1 (2)	3 (5)	a	.35
Para		52 (87)	59 (100)	8 (13)	0 (0)	a	.006**

Note. χ^2 is the value from cross-table analyses, which measure the statistical significance of relationships between categorical variables, i.e. distinct entities (here: correct vs. incorrect); df is degrees of freedom, the number of observations that is free to vary in statistical tests; p is probability, the likelihood that the null hypothesis of no effect is incorrectly rejected. [a]Fisher's Exact Test was used when expected counts were too low. This test only produces a significance value and no formal test statistic. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

4.2. *Results*

Results showed that participants had relatively few problems in writing down (*transcribing*) the English phrases. On average, 76% of the English words and phrases

were transcribed correctly. This percentage is lower than the 90% correct transcriptions of the Dutch phrases. This difference bordered on statistical significance (see Table 3). Participants did not find it harder to paraphrase the meaning of the English text compared to that of the Dutch phrases; on average, the meaning of 89% of the English phrases was paraphrased correctly as opposed to 91% correct paraphrases of the Dutch phrases (see Table 3). However, as Table 3 shows, at the level of the individual words and phrases there were statistically significant differences between the English and Dutch versions.

It was significantly more difficult to transcribe the English words and phrases *Travel agency*, *Surf naar*, and in particular *Travel agencies: the world within your reach* than their Dutch counterparts. For the latter phrase, 75% of the Dutch transcriptions were correct whereas this was true for 29% of the English transcriptions.

There were significant differences in the correctness of the paraphrases of two English phrases as compared to their Dutch counterparts. The slogan *Travel agencies, the world within your reach* was harder to paraphrase than *Reisbureaus, de wereld binnen handbereik*. We also found a significant difference between the paraphrases of *for free* and *gratis*; the latter was paraphrased significantly less successfully. In fact, all paraphrases of the English version of the phrase *for free* were correct, while there were a number of wrong paraphrases for the Dutch version.

5. Research Question 4: the effects of level of education

To determine whether level of education affected attitudes, interactions between the language of the commercial and the respondents' level of education were assessed by means of a two-way ANOVA. One statistically significant interaction effect was found for the variable 'attractiveness' of the (partly English) *Fastweb* commercial (see Table 4). It appeared that *vmbo* students (low) found the partly English version significantly more attractive than the *vwo* students (high), whereas for the all-Dutch version there were no differences in assessed attractiveness between the two educational groups.

Differences in actual comprehension between *vwo* students (high) and *vmbo* students (low) were tested by counting the number of correct transcriptions and paraphrases for both commercials. On average, *vwo* students (high) had a significantly larger number of correct transcriptions and paraphrases than *vmbo* students (low). A closer look at the data revealed that this finding was mainly due to the *Rainbow/Regenboog* commercial.

As for the transcriptions and paraphrases of the individual words and phrases in the radio commercials, the results indicate that *vwo* students (high) were significantly better than *vmbo* students (low) at transcribing the English as well as the Dutch version of the phrase *Travel agencies: the world within your reach*. In addition, the partly English phrase *Surf naar* appeared easier to paraphrase for *vwo* students (high) than for *vmbo* students (low).

Table 4. Summary of statistically significant effects of the level of education

Variable	level of education	transcriptions / paraphrases	Language of commercial	Mean / correct number (%)	Standard deviation	Test statistic	df	p
attractiveness of commercial of Internet company	vmbo (low)	-	all-Dutch	5.89	0.85	$F = 3.35^a$	1.118	.07
	vwo (high)	-		5.61	1.13			
	vmbo (low)	-	partly	4.90	1.18	$F = 3.84^a$	1.118	.05
	vwo (high)	-	English	5.92	0.85			
						$F = 12.06^b$	1.118	.01*
actual comprehension of the commercials	vmbo (low)	transcriptions	both	4.70	1.07	t = 3.27	120	.001**
	vwo (high)			5.31	0.90			
	vmbo (low)	paraphrases		5.11	0.97	t = 2.23	120	.03*
	vwo (high)			5.48	0.77			
actual comprehension of: *Reisbureaus: de wereld binnen handbereik - Travel agencies: the world within your reach*	vmbo (low)	transcriptions	all-Dutch	22 (63%)	-	$\chi^2 = 16.32$	1	< .001***
	vwo (high)			22 (92%)	-			
	vmbo (low)	transcriptions	partly English	4 (11%)	-	$\chi^2 = 6.23$	1	.01*
	vwo (high)			14 (58%)	-			
intelligibility of: *surf naar*	vmbo (low)	paraphrases	partly English	31 (80%)	-	Fisher's Exact Test	-	.02*
	vwo (high)			24 (100%)	-			

Note. Travel agency: all-Dutch = *Regenboog* (n = 59), partly English = *Rainbow* (n = 63); Internet company: all-Dutch = *Snelweb* (n = 63), partly English = *Fastweb* (n = 59). For all variables, low scores indicate a positive attitude or better intelligibility; F is the value from Analyses of Variance (that use F-tests), which assess the statistical significance of differences between the means of three or more groups; t is the t-value from t-tests, which assess the statistical significance of differences between the means of two groups; χ^2 is the value from cross-table analyses, which measure the statistical significance of relationships between categorical variables, i.e. distinct entities (here: correct vs. incorrect) (Fisher's Exact Test was used when expected counts were too low; this test only produces a significance value and no formal test statistic); df is degrees of freedom, the number of observations that is free to vary in statistical tests; p is probability, the likelihood that the null hypothesis of no effect is incorrectly rejected. [a]Main effect. [b]Interaction effect. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

For the other measures of comprehension and attitude scales investigated, no statistically significant differences were found between the two educational groups.

6. Conclusion and discussion

The current investigation has examined the use of English words in Dutch radio commercials and, after describing the degree of actual use, addressed the effects on attitudes and comprehension of using English words and phrases in such com-

mercials. There were four research questions, and the answers to these questions will be discussed here.

The first research question was: to what extent are English words used in Dutch radio commercials? Our corpus analysis showed that 39% of the commercials contained at least one English word. The average percentage of English words was low (5%). We encountered no fully English commercials.

Our results are in line with Gerritsen *et al.* (2000) and Korzilius *et al.* (2006), who found that 33% of television commercials on Dutch television and 39% of job ads in the Dutch national paper *de Volkskrant* contained English words. However, they also found that some of the ads were fully in English, whereas in the radio commercials in the current study English was always used in combination with Dutch. The mean percentage of English in the radio commercials was higher than that in the job ads (0.7%) but lower than that in the television commercials (20%). The percentage of advertisements containing English and the percentage of English per ad in the current study was lower than in product ads in the Dutch glossy women's magazine *Elle* (64% and 13% respectively, Gerritsen *et al.* 2007) and in job ads on the Dutch job site Monsterboard (88.5% and 15.9% respectively, van Meurs *et al.* 2006a), all of which also contained fully English ads. A possible explanation for the finding that English is used less extensively in radio commercials than in ads in other media is that advertisers take into account that the fleeting nature of radio may make the use of English too hard for the listener. A similar observation is made by Van Gijsel *et al.* (2008: 221), who found entirely English-spoken advertisements in Belgian television commercials but not in radio commercials and concluded: "Apparently, when there are no visual images backing up the verbal content of the spot, it is deemed useful to complement the spot with a Dutch-spoken part."

The second research question was: what are the attitudes towards the company, the product, the commercial, and its language when English words and phrases are used? The experiment showed that the use of English did not affect company image, product image, or the estimated intelligibility of the commercials. Results for attractiveness of the commercials were different for the two commercials. Buying intention was higher for the all-Dutch version of one of the commercials, and for the other there was no significant difference between the versions.

The findings regarding company and product image contradict claims in the literature about the prestige-enhancing effect of English (e.g. Friedrich 2002; Gerritsen *et al.* 2000; Griffin 1997; Haarmann 1989). Contrary to what De Raaij (1997) claimed, the use of English words and phrases did not enhance the appreciation of the text either. Our findings in these respects are in line with other experimental research into the effect of English on websites and in job ads (Dasselaar *et al.* 2005; Renkema *et al.* 2001; van Meurs *et al.* 2004; van Meurs *et al.* 2006b). We have supplied additional indications that there do not seem to be any compelling advantages to the use of English instead of Dutch words and phrases in Dutch commercials. A possible explanation for the lack of positive effects of the use of English may be that English is commonly used in Dutch advertising, as has been shown by various corpus analyses

(Gerritsen *et al.* 2000, 2007; Korzilius *et al.* 2006; van Meurs *et al.* 2006a), which may mean that Dutch people view it as 'normal'.

In some respects, the effects of the use of English words and phrases on respondents' evaluations were not the same for the two commercials. In the case of the *Rainbow* travel agency commercial, the all-Dutch version was found to result in a more attractive text and a higher buying intention than its partly English counterpart. In the case of the *Fastweb* Internet subscription commercial, however, the partly English version was considered more attractive than its all-Dutch equivalent, and there were no differences in buying intention between the two versions. Two possible explanations for these dissimilarities between the two commercials suggest themselves. First of all, the difference in attractiveness may be explained by differences in the proportion of English words and phrases. A larger proportion of the text of the partly English *Rainbow* commercial than of the partly English *Fastweb* commercial consisted of English words and of English words which were not in the Geerts *et al.* (1999) dictionary of the Dutch language (see Table 1 and the Appendix). This may have made the partly English *Rainbow* commercial less attractive. Secondly, since ICT is a domain in which many English words are used (van der Sijs 1996: 322), the use of English words and phrases may be considered to fit an Internet subscription company more than a travel agency, and may, therefore, have had less favourable effects in the *Rainbow* commercial. This would be in line with remarks by Domzal *et al.* (1995: 14), Hornikx, van Meurs & Starren (2007: 206), and Kelly-Holmes (2005: 78) about the importance of a fit between the use of foreign words in advertising and the product that is advertised. The importance of such a fit should be further explored through experimental research comparing the effects of the identical use of English words and phrases in identical ads for different product categories.

The third research question was: to what degree are the English words and phrases used in the commercials understood by participants? We found that, overall, the transcriptions of the English words and phrases contained only marginally significantly more errors than those of their Dutch equivalents. Nevertheless, a number of individual English words and phrases were more difficult to transcribe than their Dutch counterparts. Similarly, overall, participants did not find it harder to paraphrase the meaning of the English text compared to that of the Dutch text. There were two differences in the paraphrases of individual words and phrases. One Dutch and one English phrase were found to be more difficult to paraphrase than their counterparts. The differences, therefore, seem minor: the English used is not much more difficult than Dutch. This is not in line with findings by Dasselaar *et al.* (2005) and van Meurs *et al.* (2004), where the meaning of English phrases was found to be more difficult to paraphrase than that of Dutch equivalents. However, it is in line with van Meurs *et al.* (2006b), who found no significant differences between the number of correct paraphrases of English and Dutch words and phrases. The differences in the results among the various studies may be explained by the differences in the difficulty of the specific words and phrases participants were asked to paraphrase.

The fourth and final research question was: in what way does level of education affect attitudes towards the company, the product, the commercial and its language, as well as comprehension of English words and phrases in the commercial? For one of the commercials, the students with a higher level of education found the partly English version significantly less attractive than did students with a lower educational level. This is in line with suggestions in the literature that the highly educated may negatively appreciate English (Ray *et al.* 1991). Our findings for attitudes to this one commercial are similar to those by Withagen & Boves (1991), who showed that the attitude of more highly educated respondents towards the use of English words and phrases in Dutch texts of a general nature was more negative than that of less highly educated respondents. However, we found no significant differences between the more and less highly educated respondents for all the other attitudes investigated in our experiment. On the whole, therefore, our findings are more in line with Wetzler (2006: 238, 252), who found no significant differences in the attitude to English words in German product ads between participants with different educational backgrounds. As for comprehension, the experiment showed that students with a higher level of education had more correct transcriptions and paraphrases of English words and phrases than those with a lower level of education. This was also found in various other studies of English in advertisements in Germany (Fink 1975; Fink *et al.* 1995; Wetzler 2006) and the Netherlands (Gerritsen *et al.* 2000).

Since the stimulus material consisted only of two commercials, and since the responses to these commercials were partly different, caution is called for in interpreting the findings of our experiment. It can nevertheless be safely concluded that in the commercials used in our research the use of English words and phrases did not seem to have any clear advantages. In fact, our results suggest that there may also be a disadvantage to this choice, namely that English interferes with comprehension to some extent. This contrasts with many claims about the positive effects of the use of English in the literature, which underlines the need to empirically investigate the validity of beliefs about the effects of English in advertising in EFL countries.

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Appendix: The texts of the radio commercials as used in the experiment

The underlined items are the English words and phrases and their Dutch equivalents.

The (partly English) *Rainbow* commercial

(Speaker A:) Daan, je kunt nu je koffers pakken! / (Speaker B:) Hè? Hoezo? / (Speaker A:) Nou, we gaan op een acht-daagse <u>trip</u> naar Kreta voor maar 199 euro! Of ga je liever naar Amerika of Thailand? / (Speaker C:) Ga snel langs je

Rainbow travel agency voor de populairste vakantiebestsellers tegen discountprijzen, of surf naar *Rainbow*.nl. / *Rainbow* Travel agencies: the world within your reach.

The (all-Dutch) *Regenboog* commercial

(Speaker A:) Daan, je kunt nu je koffers pakken! / (Speaker B:) Hè? Hoezo? / (Speaker A:) Nou, we gaan op een acht-daagse reis naar Kreta voor maar 199 euro! / Of ga je liever naar Amerika of Thailand? / (Speaker C:) Ga snel langs je *Regenboog* reisbureau voor de populairste vakantieaanbiedingen tegen de scherpste prijzen, of ga naar *Regenboog*.nl. / *Regenboog* Reisbureaus: de wereld binnen handbereik.

The (partly English) *Fastweb* commercial

(Speaker A:) Betaal je je internetverbinding nu nog steeds per minuut? / Dat hoeft niet meer met *Fastweb*. / De one and only met een blijvend vaste prijs van 14,95 per maand. / Nu één maand for free. / Bel 0800-0103, of surf naar *Fastweb*.nl.

The (all-Dutch) *Snelweb* commercial

(Speaker A:) Betaal je je internetverbinding nu nog steeds per minuut? / Dat hoeft niet meer met *Snelweb*. / De enige met een blijvend vaste prijs van 14,95 per maand. / Nu één maand gratis. / Bel 0800-0103, of kijk op *Snelweb*.nl.

Power and politeness: a study of social interaction in business meetings with multicultural participation

Mabelle Victoria

Abstract

In today's increasingly global economy, members of the same work team do not necessarily work in the same country or on the same continent. They speak different mother tongues and belong to different cultural backgrounds. Yet they are faced with the task of collaboratively working as a unified team in order to achieve the company's goals.

Drawing upon naturalistic data from meetings of a multinational corporation in Zurich and Amsterdam, this study aims to expand current understanding of workplace communication by exploring how two chairpersons and meeting participants use linguistic resources to contest and negotiate power relations without severely straining the corporate ties that bind them. Selected excerpts from the corpus illustrate the dynamic quality of power which can be emphasized or downplayed with the use of linguistic politeness. Polite language, as the data suggest, is not an add-on or a cushioning device to pave the way for the smoother application of power; in workplace interaction, it is a pre-condition within which power can be exercised.

High-ranking chairpersons may have the power to control the content, structure and direction of the meeting but they are constrained by the very same institutional authority from which they draw power. Lower-ranking group members can and do contest power but only do so without tearing at the walls that make the team a unified whole. Indeed, since it is what happens *after* the meeting that is the bottom line for most companies, it seems in the best interest of leaders and members to co-operate for the sake of the common goal, and consequently for the very survival of their organization.

1. Introduction

The language of corporate meetings, which until fairly recently was thought of as business-like, task-oriented and topic-centred (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1997), actually performs important social and relational functions (Koester 2006; Holmes & Stubbe 2003; Spencer-Oatey & Xing 1998). Meetings are vibrant social spaces where people who work in the same organization can experience camaraderie and feel a sense of belonging. Meetings can also serve as an 'arena' (Mullany 2004: 14) where individuals vie for power which can threaten team cohesion and corporate solidarity.

This paper uses a face-saving theory of politeness to analyse how high-ranking chairpersons use linguistic politeness to mitigate the exercise of potentially face-threatening power over their subordinates. It looks at the communicative devices that lower-ranking team members deploy to challenge institutional authority and seize power. I would argue that an investigation into the intricacies of workplace interactions can add to our understanding of how social relationships are enacted through talk. Given the importance of good social relations and effective communication amongst work colleagues in today's increasingly globalized world, this study is timely and relevant.

1.1. *Previous Research*

Following the ever-increasing cultural diversity of the global workforce, there has been a growing interest in language, culture and business discourse. Spencer-Oatey (2008) examines the role of communication and rapport management across cultures while Koester (2006) explores how employers and employees use language to accomplish transactional and relational tasks. A multidisciplinary view of business language as discourse is presented in Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson & Planken (2007) while the role of discourse analysis in the understanding of organizations is highlighted in Grant, Hardy, Oswick & Putnam (2004).

In the last fifteen years, a number of studies have examined how language becomes a site for *doing* power and politeness in the workplace (see Mullaney 2004; Takano 2005; Vine 2004; Holmes & Stubbe 2003; Holmes *et al.* 1999; Diamond 1996; Pschaid 1993) and other institutional settings (Harris 2003; Rees-Miller 2000). The findings suggest that, first, power is not static and uni-directional but dynamic, negotiable and bi-directional; second, that face concerns and politeness go hand in hand with the exercise of power in workplace contexts; and third that linguistic politeness can be deployed not only as a redressive strategy but as a manipulative resource to gain compliance and cooperation, mask interactional intent and gain even more power. Previous studies also suggest that institutional rank is a poor predictor of how power and politeness are discursively manifested. I return to this point later in discussing the theoretical framework adopted in the present study.

2. Power and politeness in the boardroom

Power, a basic aspect of inter-group and interpersonal relations (Haslam 2001) and a characteristic feature of human interaction (Vine 2004; Johnstone 2002), is a heavily contested concept. It seems to escape satisfactory definition and this journal article is not the place to tease out its complexity and multi-faceted nature. Therefore, I shall focus on the *discursively and interactionally constructed* manifestations of power which is not pre-determined by corporate positions (Koester 2006).

Chairpersons have the greatest influence in the content, structure, style and goals of workplace meetings (Holmes & Stubbe 2003), thus, they become relatively more powerful than the rest of the group regardless of their corporate status and personal attributes (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1997). Verschuren (1999: 91) claims that this asymmetrical relationship enables chairpersons to "order, command and permit" while less powerful meeting participants may "ask and beg." However, my data suggest that the situation is more complex. The two chairpersons, who are also the highest-ranking group members in the meetings observed, do not just command, order and permit. Even during conflict talk – here referred to as instances where there are differences of opinion and overt disagreement between interactants – they mitigate their language and show face considerations towards the addressees, even at the expense of threatening their own faces. I return to this point in the data analysis section.

3. The data

The data consist of 22.5 hours of audio recording, collected in May 2005 from two of HyClean's meetings in Amsterdam and Zurich. HyClean[1] is an American multinational company that manufactures and markets cleaning products and systems. It has branch offices in more than 60 countries around the world. Negotiation for research access was facilitated by an informant who works for the company and is a long-time friend of the researcher's. Meeting members were informed of the research by the chairs of the two meetings a few weeks before data collection.

An Ipod Nano and an MP3 Player (one at the front and one at the back of the room) were used to record spoken interaction. Monologues (when individuals were giving slide presentations) were not transcribed. Four hours of recorded data were unusable due to background noise and unintelligible multi-party, free-for-all talks. The extracts analysed in this paper were drawn from five hours of transcribed data where participants were actively engaged in talk. Detailed observation notes taken during the meetings and interview notes were used to aid contextualization and interpretation.

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[1] Pseudonyms are used throughout for company, people and product names.

4. Data analysis

4.1. *Theoretical framework*

I have drawn on insights from pragmatics and discourse analysis. Analytical techniques are influenced by interactional sociolinguistic analysis of workplace discourses carried out by Holmes & Stubbe (2003); for explanatory framework, I draw on Brown & Levinson's (1987) face-saving model of politeness.

Brown & Levinson's theory revolves around the notion of face, a concept borrowed from Goffman (1967) which refers to the public self image of all rational adults in social interaction. It is claimed that everybody has face and face needs, which can be positive or negative. A positive face need is the desire to be well thought of, liked and admired by others; a negative face need is the desire to act freely, unimpeded and not imposed upon by others. Positive politeness strategies means using language that invokes belonging and shared common ground; negative politeness means using language that orients to the addressees' wants to be left alone and to be free from imposition. Linguistic politeness, which is the main concern here, refers to the linguistic features and strategies which speakers use to mitigate any form of communication that might threaten the positive face (e.g. criticisms, disapproval, disagreement) or the negative face (e.g. order, request) needs of the addressee.

Brown & Levinson's model has been criticized on various grounds (see Driscoll 2007; Lakoff & Ide 2005; Watts 2003; Spencer-Oatey 2000, 2005; Eelen 2001; Meier 1995) including its cross-cultural applicability (see Nwoye 1992; Gu 1990; Matsumoto 1989), its notion of face (see Arundale 2006 for an alternative model of face; Spencer-Oatey 2005 for a discussion of different types of face), and its focus on conflict avoidance and social harmony (see Ermida 2006; Culpeper 1996; Bradac & Ng 1993). While taking these criticisms into consideration, I would argue that Brown & Levinson's face-saving view which emphasizes conflict avoidance and social harmony is a defensible approach in the context of workplace communication (though see also Spencer-Oatey's (2008) rapport management model). People who work in the same organization not only transact business; they attend to the management of face and social relations as well (Koester 2006; Vine 2004; Holmes & Stubbe 2003).

Brown & Levinson's theory of politeness is being used here as a preliminary descriptive framework against which empirical evidence can be contrasted. This study, however, departs from their model in its conceptualization of power and its application of a discursive approach in analysing spoken data. It is argued that contrary to what is suggested in Brown & Levinson's theory, power is not static but constantly moving in different directions. In order to capture this dynamic quality, sequential stretches of discourse will be analysed which differs from Brown and Levinson's reliance on speech acts.

4.2. *Analysis*

An overview of the transcribed data shows that both chairpersons used direct language when doing tasks that are expected of meeting chairs such as setting the agenda, checking for understanding and keeping the meeting on track, suggesting that these functions are not deemed face-threatening. On the other hand, both chairs tended to use a combination of negative and politeness strategies when performing potentially face threatening acts such as issuing instructions, expressing disapproval, disagreeing, giving orders and managing conflict talk. It can be argued that conflict talk, particularly when there are unequal power relations, are fertile sites for locating instances of *doing* power and politeness (Locher 2004; Holmes & Stubbe 2003). Therefore, I have selected extracts from the corpus that show how the two chairs – Patrick of the Amsterdam group and Fred of the Zurich group – handle conflict talk with two meeting participants.

4.2.1. *Context: Amsterdam meeting*

The Amsterdam meeting is a two-day event held every three months. It consists of 27 members who are either chemists or chemical engineers. At the time of the observation, 19 members were present (seven Dutch, three Germans, three British, two French, one Spanish, one Italian, one Swedish and one Norwegian). They are based in different parts of Europe and the Middle East. The goals of the meeting were: to introduce a new cost-reduction project, called ROK-2; to inform members of new chemical regulations and to announce a change in company structure.

In the extract below, Patrick, meeting chair and director of the Research and Development department, is giving a presentation on the proposed cost-reduction project ROK-2. Hugo, technical manager from Spain, interrupts Patrick and insists that there is no sense in undertaking ROK-2 because a very similar project, ROK-1, was a failure.

Extract 4.2.1.1.   *Amsterdam meeting: A cost-reduction project*
1	Hugo	I SAID you last meeting[2],
2	Patr	yeah yeah
3	Hugo	in Spain, we increase the number of raw materials into ROK-1
4	Patr	yeah yeah
5	Hugo	now with the formulation for instance of Summer Range (???) we are going
6		to increase to surfactants! you know, this is NOT A REDUCTION of
7		comple- complexity from the (???) it's our experience, this erm
8	Patr	we can talk about it for hours and and and except we don't have time for
9		this! but but yet I don't think there's a there's much of an argument for
10		us to to have, erm although yeah it's fun to argue// and erm have a
11		philosophical debate// think about it erm what's important for me is that
12		this company has made a decision to erm and the decision to yes
13		throughout the world and certainly within Europe and the Middle East
14		we're gonna significantly reduce our complexity

---

[2] Transcription conventions are in the Appendix.

Hugo starts with a combative stance and takes on a powerful discursive role with little consideration for maintaining the chair's face. In lines 8 to 14, Patrick, who is Hugo's superior, re-asserts his power and tries to keep the meeting on track by using off-record strategies such as overstatement (*for hours*) and contradictions (*except we don't have time for this, it's fun to argue*) to convey off-record sarcasm (Brown & Levinson 1987: 220). Patrick's use of *philosophical debate* (line 11) suggests his view of the argument as trivial and superfluous. This strategy is similar to the use of "tactical summaries" in negotiations where a summing up move is used by both parties to present their cause in a favourable light and unfavourable to the other (Charles & Charles 1999: 74). Patrick invokes institutional authority (*this company*) in line 14 to strengthen his position, thus increasing asymmetric distance between himself and Hugo. According to Holmes & Stubbe (2003: 150), retreating into the safety of institutional processes belongs to the "armoury of discursive resources" used by those in power to manage conflict talk.

After line 14 in the previous extract, Patrick proceeds with his presentation but as soon as he opens up the floor for questions, Hugo takes the opportunity to get his previous topic ratified:

```
1   Hugo   project, now another project! but we're still talking erm,
2          have you considered repercussions for sales force? ROK-1, now THIS?
3   Patr   yeah, come back to the point that we NEVER finish what we've started!
4          we never accomplish what we've anticipated and the end result is that
5          the company makes a (???) loss// now if anyone else has a- any ideas
6          on how to improve the and help this company// I'm I'm sure that we're
7          all desperate for good ideas// so so sustaining the way we behaved and
8          the way we behaved in the last year in the couple of years is is not
9          a sustainable situation not a healthy situation// but that's why we've
10         taken the decision and we can debate that endlessly but the company has
11         made the decision that that one way forward to improve the health of the
12         company is to significantly reduce the complexity that we have in the
13         company now is that the right decision? Is it possibly – we'll know
14         fully at the end if it's the right decision or not//if we continue
15         to debate it and stay in the in the status that we are as a company
16         is unacceptable.
17  Hugo   my personal view is that is that this is not the way to go but I accept
18         I accept it because this is the rule (???) I will accept/// I will see
```

Lines 10 to 16 show Patrick appealing to institutional authority (he uses *company* six times in a single utterance), which seems to leave Hugo no other option but to concede (lines 17 and 18). By invoking the *company* as 'higher power' Patrick tries to absolve himself of the liability for the decision being challenged. His use of the plural pronoun *we* is both curious and ambiguous because it seems to include different sets of referents. From lines 3 to 12, it appears as though he was evoking common ground with all the meeting participants including Hugo. However, in lines 13 to 15, he focuses on Hugo as the sole addressee (*we'll know fully at the end,*

if we continue to debate) and then directly appeals to the whole group to evoke solidarity and group membership (*we are as a company*).

It can be argued that the chair's strategic use of an appeal to common ground and group membership is designed to simultaneously gain cooperation from subordinates and compliance without being seen as overpowering. This is similar to strategies evident in Takano's (2005) study of powerful Japanese female executives where language is used to navigate between in-group membership to promote cooperation and out-group membership to exercise control over subordinates.

Hugo is careful not to impose his 'take' on the subject by prefacing line 17 with *my personal view* and in line 18 he expresses willingness to comply, albeit reluctantly. His use of *accept* three times might be an attempt at face-saving because of his vulnerable situation. If he insists on challenging the chair's proposal, he runs the risk of being perceived as uncooperative thereby threatening his group membership. His conciliatory move works to protect the chair's face as Patrick is saved from having to further disagree with him on record, thus committing a face-threatening act.

Both interactants might still be unconvinced of each other's position at the end of the encounter however; it seems apparent that they are willing to put their difference of opinions aside for the health of the company.

4.2.2. Context: Zurich meeting

The Zurich meeting is a one-day monthly event with nine core participants (three Italians, two Swiss, one French, one German, one British, and one Mexican) who come from various departments – finance, supplies, engineering and marketing departments. In this sense, it is more professionally diverse than the Amsterdam group whose members all have chemical backgrounds. The Zurich meeting has more of a "task-oriented and problem-solving nature", whereas the Amsterdam meeting is more "information- and reporting-oriented" (Holmes & Stubbe 2003: 63).

Extract 4.2.2.1. *Zurich meeting: disagreement over launch date and lunch break*

Joshua, innovation manager, has presented his marketing campaign to the team. He is proposing to unveil and launch a new product line in June. Fred, the chair and highest ranking member of the group, rejects Joshua's proposal.

1	Fred	no! let's say let's put it in July
2	Josh	fine with me
3	Fred	it's still early to change it
4	Josh	ok good

Joshua agrees with Fred's proposed change (lines 2 and 4) seemingly without much of a fight. However, in the extract below, he assumes a more powerful discursive stance in spite of the fact that Fred is two rungs above him in the corporate ladder:

```
1   Fred    I asked you a few minutes ago when you communicated the price of//
2           the price recommendation for the 05 Series// which basis did you take
3           and you told me 7655 Swiss francs so [what is THIS?]
4   Josh                                        [NO I didn't] say that [ Fred]
5   Fred                                                              [you DID!]
6   Josh    no I DIDN'T ! what I did say I said I went I went to erm
7           the financial guy and said that would give you direct cost but now
8           we talk about version without SMB for now but it shouldn't confuse us
```

Line 4, which overlaps with Fred's line 3, signals the change in Joshua's power stance. *No* carries a marked status of negation and speakers tend to delay verbalizing it (Eggins & Slade 1997). However, Joshua asserts his position (lines 6 to 8) and refutes Fred's accusation. He then grabs a board marker and illustrates his price calculations on the white board. After the numbers in question have been clarified, Fred apologizes and praises Joshua profusely:

```
1   Fred    sorry you know I'm sometimes I'm getting too energetic when it comes
2           to prices // basically it's good work you've done is good a good work
3           very good work
```

By apologizing and accepting responsibility for his behaviour (line 1), and exaggerating praise (lines 2 and 3, using *good* four times), Fred humbles himself, threatens his own face in front of the whole team and anoints Joshua's positive face at the same time. This illustrates the dynamic quality of power that is evidently not pre-determined by institutional hierarchy.

The extract below is a further example of how Joshua, comparatively more junior in terms of age, length of service with the company and rank than Fred, seizes power. He manages to get his goals met (continue with the presentation) at the expense of the chair's goals (breaking for lunch).

```
1   Fred    project Apero can we agree on – (laughs and stands up)
2   Josh    Fred sorry to interrupt// quite a few slides to go you want to give them
3               what do we do with the=
4   Fred    you have to stay another month// I cannot do an Apero for you today!
            (laughs)
5   Josh    guys! guys! give me three minutes and we're through
6   Flor    (???)
7   Noel    [please] please let Josh finish his presentation//
8           he's worked very hard on it!
9   Josh    three minutes! three minutes guys? (pleading)
```

Joshua appeals to the chair to let him finish his presentation but is unsuccessful. He even addresses Fred by name in line 2 but to no avail. Determined to finish his presentation before the break, he turns to the whole group (with the support of his direct supervisor, Noel, in lines 5, 7 and 8). He invokes a sense of cohesion by using in-group markers (*guys*) and minimizing imposition (*three minutes*). Fred,

who was already on his way to the door, goes back to his seat and, with the rest of the team, listens to Joshua's talk. At the end of the presentation, Fred pays a compliment to Joshua for a job well done. It does seem that both chair and subordinate know that time is a precious commodity and actions need to be taken in a timely manner, irrespective of whose face is on the line. The collective, overarching goals of the team appear to supersede individual face needs.

5. Discussion and conclusions

In the Amsterdam meeting, the chair appeals to institutional authority and the company to manage resistance from a subordinate team member. However, he also softens his exercise of power with positive politeness by evoking common ground and group membership. At the Zurich meeting, a team member seizes power from the more senior, higher-ranking chair by using in-group identity markers and non-imposing language to harness the collective power of the team.

The findings of the current study suggest that the metaphoric space within which interactants negotiate conflict talk is bounded by corporate culture and the overall goals of the company. It seems that the 'collective' face of the organization plays a bigger role in shaping conflict talks far more than each individual's positive face wants (the need to be liked and admired by others) and negative face wants (the need to act freely and unimpeded). Indeed, corporate identity and culture promote social cohesion and a singular view of how problems are defined, how issues and alternatives are evaluated and which actions need to be taken (Brown 1995: 57). As Diamond (1996: 49) points out, "the attempt to self assert and increase one's rank in the eyes of others is constrained by the necessity of keeping the group together, and of ensuring one's standing and belonging in it."

This investigation, consistent with other studies, has shown that power in the workplace is fluid, bi-directional and not tied to corporate rank or role (Vine 2004; Locher 2004; Diamond 1996). Data also suggest that linguistic politeness is implicated in mitigating the exercise of power. As Koester (2006), Holmes & Stubbe (2003), and Holmes *et al.* (1999) state, co-workers attend simultaneously to the transactional and relational goals of the interaction.

Contrary to Brown & Levinson's (1987) model and in line with the findings of Harris (2003) and Rees-Miller (2000), the present study indicates that an individual's relative power is not an accurate predictor of linguistic politeness. Being more powerful does not necessarily mean being less polite and being less powerful does not always equate with more linguistic politeness.

This research extends our current knowledge of social interaction in the workplace. It highlights a concept of power that is "not necessarily dominance but rather like an agency: a person's ebbing and flowing contribution to shaping the activity at hand" (Johnstone 2002: 113). I would argue that the 'ebbing' and 'flowing' of power in a business meeting context is both driven and bounded by the common goals that members hold. These common goals are as much about em-

powering as they are about controlling. In the end, everybody is measured according to the synergistic performance of the whole team. Power might steer the wheels of social interaction but it is concern for each other's face through the use of linguistic politeness that keeps the wheels well-oiled, making the ride towards the company's target destination smoother and with less friction.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix Transcription Conventions
(Adapted from Koester 2006 and Holmes 1995)

(???)	unintelligible text
(word?)	guess at unclear text: e.g. I (apologize?) for the delay in shipment
//	a short pause
///	a slightly longer pause
.	falling intonation at end of tone unit
?	high rising intonation at end of tone unit
,	slightly rising intonation at end of tone unit
!	animated intonation
-	unfinished utterance, e.g. false start
WORD	Words written in capitals to indicate emphatic stress: e.g. VERY
[words]	
[words]	simultaneous speech indicated in brackets: e.g.

A: mm// Did you   [read the report]
B: [didn't have] the time

=	latching, no perceptible pause after a turn
(laughs)	description of current action, transcriber's comments

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