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**Dear Reader,**

Over the past decades, interest in how language is used has become more and more fundamental to several research fields within the branch of literature and linguistics. Issues concerning culture and multiculturalism are more and more dealt with and new ways of understanding and approach are emerging.

The Department of Humanities of the Faculty of Business and Humanities, Sapiientia University, organized its first conference entitled *Discourse, Culture and Representation* on April 23–24, 2010.

The second linguistic volume of *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae Philologica* comprises a selection of the papers presented at this conference, ranging from the area of cognitive linguistics through discourse analysis, pragmatic approaches to literature, and generative grammar to the much researched area of applied linguistics, i.e. second and third language acquisition.

We hope that you will find interest in this richness and variety of papers. With due thanks to all the contributors, we wish you good reading.

Zsuzsanna Ajtony  
Assistant editor



## Metaphor and Culture

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**Abstract.** To see and appreciate the relationship between metaphor and culture in its complexity, we have to deal with a number of basic issues. By metaphor in this paper, I will primarily mean “conceptual metaphor” that can have a number of linguistic manifestations (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Kövecses 2002/2010). A conceptual metaphor consists of a set of correspondences, or mappings, between a “source” and a “target” domain. The meaning of particular metaphorical linguistic expressions is based on such correspondences.

The issues that form a part of the “metaphor-culture interface” are numerous. In this paper, I will discuss the following six. First, we need to ask if there are at all universal conceptual metaphors that are in a sense culture-independent. Second, if there are (which is the case), how can we account for their universality? Third, if we also find in our metaphors variation (which we do), what are the major cultural dimensions along which the metaphors vary? Fourth, we need to examine whether broad, general cultural dimensions are sufficient to account for all variation in metaphors (they are not), or whether metaphor variation also depends on more fine-grained contextual factors. Fifth, is a more fine-grained theory of metaphor variation helpful in understanding everyday talk, poetic language, or both? Sixth, and finally, what role does metaphor play in the creation and understanding of discourse?

**Keywords:** conceptual metaphor, variation, embodiment, metaphor-culture interface

## 1. Universal metaphors

Native speakers of all languages use a large number of metaphors when they communicate about the world (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Such metaphorically used words and expressions may vary considerably across different languages. For example, the idea that English expresses with the words *spending your time* is expressed in Hungarian as *filling your time*. The “images” different languages and cultures employ can be extremely diverse. Given this diversity, it is natural to ask: Are there any universal metaphors at all, if by “universal” we mean those linguistic metaphors that occur in each and every language? Not only is this question difficult because it goes against our everyday experiences and intuitions as regards metaphorical language in diverse cultures, but also because it is extremely difficult to study, given that there are 4–6000 languages spoken around the world today.

However, if we go beyond looking at metaphorically used linguistic expressions in different languages, and, instead of linguistic metaphors, we look at conceptual metaphors, we begin to notice that many conceptual metaphors appear in a wide range of languages. For example, Hoyt Alverson (1994) found that the TIME IS SPACE conceptual metaphor can be found in such diverse languages and cultures as English, Mandarin Chinese, Hindi, and Sesotho. Many other researchers suggested that the same conceptual metaphor is present in a large number of additional languages. Several other conceptual metaphors appear in a large number of different languages. Kövecses (2000a), based on evidence from a number of linguists who are native speakers of the respective languages, points out that English, Japanese, Chinese, Hungarian, Wolof, Zulu, Polish, and others, possess the metaphor AN ANGRY PERSON IS A PRESSURIZED CONTAINER to various degrees. Ning Yu’s (1995, 1998) work indicates that the metaphor HAPPINESS IS UP is also present not only in English but also in Chinese. The system of metaphors called the Event Structure metaphor (Lakoff 1993) includes submetaphors such as CAUSES ARE FORCES, STATES ARE CONTAINERS, PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS, ACTION IS MOTION, DIFFICULTIES ARE IMPEDIMENTS (TO MOTION), and so forth. Remarkably, this set of submetaphors occurs, in addition to English, in such widely different languages and cultures as Chinese (Yu 1998) and Hungarian (Kövecses 2005). Eve Sweetser (1990) noticed that the KNOWING IS SEEING and the more general MIND IS THE BODY metaphors can be found in many European languages and are probably good candidates for (near-)universal metaphors. As a final example, Lakoff and Johnson (1999) describe the metaphors used for one’s inner life in English. It turns out that metaphors such as SELF CONTROL IS OBJECT POSSESSION, SUBJECT AND SELF ARE ADVERSARIES, THE SELF IS A CHILD, are shared by English, Japanese, and Hungarian. Given that one’s inner life is a highly elusive phenomenon, and hence would seem to be heavily culture- and language-dependent, one would expect a great deal of significant cultural variation in such a metaphor. All in all, then, we

have a number of cases that constitute near-universal or potentially universal conceptual metaphors, although not universal metaphors in the strong sense.

*How can we have (near-)universal metaphors?*

How is it possible that such conceptual metaphors exist in such diverse languages and cultures? After all, the languages belong to very different language families and represent very different cultures of the world. Several answers to this question lend themselves for consideration. First, we can suggest that by some miracle all these languages developed the same conceptual metaphors for happiness, time, purpose, etc. Second, we can consider the possibility that languages borrowed the metaphors from each other. Third, we can argue that there may be some universal basis for the same metaphors to develop in the diverse languages.

Let us take as an example the HAPPINESS IS UP conceptual metaphor, first discussed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in English. The conceptual metaphor can be seen in such linguistic expressions as *to feel up*, *to be on cloud nine*, *to be high*, and others. Yu (1995, 1998) noticed that the conceptual metaphor can also be found in Chinese. And evidence shows that it also exists in Hungarian. Below are some linguistic examples: (Yu uses the grammatical abbreviations PRT = particle and ASP = aspect marker.)

Chinese:

(1) HAPPY IS UP

Ta hen gao-xing.  
he very high-spirit  
He is very high-spirited/happy.

Ta xing congcong de.  
he spirit rise-rise PRT  
His spirits are rising and rising./He's pleased and excited.

Zhe-xia tiqi le wo-de xingzhi.  
this-moment raise ASP my mood  
This time it lifted my mood/interest.

Hungarian:

(2) HAPPINESS IS UP

Ez a film feldobott.  
 this the film up-threw-me  
 This film gave me a high. -This film made me happy.

Majd elszáll a boldogságtól.  
 almost away-flies-he/she the happiness-from  
 He/she is on cloud nine.

English, Mandarin Chinese, and Hungarian (a Finno-Ugric language) belong to different language families, which developed independently for much of their history. It is also unlikely that the three languages had any significant impact on each other in their recent history. This is not to say that such an impact never shapes particular languages as regards their metaphors (e.g., the processes of globalisation and the widespread use of the internet may “popularise” certain conceptual metaphors, such as TIME IS A COMMODITY), but only to suggest that the particular HAPPINESS IS UP metaphor does not exist in the three languages because, say, Hungarian borrowed it from Chinese and English from Hungarian.

So how did the same conceptual metaphor emerge then in these diverse languages? The best answer seems to be that there is some “universal bodily experience” that led to its emergence. Lakoff and Johnson argued early that English has the metaphor because when we are happy, we tend to be physically up, moving around, be active, jump up and down, smile (i.e., turn up the corners of the mouth), rather than down, inactive, and static, and so forth. These are undoubtedly universal experiences associated with happiness (or more precisely, joy), and they are likely to produce potentially universal (or near-universal) conceptual metaphors. The emergence of a potentially universal conceptual metaphor does not, of course, mean that the linguistic expressions themselves will be the same in different languages that possess a particular conceptual metaphor (Barcelona 2000, Maalej 2004).

Kövecses (1990, 2000a) proposed, furthermore, that the universal bodily experiences can be captured in the conceptual metonymies associated with particular concepts. Specifically, in the case of emotion concepts, such as happiness, anger, love, pride, and so forth, the metonymies correspond to various kinds of physiological, behavioural, and expressive reactions. These reactions provide us with a profile of the bodily basis of emotion concepts. Thus, the metonymies give us a sense of the embodied nature of concepts, and the embodiment of concepts may be overlapping, that is, (near-)universal, across



different languages and language families. Such universal embodiment may lead to the emergence of shared conceptual metaphors.

Joseph Grady (1997) developed the Lakoff-Johnson view further by proposing that we need to distinguish “complex metaphors” from “primary metaphors”. His idea was that complex metaphors (e.g., THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS) are composed of primary metaphors (e.g., LOGICAL ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE). The primary metaphors consist of correlations of a subjective experience with a physical experience. As a matter of fact, it turned out that many of the conceptual metaphors discussed in the cognitive linguistic literature are primary metaphors in this sense. For instance, HAPPY IS UP is best viewed as a primary metaphor, where being happy is a subjective experience and being physically up is a physical one that is repeatedly associated with it. Other primary metaphors include MORE IS UP, PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS, and INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS. On this view, it is the primary metaphors that are potentially universal.

Primary metaphors function at a fairly local and specific level of conceptualization, and hence in the brain. At the same time, the brain is also characterized by much more global metaphoric potentialities, or principles. Indeed, the major research question for several cognitive archaeologists is: What kind of brain is necessary for metaphorical thought? Cognitive archaeologist Steven Mithen (1996, 1998) suggests that the brain of humans before the Upper Palaeolithic period in Europe (100,000 to 30,000 years ago) was a domain specific brain. In it, cognitive domains related to tools, the natural world, and social interaction were isolated. These early humans were not capable of metaphoric thought until the Upper Palaeolithic period, when the domain-specific brain became more fluid and allowed the interpretation of knowledge in one domain in terms of knowledge in another domain. This newer brain was a “cognitively fluid” brain. For example, in cave drawings people may be represented as animals. In the terminology of the cognitive linguistic view of metaphor, humans in the Upper Palaeolithic developed the PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS conceptual metaphor. Other conceptual metaphors pointed out by Mithen (1998: 171) include:

ANIMALS AND PLANTS ARE PEOPLE  
ANIMALS AND PLANTS ARE STRUCTURED OBJECTS  
PEOPLE ARE STRUCTURED OBJECTS

Furthermore, in the same way as animals can be metaphorically viewed as humans and humans can be viewed as animals, objects can be seen as humans. A famous example of this was described by Keith Basso (1967), who showed that in the language of the Western Apache cars are metaphorically viewed in terms of the human body. In addition, Bernd Heine and his colleagues’ work (Heine, Hünemeyer, and Claudi 1991, Heine 1995, Heine and Kuteva 2002) reveals other large-scale

metaphorical processes people seem to employ (near-)universally; for example, spatial relations are commonly understood as parts of the human body (e.g., the head means up and the feet means down) (for more detail, see also Kövecses 2006). These conceptual metaphors and the large-scale processes they underlie are global design-features of the brain/mind of modern humans. They represent global metaphoric potentialities, or principles, of a cognitively fluid brain.

It seems to be clear at this point that commonality in human experience is a major force shaping the metaphors we have. It is this force that gives us many of the metaphors that we can take to be near-universal or potentially universal. But commonality in human experience is not the only force that plays a role in the process of establishing and using metaphors. There are also countervailing forces that work against universality in metaphor production.

## **2. The issue of embodiment**

Embodiment is one of the key ideas of cognitive linguistics that clearly distinguishes the cognitive linguistic conception of meaning from that of other cognitively-oriented theories. In the emergence of meaning, that is, in the process of something becoming meaningful, the human body plays an important role (Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Gibbs 2006). It is especially what are known as “image schemas” that are crucial in this regard. Image schemas are based on our most basic physical experiences and are inevitable in making sense of the world around us.

However, several researchers have pointed out that aspects of the view of embodiment may lead to contradictions within the theory (e.g. Alverson 1994; Rakova 2002). It can be problematic that the theory of embodiment tries to account simultaneously for universality and cultural specificity. Rakova emphasizes that a theory that builds on image schemas and, in general, on the universality of essential physical experiences cannot in the same breath be a theory of cultural variation – especially not if embodiment is conceived naturalistically. Here are some quotes that indicate her position:

The thing is that reductionism and relativism are not supposed to go together. The failure to balance these two tendencies is, I believe, the second drawback of the philosophy of embodied realism. (Rakova 2002: 228)

Thus, my claim is that experientialism is often relativism in the strong sense, and that the supposed universality of directly meaningful concepts and kinesthetic image schemas is not consistent with the idea of culturally defined conceptualizations. (Rakova 2002: 228)

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The claim that there are cognitively significant cultural differences in the conceptualization of spatial relations is incompatible with the naturalistic stand that follows from the theory of image schemas. (Rakova 2002: 238)

Undoubtedly, the examples that Lakoff and Johnson provide (like the CONTAINER schema) may give the impression that Lakoff and Johnson regard image schemas and embodiment as universal experiences that make things (including language) meaningful “in a natural way”, that is, in a way that suggests that the universality of embodiment mechanically produces universal meanings.

In my view, we can refine and improve on this conception of the embodiment of meaning, and, thus, we can meet the challenge of the criticism above. In order to do that, we need to change the way we think about embodiment; we should not see “embodied experience” as a homogeneous, monolithic factor. This is made possible by the idea that embodiment (i.e., embodied experience relative to a domain) consists of several components and that any of these can be singled out and emphasized by different cultures (or, as a matter of fact, individuals within cultures). I termed this idea “differential experiential focus” in previous work (see Kövecses 2005).

Let us take as an example the kind of embodiment that makes our concepts and words relating to anger meaningful in different cultures. According to physiological studies, anger is accompanied by several physiological reactions, such as increase in skin temperature, in respiration rate, blood pressure, and heart rate (Ekman et al. 1983). These are universal physiological reactions that derive from the human body and explain why we find the same generic-level conceptual metaphor in languages and cultures that are independent from each other (Kövecses 2002/2010).

At the same time, we can observe that the different languages and cultures do not attend to the same physiological reactions associated with anger. While in English and Hungarian a rise in body temperature and increase in blood pressure receive equal attention, in Chinese the presence of PRESSURE seems to be much more focal (Yu 1998). Moreover, as Rosaldo’s (1980) work tells us, the main physiological characteristic of anger among the Ilongot of New Guinea is an undifferentiated and generalized state of physiological arousal. In other words, it seems that different languages and cultures base their anger-concepts on different components and levels of embodiment, thereby creating partly universal, partly culture-specific concepts. This account is made possible by the process of differential experiential focus.

The phenomenon of differential experiential focus can also be observed historically. Gevaert (2001, 2005) suggests that in historical corpora of the English language the conceptualization of anger as HEAT was prominent between 850 and 950. (This can be established on the basis of the number of heat related anger

metaphors in the various historical periods.) Later, however, anger was conceptualized mostly as PRESSURE, and, beginning with the 14<sup>th</sup> century, HEAT and PRESSURE jointly characterized the conceptualization of anger in English. The well-known metaphor ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER (see Lakoff and Kövecses 1987) is the end product of the process. Gevaert justifiably asks in this connection whether the Lakoff-Johnson view of embodiment can be maintained in the light of such findings. After all, it would be unreasonable to propose that the physiological responses associated with anger change from one century to the next.

The idea of differential experiential focus can serve us again in responding to this criticism (Kövecses 2005). The embodiment of anger, as we have seen above, is complex and consists of several components. Of these, as a result of certain cultural influences over the ages, different components may occupy central position in the metaphorical conceptualization of anger. In other words, the criticism formulated by Gevaert would only be valid if we thought about embodiment as a homogeneous and unchanging factor in how humans conceptualize various abstract concepts. But if we think of embodiment as a complex set of factors to which speakers can apply differential experiential foci, we can resolve the dilemma raised by Gevaert and others.

### **3. The issue of the relationship between metaphor and culture**

However, not even the weaker and less mechanical notion of embodiment described above can provide a general account of how culture shapes metaphorical conceptualization. It is not clear what the more precise relationship is between the process of embodiment leading to universal metaphors and that of local culture leading to language- and culture-specific metaphors. More generally, the question is whether conceptual metaphor theory can simultaneously account for both the universal and culture-specific aspects of metaphorical conceptualization. This was the general issue I tried to raise and resolve in my book *Metaphor in Culture*. For lack of space in this paper, I can only briefly outline and demonstrate through some examples a possible answer to this question.

Metaphorical conceptualization in natural situations occurs under two simultaneous pressures: the pressure of embodiment and the pressure of context. Context is determined by local culture. This dual pressure essentially amounts to our effort to be coherent both with the body and culture – coherent both with universal embodiment and the culture-specificity of local culture in the course of metaphorical conceptualization. We can achieve this in some cases, but in others it is either embodiment or cultural specificity that plays the more important role.

Context may be characterized by physical, social, cultural, discourse, etc. aspects, and it consists of such factors as the setting, topic, audience, and medium, which can all influence metaphorical conceptualization. For example, Boers (1999)

showed that physical context may systematically shape the way we think metaphorically. Boers studied the ECONOMY IS HEALTH metaphor in a ten-year period, and found that the use of this metaphor is systematically more frequent in the winter than in the summer. ECONOMY IS HEALTH is a potentially universal metaphor whose use varies according to the physical context of metaphorical conceptualization.

Which metaphor is used in a particular situation does not only depend on which (potentially) universal metaphor is available in connection with the given target domain for the expression of a given meaning but also on the setting and topic of the situation in which the metaphorical conceptualization takes place. Let us take the following passages from a Hungarian newspaper (Kövecses 2005):

- (3) Levelet írt Sepp Blatter a Nemzetközi Labdarúgó Szövetség (FIFA) svájci elnöke az ázsiai szövetség (AFC) vezetőinek, melyben elfogadhatatlannak minősítette a kontinens küldötteinek három héttel ezelőtti kivonulását a FIFA-kongresszusáról, ugyanakkor megígérte, hogy megpróbál segíteni az AFC gondjainak megoldásában – jelentette kedden a dpa német hírügynökség.

Nagyon elkésérített az Önök viselkedése a Los Angeles-i kongresszusunkon. Önöknek, mint a labdarúgáshoz értő szakembereknek tudniuk kellett volna, hogy az a csapat soha nem nyeri meg a mérkőzést, amelyik a lefújás előtt levonul a pályáról – áll a levélben. (*Zalai Hírlap* [The Chronicle of Zala County], July 28, 1999)

Sepp Blatter, the Swiss president of the International Football Federation (FIFA), wrote a letter to the leaders of the Asian Football Association (AFC), in which he deemed unacceptable the behaviour of the association's delegates three weeks ago when they left the FIFA Congress prematurely. On the other hand, he promised that he would try to help solve the problems with which AFC is struggling – the German news agency dpa reported.

I was bitterly disappointed by your behaviour at our Congress held in Los Angeles. You, as experts on football, should have known that the team that leaves the field before the game is called off by the referee can never win the game – states the letter. (my translation, ZK)

The passages are about a FIFA Congress, where the Asian representatives left the meeting prematurely because of their dissatisfaction with some of the decisions of the Congress. It is the behaviour of the Asian representatives that is conceptualized metaphorically by Sepp Blatter, the president of FIFA. The target domain of his conceptual metaphor is the FIFA Congress and the source domain is football itself.

We find this completely natural. Why? In all probability, it is because the congress is about football. That is to say, the topic of the congress (football) of the FIFA meeting (the target) influences the conceptualizer to select a particular source domain (the game of football). This is a common way in which we select metaphorical source domains in local contexts.

The selection of the metaphors we use may also depend on who we are, that is, what our personal history is or what our long-lasting concerns or interests are. The Letters to the Editor sections of newspapers often offer a glimpse into how these factors can shape metaphorical conceptualization. In a Hungarian daily, one of the readers sent the following letter to the editor before Hungary's joining of the European Union:

- (4) Otthon vagyunk, otthon lehetünk Európában. Szent István óta *bekapcsolódtunk* ebbe a szellemi áramkörbe, és *változó intenzitással*, de azóta benne vagyunk – akkor is, ha különféle erők időnként, hosszabb-rövidebb ideig, megpróbálták kirángatni belőle. (italics in the original; *Magyar Nemzet*, [Hungarian Nation] June 12, 1999)

We are, we can be at home in Europe. Since Saint Stephen we have been *integrated/connected* to this intellectual/spiritual *electric circuit*, and *with varying degrees of intensity*, but we have been in it – even though various powers, for more or less time, have tried to yank us out of it. (my translation, ZK)

The EUROPEAN UNION AS AN ELECTRIC CIRCUIT metaphor is not a conventional one. But, as we find out from the reader's note, he is an electrical engineer, and it was only natural for him to create and use this particular metaphor. In general, we can observe that our profession, personal history, concerns and interests all play a role in how we arrive at the most appropriate source domains for target domains in a given naturally occurring situation.

As the examples above clearly show, metaphorical conceptualization does not simply and merely utilize ready-made and/or universal metaphors. The pressure of context is another inevitable component in the use of metaphors. Our effort to be coherent with the local context may be an important tool in understanding the use of metaphors in natural discourse. This aspect of metaphor use has so far remained outside the interest and, indeed, the competence of "traditional" conceptual metaphor theory. With the help of the new conceptual tools briefly introduced in this section, the study of these exciting cases of metaphor use may open up new possibilities in our understanding of linguistic and cultural creativity within the framework of conceptual metaphor theory.

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## 4. Dimensions of metaphor variation

I will distinguish two kinds of dimensions along which metaphors vary: the cross-cultural and the within-culture dimension.

### 4.1. Cross-cultural variation

The most obvious dimension along which metaphors vary is the cross-cultural dimension. Variation in this dimension can be found in several distinct forms. One of them is what I call “congruence.” This is obtained between a generic-level metaphor and several specific-level ones. Another is the case where a culture uses a set of different source domains for a particular target domain, or conversely, where a culture uses a particular source domain for conceptualising a set of different target domains. Yet another situation involves cases where the set of conceptual metaphors for a particular target domain is roughly the same between two languages/cultures, but one language/culture shows a clear preference for some of the conceptual metaphors that are employed. Finally, there may be some conceptual metaphors that appear to be unique to a given language/culture. I will demonstrate congruence and alternative metaphorical conceptualization by some examples.

*Congruent metaphors.* There is some evidence that THE ANGRY PERSON IS A PRESSURIZED CONTAINER metaphor may be near-universal (see Kövecses 2000a). What is especially important about this conceptual metaphor is that it functions at an extremely general level. The metaphor does not specify many things that *could* be specified. For example, it does not say what kind of container is used, how the pressure arises, whether the container is heated or not, what kind of substance fills the container (liquid, substance, or objects), what consequences the explosion has, and so on. The metaphor constitutes a generic schema that gets filled out by each culture that has the metaphor. When it is filled out, it receives unique cultural content at a specific level. In other words, a generic-level conceptual metaphor is instantiated in culture-specific ways at a specific level. This is one kind of cross-cultural variation.

Consider the following three special cases. In one, Matsuki (1995) observes that all the metaphors for anger in English as analysed by Lakoff and Kövecses (1987) can also be found in Japanese. At the same time, she also points out that there is a large number of anger-related expressions that group around the Japanese concept of *hara* (literally, ‘belly’). This is a culturally significant concept that is unique to Japanese culture, and so the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS (IN THE) HARA is limited to Japanese.

Second, Ning Yu (1998) studied the PRESSURIZED CONTAINER metaphor in great depth, and points out that Chinese uses a version of this metaphor in which the excess *qi* (i.e., energy that flows through the body) that corresponds to anger is not a fluid, like in English, but a gas. The gas is neutral with respect to heat, but it is capable of exerting pressure on the body-container. The most remarkable feature of the Chinese anger-metaphor is that it employs and is crucially constituted by the concept of *qi* – a concept that is deeply embedded in the long history of Chinese philosophy and medicine.

Third, Zulu shares many conceptual metaphors with English (Taylor and Mbense 1998). This does not mean, however, that it cannot have metaphors other than the ones we can find in English. One case in point is the Zulu metaphor that involves the heart: ANGER IS (UNDERSTOOD AS BEING) IN THE HEART. When the heart metaphor applies to English, it is primarily associated with love, affection, and the like. In Zulu it applies to anger and patience-impatience, tolerance-intolerance. The heart metaphor conceptualizes anger in Zulu as leading to internal pressure since too much “emotion substance” is crammed into a container of limited capacity. The things that fill it up are other emotions that happen to a person in the wake of daily events. When too many of these happen to a person, the person becomes extremely angry and typically loses control over his anger.

In all of the three cases, there is a generic-level metaphor and a specific-level one. The specific-level metaphors are instantiations of the generic-level one in the sense that they exhibit the same general structure. The lower-level instantiations are thus congruent with a higher-level metaphor. Where they differ is in the specific cultural content that they bring to the generic metaphor.

*Alternative metaphors.* There can be differences in the *range* of conceptual metaphors (or, more precisely, the range of source domains) that languages and cultures have available for the conceptualization of particular target domains. This is what commonly happens in the case of emotion concepts as targets.

Chinese shares with English all the basic metaphorical source domains for happiness: UP, LIGHT, FLUID IN A CONTAINER. A metaphor that Chinese has, but English does not, is HAPPINESS IS FLOWERS IN THE HEART. According to Ning Yu (1995, 1998), the application of this metaphor reflects “the more introverted character of Chinese”. He sees this conceptual metaphor as a contrast to the (American) English metaphor BEING HAPPY IS BEING OFF THE GROUND, which does not exist in Chinese at all and which reflects the relatively “extroverted” character of speakers of (especially American) English.

As another illustration, let us take the concept of life as target. Life is commonly and primarily conceptualized as STRUGGLE/WAR, PRECIOUS POSSESSION, GAME, JOURNEY, and in several other ways (see Kövecses 2005). However, as work by Elizabeth Riddle (2001) shows, speakers of Hmong, a



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language spoken mainly in Laos and Thailand, conceptualize it very differently. They view life as a STRING that can be cut and broken. The word meaning ‘cut,’ *tu*, can also mean ‘to give birth,’ ‘to die,’ and ‘to kill.’ Riddle presents evidence for the existence of the conceptual metaphor not only from language but also from social behaviour. Although the Hmong metaphor LIFE IS A STRING resonates as at least vaguely familiar to members of the European cultural sphere who have a similar metaphor in Greek mythology (the three Fates spinning, weaving, and cutting the thread of life), the Hmong metaphor is much more clearly present among speakers of this language and seems to guide much of their linguistic and nonlinguistic behaviour.

#### 4.2. Within-culture variation

We know from work in sociology, anthropology, sociolinguistics, etc. that languages are not monolithic but come in varieties reflecting divergences in human experience. It makes sense to expect metaphor variation in the varieties of language most commonly identified by these researchers. I will present evidence that, I believe, supports the idea that metaphors vary not only cross-culturally but also within cultures. This variation can occur along a number of dimensions including the social, regional, ethnic, style, subcultural, diachronic, and individual dimensions. I conceive of this approach to metaphor variation as the cognitive dimension of social-cultural diversity. I will demonstrate with some examples how metaphors vary along these dimensions.

*The social dimension.* Social dimensions include the differentiation of society into men and women, young and old, middle-class and working class, and so forth. Do men, the young, or the middle-class use different metaphors than women, the old, or the working-class? At present we do not have systematic studies from a cognitive linguistic perspective. But we do have some indication that some of these social factors might produce variation in metaphorical conceptualization.

One example of this is the man-woman dimension. This dimension seems to be operative in several distinct cases: the way men talk about women, the way women talk about men, the way men *and* women talk about women, the way men *and* women talk about the world in general (i.e., not only about the other). In English speaking countries (but also in others), it is common for men to use expressions such as *bunny, kitten, bird, chick, cookie, dish, sweetie pie*, and many others, of women. These metaphorical expressions assume certain conceptual metaphors: WOMEN ARE (SMALL) FURRY ANIMALS (*bunny, kitten*), WOMEN ARE BIRDS (*bird, chick, hen-party*), and WOMEN ARE SWEET FOOD (*cookie, dish, sweetie pie*). However, when women talk about men they do not appear to use these metaphors of men, or use them in a more limited way. Men are not called *bunnies*

or *kittens* by women. Neither are men characterized as *birds* or *chicks*, but they can be thought of as LARGE FURRY ANIMALS instead, such as bears. And women are more commonly viewed by men as SWEET FOOD than men are by women, although women can also sometimes describe men as FOOD, especially for sexual purposes.

*The regional dimension.* Languages often develop new metaphors when the language is moved by some of its speakers to a part of the world different from where it was originally spoken. The spread of English to the United States is one example (see Kövecses 2000b). Another is Afrikaans (Dutch spoken in South Africa). Afrikaans was carried from Europe to South Africa, and, as shown by Rene Dirven (1994), it changed its metaphorical patterns. It acquired many new metaphors based on natural phenomena and the animal world.

*The style dimension.* Style is determined by a number of factors, such as audience, topic, setting, and medium. All of these may influence the selection and use of metaphors in discourse. For example, slang is typically rich in metaphor and may be characterized by metaphors not found in other varieties of language.

*The subcultural dimension.* Each society and culture consists of a number of subcultures. Subcultures develop their own metaphors, and these metaphors may define the group. There is of course no subculture that defines itself through an entirely new set of metaphors, but some of the metaphors members of the group use may be new relative to the mainstream. For example, we can think of emotionally-mentally ill people as one such group. Although depressed people share many of the metaphors for the concept of depression-sadness that “non-depressed” people have, like DEPRESSION IS DARKNESS, DEPRESSION IS HEAVY, DEPRESSION IS DESCENT/DOWN, they also have metaphors that are unique to the group. One such metaphor is DEPRESSION IS A CAPTOR (McMullen and Conway 2001).

*The individual dimension.* Individuals often have their idiosyncratic metaphors. These can be entirely novel or they may be versions of already existing conceptual metaphors. Thus, one can have a view of love relationships as the action of “*pushing a wagon uphill*,” a linguistic metaphor based on LOVE IS A JOURNEY, but adding to it the aspect of requiring an effort to maintain it.

## 5. The effect of the immediate cultural context on metaphor use

Consider the following example taken from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, in which Bill Whalen, a professor of political science in Stanford and an advisor to Arnold Schwarzenegger, uses metaphorical language concerning the actor who later became the governor of California:

- (5) “Arnold Schwarzenegger is not the second Jesse Ventura or the second Ronald Reagan, but the first Arnold Schwarzenegger,” said Bill Whalen, a Hoover Institution scholar who worked with Schwarzenegger on his successful ballot initiative last year and supports the actor’s campaign for governor.
- “He’s a unique commodity – unless there happens to be a whole sea of immigrant body builders who are coming here to run for office. This is ‘Rise of the Machine,’ not ‘Attack of the Clones.’” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, A16, August 17, 2003)

Of interest in this connection are the metaphors *He’s a unique commodity* and particularly *This is ‘Rise of the Machine,’ not ‘Attack of the Clones.’* The first one is based on a completely conventional conceptual metaphor: PEOPLE ARE COMMODITIES, as shown by the very word *commodity* to describe the actor. The other two are highly unconventional and novel. What makes Bill Whalen produce these unconventional metaphors and what allows us to understand them? There are, I suggest, two reasons. First, and more obviously, it is because Arnold Schwarzenegger played in the first of these films. In other words, what sanctions the use of these metaphorical expressions has to do with the knowledge that the conceptualizer (Whalen) has about the topic of the discourse (Schwarzenegger), as discussed in a previous section. Second, and less obviously but more importantly here, he uses the metaphors because these are films that, at the time of speaking (i.e., 2003), everyone knew about in California and the US. In other words, they were part and parcel of the immediate cultural context. Significantly, the second film, *Attack of the Clones* does not feature Schwarzenegger, but it is the key to understanding the contrast between individual and copy that Whalen is referring to.

Given this knowledge, people can figure out what Whalen intended to say, which was that Schwarzenegger is a unique individual and not one of a series of look-alikes. But figuring this out may not be as easy and straightforward as it seems. After all, the metaphor *Rise of the Machine* does not clearly and explicitly convey the idea that Schwarzenegger is unique in any sense. (As a matter of fact, the mention of machines goes against our intuitions of uniqueness.) However, we get this meaning via two textual props in the text. The first one is a series of statements by Whalen: “Arnold Schwarzenegger is not the second Jesse Ventura or the second Ronald Reagan, but the first Arnold Schwarzenegger” and “He’s a unique commodity – unless there happens to be a whole sea of immigrant body builders who are coming here to run for office.” What seems to be the case here is that the speaker emphasizes the idea of individuality before he uses the MACHINE metaphor. But not even this prior emphasis would be sufficient by itself. Imagine that the text stops with the words “...This is ‘Rise of the Machine.’” I think most native speakers would be baffled and have a hard time understanding what Whalen

intended to say in this last sentence. Therefore, in order to fully understand the discourse we badly need the second textual prop, which is: “not ‘Attack of the Clones.’” It is against the background of this phrase that we understand what the metaphorical expression *Rise of the Machine* might possibly mean.

*The cultural context in poetry*

The choice of the image of Medusa by Sylvia Plath in a poem with the same name is in part motivated by the larger cultural context, of which the three gorgons of Greek mythology, including Medusa, form a part. The symbolic belief system is thus one aspect of Sylvia Plath’s cultural system. The poem continues with the following lines:

- (6) My mind winds to you  
 Old barnacled umbilicus, Atlantic cable,  
 Keeping itself, it seems, in a state of miraculous repair.

(retrieved from <http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/sylviaplath/1412>)

Another aspect of the cultural context involves the entities we find in a particular physical-cultural environment. In the lines, the relationship to her mother is conceptualized metaphorically both as the *umbilicus* and the *Atlantic telephone cable*. In the former case, the generic-level conceptual metaphor PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE PHYSICAL CONNECTIONS is fleshed out at the specific level as the *umbilicus*. This is of course motivated by human biology, not by cultural context. What gives a metaphorical character to it is that we know that the poet is no longer physically-biologically linked to the mother through the umbilicus. The metaphor is probably used to convey the naturalness and inevitability of a strong bond between mother and child. However, the adjacent metaphor *Atlantic cable* derives from the surrounding physical-cultural environment. The first transatlantic telephone cable system between Great Britain and North-America was laid in the 1950s, making it possible for people to communicate directly with each other at a long distance. Through the metaphor, the strength of the biological bond is reinforced, and the *Atlantic cable* can be seen as the temporal (and metaphorical) continuation of the umbilicus.

The cultural context, among other things, includes, as we just saw, the belief system of a person and the physical-cultural environment. Both of these occur in various specific forms in a large number of other poems. The cultural belief system also involves the religious beliefs that are entertained in a given culture. Let us take the first stanza of a poem, *Prayers of Steel*, by Carl Sandburg.

- (7) LAY me on an anvil, O God.  
 Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.  
 Let me pry loose old walls.  
 Let me lift and loosen old foundations.  
 (retrieved from <http://www.bartleby.com/134/39.html>)

Here the poet evokes God and wants God to turn him into an instrument of social change. This making of an “old type of man” into a “new type of man” is conceptualized on the analogy of God’s creation of man in the Bible. In other words, the source domain of the metaphor is the biblical act of man’s creation, while the target domain is the making of a new type of man who can effect social changes in the world. This means that the source domain is provided by the religious belief system in the culture of the poet by virtue of an analogy between God’s creation of man and the creation of a tool that metonymically stands for the poet (INSTRUMENT USED FOR THE PERSON USING IT), who can thus function in a new role to effect social change.

A physical-cultural element, or entity, that is significant in Sandburg’s poetry is the skyscraper. Consider the first stanza of the poem called *Skyscraper*:

- (8) BY day the skyscraper looms in the smoke and sun and  
 has a soul.  
 Prairie and valley, streets of the city, pour people into  
 it and they mingle among its twenty floors and are  
 poured out again back to the streets, prairies and  
 valleys.  
 It is the men and women, boys and girls so poured in and  
 out all day that give the building a soul of dreams  
 and thoughts and memories.  
 (Dumped in the sea or fixed in a desert, who would care  
 for the building or speak its name or ask a policeman  
 the way to it?)  
 (retrieved from <http://www.bartleby.com/165/55.html>)

What makes the skyscraper such a significant symbol and what makes Sandburg choose it to talk about America? The poem was written in 1916 in Chicago. It was at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the major American cities that skyscrapers began to be built on a large scale. The skyscraper became a dominant feature of the city skyline. Due to its perceptual and cultural salience, it became, for Sandburg and many others, a symbol of America. The symbol is based on a connection between a salient element that characterizes a place (a kind of building) and the place itself;

hence the metonymy SKYSCRAPER FOR AMERICA, which is a specific-level version of the generic-level metonymy A CHARACTERISTIC PROPERTY FOR THE PLACE THAT IT CHARACTERIZES. In this case, the characteristic property is embodied in a type of building.

What is additionally interesting about this example is that it is a metonymy, not a metaphor. It seems that metonymies are also set up in part as a result of the local cultural influence; the skyscraper was at Sandburg's time a salient feature of the American landscape that made it a natural choice for a metonymic symbol for the country.

## 6. Metaphorical coherence in discourse

Most researchers who work on metaphor in real discourse would agree that a major function of the metaphors we find in discourse is to provide coherence (see, for example, Cameron 2003; Charteris-Black 2004; Chilton 1996; Chilton and Ilyin 1993; Deignan 2005; Eubanks 2000; Koller 2004; Musolff 2000, 2004, 2006; Ritchie 2004a, b; Semino 2008). The coherence provided by metaphors can be either intertextual or intratextual; that is, metaphors can either make several different texts coherent with each other or they can lend coherence to a single piece of discourse.

### *Intertextual coherence*

In some cases of intertextuality, intertextual coherence is achieved through inheriting and using a particular conceptual metaphor at different historical periods. One of the best examples of this is how several biblical metaphors have been recycled over the ages. Shortly after arriving in Durham, England, in the winter of 2008, where I did the research for some of this work, I was given a bookmark in Durham cathedral with the following text on it:

- (9) Almighty God  
Who called your servant Cuthbert  
from keeping sheep to follow your son  
and to be shepherd of your people.

Mercifully grant that we, following his  
example and caring for those who are lost,  
may bring them home to your fold.  
Through your son.  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

In the prayer, the basic conceptual metaphor is the one in which the shepherd is Jesus, the lost sheep are the people who no longer follow God's teachings, the fold of the sheep is people's home with God, and for the shepherd to bring the sheep back to the fold is for Jesus to save the people. We can lay out these correspondences, or mappings, more explicitly as follows:

Source:	Target:
the shepherd	→ Jesus
the lost sheep	→ the people who do not follow God
the fold of the sheep	→ the state of people following God
the shepherd bringing back the sheep	→ Jesus saving the people

This metaphor was reused later on when God called a simple man called Cuthbert to give up his job (which, significantly, was being a shepherd) and become a "*shepherd* of people". Here it is Cuthbert (not Jesus) who saves the lost people (a set of people different from the ones in Jesus' times). Finally, in the most recent recycling of the metaphor in the prayer said on St Cuthbert's day, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2007, the particular values of the metaphor change again. It is the priests who live today who try to bring people back to the fold – again, a set of people different from either those who lived in Jesus' or Cuthbert's times.

This type of intertextuality characterizes not only Christianity (and other religions) through time but many other domains within the same historical period. Thus a metaphor can provide coherence across a variety of discourses both historically and simultaneously.

### *Intratextual coherence*

In a similar fashion, the same conceptual metaphor can lend coherence to a single text. The metaphor that structures the discourse does not necessarily have to be a deeply entrenched conventional conceptual metaphor – it can be what we can call a "metaphorical analogy" of any kind. Consider the following three paragraphs, taken from the very beginning of a newspaper article:

- (10) Performance targets are identical to the puiſſance at the Horse of the Year Show. You know the one – the high-jump competition, where the poor, dumb horse is brought into the ring, asked to clear a massive red wall, and as a reward for its heroic effort is promptly brought back and asked to do it all over again, only higher.

I've never felt anything but admiration for those puiſſance horses which, not so dumb at all, swiftly realize that the game is a bogey. Why on

earth should they bother straining heart, sinew and bone to leap higher than their own heads, only to be required to jump even higher? And then possibly higher still.

Hard work and willingness, ponders the clever horse as he chomps in the stable that night, clearly bring only punishment. And so next time he's asked to canter up to the big red wall, he plants his front feet in the ground and shakes his head. And says, what do you take me for – an idiot? (Melanie Reid, *The Times*, Monday, February 4, 2008).

Here *puissance* horses are compared to people, riders to managers, the red walls as obstacles to the targets people have to achieve, having to jump over the obstacles to being subject to assessment, clearing the obstacles to achieving the targets, raising the obstacles to giving more difficult targets, the Horse Show to life, and so on and so forth. This elaborate metaphorical analogy provides a great deal of structure for the text. As a matter of fact, most of the structure of the text is given in terms of the metaphor up to this point in the article, with only the first two words (“performance targets”) suggesting what the analogy is all about.

But then in the fourth paragraph the author lays out the correspondences for us, probably to make sure that we understand precisely what she has in mind:

- (11) Thus it is with work-related targets. Most of us will in the course of our careers be subject to performance assessments, where we are examined against the objectives we were set the previous year, then tasked with new ones.

From this point onward, the article uses predominantly literal language with some of the metaphorical language of the Horse Show interspersed in the text. At the end, however, the metaphor comes back in full force:

- (12) Oh, the bar may be set at what the politicians regard as a reasonable height. Aspirational enough to keep them all in power. From the perspective of the weary horse, however, we've reached the point where whipping doesn't work, but a carrot and a short rest just might.

Clearly, the metaphor is used here at the end of the article to make a point emphatically. This is a common rhetorical function that metaphors are assigned to perform in discourse. Thus, in addition to providing some of the internal coherence of the text, metaphors are often exploited for such and similar rhetorical functions (see, for example, Goatly 1997).



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## 7. Conclusions

I have surveyed a number of issues that form a part of the “metaphor-culture interface”. In particular, the following suggestions have been made. (Additional results of the approach can be found in Kövecses, in press/2010).

First, some conceptual metaphors appear to be near-universal or potentially universal (though not universal in an absolute sense).

Second, such universal metaphors seem to result from certain commonalities in human experience. These commonalities constitute universal embodiment on which many conceptual metaphors are based.

Third, it is important, however, *not* to think of embodiment as a mechanical and automatic force shaping conceptual metaphors (and conceptual systems in general) but as a complex set of factors to which speakers can apply differential experiential foci.

Fourth, in the course of metaphorical conceptualization in addition to the pressure of embodiment, human beings also observe the pressure of context. The effort to be coherent with the local context may be an important tool in understanding the use of metaphors in natural discourse.

Fifth, metaphors vary not only cross-culturally but also within cultures. This variation can occur along a number of dimensions including the social, regional, ethnic, style, subcultural, diachronic, and individual dimensions.

Sixth, there is some agreement among scholars that a major function of the metaphors we find in discourse is to provide coherence. This issue can be related to the notion of intertextuality.

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## **Flowers of Love**

Cognitive Linguistic Analysis of Moldavian Southern Csángó Folksongs

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**Abstract.** This is a research into the ways in which the speakers of one of the most ancient Hungarian dialects living on the eastern slopes of the Carpathian mountains conceptualized ‘love’ when their folksongs were born, by studying conceptual mechanisms through the texts of the songs. In spite of the fact that in the language of most of the researched modern societies ‘love’ is taken to be a romantic emotion and as such, conceptualized by the metaphor EMOTIONS ARE FORCES (Kövecses 2000), Csángó authors of the folksongs seem to think about it in an utterly different way. The concept of ‘love’ is based on morality metaphors, more specifically, those of the STRICT FATHER morality (Lakoff 1996). It can be ascertained that beyond the rich erotic meaning emphasized by folklorists, the metaphors of folksongs reveal a complex love model based on moral aspects.

**Keywords:** conceptual metaphor and metonymy, emotions, morality, Hungarian folksongs

### **1. Introduction**

When trying to understand abstract concepts of a different era, of a language variant other than that of the researcher’s own, one encounters great difficulties. The analyzer must pay particular attention to the problem that a concept entrenched in his/her own variant of language might be present in a different way or be completely absent from the conceptualization of the speakers of the studied language variant.

The present paper wishes to reveal the conceptual structure of the most salient concept of Moldavian Southern Csángó folksongs, the concept of ‘love’. It wishes to show how ‘love’ is represented in the texts of the songs; what kind of cognitive mechanisms and guiding principles there are behind it; whether it is a romantic emotion, a force that sweeps people off their feet without any reasonable explanation or rather a relationship that leads to the unity of two halves in the frame of marriage. All in all, the main aims of this paper are to show how people speaking one of the most archaic Hungarian dialects conceptualized ‘love’ when their folksongs were born, and to discover how similar and different this love model is from the typical love model of recent western cultures: the romantic model for ‘love’.

## **2. The Moldavian Csángó villages**

Moldavian Csángó villages are situated on the eastern slopes of the Carpathian mountains. Csángós have preserved a variant of the Hungarian language from before the Language Reform, in a Romanian environment. Not only are there archaic features in their dialects, but also in their life styles. They preserve medieval characteristics of mentality. They are people from nature, leading an agricultural and stock-breeder’s way of life, practising Roman Catholic religion, having a strong faith in God, besides which they also preserve ancient magic traditions. These make this group of people colourful and unique. Their community forms a cultural, religious and language island in an Orthodox, Romanian-speaking environment, their survival being endangered because of the lack of intellectuals, and the crisis of identity caused by the strong Romanian ambition for assimilation.

## **3. Data and research method**

For this research I used the texts of 160 Moldavian Southern Csángó folksongs from Bogdánfalva (Valea Seacă), Újfalu (Bălcescu), Trunk (Galbeni), Diószén (Gioseni) and Nagypatak (Valea Mare). They are compiled mainly from printed collections – of Faragó–Jagamas (1954, 1974), Domokos (1941), Kallós (1996), Domokos–Rajeczky (1956, 1961), Seres–Szabó (1991), Paksa (1999) – and in smaller part from my own gatherings.

The data were analysed with a cognitive linguistic method following the theory of conceptual metaphors and metonymies. According to this view our abstract concepts are basically motivated by both our physical experiences (Lakoff-Johnson 1980) and the cultural background surrounding us (Kövecses 2005, Yu 2003, Sharifian et al, 2007), through which they fit into a system. On the level of language it is manifested in the metaphorical and metonymical richness of our expressions. For example, when Csángó people say ‘the man is the sole of the

house' they mean that men provide security for their family. The physical motivation of this figurative expression lies in the fact that the sole is able to hold a whole person. If the husband is conceptualized by the source concept 'sole', the family and the marital relationship is condensed in the figure of a man standing on his soles. The cultural motivation of the expression appears in the fact that the tasks of a man fundamentally differ from those of a woman. In a modern society, these take shape in an entirely different way.

The cognitive linguistic method applied in the paper argues for a body-based cultural model (Geeraerts–Grondelaers 1995, Kövecses 2000), according to which emotions evoking universal physical effects can in different eras and cultures be conceptualised in diverse ways, and the cultural dissimilarities can be clarified on the basis of language use.

## 4. Discovering the concept of 'love'

### 4.1. The Western model of romantic love

The analysis of the concept of 'love' can be performed by approaching it in two different ways. On the one hand, we can perceive it as an emotion, on the other hand, as a relationship sealed by marriage. In this regard, the concept of 'love' has been thoroughly researched in American English by Zoltán Kövecses (1988, 2000). He states that the two approaches are combined in the folk model of 'love' along the conceptual metaphor RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS, the mappings of which are as follows:

RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS

EMOTION IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE BUILDING

HUMAN RELATIONSHIP IS THE UPPER STRUCTURE OF THE BUILDING

THE STABILITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP IS THE STABILITY OF THE BUILDING

Thus, in the abstract domain the forceful entity that is able to hold another entity is *emotion*, and the entity supported by this ideally strong base is called *relationship*. According to Kövecses's studies, there are two other metaphors intertwined with this conceptual setting without which we would fail to analyse the concept of 'love'. These are the EMOTIONS ARE FORCES and the HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE COMPLEX OBJECTS metaphors.

In the languages studied so far with cognitive linguistic methods, 'love' in greatest part is taken to be an emotion and as such, conceptualised by the metaphor emotions are forces (Kövecses 2000). He arrived at this conclusion applying the force dynamics schema elaborated by Leonard Talmy (1988) for emotion concepts.

In this model two selves fight against each other: the emotional self and the rational self. The emotional self is the active force that tries to overcome the passive rational self that first tries to take control, but then typically fails to do so. This is called the model of romantic love. There is a high number of American English expressions that represent this conceptual mechanism, the types of which are very diverse: e.g.: I was *swept off* my feet (LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE), He was *hungry* for love (LOVE IS PHYSIOLOGICAL FORCE: HUNGER), I am *attracted* to her (LOVE IS PHYSICAL [MAGNETIC] FORCE). Although it has not been thoroughly analyzed so far, we can assume that the general ideal model for love in Standard Hungarian is quite similar to this, since it is not time-consuming to find examples for the above-mentioned metaphors in colloquial Hungarian expressions:

LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE

- (1) *Levett* *a lábamról.*  
 PREF.+take+PAST 3RD SING. the feet+POSS. 1ST SING.+off  
 Eng.: ‘He swept me off my feet.’

LOVE IS PHYSIOLOGICAL FORCE

- (2) *Szeretetéhes.*  
 love + hungry  
 Eng.: ‘He is hungry for love.’

LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE

- (3) *Vonzódom hozzá.*  
 attracted+1ST SING. to+him  
 Eng.: ‘I am attracted to him.’

#### 4.2. Revealing ‘love’ in the folksongs

Folksongs rarely speak about love expressively:

- (4) „*Sose szeress kettőt, hármat,*  
 never love+2nd sing. imp. two+acc. three+acc.  
*mer’ az egy is elég nagy bánat.*”  
 ‘cause the one too fairly big sorrow

Eng.: ‘Never love two or three because even loving one is painful enough.’

The abstract meaning (target domain of the metaphor) is most often expressed implicitly, through concrete source domains. They appear in the form of so-called *cover stories* that are built up by the elements of the world surrounding the authors of the songs. These pictures of nature distract the attention of the outsiders from the



real meaning, providing them with a credible scene. In this special environment there are many colourful flowers, trees and bushes, the fertile earth, fields, gardens and woods, animals of different size and properties, and people who are most often caught at work. The picturesque view lets us glance at the phases of labour such as sowing, planting, watering, reaping, harvesting and so on. The conceptual domain is hidden behind the cover-stories in many different ways that can be demonstrated on a scale starting from the explicit towards the implicit.

The frequent initial *pictures of nature* do not merely have an ornamental function, but add to the meaning in great deal.

- (5) „*Kerek e káposzta, száraz e levele,*  
 round the cabbage dry the leaf+POSS. 3RD SING.  
*búszul e küsliján, nincsen szereteje.*”  
 grieve+3RD SING. the little+girl there+is+no lover+POSS. 3RD SING.  
 Eng.: ‘The cabbage is round, its leaf is dry, the little girl is sad having no lover.’

In the quotation above the abstract domain appears through *parallelism*. A cabbage with dry leaves is parallel to the figure of the little girl who has no lover. Round, healthy leaves usually symbolize the fertility of women due to the fact that female lines are round as those of the leaves of a plant. In the concrete domain of the quotation we can find LACK OF VITALITY that corresponds to LACK OF LOVE in the abstract domain.

Another representation of the hidden abstract meaning is *blending* source and target domains. An example to this is the quotation hereunder.

- (6) „*Ahol én elmenek,*  
 where I PREF.+go+1ST SING.  
*még a fák es sírnak,*  
 even the tree+PLUR. also cry+3RD PLUR.  
*gyöngye ágaikról*  
 weak branch+POSS.+PLUR.+from  
*levelek lehullnak.*”  
 leaf+PLUR. PREF.+fall+3RD PLUR.

Eng.: ‘Wherever I pass by, even the trees cry and leaves fall off their weak branches.’

This cover story does not show us two separate images, one of a tree losing its leaves and one of a crying person; it represents the blended image of a *crying tree* instead, in which even the separation of man and woman is compressed. The male part of the relationship appears in the form of a branch and the female one in the

shape of a leaf, which is due to the PEOPLE ARE PLANTS metaphor and – through the resemblance of shapes – the PART FOR WHOLE metonymy.

The abstract meaning is even more hidden in the following scene of agricultural work, which can only be understood if we further elaborate on the Csángó concept of ‘love’.

- (7) „*Felszántom e kertem ajját,*  
 PREF.+plough+1ST SING. the garden+POSS 1ST SING. bottom+ACC.  
*hogy ne nőjjön gyalogbedza,*  
 so+that do+not+IMP. grow+3RD SING. IMP. dwarf-elder  
*lepje fel e kerti róza*”  
 cover+3RD SING. IMP. up the garden+ADJ. SUFF. rose

Eng.: ‘I shall plough the bottom of my garden so that there should not grow any dwarf-elders, only garden roses.’

### 4.3. Love as a relationship in the folksongs

Love as a relationship is most frequently manifested in the LOVE IS A UNITY metaphor. This was also found in American English that has been thoroughly studied from this respect (e.g.: “*We are as one*”, “*They are breaking up*”). This metaphor expresses more traditional ideas about love and has recently been more and more pressed back by an earlier unknown metaphor, LOVE IS AN ECONOMIC EXCHANGE (e.g.: “*I’m putting more into this than you are*”). It does not mean that UNITY is completely forgotten, but a tendency towards the more recent metaphor is observable (Stearns 1994, Kövecses 2000). The two are in opposition in the following way: UNITY suggests that the members of a love couple are complementing each other and alone they are merely halves, whereas in a successful EXCHANGE each person becomes just more autonomous than before, rather than becoming part of a whole.

In Csángó folksongs only the UNITY metaphor has many instantiations that can be grouped as follows.

#### A) THE TWO LOVERS ARE PARTS OF A BIGGER ENTITY

- (8) „*Úgy megvállunk mi egymástul,*  
 so PREF.+depart+1ST PLUR. we each+other+from  
*mind a level az ágátul.*”  
 like the leaf the branch+POSS. 3RD SING.+from

Eng.: ‘We shall separate from each other like the leaf does from its branch’.

The male (branch) and female (leaf) part of the relationship – see above – form part of a bigger entity that in this example is the tree itself. From the continuation of the song we learn that while the tree can have new leaves the next year, one cannot replace one's sweetheart with any other person. Thus, the UNITY metaphor entails the fact that in the ideal model there is only one real love in one's life and this relationship lasts forever.

#### B) LOVERS ARE INSEPARABLE PARTS OF A BIGGER ENTITY

- (9) „*A te pirosz véred*  
 the you red blood+POSS. 2ND SING.  
*az ien pirosz vérem*  
 the I red blood+POSS. 1ST SING.  
*ed árokba főjjon*  
 one ditch+into flow+3RD SING. IMP.  
*sz ed malmot meghajtcon.*”  
 and one mill+ACC. PREF.+turn+3RD SING. IMP.

Eng.: ‘*May your red blood and my red blood flow into one ditch and turn one mill.*’

Through the PART FOR WHOLE metonymy (BLOOD FOR PEOPLE) we see another instantiation of the UNITY metaphor here. The two parts cannot be distinguished, like two types of blood flowing together into a ditch.

#### C) THE TWO LOVERS ARE TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS

- (10) „*Hirvad az a ruza,*  
 wither+3RD SING. that the rose  
*kinek töve nincen,*  
 who+POSS. root+POSS.3RD SING. there+is+not  
*ien isz hinvadozok,*  
 I too wither+1ST SING.  
*had szeretém nincen.*”  
 that lover+POSS. 1ST SING. there+is+not

Eng.: ‘*The rose without root withers like I do for having no lover.*’

With the help of the PEOPLE ARE PLANTS conceptual metaphor we understand that the root of the flower is the man and the plant itself is the woman. Without the root the plant is unable to live, and vice versa; they complement each other. Here again there is a manifestation of the fact that in the conceptualization of the authors of this song ‘love’ is irreplaceable and lasts forever.

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 D) THE TWO LOVERS ARE PARTS LIVING IN SYMBIOSIS

Quotation (7) and all the ones in which the abstract meaning is hidden so well behind a cover story require a bit longer analysis. Even though the scene presented in the text can be understood literally, taking the broader context of the songs into account, it conveys a deeper message. In most of the texts plants stand for something else. Many times this is the lover (e.g.: „*rózsám*” <‘my rose’>, „*violám*” <‘my gillyflower’>), or it metonymically stands for the relationship itself, like in the fragment above. The mapping between the source domain of a flower and the target domain of love is: THE QUALITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP IS THE QUALITY OF THE PLANT. The dwarf-elder that is considered a type of weed in a garden symbolizes a valueless love relationship, while the beautiful garden roses stand for a valuable one. The other items of the scene fit this target domain very well if we apply the metaphor Martínez arrived at by analysing similar lines from Shakespeare (Oncins-Martínez 2006): SEX IS AGRICULTURE. The submappings of this are: A WOMAN’S BODY IS AGRICULTURAL LAND, COPULATION IS PLOUGHING AND SOWING, GESTATION AND BIRTH IS HARVESTING. In the fragment above, the land that stands for the fertile body of the woman is fenced in: the values of the object of love are well protected and not open for everyone to come and “plough” it. But how does the UNITY metaphor arise in this quote? I propose that it is present in its biochemical sense. The flower planted in the ground grows and develops through the common work of the ground and the planter. As the ground is the woman and the active force that makes it fertile is the man, the result of their collaborative work is a new life that is born through their love relationship that unites them. Thus, this kind of love is a fruitful one, not standing for itself, but giving way to new life.

The agricultural metaphor is thus further elaborated in the songs in the following way:

FEMALE BODY IS LAND (fertile or not)

UNMARRIED WOMAN IS A FIELD

MARRIED WOMAN IS A GARDEN

SEX (THE ACTIVE WORK THAT MAKES THIS BODY FERTILE) IS ANY AGRICULTURAL WORK ON THE LAND (PLOUGHING, SOWING etc., even RAIN)

CHILD/FRUIT OF LOVE (that will later become a new object of love) IS PLANT

It is rather difficult to come across a song in which the planting scene can be encountered in its totality. Much more typical is to discover texts that contain only some parts of it, highlighting different aspects of the target domain. However, in order to understand them, we have to put the items of the mosaic together and analyze the texts in relation to each other.

In the following fragment the metaphor LOVE IS A PLANT is unambiguously hinted at in the root of the planted herb that is called 'love'.

- (11) „*Látád édeszidet,*  
 see+PAST 2ND SING. sweet+POSS. 2ND SING.+ACC.  
*virágos kertyiben,*  
 flower+ADJ. SUFF. garden+POSS. 3RD SING.+in  
*marujánnát ültet szerelemgyükiérbül.”*  
 marjoram+ACC. plant+3RD SING. love+root+from

Eng.: 'You saw your sweetheart in her flowery garden planting marjoram from love-root.'

Love is a relationship of two people and if it appears in the symbol of a single plant, the UNITY metaphor is entailed by it. Interestingly, only the female part of the unity is highlighted here and through this the purity of true love. The garden where the fences protect the ground and do not let it be plundered by outsiders stands for the woman who rejects all kinds of temptation. The masculine part of the UNITY is not well elaborated. The subject of love, while being present in the root of the plant, is at the same time an outside observer. This gives the impression that the UNITY here only appears at the spiritual level.

Many times it is not flowers but crops that convey the message of UNITY. The following example highlights the result of sowing the seeds. This stands for fulfilled love the entailment of which is happiness:

- (12) „*Tündöklik a mező sok búzavetéstől,*  
 glitter+3RD SING. the field many wheat+sowing+from  
*Visszhangzik az erdő sok szép énekléstől.”*  
 echo+3RD SING. the forest many nice singing+from

Eng.: 'The field is glittering from the numerous seeds sown in it, the wood is echoing from many beautiful melodies.'

When the seeds are sown, the field is bright and the wood, symbolizing the whole world is full of melody. Here the HAPPINESS IS LIGHT cognitive metaphor and the metonymy of BEHAVIOURAL REACTION FOR THE EMOTION: SINGING FOR HAPPINESS can be discovered.

As a result we can say that the UNITY metaphor that plays a less and less important role in modern culture is strongly present in the Csángó folksongs with all its entailments (without unity the two parts would not be able to function properly, there is only one true love and love lasts forever, unity makes the world of the lovers happy, the result of unity is new life). The texts of the songs mainly

highlight on little parts of the whole scene; in order to get a complete picture we need to put the fragments together.

#### 4.4. Love as an emotion?

As I discussed above, the FORCE metaphor plays an emphasized role in the model of romantic love of western language variants, like American English. This serves as the basis for the love relationship. Without this strong emotion the “building of love” would collapse. Our task here is to see whether this idea is also present in Csángó folksongs.

Throughout my studies of Csángó folksongs I did not arrive at instantiations of the LOVE IS FORCE metaphor. However, another manifestation of the FORCE metaphor is much more saliently present in the texts of these archaic songs: MORALITY IS FORCE.

In order to understand the FORCE schema of the folk songs, one needs to take a look at certain lines of the texts speaking about the values characteristic of a true love relationship, as can be understood from the continuation of quotation (9):

- (13) „ ... *pedig az a malom*  
 but that the mill  
*háromkeví legyen;*  
 three+stone+ADJ.SUFF. be+3RD SING. IMP.  
*A legelső keve*  
 the PREF.+first stone+POSS 3RD SING.  
*bélagyengyet járjon,*  
 white [SLAVIC]+per1+ACC. run+3RD SING. IMP.  
*A mászodik keve*  
 the second stone+POSS. 3RD SING.  
*aprópénzt hullasszon*  
 small+money+ACC. drop+CAUSATIVE+3RD SING. IMP.  
*Sz a harmadik keve*  
 and the third stone+POSS. 3RD SING.  
*szeretetet járjon.”*  
 love+ACC. run+3RD SING. IMP.

Eng.: ‘... but that mill should have three stones. The very first one should produce white pearls, the second one coins and the third one love.’

The first value of this relationship is purity as symbolized by *white pearl*, understood by the cognitive metonymy COLOUR OF THE OBJECT FOR THE STATE OF THE OBJECT: WHITE FOR PURITY and – as a pearl is a precious object – also by the cognitive metaphor: THE OBJECT OF LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT. The same

metaphor is present in the line showing the second value of the relationship. The symbol of *money* stands for rationality, whereas the third value is *love* that appears literally in the text.

The values of a love relationship are constantly under the attack of EVIL FORCES that need to be defeated by the moral self. The fight here is not between emotion and rationality like in the romantic model of love, but rather between the tempting evil forces (both internal and external) and the moral self. The FORCE schema in these cases is present in its broader context, namely the EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor that was elaborated by George Lakoff and his colleagues (1993). It is a complex metaphor and some of its mappings are important to understand the songs:

STATES ARE CLOSED REGIONS;  
CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS;  
CAUSES ARE FORCES.

The FORCE metaphor is present in the CAUSES ARE FORCES mapping, an instantiation of which is EMOTIONS ARE FORCES. For example “be *in* love” is an EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor, as the state of LOVE IS considered here to be A CLOSED REGION. To “fall *in* love” is based on the metaphor CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS.

In the battle of moral force and evil force we very often come across the metaphors GOOD THINGS ARE UP, BAD THINGS ARE DOWN. This appears together with the CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS mapping of the EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor, like in the quotations below.

DOING EVIL IS FALLING, RESISTING TEMPTATION IS STAYING UPRIGHT

(14) „*Attól fielek, had eleszek,*  
that+of afraid+1ST SING. that PREF.+fall+1ST SING.  
*Sz ed nad gederbe bészesek,*  
and a big pothole+into PREF.+fall+1ST SING.  
*Sz e fejem esz ketté eszik,*  
and the head+POSS. 1ST SING. also two+into fall+3RD SING.  
*Sz e veleje messzeeszik.”*  
and the brain+POSS. 3RD SING. far+fall+3RD SING.

Eng.: ‘I am afraid of falling into a big pothole with my head breaking into two parts and my brain falling far away.’

MORAL IS STAYING UPRIGHT, DOING EVIL IS GETTING BENT

- (15) „*A pinkezdi rúza*  
 The Pentecost +ADJ. SUFF. rose  
*kihajlott az útra,*  
 PREF.+bend+PAST 3RD SING. the road+onto  
*Nem tudom, édeszem*  
 Not know+1ST SING. sweet+POSS 1ST SING.  
*Jóra -e vad rosszra*  
 good+onto whether or bad+onto  
*Vad holtig bánatra.*”  
 or dead+until grief+onto

Eng.: ‘The peony has bent onto the road, I don’t know, my sweetheart, if it is for a good or bad reason, or for grief until death.’

MORAL IS HEALTHY, IMMORAL IS UNHEALTHY, MORAL IS COMPLETE, IMMORAL IS GETTING DAMAGED/INCOMPLETE

- (16) „*Leszakasztott ed cűf legien,*  
 PREF.+tear+PAST 3RD SING. an ugly lad  
*Keze kezett elhírvasztott.*”  
 hand+POSS. 3RD SING. between PREF.+wither+CAUSATIVE+PAST 3RD SING.

Eng.: ‘An ugly lad has torn me off, and made me wither in his hands.’

The tempting evil appears in diverse forms. For example, in the form of a ripe fruit on a tree that raises appetite we find the figure of the tempter. The conceptual background for this is set up by the SEX IS EATING metaphor, with the submapping THE OBJECT OF LOVE IS FOOD. In the hungry lover’s figure a physiological type of force is to be discovered. The moral self, however, does not let the evil forces overcome it in the battle.

It is the STRICT FATHER morality model that justifies these metaphors. It was elaborated by George Lakoff (1996), who has built up his theory about the abstract concept of morality on the basis of idealized family structures. The main focus of STRICT FATHER MORALITY lies in the fact that the world is a dangerous place where evil forces constantly want to attack us. The temptations of the devil should be overcome by MORAL FORCE. The STRICT FATHER is the embodiment of authority whose responsibility is to protect the family. He may even punish the family members for this goal. The task of the mother is to support the father to maintain his authority. When the children grow up they will know by themselves what good and bad is, and therefore will be able to protect their own families. The following lines provide an example for the moral strength that is a main component of ideal love.



## FIGHT AGAINST THE DEVIL: MORAL FORCE

- (17) „*Túl a vizen rakottya,*  
 over the water broom  
*az alatt van botoska*  
 that under there+is marigold+flower  
*Házasodik a diák,*  
 marry+3RD SING. the lad,  
*kell -e botoskavirág.*  
 would+like whether marigold+flower  
*Nem kell botoskavirág,*  
 not would+like marigold+flower  
*mert az nagyon szép virág.*  
 because that very beautiful flower  
*Leveliben haj,*  
 leaf+POSS. 3RD SING.+in EXCLAMATION  
*fehér fuszulykavirág.”*  
 white bean+flower

Eng.: ‘The man is about to get married. Would you like a marigold flower? I wouldn’t like one, because it’s a very beautiful flower. Oh, there is a white bean flower in its leaves.’

The marigold flower that is situated under a bush of brooms on the other side of the river is left alone by the man preparing to get married. The beauty of this flower is overshadowed by the purity (WHITE FOR CLEAN metonymy) of the simple bean flower at the moment of choosing wife. On the basis of the PEOPLE ARE PLANTS and BAD IS DOWN metaphors the marigold flower stands for a sexually experienced woman. “She” is on the other side of the river, which symbolizes the active fertilizing masculine force. Refusing temptation makes the moral self stronger, through which the person gets mature for his role as a husband. Although it is known that the Csángó word *diák* can also mean ‘Catholic chorister’ or ‘novice’ and the structure of the chosen stanza reminds us of mockeries (e.g.: „*Házasodik a tücsök...*”), this does not affect the justification of the above-mentioned metaphors and the Csángó model of ideal love.

The punishing STRICT FATHER of this morality model has various embodiments in the songs. An account of these is:

THE STRICT FATHER IS THE FATHER HIMSELF  
 THE STRICT FATHER IS THE MOTHER  
 THE STRICT FATHER IS CONSCIENCE  
 THE STRICT FATHER IS THE SOCIETY  
 THE STRICT FATHER IS GOD

This strictness of moral rules is similar to the morality of the Old Testament (Kövecses, in press): an eye for an eye, by which the MORAL ACCOUNTING metaphor of Lakoff is reflected. The main content of this metaphor is that if you receive something it is moral to give it back. However, receiving something of negative value raises the question of what is moral: giving it back or not. The characters of the songs normally want to give it back, that is the reason for the presence of numerous curses in the texts. Thus, religion and magic, similarly to folk religious traditions that preserve many features of primitive religions, live together in the Csángó culture.

The strictness of the model is slightly balanced by the figure of THE NURTURING MOTHER, so that it does not get heartless.

- (18) „*Gyöngé harmat neveli a búzát,*  
 Mild dew raise+3RD SING. the wheat  
*édesanyja neveli a leányát.*”  
 mother+POSS 3RD SING. raises the daughter+POSS. 3RD SING.+ACC.  
 Eng.: ‘Mild dew raises the wheat, mother raises her daughter.’

## 5. Conclusion

Having analyzed the concept of love from two aspects (relationship vs. emotion) in the folksongs we find that the RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS metaphor, along which these aspects are connected, should be revised: its mappings are different from the ones in the model of romantic love.

The process of the analysis related to this topic raises a question: if the emotion aspect of ‘love’ is absent from the songs, what can secure the foundation of the building? As a solution to this, I suggest that it is the above-mentioned MORALITY IS STRENGTH metaphor that serves as basis for the relationship of two people, instead of the emotional force typical in western models of ‘love’, through the STRICT FATHER morality model.

Thus, the metaphor appears here as follows:

RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS  
 MORALITY IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE BUILDING  
 THE RELATIONSHIP IS THE UPPER STRUCTURE OF THE BUILDING  
 THE STABILITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP IS THE STABILITY OF THE BUILDING

The relationship built on this morally strong basis is most saliently conceptualized as a UNITY of two halves. This is, however, not a static kind of unity, but a dynamic one, the aim of which is to produce a new life. This is reflected by the colourful pictures of nature full of flowers and plants.

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## **Culture, Language and Idiomaticity**

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**Abstract.** The paper describes how conceptual blending (in other words conceptual integration) operates, and it provides insight into the cultural aspects of language use. It also focuses on four basic forms of this mental operation: simplex, mirror, single-scope and double-scope. All are important cognitive operations, but especially double-scope integration is said to have played a crucial role in the development of human thinking. The study illustrates conceptual integration through examples of idiomatic blends and explains what differences and similarities can be observed between blending and other cognitive operations, such as metaphor and metonymy.

**Keywords:** conceptual integration, culture, metaphor, metonymy, blending

### **1. Introduction**

The beginning of language use is one of the highly-debated issues in linguistics. Some nativists (Pinker and Bloom) say, based on evidence from neurobiological and linguistic research that, similarly to Darwin's theory of evolution, language aptitude also took a long time to evolve (estimated around 50,000 years). This view is discarded by other nativists (Chomsky and others), claiming that language emerged in dramatic and sudden changes owing to a genetically-coded language module. In their view, language faculty is unlike other human capacities (as argued in Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 172).

Whichever line of reasoning is right, language, in the form it is known today, is the result of extensive changes through mental operations manifested in the form of metaphor, metonymy and conceptual integration, or, in other words, blending.

Conceptual integration is present and active at all levels of cognition, and is the precondition of language use. It is vital for construing even simple ideas and involves the compression of images from two or more different mental spaces into one. It consists of four elements: two input spaces, a generic space highlighting the shared or common elements of the two input spaces, and the blend offering an emergent structure not included in the inputs.

## 2. Networks of conceptual integration

Conceptual integration is not a unidirectional and one-sided process. It requires complex mental operations to blend input information into an emergent structure and this compression yields a unique result. In terms of language use, out of the many, four basic integration networks are discussed in this paper: simplex, mirror, single-scope and double-scope integration.

Very briefly, **simplex** is a network suitable for the compression of prototypical scenarios such as human relations. For instance, possessive structures, such as “Joan is Mary’s mother”, a prototypical scenario can be expressed in the more general format “X is the Y of Z”. Surprisingly, it is of compositional nature and truth-functional. In addition, it is ideal for compressing roles (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 120).

**Mirror-integration** is ideal for integrating different spaces in a blend. The major components of various scenarios can be paralleled and compared, while selective projection excludes irrelevant traits of blending. For instance, *integrating* races or events through different spaces and times is a concomitant of a sports reporter’s summary of record-breaking events. We can visualize two or more competitors in the blend as if they were racing side by side and can rank them according to their results. This manifestation of input-integration provides shared generic information between the various scenarios. For instance, an Afro-American athlete set up the world record of long-jump decades ago and his result could not be surpassed by anyone. Through imaginative activity one can run the blend and create a scene involving participants that could not have competed with each other due to time and space constraints. Vital relations such as Time, Space, Identity and so on are *compressed* in mirror-integration and clashes at low level can be observed (for example, the various means or conditions of racing: competing at high-altitude instead of ordinary conditions).

**Single-scope integrations** have different organizing frames and align metaphors, where the framing or source input activates the focus or target input as it happens in the case of “*stay in the saddle*”, where two mental spaces are

integrated – riding and status. The riding frame, that is the source input involves keeping your balance as a rider, while the focus input includes discrete events such as proving your skills, meeting requirements, competing with others and so on. In the blend, the image of a leader/competitor emerges. Finally, the framing input is projected to the blend, and the events in the focus input are conceptually integrated into a unit with the emergent concept of *position*.

**Double-scope integration** involves inputs with different organizing frames and an organizing frame for the blend including information from each of those frames and has an emergent structure of its own. The differences in the organizing frames allow for rich clashes challenging the imagination, whereby the blends are highly creative. The idiomatic metaphor “*roll in one’s grave*”, for instance, actually focuses on moral, ethical issues and refers to latent causal links. Unlike the traditional scenario where a dead person is criticized and cannot retort in any way, the idiom projects the image of the dead reacting vividly. In other words, the traits of the living are assumed by the dead.

The physiological functions and emotional responses of a living person in one of the inputs (understanding the charges of someone from the real world and reacting to them), are blended with the unresponsive, lifeless remains of the dead person that cannot give a suitable answer to the criticism, whereby the sequence of events is reversed: the dead person revives, and is yet stranded between the world of the living and the dead. “It” retains capacities of the past (‘rolling’, as a sign of ‘being *shocked*’, which involves physical motion and emotional response) as well as preserves the location of the present self (the grave). Reactions are restrained and limited to physical motion, but verbal reactions are not feasible. In the blend, physical motion emerges with conceptuality: vivid body motion is a concomitant of strong emotional response, *shock*.

As the topologies of the two inputs ([latent] verbal-cause versus shock) clash, an emergent structure suggests that mapping the world of the living onto the world of the dead may lead to emergent concepts.

This mapping of the frame input over the target input offers a rich blend where two worlds are compressed to create a go-between. It is the causal trigger of the present that leads to the emergent structure constituting the integration. The blend is richer than the two input spaces, but we only understand the workings of the blend by decompressing it. This form of deblending makes us understand how rich conceptual integration can derive from seemingly simple inputs and how far-reaching the consequences of the process are.

And that is what it is all about. By blending, deblending, reblending, compressing and decompressing we gain novel approaches to brain-functioning, enriching language and using the potentials of our mind to reproduce intelligibility and clarity. In terms of pragmatic aspects, language does accept images and

utterances about the dead rolling in their graves associated with *shock* caused by discrete activities or events.

As far as cultural aspects are concerned, Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 246) point out that “cultures find it efficient to evolve compressions that can be easily transmitted. On the one hand, cultures want to channel thought so as to block off large ranges of possible double-scope integrations”. For instance, the writers call the traffic light “a material anchor” for a complex compression. This “governing solution” has been introduced to ward off the possibility of vehicles colliding, which emerges from the decompressed form exhibiting a variety of mental spaces where vehicles with different kinds of drivers at different speeds go through the intersection.

In evaluating the role of culture, Kövecses (2006: 85) remarks that culture can be thought of as “a complex network of frames”. He adds that when cultural issues are argued about they can be framed in different ways.

The following examples (quoted from Gyula Dávid, *A Conceptual Idioms Dictionary*, D.U.P. and Gyula Dávid, *A Concise Conceptual Idioms Dictionary*, forthcoming) below offer insight into idiomatic metaphoric blends.

### 3. Idiomatic metaphors

As blends operate at all levels of cognition from simplex networks to double scope integration, they are manifest in all parts of the language. The examples below illustrate the complexity of conceptual integration and the way lexical items are blended.

Take the idiomatic metaphor ‘*paper tiger*’. It is common knowledge that tigers are fierce, strong animals. Here, a blend is construed that combines the features of paper (weak, offering no resistance when exposed to impact, etc.), while ignoring other irrelevant traits (inanimate, white, flat, foldable, easy to crease, containing cellulose, inflammable, suitable for writing, etc.). At the same time, due to selective projection, irrelevant features of the tiger do not emerge in the blend either (furry, striped, able to purr, living on flesh, hunting, rearing or producing cubs, mating regularly, savage, territorial, etc.). The blend offers a counterfactual scenario, ‘*missing power*’. The two input spaces clash, since in input space 1 the properties of ‘paper’ are diagonal opposites of the properties of a ‘tiger’ of input space 2. The compression yields the metaphorical image of someone or something powerless. The disanalogy between tiger properties and paper properties undoubtedly creates a very challenging image, the mapping of weakness over the well-known strength of a tiger. Whatever or whoever is targeted at in this mapping process, they are ineffective, powerless and helpless in spite of the expectations.

Another idiom, ‘*back from the dead*’, sets up a scenario to blend the potentials of the living with the missing potentials of the dead. This compression of the two



mental spaces (one of the LIVING and the other of the DEAD), in fact, offers a counterfactual situation and its ramifications. Here, one of the input spaces includes a set of features characteristic of the living. Making a journey is part of the daily scenarios we experience, be it either simple commuting or a time-consuming pleasure trip. However, the blend features neither, but an involuntary and fatal trip to one's destination (DEATH).

Another peculiarity of the scenario is that in normal conditions reaching your destination at the end of a journey is a desired goal, whereas here it is not. In fact, the 'passenger' loses vitality and his or her life by the end of the journey. At the same time, the 'return trip', a counterfactual one, projects the image of the dead regaining vitality and reacquiring capacities of the living. Only the return trip is given priority, whereas the previous leg of the journey is a prerequisite of the return trip. The journey to DEATH involves lack of intentionality, reduced activity and consciousness, while the return trip is its opposite, where the agent reaches top form by the time of reaching the destination. The blend is as striking as is suitable for the metaphorical mapping of a scenario where one regains *popularity*, *fame* or achieves *success* after a period of inactiveness or lack of limelight. DEATH is traditionally associated with FAILURE, whereby an imaginary journey back from DEATH is a sign of returning to SUCCESS.

The scenario of the idiomatic metaphor '*score an own goal*', looks a single-scope network, but it is not, as the topologies of the inputs clash on intentionality, causality, identity, participant roles and internal event structure. The blend takes its topology from the "*opposite effect*" input and not from the "score a goal" input. According to a "normal scenario", two opposing teams attempt to score a goal or goals into each other's net. Traditionally, the higher the number of scores, the bigger likelihood a team has to win the match. Time is conventionally pre-determined, as are the number of players, place, colours of outfits, the length of two halftimes, the identity of the referee and linesmen, the number and identity of players to replace the ones on the pitch, and a set of rules to be observed all throughout the match. The events evoked by '*dig your own grave*', another idiom, and '*score an own goal*' both feature scenarios of unintentional, self-inflicted acts which borrow entrenched mappings. The blends themselves may become entrenched too by virtue of recruiting mappings of similar content. The scenario shared by both conceptual integrations is that actions implemented by the "patient" (the one who scores an own goal) instead of the "agent" for the "agent's" advantage are harmful for the "patient". It is a boomerang-effect scenario.

In the blend, the game becomes hypothetical, and the factors listed above are irrelevant through selective projection. What we have is the image of an agent acting against his own interest. The intention of an opposing player is fused with the unaware, unintentional, self-inflicting, harm-causing act of a member of the home team. It is foolish to cause oneself harm just as it is to score a goal into one's

own net. Contrary to the rule-book of a sporting event, this own-goal, which might be equalized by the other team in normal circumstances, seems an all-out one, putting an end to the game. Preceding events as well as time are irrelevant, as is the causal chain of scoring goals into the other team's net leading to their defeat. The conventional scoring-system of three points for a match won, and the potentials of having to win further matches to come out on top of the league are invalid through selective projection.

In this unconventional scenario, the blunder of someone, turning into their own opponent, simplifies the whole complexity of the event and compresses 'patient' and 'agent' into one and the same person (and in fact, they become the same through a mistake). However, the dramatic scenario only unfolds when the blend is decompressed. The integration of events in the blend preserves its links to events in the two input spaces. Running the blend merges two scenarios: scoring an own goal leads to losing a match just like causing unintentional harm to yourself leads to your doom or *failure*. The fusion leads to a dramatic change: just one wrong act in a sporting event evokes irrevocable failure and harm. The identity of "causer" changes (the 'causer' and 'patient' are identical), and the event-structure and complexity of a match is merged into one "singularity". A global insight into our deeds is gained through compressing two input spaces in a creative way: the sporting event serves as a launch-pad for unfolding cause and effect.

Another idiomatic metaphor, '*Eat humble pie*' offers a compact frame for us to understand the workings of an idiomatic metaphor within a single-scope network. The framing input, or "source" provides an organizing frame to the blend. The other input, that is the focus input, is the target in the network.

Two events are integrated in the blend: eating and '*admission of a fault*'. The latter is imagined as part of the eating process, which normally consists of discrete events of selecting food, biting, chewing, pre-digesting, digesting and so on. These components of the source input constituting the whole act of eating, however, are considered irrelevant in the blend and are omitted through selective projection. In the blend, 'admission of fault' is seen as 'eating' being 'humbled' by eating or rather by admitting your own faults.

Similarly, the idiomatic metaphor '*swallow your pride*' integrates two input spaces: 'eating' as source, and '*acceptance*'. In the former input space, not the whole eating process is highlighted, but a part of it, "enforced swallowing" of food one does not feel like eating. Selection of food, chewing, digesting and several other components of eating are not important due to selective projection, so several discrete events involved in the process of eating are irrelevant. In the blend, *acceptance* is viewed as "enforced swallowing of food".

#### 4. Metaphor and blending

As is remarked by Evans and Green (2006: 401-2) some seemingly metaphorical examples cannot be explained by applying the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. For instance, in ‘*That surgeon is a butcher*’, the negative aspects of a butcher’s job cannot be derived from the source domain, and the question is how this “negative assessment of incompetence arises from conceptualizing one highly-skilled profession in terms of another”.

As was pointed out above, blending is pervasive in language and so is metaphor. Then what major distinctions can be observed between them?

1/ Metaphors rely on mappings from the source domain to the target domain (Kövecses 1990, 2000, 2002). As opposed to this, conceptual integration operates through input spaces, a generic space and the blend with an emergent structure. Blends can be deblended, which is necessary for seeing the information in the input spaces and for understanding how the emergent structure is enriched. Metaphor employs domains whereas a blend at least four spaces. Metaphors can be either one-scope or double-scope blends, as presented by ‘*score an own goal*’, but not all metaphors are blends. Joseph Grady’s (1997) primary ones are not, as they are based on concepts rather than different domains.

2/ In contrast with the unidirectionality of metaphorical mapping, blending involves compression/decompression, blending/deblending and the richness of the emergent blend can be seen when it is projected back to the input spaces.

3/ In blending, an emergent structure appears in the blend, which is richer than the information in the inputs. *Composition* of the information in the inputs makes it possible to run the blends.

As Coulson (2001: 201) points it out, “conceptual integration networks represent only those cognitive models that are particularly relevant to the mapping supported by the utterance. What’s projected in metaphor is not static information in long-term memory, but dynamically constructed entities in working memory”.

Let us see now another mental operation, metonymy, compared to blending.

#### 5. Blending and metonymy

In the ‘*roll in one’s grave*’ blend, the grave has the topology of being linked to death. In terms of metonymic relationship it expresses ‘place for event’ or, in terms of topology, ‘a place for burial’. The role of the metonymy in the blend is important, as it establishes connections with the Death space. It actually represents a prototypical metonymic link with death by denoting the place where one is traditionally buried.

Untypically, however, many are not buried into graves, when killed in a plane-crash over the sea or being swept off Mount Everest by a gale-force wind.

And yet, symbolically, it is the grave that establishes a link between the world of the living and that of the dead. It is culture that prescribes the acceptable scenario for the mourning relatives and friends: the dead are to be put into coffins and graves. In other cultures, for example Hinduism, it is the ashes of the dead that link the past and the present.

Death has other metonymic connections as well, such as the *skull* or the *skeleton*, which establish the ‘body part for event’ metonymy. However, in the scenario described above they are not present. As we can see, several metonymic relationships can be prioritized in language. The *skeleton*, as the metonymic expression of the Death input, has important topology by shocking and reminding us of the deceased. Thus, the *skull*, the *skeleton* as reminders of death, and the *grave* as final resting-place of the deceased are associated with Death through a metonymic relationship.

Another idiomatic metaphor, *stay in the saddle*, analysed above, also presents a metonymic connection by being ‘equipment for position’. Although other metonymies could also be linked to riding a horse, topologically a ‘saddle’ is salient in referring to power games. Obviously, the integration of the input spaces only provides an opportunity for one acceptable metonymy.

## 6. Conclusion

At the end of the blending process, and the manifestation of the emergent structure, deblending is necessary to facilitate understanding the workings of blending and develop our skills of creating further blends. It allows for seeing the two (or in the case of megablends more) input spaces, which contribute to an emergent structure. Thus, blending adds to the information available, enriches it, and, in this respect, differs from other mental operations.

Conceptual integration (blending) is an important means of seeing the world, using imaginative power for both a child and an adult. The former is still in the experimental stage understanding a whole array of blends, whereas the latter keeps carrying out blending, deblending, compressing and decompressing more consciously.

Culture, and its essential element, language, draw from conceptual integration, which appears both in seemingly simple compounds such as ‘safe beach’, ‘safe knife’ and so on, and in more complex idiomatic expressions, too (*roll in one’s grave*, *score an own goal*, etc.). Blending enriches the world of other cognitive operations available (e.g. metaphor, metonymy) and contributes to human development on the whole.

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## **Humour and Verbal Irony in G.B. Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island***

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**Abstract.** Relying on theories of irony relevant to our study, this paper investigates the humorous and ironic exchanges among the different ethnicity characters in the Shavian play *John Bull's Other Island*, focusing especially on the verbal encounters between the different ethnicity characters: the English protagonist Broadbent and the Irish one, Larry Doyle, but also on the sarcastic remarks of Father Keegan. The conversations that take place both in the English and the Irish milieu foreground the characters' real intentions and behavioural patterns. The findings of this paper also support our earlier assumption that through the two ambiguous ethnic stereotypes manifested here reversed roles are displayed.

**Keywords:** ethnic identity, verbal irony, stereotypes, reversal, Shaw

### **1. The aim of the paper**

The aim of this paper is to analyse the linguistic behaviour of the two protagonists of G.B. Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island*, displayed in the form of ethnic stereotypes. Therefore the stereotypical verbal manifestations of the English Thomas Broadbent and the Irish Larry Doyle, complemented by Father Keegan are investigated.

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## 2. Relevant theories of irony

Verbal irony is a linguistic phenomenon exploiting the incongruity between reality and expectation and consequently, unveiling an attitude towards such an incongruity. It is very important to make a distinction between verbal irony and situational irony. According to Gibbs (1994: 363), “[b]oth verbal and situational irony involve a confrontation or juxtaposition of incompatibles, but in verbal irony an individual presents or evokes such a confrontation by his or her utterance(s), whereas situational irony is something that just happens to be noticed as ironic”. Both verbal and situational irony employ incongruity in order to distinguish between facts and expectations (saying one thing and meaning another) while keeping in mind the audience’s (reader’s) awareness of both. While situational irony foregrounds events which appear as ironic regardless of the speaker’s intention, in the case of verbal irony the speaker creates a juxtaposition of incompatible actions or words with a view to conveying an attitude.

From the many recent views on irony processing we will consider those, which are of interest for our purpose. Both views maintain that irony presupposes a two-stage processing: first, the processing of a meaning of a specific utterance is rejected, and, second, a reinterpretation of the utterance through inferring an implicature is triggered.

One of these views is based on Grice’s Cooperation Principle and its maxims. In Grice’s view, irony is a case of conversational implicature. By blatantly violating the Maxim of Quality (‘Do not say what you believe to be false’), the speaker implies the opposite of what is said. The ironist says something s/he does not believe to be true, although it is not in his/her intention to tell a lie. The intention conveyed by the ironist’s implicature urges the hearer to look for an additional meaning. The addressee feels inclined to reject the literal meaning and to subsequently decipher the implied meaning, highly likely to “be some obviously related proposition; the most obviously related proposition is the contradictory of the one he purports to be putting forward” (Grice 1989: 34). In a later study<sup>1</sup>, Grice broadens the definition of irony by incorporating the notion of an attitude into it: “To be ironical is among other things, to pretend (as the etymology suggests) and while one wants the pretence to be recognized as such, to announce it as pretence would spoil the effect.” (ibid. 54) In this line, irony is recognized as a verbal resource meant to convey an evaluative position on the part of the speaker.

Later, two post-Gricean attempts have been forwarded to provide a rationale for irony. One approach (Wilson & Sperber 1992, Wilson 2006) treats verbal irony as a type of *echoic allusion* to an attributed utterance or thought. According to this view, the speaker *interprets* an earlier thought or utterance, uses an utterance interpretively

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<sup>1</sup> Further Notes on Logic and Conversation, in: Grice 1989: 41-58.

(see Relevance Theory in Sperber and Wilson 1986). She “is expressing her own reaction to a thought or utterance with a similar content which she tacitly attributes to someone else (or to herself at another time), and which she wants to suggest is ludicrously false, inadequate or inappropriate”. (Wilson 2006: 1724) The aim of such a reaction is to express a critical or mocking attitude to such a false utterance and it actually dissociates the speaker from this tacitly attributed utterance.

The second post-Gricean approach is suggested by the etymology of the word<sup>2</sup> ‘irony’ and treats verbal irony as a type of pretence. According to this approach, the speaker is not asserting but merely pretending to assert a proposition, and expects his/her audience to see through the pretence and recognise the critical or mocking attitude behind it. (Wilson 2006: 1725)

Brown and Levinson (1987) deal with irony as a form of off-record politeness strategy, an indirect face-threatening act, along with joking and humour, the latter being positive politeness strategies with claim common ground with the interlocutor. Through irony it is possible to show aggression towards the victim of irony, but the use of irony means mitigated aggression.

In our analyses, we will adopt both the echoic and the pretence theory of irony, blended with the off-record politeness theory because these are the attitudes which account for the natural, “in-born”, stereotypical state of mind of the English as an ethnic community (cf. “the Importance of Not Being Earnest rule”<sup>3</sup>, Fox 2005). This idea is emphasised elsewhere (Anolli, Infantino, Ciceri 2001) as well, foregrounding that

ironic communication finds its edge in those cultures (like the Anglo-Saxon one) where self-control is very important and where it is thus a very positive thing to be able to keep coolly detached from event, without emotional arousal. In this way, a speaker can use irony to hide the expression of his/her emotions and safeguard his/her personal experience. (...) In English culture, where one talks about emotions in preference to showing them, (...) irony becomes not only a device to keep at distance from emotions and ‘de-

<sup>2</sup> The etymology of the word itself means pretence. The word ‘irony’ derives from Greek *eirōneia* (cf. also Latin: *ironia*), which means “simulated ignorance”, “the pretence of ignorance”. The Greek term *eironia* describes the main characteristic of the stock characters (the “ironic man”) in early Greek comedies. Source: Glottopedia, accessed 10.04.2010.

<sup>3</sup> Kate Fox calls this pervading attitude “the Importance of Not Being Earnest rule”, alluding to Oscar Wilde’s celebrated comedy. This rule refers to the major distinction between “serious” and “solemn”, between “sincerity” and “earnestness”. According to Fox, “seriousness is acceptable, solemnity is prohibited. Sincerity is allowed, earnestness is strictly forbidden. Pomposity and self-importance are outlawed. Serious matters can be spoken of seriously, but one must never take oneself too seriously. The ability to laugh at ourselves, although it may be rooted in a form of arrogance, is one of the more endearing characteristics of the English.” (Fox 2005: 62) Similarly, “irony is the dominant ingredient in English humour”, it is “endemic: a constant, a given, a normal element of ordinary everyday conversation” (ibid. 65-66).



emotionalize' oneself, but also a way of showing consideration for the interlocutor's feelings, in order to be polite ... (ibid. 148).

However, it must be stated that whatever theory would be adopted, what is common in any analysis of ironic utterances is that irony is linked to the expression of a certain type of derogatory, hostile or contemptuous attitude and this perfectly suits the Shavian outlook.

### 3. Hypothesis

As it has been claimed by literature, initiators of humorous and ironic dialogues are usually acknowledged to occupy higher hierarchical positions and to feel entitled to exert control over the interaction (Cosier 1960 in Kotthoff 2006). *John Bull's Other Island* is, however, a different case. There are two main characters in the play, of equal social rank: Thomas Broadbent, a faithful descendant of John Bull<sup>4</sup>, and his Irish counterpart, Larry Doyle. On the surface, according to the stereotypical image the reader / audience would expect based on their ethnicity, Broadbent is supposed to be the rational, cold-blooded gentleman, common-sensical and having a particular sense of humour (English humour); while Doyle should be the passionate dreamer, lover of freedom and independence, and having no sense of humour whatsoever.

In actual fact, what can be witnessed here is exactly the opposite: reversed roles and ambiguous stereotypes<sup>5</sup>. It is Broadbent who is overwhelmed by sentimentalism and displays a passionate love for Nora Reilly, the Irish heiress; and Doyle is the character with common sense, reasonable and it is him who tries to bring Broadbent down to earth, to reality.

### 4. The paradoxical English stereotype

According to Shaw's description, Broadbent is "*a robust, full-blooded, energetic man in the prime of life, sometimes eager and credulous, sometimes shrewd and roguish, sometimes portentously solemn, sometimes jolly and impetuous, always buoyant and irresistible, mostly likeable, and enormously absurd in his most earnest moments*". (p. 67). His name (Broad-bent), however, which he proudly bears, is in sharp contrast with his real personality. He calls himself a liberal but he is quite conservative and narrow-minded: he tries to be humorous ('I have a strong sense of humor which sometimes makes people doubt

<sup>4</sup> John Bull is a leading character in satirical pamphlets, first published separately and later as a book entitled *The History of John Bull* (1712), by John Arbuthnot (1667-1735) that has come to personify the English nation.

<sup>5</sup> See my earlier study on stereotype ambiguity in Ajtony (2010).

whether I am quite serious.’ 147) but does not understand Irish humour and misunderstands irony. These features distance him from the English stereotype.

- (1) KEEGAN. There is a saying in the Scripture which runs – so far as the memory of an oldish man can carry the words – Let not the right side of your brain know what the left side doeth. I learnt at Oxford that this is the secret of the Englishman’s strange power of making the best of two worlds.  
 BROADBENT. Surely the text refers to our right and left hands. I am somewhat surprised to hear a member of your Church quote so essentially Protestant a document as the Bible; but at least you might quote it accurately.  
 LARRY. Tom: with the best intentions youre making an ass of yourself. You dont understand Mr. Keegan’s peculiar vein of humor.  
 BROADBENT (*instantly recovering his confidence*). Ah! it was only your delightful Irish humor, Mr. Keegan. Of course, of course. How stupid of me! I’m so sorry. (*He pats Keegan consolingly on the back*). John Bull’s wits are still slow, you see. (p. 137)<sup>6</sup>

Broadbent’s humble intention is to correct the Irishman’s interpretation of the Bible and expresses his disappointment that the priest cannot quote a well-known line exactly. His calling the Bible ‘an essentially Protestant document’ has a humorous effect. This attitude is probably due to his ethnical bias: he acts as a typical Englishman who views the world according to his British (Anglocentric) mentality monopolizing even the Bible to his Protestant church. At this point his friend, the Irish Larry Doyle interferes but this time the interruption must be interpreted as a sign of solidarity. He goes bald on record, uses an impolite set formula (‘Youre making an ass of yourself’) with a hedge, though, in order to mitigate his imposition. But with this direct FTA (face-threatening act) he actually saves his friend’s face from an even greater face-loss in front of the foreigner, the Irish priest. Doyle draws Broadbent’s attention to the fact that he is actually being mocked at and called a hypocrite. He does not feel offended at all, but admits his disability to recognise Irish humour.

In another conversation, Keegan and Broadbent discuss their world-views but – perhaps due to their different ethnic background – there are no shared “mutual contextual beliefs”, which hinder the correct interpretation of each other’s utterances (cf. Anolli, Infantiono, Ciceri 2001):

- (2) KEEGAN. You feel at home in the world, then?  
 BROADBENT. Of course. Dont you?  
 KEEGAN (*from the very depths of his nature*). No.

<sup>6</sup> Page numbers refer to Shaw, G.B. ([1904], 1977) *John Bull’s Other Island*.

BROADBENT (breezily). Try phosphorus pills. I always take them when my brain is overworked. I'll give you the address in Oxford Street. (...) (p. 139)

This short exchange of words also betrays Broadbent's narrow-mindedness, misunderstanding the priest's question, which is actually inquiring about his interlocutor's attitude, psychological state of mind towards the world. As Keegan's irony does not leave clues for a correct interpretation, Broadbent's inference is wrong. He infers that Keegan was inquiring about his fatigue, which can be cured by taking pills. He is even extremely generous providing the source where these can be acquired.

### 5. The paradoxical Irish stereotype

For the definition of the Irish stereotype, we consider the work of Matthew Arnold, Shaw's contemporary, whose lectures *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867) had a formative influence on the Irish literary revival. He saw the Celtic psyche as "essentially feminine", ambiguously praising the Celts for their indifference to the "despotism of fact". In his view, they lacked common sense and steadfast powers of practical application, qualities he attributed to the Saxon (Welch (ed.) 1996: 21).

Paradoxically, humorous exchanges appear mostly in the Irish characters' utterances. Their teasing, banter and irony, which pervades their verbal behaviour in their face-to-face encounters, is a sign of solidarity against any out-group member, Broadbent included.

(3) CORNELIUS. (...) Here: take up them things and let me hear no more o your foolish lip. (*Patsy obeys*). You can take the sammin under your oxther. (*He wedges the salmon into Patsy's axilla*).

PATSY. I can take the goose too, sir. Put it on me back n gimme the neck of it in me mouth. (*Cornelius is about to comply thoughtlessly*).

AUNT JUDY (*feeling that Broadbent's presence demands special punctiliousness*). For shame, Patsy! to offer to take the goose in your mouth that we have to eat after you! (...)

PATSY. Arra what would a dead goose care for me mouth? (*He takes his load up the hill*). (p. 99)

Although both Cornelius and Aunt Judy are teasing Patsy Farrel, his ironic retorts betray a free spirit, who – though overwhelmed by the burdens of life (in its physical sense as well) – is still able to answer back, implying "this is too much already, can't you see?" But through this ironic remark he is able to save Cornelius's and Aunt Judy's, and redresses his own long-lost face.

At first, Cornelius does not understand the irony (he is about to comply “*thoughtlessly*”). The situation is about to be remedied by Aunt Judy, but who similarly misunderstands the implied meaning of Patsy’s words. She takes them literally, on face value and is scandalized by the farmer’s proposal to take the head of the goose in his mouth before offering it as a meal. Naturally, Patsy continues in the same line, but in this latter remark it is the goose, which should be offended for having been swallowed. This time he does not even expect an answer, he intends his question to be rhetorical, indicating that he accepts his role, as the servant of servants, with resignation and acts accordingly (“*He takes his load up the hill*”).

The Irish heiress, Nora Reilly also employs ironical remarks towards the English Broadbent. She has authority, being “at home”, while Broadbent, though he is the coloniser, assumes the role of the newcomer and the outsider, and Nora’s higher hierarchical position overrides the Englishman’s status:

- (4) BROADBENT (*suddenly betraying a condition of extreme sentimentality*).  
 (...) The magic of this Irish scene, and – I really don’t want to be personal, Miss Reilly; but the charm of your Irish voice –  
 NORA. Oh, get along with you, Mr Broadbent! Youre breaking your heart about me already, I daresay, after seeing me for two minutes in the dark.  
 (p. 101)

In Nora’s reply irony emerges from her intention that her statement be inferred literally, so an ironic opposition can be found between the sentence meaning and the speaker meaning. The irony lies rather in the obvious, in the redundant: it is self-evident that nobody can fall in love with a woman after having met her for two minutes in the dark. The irony is emphasised by the hyperbole in the form of a personification (“*Youre breaking your heart...*”). However, Nora’s criticism seems to be face-saving: she does not attack Broadbent’s face directly, she also employs a hedge (“*I daresay*”) to mitigate the imposition of her utterance. It is rather the expression of criticism, which also allows for the possibility of a serious reply. Broadbent takes this chance but is retorted again with “bitter indifference”.

- (5) BROADBENT. I have looked forward to meeting you more than to anything else in Ireland.  
 NORA (*ironically*). Dear me! did you now? (101)

Nora’s reply – this time – is an echo of Broadbent’s words. Irony as pretence can be witnessed here. She pretends to take the role of the English gentleman, but turning the meaning of the original sentence into its opposite.

While Nora's remarks contain irony blended with humour and therefore they represent milder attack and criticism towards her interlocutor's face, her fellow countryman, Larry Doyle's irony is much darker, even sarcastic. This strong critical attitude springs from his detachment from the "Irish issues", which gives him clear-sightedness and a sense of reality. Having been both physically and spiritually uprooted and detached from his home-country, he is able to rise above the petty conflicts of everyday Irish life. This gives him a "higher hierarchical position" and therefore he can employ ironic remarks, even bitter sarcasm in his interaction with his English partner and his Irish fellows.

Larry Doyle is a man of reason, the poet of Irish self-reflection. He can see through all foolish self-delusion and considers dreaming a destroyer of life. He even targets his irony against himself in an unusually passionate outbreak:

- (6) DOYLE: (...) Oh, the dreaming! the dreaming! the torturing, heartscalding, never satisfying dreaming (...)! An Irishman's imagination never lets him alone, never convinces him, never satisfies him; but it makes him that he cant face reality nor deal with it nor handle it nor conquer it (...) (p. 79)

In this remark he counter-argues his own statement in a conscious reflection. Ethnic ambivalence is detectable in the presence of both his Irish and English self in one utterance. While his Irish ego, which was hiding and almost forgotten in the two long decades spent in London, gives voice to a sincere patriotism and emotional attitude to life, his English self is the rational ego which clear-sightedly analyses and precisely formulates his sensible stance to his emotional side.

Similarly, feelings and emotions intermingle with rationality in his second sentence, as well. Dreaming and reality are the core concepts around which his utterance is structured. First of all, he speaks about himself as "an Irishman", in the third person singular, which implies that although being one himself, he is actually an outsider in Ireland. Moreover, the repetitive use of the adverb "never" followed by the enumeration of the disturbing effects of dreaming foreground the poetic function of his discourse, approaching him towards the Irish stereotype. The second part of his sentence continues the enumeration, this time repeating the word "nor", thus emphasising the idea of negation. The form of the utterance (through the enumerations and repetitions) implies an ever-increasing passion, i.e. the idea of limitless imagination; the content of the utterance, on the other hand, bears the implication of rationality, considering the tackled issue from several angles, in this way bringing arguments with the means of sense.

In the comparison of an Irishman's and an Englishman's industriousness, Larry points to the Irish peasants' useless toil in order to get some result as opposed to the Englishman's ability to attain achievements much easily:

(7) BROADBENT. Was he industrious? Thats remarkable, you know, in an Irishman.

LARRY. Industrious! That man's industry used to make me sick, even as a boy. I tell you, an Irish peasant's industry is not human: it's worse than the industry of a coral insect. An Englishman has some sense about working: he never does more than he can help – and hard enough to get him to do that without scamping it; but an Irishman will work as if he'd die the moment he stopped. (...)

BROADBENT. That was magnificent, you know. Only a great race is capable of producing such men.

LARRY. Such fools, you mean! What good was it to them? (p. 108-9)

Larry's ironic statement introduced by echoing Broadbent's adjective ("industrious") is an utterance that the speaker attributes to a clearly identifiable interlocutor. From this echoing bitter irony derives. The more he repeats (echoes) Broadbent's word (even if it is not an exact repetition, but a word class change: from the adjective "industrious" deriving the noun "industry"), the bitterer the irony in his utterance. The darkness of Larry's remark is emphasised by the adjectives with negative connotation (*sick, worse*) or positive adjectives preceded by negation (*not human*). The ironic attitude is also detectable in the comparison of the Irishman and the Englishman, the former appearing in the form of a metaphor with a degrading, contemptuous implication (*coral insect*). The metaphor refers to the Irishman as a static being, deprived of the capacity of thinking and the possibility for action, as opposed to the active, working Englishman. When characterising the Englishman, Larry employs action-verbs (*work, does, help*), while the Irishman's features are linked to non-action verbs (*die, stop*), implying static, passive attitude.

In the subsequent exchange, Broadbent tries to make Larry see his own ethnic group ("race") more positively, using adjectives and verbs with a positive, creative connotation (*magnificent, great, capable, producing*), but the Irishman turns the encouraging implication of Broadbent's words into their negative counterpart (*such men – such fools*), by echoing them with ironic tone (though the stage directions do not refer to the character's tone of voice, the ironic overtone is obvious from the context). Larry's interpretively used utterance (*such fools*) (actually "mentioning" it, as Sperber and Wilson (1986) suggest) is followed by an overt sign referring to the attribution itself (*you mean*), which obviously reflects that "such fools" is only partly his own thought. He attributes the utterance to his interlocutor, but by uttering it, he dissociates himself from his partner's thought, thus creating ironic effect. Similarly, there is no overt stage direction to prescribe this, but it is obvious that Larry interrupts Broadbent's statement ending with "such men" with his contradicting exclamation bearing negative overtone, the contradiction arising from the positively implied "men" and the inherently negative "fools". The linking

element between the two phrases is parallelism achieved through the double use of the preceding adjective "such". To sum up, when Broadbent misunderstands the implication of Larry's story and interprets it as "magnificent", Larry echoes his last words, replacing "men" (implying: reasonable creatures) with "fools" (persons lacking good sense and judgment) and thus turning the original meaning into its opposite and as a result, being ironic.

"Ironic meaning has been described as the opposition, negation or contradiction of the sentence meaning" (Barbe 1995: 25). In "Harry is a genius", the audience has to differentiate between "surface" sentence meaning (the face value meaning of the sentence) and the situationally probable "intended" meaning. If the literal meaning does not prove to be true, based on the conversational cooperative cues noticeable in the interaction, then the hearer must look for another interpretation, an ironic reading. What is the closest to the literal meaning is its opposite: "Harry is not a genius.")

A similar case can be identified in Larry's conversation with Broadbent when the latter confesses to him that he proposed to Miss Reilly the night before.

- (8) LARRY. Well, you are a nice infant to be let loose in this country! Fancy the potcheen<sup>7</sup> going to your head like that!  
 BROADBENT. Not to my head, I think. (...) No: potcheen goes to the heart (...). (p. 110)

With the help of his ironic words ("*nice infant*"), Larry does not intend to soften his expression of criticism of Broadbent's hasty proposal, but to condemn his interlocutor by humiliating him through sarcasm and coldness. The "infant" frame contains the implicature that if children are "let loose", they may commit childish acts and they may not realise the consequences of their actions. Larry implies that the same thing might have happened to Broadbent as he, like a reasonable adult, was not there to help him. Doyle's subsequent utterance further develops the "infant" frame: children are not allowed to consume alcoholic drinks (as Broadbent did the night before) and his irresponsible proposal is the result of losing his head after consuming the strong Irish drink. Broadbent, on his part, infers that Larry's second utterance should not be taken literally. Naturally if he were helped by the presence of contextualisation cues, such as code switching, features of oral art, repetition, marked wording, prosody, interjection, laughter, mimicry, etc. (see Kotthof 2006: 7), this misunderstanding would not have taken place. However, there are no such signs available for him, therefore he leaves this act of criticism unseen and does not react to it in any hostile way but gives a metaphoric answer, referring to the reaction this drink stirs in the consumer's emotional state.

<sup>7</sup> Strong Irish alcoholic drink.

Last but not least, it is **Father Keegan**, an outcast and “an Irish saint”, who employs irony, moreover, dark sarcasm most frequently. In his case, irony is the sign of clear vision and sense of reality. When Broadbent complacently boasts to him about his already feeling at home in Roscullen, he very openly throws the truth into his face with bitter sarcasm, confronting him with his reflection:

- (9) BROADBENT. (...) Well, Mr Keegan, as I said, I begin to see my way here. I begin to see my way.  
 KEEGAN (*with a courteous inclination*). The conquering Englishman, sir. Within 24 hours of your arrival you have carried off our only heiress, and practically secured the parliamentary seat. (...) you will comfort me with the bustle of a great hotel, and the sight of the little children carrying the golf clubs of your tourists as a preparation for the life to come. (p. 153)

This retort clearly mirrors Broadbent’s real intentions on his “other island”, and it is taken as a direct criticism. He is the only one who directs a direct attack to the Englishman’s face and does not mitigate it. But even this ironic remark is turned against him. In his reply, Broadbent suggests that exactly for his open mind and critical sense should Keegan be shown as an attraction to the tourists.

Keegan’s great ironical tirade turns the tables on both Broadbent and Doyle, revealing their true intentions and true identity:

- (10) KEEGAN (*with polished irony*). I stand rebuked, gentlemen. (...) You are both, I am told, thoroughly efficient civil engineers; and I have no doubt the golf links will be a triumph of your art. Mr. Broadbent will get into parliament most efficiently, which is more than St. Patrick could do if he were alive now. You may even build the hotel efficiently, if you can find enough efficient masons, carpenters, and plumbers, which I rather doubt. (*Dropping his irony...*) When the hotel becomes insolvent (*Broadbent takes his cigar out of his mouth, a little taken aback*) your English business habits will secure the thorough efficiency of the liquidation. You will reorganize the scheme efficiently (*Broadbent and Larry look quickly at one another; for this, unless the priest is an old financial hand, must be inspiration*); you will get rid of its original shareholders efficiently after efficiently ruining them; and you will finally profit very efficiently by getting that hotel for a few shillings in the pound. ... (p. 158)

Keegan echoes Broadbent’s earlier words on efficiency, which were used in a positive sense at the time, turning them into their opposite meaning. As known, repetition, echoing in itself is a contextualisation cue for irony. This is emphasised by the mention of St Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, in the very mundane, secular



context of parliamentary work. Finally, he turns the topic of his speech on the truly financial side of “efficiency”, implying the meaning of “profit”. The playwright’s comments literally represent the effect Keegan’s words create in his interlocutor’s mind and suggest that irony attained its goal.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper we have investigated some of the humorous and ironic remarks of two different ethnicity characters of *John Bull's Other Island*. Our analyses have revealed that through their face-to-face linguistic manifestations they display two different kinds of verbal behaviour and attitude, showing an ambiguous English and Irish stereotype. A double reversal of roles can be detected in the verbal manifestations of the two protagonists, as representatives of the two ethnic stereotypes. On the one hand, the English Broadbent’s verbal behaviour reveals an Irish identity in so far as his utterances lack humour and irony, but in fact he approaches the stiff, moralising, cold and cynical English stereotype, who – also verbally – tries (and manages) to cheat on his conversational partners (the Irish), pretending to be more Irish than they are. On the other hand, on surface level Larry Doyle’s utterances reveal a fake English stereotype, being a sober realist, frequently employing irony in his attitude towards his English friend but also towards the other Irish characters and himself. His realistic, and often cynical detachment from all the important issues of life, his rationality, absence of emotions and strong predilection for irony are stereotypically English features. However, his affective attitude towards his country and the passivity he displays while complaining about it, make him a typical Irishman, and this role overrides the English one.

It has also been shown that these characters’ humorous and ironic remarks define their identity and also work as solidarity shaping devices towards their in-group. Ironically, this in-group proves to be an ambiguous Irish-English conglomerate represented by Broadbent and Doyle. The ethnic layer of these characters’ identity is not at stake any longer when in interaction with the Irish Father Keegan. Instead, a more universal, “international” identity (defined by financial interests) is revealed as opposed to the identity void of any interests represented by Father Keegan. The title of the play (*John Bull's Other Island*) proves to be an excellent display of a mega-ironic attitude from the part of the playwright to represent this idea.

## Source

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## The Discourse Analysis of a Newspaper Article

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**Abstract.** This paper is meant as an attempt to show the way in which by analysing the discourse of a newspaper article, we may uncover a certain culture in a specific period of its historical development. In order to do that, I have chosen an article from a Romanian satirical newspaper, *Academia Caţavencu*<sup>1</sup>, which I found particularly interesting as it poses a number of problems for the analysis. The analysis is based on Widdowson's (1979) view of discourse-as-process, the focus being on three main aspects, namely the role of context, topic and the representation of discourse content, and the nature of reference in text. Hopefully, by investigating these aspects I could bring further evidence in support of the idea that a text can be regarded as an interaction between the writer and the reader.

**Keywords:** sentence topic, discourse topic, discourse-as-process, context, reference

### 1. Introduction

Discourse can be approached from a number of perspectives, each of them addressing some important issues bearing on the production and interpretation of utterances as both linguistic and social practice. Schiffrin (1994) presents in details six such approaches, namely the speech act theory, interactional linguistics, the ethnography of communication, pragmatics, conversational analysis and variation analysis. Though apparently there are clear-cut borders among these approaches,

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<sup>1</sup> The article is to be found in the appendix, both in the original and in the English translation.

they all, nevertheless, share a number of issues, such as “the relationship between structure and function, text and context, utterances and communication” (Schiffrin 1994: 337).

My attempt at analysing the discourse of a newspaper article could be classified as a pragmatic approach, which focuses on the speaker meaning at the level of utterances situated in a context. In certain circumstances, there seems to be a lack of obvious connection between the utterances/sentences of a text which nevertheless will not prevent the receiver from understanding the message. The speaker’s intended meaning is understood by the receiver due to the fact that the latter is willing to cooperate in the process of communication by supplementing “the missing link” and also by supplementing the literal meaning of the utterances/sentences “with an assumption of human rationality and cooperation” (Schiffrin 1994: 9). Thus, what the pragmatic approach to discourse analysis suggests is that human beings work with very minimal assumptions about one another and that they use these assumptions as a basis from which to draw specific inferences about one another’s intended meanings.

In what follows I shall adopt Widdowson’s (1979) (quoted in Brown & Yule 1989: 24) view of **discourse-as-process**, in that I will consider the words, phrases and sentences that appear in a text to be the elements necessary for a producer to communicate his message to a recipient. I am particularly interested in the interaction between producer and the recipient, more exactly in the way in which the recipient understands the producer’s intended message in a particular circumstance, and in the way the requirements of the particular recipients determine the organization of the producer’s discourse. The analysis will focus on three key elements of discourse, namely the role of the text, topic and the representation of discourse content, and reference. Hopefully, some cultural issues will emerge from the analysis.

## 2. The role of context

In order to be able to properly analyse the piece of discourse under consideration, we need to take account of the **context** in which this occurs. “Context” is a term referring to the features of the non-linguistic world in relation to which linguistic units are systematically used. In discourse analysis, we encounter the situational context, which, in its broadest sense, covers the total non-linguistic background to a text/utterance, including the immediate situation in which it is used, and the awareness of the producer and recipient of what has been said earlier and of any relevant external beliefs. We need to know something about the **producer** (in our particular case, the WRITER), and about the **recipient** (the READER/AUDIENCE). Hymes (1964) calls the persons participating in a speech event **addressor** and **addressee**. According to him, “knowledge of the addressor in a given

communicative event makes it possible for the analyst to imagine what a particular person is likely to say. Knowledge of his addressee constrains the analyst's expectations even further" (Hymes 1986, quoted in Brown & Yule 1989: 38).

The **producer (addressor)**, in our case, is a weekly satirical newspaper called *Academia Cațavencu. Săptămînal de moravuri grele* (The Catavencu Academy: A weekly newspaper of heavy morals), which tries to bring to light the abuses, corruption and ignorance of Romanian politicians, especially of the ones holding the power. The way in which facts and events are presented in the article varies from very straightforward to very hermetic (including even riddles, idiomatic expressions). The language forms and the lexis used vary according to the style. Thus, within a paragraph the lexical items may range from extremely sophisticated to very vulgar ones, as illustrated below:

- (1) Conflict de principii – intrigi – lucrături – urlete – four.letter.word  
 'Conflict of principles – intrigues – pulling strings – shouting – swearing'

We may assert that, although this particular newspaper is meant to be read by any person, it can be really enjoyed by **recipients (addressees)** with a certain intellectual and cultural background, since the articles are so full of hints to historical events, sociological aspects, psychological, literary and even linguistic facts, that an ordinary person with little education will not be able to go deeper than the level of the text, and consequently will miss a lot of the excitement of fully comprehending the meaning intended by the writer. Thus, a person whose knowledge of history leaves much to be desired cannot possibly grasp the idea behind "**the war of the three mimosas of RTV**" (encountered in the article) which is an analogy to the War of the Two Roses (The Red Rose of Lancaster and the White Rose of York) that took place in Britain some centuries ago. We will come to analyze such aspects in more details when we pursue the analysis proper.

Another element of context which constrains the interpretation of the event by the analyst refers to the **setting**, i.e. information in terms of where the event is situated in **place** and **time**. If we take a look at the title of the newspaper article under consideration: *Azi și mîine: Alina Toader-Longin* ("Today and Tomorrow: Alina Toader-Longin"), we need to analyze it along two lines:

a) First, we have to identify the **time-coordinate** along which we can interpret the deictic elements "today" and "tomorrow". A simple solution would be to look at the date when the newspaper appeared, and say that "today" corresponds to that particular day, whereas "tomorrow" would correspond to the following day. But this is not possible in our situation because we are dealing with a weekly newspaper which, indeed, appears on a certain day (Wednesday), but which covers the events of a whole week (13–19 October, 1998). Another, more plausible possibility would be to somehow equate 'today' with the week within the 13<sup>th</sup> and

the 19<sup>th</sup> of October, and “tomorrow” with the following week (i.e. the week between the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 27<sup>th</sup> of October). Yet, the best option would be to **expand the context** (in keeping in line with Brown and Yule): the time span of the deictic expressions “today” and “tomorrow” must be determined with respect to the content of the text, i.e. they can be enlarged to cover the present and the future, although they may retain the standard deictic centre on the writer.

There is a further point that has to be mentioned with respect to the first part of the title, namely that by using the deictic expressions “today” and “tomorrow” the writer somehow constrains the reader to focus his/her attention only on what happens at present and on the future consequences of the present event(s). But actually, the past events have an important role in properly understanding the hatred between the two “parties”.

b) If we analyze the second half of the title, “*Alina Toader-Longin*”, we will be able to grasp the writer’s intended meaning behind this hybrid name only if we place it on a specific *place co-ordinate*, namely that of the Department of Informative Programmes within the Romanian Television, where the three persons mentioned in the hybrid name **Alina** Mungiu-Pipidi, Anca **Toader** and Lucia Hossu-**Longin** work (in all the possible senses of the lexical item “work”). Since two of the persons mentioned have a double family name, the writer of the article produced one such name by picking an element from each of the names of the three persons (first name of one and surnames of the other two, i.e. the elements highlighted above), creating a hybrid whose spelling is relevant in that the hyphen could be interpreted as the “border” between the two parties. Thus, **Alina** Mungiu-Pipidi and Anca **Toader** will be members of one “party”, whereas Lucia Hossu-**Longin** would be the representative of the second one. Another interesting thing related to the hybrid name is that it is illustrative of a new trend among certain Romanian women of keeping their maiden surnames together with those of their husbands’, indicating thus a certain status they enjoy in society.

A brief description of the “source of inspiration” of the newspaper article would be in order here so as to make the analysis more comprehensible. The scenario is the following: the three ladies mentioned in the article, Anca Toader, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi and Lucia Hossu-Longin all worked in the Department of Informative Programmes. Close to the period when the Head of the Department was to be elected, knowing that the latter had the highest chances to get the job and also that she was supported by the leading party in Romania in 1998, the first two ladies tried to find some compromising evidence against Lucia Hossu-Longin. Thus, they came up with some TV programmes that L.H.-Longin had presumably signed for the late leader of Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu. The nasty thing was that they broadcast this on the national TV station, making a whole nation witness the political and private dissensions between the two women parties in the DIP.

In brief, we can say that the more the analyst knows about the features of context (i.e. addressor, addressee, time and place of the communicative event), the more capable s/he is to predict what is likely to be said.

### 3. Topic and the representation of discourse content

Among **addressor**, **addressee**, **setting** (time and place of the communicative event), **code** (what language, or dialect, or style of language is used), **message-form** and **event**, Hymes (1986, quoted in Brown and Yule 1989) identified another feature/category of context, namely **topic**, which is defined as *what is being talked about*. “The notion of ‘topic’ is clearly an intuitively satisfactory way of describing the unifying principle which makes one stretch of discourse ‘about’ something and the next stretch ‘about’ something else (...)” (Brown & Yule 1989: 70).

Analysts make the distinction between **sentence topic**<sup>2</sup> and **discourse topics**. The latter term has been introduced by Keenan & Schieffelin (1976) (quoted in Brown and Yule 1989: 71) and is defined as follows: “discourse topic is not a simple NP, but a proposition (about which some claim is made or elicited)”.

Some linguists suggest that the topic of a text is equivalent to the title and that, for any text there is a single correct expression that is the topic. This suggestion would not hold for our article, since the title (*Today and Tomorrow: Alina Toader-Longin*) does not even count as a proposition. We cannot possibly say that the article is (only) about the present and future situation of three persons. There is more to it than that. We could, for instance, say that the article is about the dissensions between the small parties within Romanian Television, or about the impact of these dissensions on the audience of this TV station, or about the evil inherent in people, which is the cause of so many disasters in the world (the war in Kosovo, the War of the Two Roses, etc.). Each of these different ways of expressing the topic would stand for a different judgment of what is being written about in the article. Out of this number of ways of expressing the topic, we need to determine the correct expression of the topic for the text.

Consequently, we shall adopt the point of view of Tyler (1978) (quoted in Brown and Yule 1989: 75), according to whom “the ‘topic’ can only be one possible paraphrase of a sequence of utterances. What is required is a characterisation of ‘topic’ which would allow each of the possible expressions, including titles, to be considered (partially) correct, thus incorporating all reasonable judgments of ‘what is being talked about’. This would be the so-called **topic framework**.”

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<sup>2</sup> In a sentence, the speaker announces a topic and then says something about it (comment); topics are usually subjects and comments are predicates.

The topic framework is assumed to be given by the aspects of the context, which are directly reflected in the text. These aspects of the context can be identified from the content of the text. Thus, if we take a look at our text, we would easily see that the addressor (the writer) is talking about three particular women, about a conflict among these women, about Romanian Television, about one particular mischievous thing that two women did to a third one, about the political support this last person enjoyed from certain political parties, about her excessive sensitivity, about the reform in Romania, and the conflicts in Kosovo. This set of facts, persons and events could be taken as a set of elements which would have to be included in the representation of this writer's topic, i.e. what he is talking (writing) about. But this is not a complete set, since the writer talks about a particular **time** (recent past: *last week*, i.e. the week between 6–12 October 1998) and **place** (the institution of Romanian Television), and about particular **persons** (three employees of the afore-mentioned institution). Thus, the topic framework represents the area of overlap in the knowledge which has been activated in the text and which is shared by the writer and the readers of the article. We can say that the topic of our newspaper article is: *fight for power/high position of three women working in the Department of Informative Programmes of Romanian Television, in the period preceding the election of the Head.*

So far we have discussed the notion of “topic” by mainly concentrating on considerations of **content** of discourse, i.e. *what* the writer is talking about. But sometimes the **form** of the discourse (i.e. *how* the writer structures what he is saying) can give us a clue as to what the topic is. Maynard (1980) (quoted in Brown and Yule, 1989: 94) suggests “that instead of undertaking the difficult task of *what a topic is*, we should concentrate on describing what we recognize as **topic-shift**. Between two contiguous pieces of discourse which are intuitively considered to have different ‘topics’, there should be a point at which the shift from one topic to the next is marked. If we can characterize this marking of topic-shift, then we shall have found a structural basis of dividing up stretches of discourse into a series of smaller units, each on a separate topic.” The problem now lies in identifying the formal markers of topic shift in a discourse.

Some analysts, among whom we can mention Grimes (1975) and Hinds (1977), have come to the idea that the partitioning of discourse into smaller chunks, each on a separate topic, depends on the change of setting (time and place) and on the change of theme (the person or thing that is being talked about). Longacre (1979) stated that the markers that indicate temporal shift, especially in narrative discourse, are adverbial expressions. Thus, adverbs appearing at the beginning of a sentence can represent possible topic-shift markers.

If we take a look at the article under consideration, we will not encounter any such formal markers of topic shift. No sentence begins with an adverbial of time or place, and the theme remains the same, although the persons that are being talked



about are referred to by different expressions (e.g. Anca and Alina, the two little denouncers, the two ladies, the two infantes, the Furies, the Graces, etc). Yet, one can identify some topic shifts, in that the **place** changes gradually: from the **world**, in general, we are introduced into a particular institution, **Romanian Television**, and here into a certain **Department**. From here we move further to the **whole country**, and next to **Kosovo**. The **time** also changes: from **times immemorial** (the time of the three Graces and of the Furies), to the **present**, then it goes back to the recent **past**, to shift back to the **present** again.

On the basis of these topic shifts we can then identify the topic for our discourse, namely the fight for power/high position of three women working within the Department of Informative Programmes of RTV, in the period preceding the election of the Head of the Department.

#### 4. The nature of reference in text and discourse

One of the central issues in discourse analysis is **cohesion**, which refers to the formal links that give a text a sense of unity beyond the sentence. The problem of cohesion was dealt with by the outstanding linguists Halliday and Hassan (1976: 4) who considered that “[c]ohesive relationships within a text are set up where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it”. One particular cohesive relationship that the two linguists dealt with is **reference**. Brown and Yule replaced it by **co-reference**.

The relationship of co-reference can be:

- **exophoric**, when for the interpretation of a certain lexical item the hearer/reader has to look outside the text, in the context of situation.
- **endophoric**, instructing the hearer/reader to look inside the text to find what is being referred to by a particular form. The endophoric co-reference, in its turn, is of two types:
  - *anaphoric*: for the interpretation of a particular form, the hearer/reader has to look back in a text;
  - *cataphoric*: the hearer/reader has to look forward in the text in order to be able to interpret some forms.

The relationship of **anaphoric co-reference** can hold among a number of forms which shall be illustrated on the basis of examples taken from the newspaper article under consideration.

a. **a full lexical item and a pronoun:**

- (2) (...) **damele** bine (...) **tot atâtea sînt**. *Că-s trei **Grații**, că-s tot atâtea **Furii**, puțin importă. Important este că în Televiziunea Română **le** avem în ordine strict....*

“(...) the **good dames** (...) are in an equal number. Whether there are three **Graces** or three **Furies**, is of little importance. What is important is that in the Romanian Television we have them ...”<sup>3</sup>

- *damele* (S.2) *le*  
dames, def. art. pers. pron. (weak), 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. pl, acc., fem.
- *Grații* ‘Graces’ *le*
- *Furii* ‘Furies’ *le*

In this example, one pronominal form binds back to three full lexical items.

- (3) *Anca și Alina (...) i-au organizat **coanei Lucica** o dare-n gît (...) cu gîndul de a bloca alegerea **dînsei** în fruntea CA...*

‘Anca and Alina have set up a perfect denunciation of **Missis Lucica** aiming at preventing **her** from being elected ...’

- *coanei Lucica* (S.8) *dînsei*  
Missis (dat.) Lucica politeness pronoun, 3<sup>rd</sup> pers., sg., fem., gen.

b. **substituted form:**

- (4) (...) *Lucia Hossu-Longin, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi & Anca Toader. **Ultimele** (...) **doamne** n-o înghit deloc pe **prima**.*

‘The last two ladies do not stand the **first one** at all.’

c. **partially repeated form:**

- (5) *Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, Anca Toader ..... **Alina & Anca***

d. **repeated form:**

- (6) (...) *domnia-sa este cunoscută (...) pentru **excesul** de sensibilitate. **Un exces**...  
‘(...) her highness is known (...) for the **excess** of sensitivity. **An excess** ...’*

The relationship of **cataphoric co-reference** is illustrated by the following examples:

- (7) *banii **noștri**, ai **contribuabililor***  
‘money our, poss. art. tax payer’  
‘our money, the money of the tax payers’

<sup>3</sup> The translations belong to the author.

- (8) *E drept că nici doamna Lucica nu le suportă (...)* *pe*  
 ‘Is true that neither Missis Lucica not pers. pron. 3<sup>rd</sup> pl., fem. Acc. marker  
*cele două infante.*  
 dem. art. two Infantas’  
 ‘It is true that neither does Missis Lucica stand the two Infantas.’
- (9) *Anca și Alina (...)* *i-au organizat* *coanei Lucica...*  
 clitic pron, 3<sup>rd</sup>, sg., fem., Dat. Ma’am (Dat) Lucica  
 ‘Anca and Alina have organized for Madam Lucica...’
- (10) *I-a sedus (...)* *pe niște haidamaci*  
 clitic (3<sup>rd</sup>, pl., masc., Acc) loafers  
 ‘she seduced some loafers’

The text of the article is also illustrative of chains of reference:

*damele bine – Grații – Furii – Alina, Anca & Lucia*  
 the good dames – Graces – Furies – Alina, Anca & Lucia

In this co-referential chain, the persons are referred to by means of **proper names** (Anca, Alina, Lucia), of **indefinite noun phrases** (Graces, Furies) and by means of a **definite noun phrase** (the good dames). This last referring expression, though used as the subject of its sentence, is not used “referentially”. In our article, this definite noun-phrase does not refer to some specific individuals. To adopt the distinction drawn by Donnellan (1966) (quoted in Brown and Yule, 1989: 211), we would say that it is used “attributively”, not “referentially”. This attributive use of the referring expression “the dames” may not select particular individuals in the real world, but they will establish specific individuals in the reader’s representation of the discourse.

- (11) *Alina & Anca – ultimele două doamne – infante – sicofante – cele două pîricioase mici – năbădăioasele de la DEI – le*  
 A & A - the last two ladies - Infantas – sycophants – the two little denouncers – the peppery women of DIP – them (weak pers. pron.)
- (12) *Lucia – prima – doamna Lucica – coana Lucica – tanti Luci – dînsa – domnia sa*  
 Lucia – the first – Mrs. Lucica – Ma’am Lucica – Miss Luci – politeness pers. pron. - her highness

Cohesion within the text can be provided not only by relationships of coreference, but also by formal markers which relate what is going to be said to what has already been said. In our particular text we have the following examples:

- Additive forms (conjunctions and adverbials): *de asemenea* (also), *pe lângă faptul că* (beside the fact that);
- Causal/temporal: *Iar ce a urmat a fost prăpăd*. ‘**And** what followed was a disaster.’

Another device which ensures the cohesion of a text is the **continuity of tense**. According to this, our newspaper article would consist of two texts: the first part of the article, in which sentences are connected by the present tense (*lucrurile bune sînt...* ‘good things **are**...’; *damele (...) sînt ...* ‘the dames **are** ...’; *Important este...* ‘What **is** important **is**...’; *le avem*, ‘we **have** them’, etc.) would represent one text, while the second part, in which verbs are mainly in the past (Romanian: “perfect compus”<sup>4</sup>), represents the second text. Here are some examples:

(13) *Acest conflict (...) a izbucnit*  
‘This conflict **burst out**...’

(14) *I-                    au organizat...*  
pers. pron. 3<sup>rd</sup>, sg., fem. D - have organized  
‘Anca and Alina **organized** (for her)...’

If we take a closer look at the cohesive structuring of our text we will realize that cohesion is not a syntactic relation, but more a semantic one. It is on the basis of the semantic relations that hold between the items in a text (and less due to the explicit expression of these semantic relations) that we perceive a text as a composite complex product.

## 5. In lieu of conclusions

What I have tried to do in this paper was to identify and analyze, on the basis of a newspaper article, some of the ingredients which are necessary in any account of the way people use language as a means of interaction. Thus, as far as the role of context in analyzing discourse is concerned, we have seen that in order to be able to derive appropriate inferences about the writer’s message, we need to combine linguistic meaning with context. Identifying the communicative content of a sentence is important because it can help us understand coherence relations across

<sup>4</sup> The Romanian ‘perfect compus’ is a tense formed by the auxiliary ‘a avea’ (have) + the participle of the main verb.

the sentences making up the text of the newspaper article. Context, in our particular case, refers to knowledge of situation.

As topic is a category of context, which contributes to the understanding of a piece of discourse, I have tried to identify it from the point of view of the reader. We have seen that in the case of our article the topic was difficult to pin down, since as the title is not a proposition, it cannot represent the topic. We identified the topic only by expanding the title, paraphrasing the sequence of deictic terms and names contained in it.

Finally, since any text needs to be both coherent and cohesive, I have shown how the various types of reference employed by the writer contribute to the cohesion of the newspaper article.

## APPENDIX

### **Azi și mâine: Alina Toader-Longin/Today and Tomorrow: Alina Toader-Longin**

1. Lucrurile bune sînt totdeauna în număr de trei.  
Good things always come in a number of three.
2. De asemenea, damele bine – da' bine de tot – ca să vezi, tot atîtea sînt.  
The good – the extremely good – dames, happen to be in the same number.
3. Că-s trei Grații, că-s tot atîtea Furii, puțin importă.  
Whether there are three Graces or whether there are three Furies, is of little importance.
4. Important este că în Televiziunea Română (cum ar veni, postul național plătit din banii noștri, ai contribuabililor), le avem în ordine strict alfabetică, pe: Lucia Hossu-Longin, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi și Anca Toader.  
What is important is that in the Romanian Television (as it were, the national corporation paid for from our money, the tax payers'), we have, in strictly alphabetical order: Lucia Hossu-Longin, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi and Anca Toader.
5. Ultimele (dar deloc cele din urmă) două doamne n-o înghit deloc pe prima.  
The last (but not at all the least) two ladies do not stand the first one at all.
6. E drept că nici doamna Lucica nu le suportă cîtuși de puțin pe cele două infante, ca să nu zicem sicofante, ale coanei Zoe de la Cotroceni.  
It is true that neither does Missis Lucica stand in the least the two Infantas, not to call them sycophants, of ma'am Zoe of Cotroceni.
7. Acest conflict de principii – concretizat pînă mai ieri prin mici birfe, intrigi, lucrături, otrăvuri, urlete și pizduieli aruncate pe culoare sau în birouri – vai, a izbucnit plener săptămîna trecută.  
This conflict of principles – manifested till recently as little gossip, intrigue, string-pulling, poison, shouting and swearing in the corridors or in offices – dear me, burst out in plenary last week.

8. Anca și Alina, cele două pîrčioase mici, i-au organizat coanei Lucica o dare-n gît ca la carte (Cursul scurt de demascare, Moscova, 1952), cu gîndul de a bloca alegerea dînzei în fruntea CA al TVR.  
Anca and Alina, the two little denouncers, have organized a perfect denunciation of Missis Lucica, according to *The Short Course of Denunciation*, Moscow (1952), meant to hinder her election as Chief of the Administration Council of Romanian Television.
9. Dreptu-i că nici tanti Luci nu-i chiar ușă de biserică.  
The truth is that Missis Luci is not exactly innocent, either.
10. Pe lîngă faptul că i-a sedus în mod neașteptat pe niște haidamaci din PDSR, PUNR și PRM, domnia-sa este cunoscută în TVR pentru excesul de – să-i spunem astfel – sensibilitate.  
Besides the fact that she surprisingly seduced some loafers of the Social Democratic Party of Romania, the Party of National Union of Romania and The Great Romania Party, her Highness is known among the people of RTV for the excess of - let us call it – sensitivity
11. Un exces care face ca ședințele de consiliu la care dînsa ia parte să se transforme, zău, în mini-ședințe de psihoterapie în grup.  
An excess which makes the council meetings she participates in turn into mini-meetings of group psychotherapy.
12. Probabil că tocmai d-iaia, de groază, cunoscînd-o bine, năbădăioasele de la DEI și-au ridicat poalele-n cap, pe postul public național, de le-a văzut o țară întregă deontologia.  
It must have been because of that, out of fear, knowing her too well, that the peppery women of the Information Program Department threw their caps over the windmills on the public national station, so that a whole country could see their deontology.
13. Iar ce-a urmat a fost prăpăd.  
And what followed was a complete disaster.
14. Toată mass-media și întreg spectrul politic n-au pregetat să ia atitudine, să comenteze și să dezbată situația.  
The entire mass-media and the whole political spectrum have not hesitated to take attitude, to comment on and to discuss the situation.
15. Problemele reformei sau situația din Kosovo au apărut ca insignifiante conflicte locale în comparație cu războiul celor trei mimoze de la TVR. (...) Trei doamne și toate trei!  
The problems posed by the reform or the situation in Kosovo seemed unimportant local conflicts in comparison to the war of the three Mimosas of the Romanian Television. (...) Three ladies and all three!

(Academia Cațavencu, 13–19 octombrie 1998)

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## **Focus Phenomena in a Parallel LFG Grammar of Hungarian and English**

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**Abstract.** The paper gives an overview of the grammar of parallel Hungarian and English focus phenomena and outlines an account in the framework of *Lexical-Functional Grammar* (LFG). Focus constructions are subject to variation with respect to their grammatical properties both within and across the two languages. The LFG framework is well-suited to represent this variation in a systematic way and, at the same time, to capture at the level of *information-structure* the shared contribution that various focus constructions make.

**Keywords:** focus, information structure, LFG, variation

### **1. Introduction**

For the last two decades, there has been an increased interest in generative grammar in what has come to be known as *interface phenomena*. The issue is the proper treatment of the flow of information between the core syntactic module(s) and other representational levels, especially lexical-conceptual structure, morphological structure, semantic structure and phonological structure. The study of the interfaces is the central objective of the Minimalist Program, and it has also received increased attention in such non-transformational generative theories as LFG.

In this paper, we provide an overview of one such interface phenomenon: the grammatical encoding of focus. Our immediate goal is threefold. First, in Section 2, we briefly describe the grammar of focus. Focusing primarily serves to divide



the clause into a part that expresses new information (focus) and another one which expresses old information (background). It is a typical interface phenomenon in being a grammatical device that encodes what is essentially a non-grammatical, discourse-governed contrast between old and new information. Its proper linguistic treatment is a non-trivial issue for this very reason. Our second aim, to be addressed in Section 3, is to narrow down on the grammar of focus marking in Hungarian and English. In particular, we investigate the division of labour between syntax and phonology in the encoding of focus across different focus constructions, as well as the presence or absence of a direct semantic impact of focus. Third, in Section 4 we present the outlines of an LFG-theoretic account of focus phenomena, building on recent advances of the theory which expand the classical LFG architecture by the introduction of *information-structure*. We present our conclusions and an outlook on our future research plans in Section 5.

## 2. Focus phenomena and their linguistic representation

### 2.1. Defining focus

In the widest sense, focus is the part of the clause that is new or asserted. The rest of the clause, which includes old and often presupposed information, is generally referred to as the background.<sup>1</sup> In essence, focusing thus serves to partition the clause in two, a function most manifest in question-answer pairs like (1) below:

- (1) “*What did Mary buy?*”  
 “*Mary bought A HAT*”<sup>2</sup>.”

The new information that the answer provides is that what Mary bought is *a hat*, this noun phrase being in focus. The rest of the clause serves as the background and is presupposed old information, since we already know from the question that Mary bought something.

It is a relatively strong universal that focus always receives prosodic marking. The universal is formulated in Reinhart (1995) as follows:

<sup>1</sup> We do not attempt here to overview the huge literature on focus and related phenomena, and concentrate on works and issues that are directly relevant to our purposes. For comprehensive overviews of the literature, we refer the reader to É. Kiss (1998), Szendrői (2001, 2004) and Vallduví (1992, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> Capitals are used to mark focused constituents. Note that there may be mismatches between focus content and prosodic marking, see the discussion below (2).

(2) **Stress-focus correspondence** (Reinhart 1995)

The focus of an utterance always contains the main stress of the utterance.

As the formulation suggests, the prosodic marking can in certain cases cover only part of the focused constituent. In the answer in (1) above, for example, the indefinite article is unaccented, even though the whole noun phrase *a hat* is in focus. There may be exceptions to this universal inasmuch as a focused constituent need not always contain the main stress in certain languages (see Szendrői 2004 for some discussion), but (2) is certainly valid for English and Hungarian. In both languages, focussed constituents must be marked prosodically, and, as we will see, variation across focus constructions is in part variation in the presence or absence of direct syntactic coding.

In one currently popular approach, focus is a unitary phenomenon in the sense that its sole function is to introduce new information (cf. especially Reinhart 1995, Szendrői 2001, 2004). É. Kiss (1998), however, makes strong arguments that we must distinguish between what she calls *information* and *identificational focus*. This distinction is grammaticalized since different constructions may express either one or the other focus type. Clause-final focus in English (1) is a representative of the first strategy: as information focus, it merely presents new information, which, however, is not meant to be exhaustive. In other words, the dialogue in (1) is well-formed even if Mary bought other things than a hat.

Clefting, on the other hand, is argued by É. Kiss to be an operation that codes identificational focus. Identificational focus is stronger semantically than informational focus, and its impact is described by É. Kiss (1998: 245) as follows:

An identificational focus represents a subset of the contextually or situationally given elements for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold; it is identified as the exhaustive subset of this set.

The difference between the two focus types is illustrated by the following test<sup>3</sup>:

- (3) “*Mary bought A HAT.*”  
 “*No, she bought a coat, too.*”
- (4) “*It was A HAT that Mary bought.*”  
 “*No, she bought a coat, too.*”

In both (3) and (4), the reply is interpreted as a negation of exhaustivity. The identificational focus coded by the cleft in (4) asserts exhaustivity, and consequently, this semantic feature can be meaningfully negated in the reply. (3)

<sup>3</sup> É. Kiss (1998: 251) credits Donka Farkas (p.c.) with the authorship of this test.

involves only information focus, which does not include exhaustivity. The reply therefore is inappropriate.

A related distinction is made in the LFG literature by Choi (1997, 2001). She distinguishes between *contrastive* and *completive focus* by using the binary feature *+/- prominent in discourse*, the former being +PROM and the latter being -PROM. This dichotomy is very similar to É. Kiss' distinction, but the overlap between the two is only partial. É. Kiss (1998) argues at length that identificational focus is often contrastive, but it need not always be (see op. cit. for details).

Importantly, whether contrastive or not, identificational focus always changes the truth-conditions of the sentence by the necessary assertion of exhaustivity. This type of focus must therefore be represented in semantic structure, whereas information focus does not necessarily have a direct semantic impact (though it does affect information structure). We will therefore assume É. Kiss' dichotomy for the purposes of this paper.

## 2.2. Focus in the GB/Minimalist tradition

Szendrői (2001, 2004) argues at length that the representation of focus is a non-trivial issue in transformational grammarian models in general, and in Minimalism in particular. The fundamental problem is that focus is prosodically coded (see (2) above), and sometimes that is the only grammatical marking that it receives (as in the case of end focus in English, cf. (1)). In transformational grammar, however, the phonological/prosodic module (PF) has always been an output level for syntax with no feedback. What is more, PF cannot communicate directly with post-syntactic interpretive levels in standard models.

The problem then is this. We know that focus has an effect on the interpretation of the sentence, but when its only coding is through stress, there is no obvious way to capture this interpretive effect in the model. The standard account is to introduce a focus feature lexically upon the head of the focussed phrase, which will force the phrase to move into the specifier position of a FocusP, where it is interpreted as the focus of the clause<sup>4</sup>. Though this solution is technically adequate, it is counterintuitive in treating focus as a lexical feature (and introducing it, as it seems, in an arbitrary manner).

Szendrői (2001, 2004), following Reinhart (1995), proposes instead to modify the architecture of the theory. We can properly account for focus facts if we treat focus as essentially a PF-feature (and do not introduce it in the lexicon), and then allow PF to communicate directly with the interpretive module: LF. This solves the above problem at the cost of modifying the grammatical model via what counts as a radical change from the perspective of standard approaches.

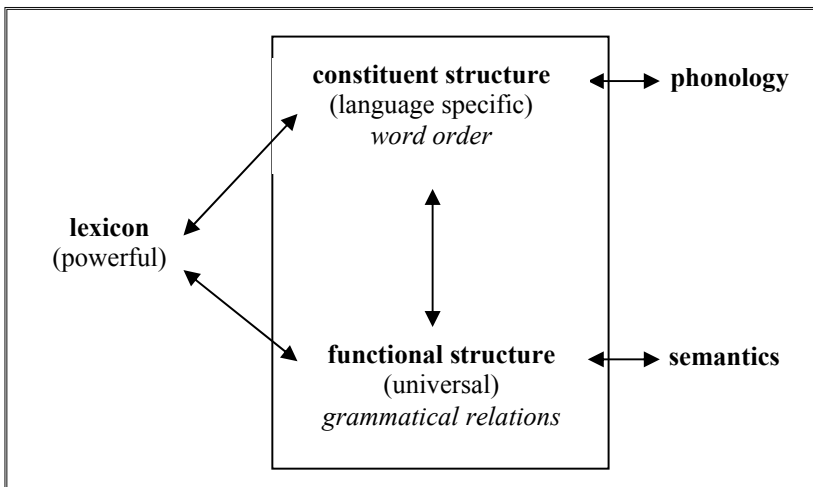
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<sup>4</sup> Bródy (1995) is a by-now classical analysis of Hungarian focus marking along these lines.

### 2.3. Focus and the LFG architecture

Lexical-Functional Grammar assumes representational modularity, just like transformational grammars. The crucial difference is that the architecture is much less restricted both in allowing for the application of a greater number of modules (called *structures*) and for a less constrained interaction among them, as dictated by the exigencies of grammar writing. An immediate consequence is that in LFG, there is no principled problem whatsoever posed by sending information from, say, *phonological structure* to *semantic structure*, thereby creating a suitable environment for the representation of focus.

The confines of this paper do not allow us to introduce the LFG architecture in full, and we refer the interested reader to Bresnan (2001), Dalrymple (2001) and Laczkó et al. (2010) for overviews. Diagram 1 is included below to give a pictorial overview of the classical LFG architecture.



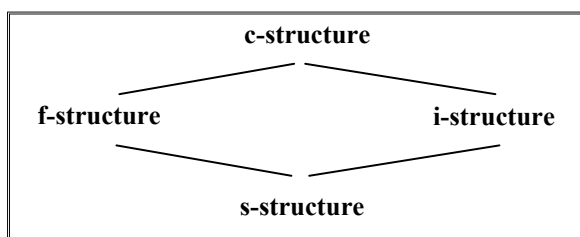
**Diagram 1.** *The classical LFG architecture*

The core syntactic modules are *c(onstituent)-structure*, which represents information about possibly language specific word order and constituency patterns, and *f(unctional)-structure*, which encodes featural information concerning the grammatical relations and predicate-argument structures underlying the surface strings of expressions. Importantly, this is a parallel, and not a procedural architecture. As a result, information flow is allowed in principle in any direction. In particular, phonology and c-structure can communicate in either order, but there is no principled constraint against phonology serving as input to f-structure or s(semantic)-structure.

In the classical LFG model, the discourse functions topic and focus were represented as syntactic features at f-structure. This treatment is adequate and in fact necessary in the case of, for example, syntacticized focus constructions like the English cleft-construction. Clefting is a way of encoding focus directly in syntax, with a clear truth-conditional effect, as we have seen in 2.1. In the classical architecture, f-structure is the primary input to s-structure, thus f-structural encoding guarantees that focus information will reach s-structure.

End-focus (as in 1 and 3 above), however, is not syntacticized and is not truth-conditional, and should, therefore, not be encoded in f-structure. To be able to represent non-syntacticized focus and to capture the meaning contribution that any focus construction has, a separate module, *i(nformation)-structure* has been introduced into the theory (see, a.o., Choi 1997, 2001, King 1997, King & Zaenen 2004). I-structure contains special attributes that represent the information content of the clause. In this paper, we will use three such features: ID-FOC for identificational focus, INF-FOC for information focus, and GROUND for background.

The result is an enriched architecture. King (1997), for example, proposes the following extended model (only the relevant aspects of the approach being included)<sup>5</sup>:



**Diagram 2.** *The extended LFG architecture of King 1997*

The focus phenomena that we discuss in Section 3, we argue, require a richer architecture to be properly represented. Our proposal is summarized in Diagram 3. Space limitations force us here to focus on designated aspects of this model, and we leave a full presentation, as well as a more complete justification, to another occasion.

<sup>5</sup> King (1997) does not assume a mapping from f-structure to i-structure because a discourse function constituent does not always coincide with an f-structure constituent. The elements of the background, for example, typically do not form a constituent. See King (1997) for details.

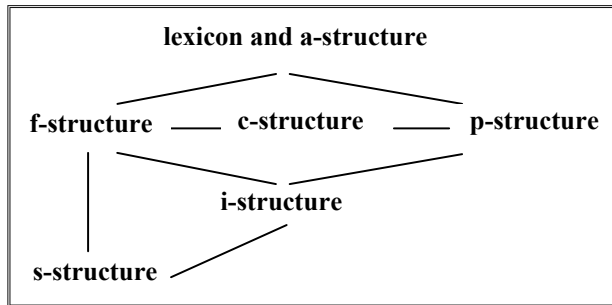


Diagram 3. *Our proposed architecture*

### 3. Parallel focus phenomena in Hungarian and English

Hungarian, unlike English, is known to be a discourse-configurational language, which encodes discourse functions directly in syntax. In contrast, English is regarded as configurational inasmuch as the basic syntactic functions (subject, object, indirect object) must be inserted into designated syntactic positions – a constraint that is not operational in Hungarian syntax at a descriptive level. Nevertheless, as we will point out directly, focus marking is not always configurational in Hungarian, neither is it always only prosodic in English.

#### 3.1. Focus in the left periphery

Hungarian has long been known to be a language in which the primary means of focus marking is configurational. In particular, a focused constituent has to occupy an immediately preverbal position. As a result, focused constituents are in complementary distribution with so-called verbal modifiers (particles, bare nouns and certain adverbials that form a complex predicate with the verb). The examples below are presented by vertically aligning the preverbal positions in the respective sentences.

- (5) a. *János le- tette a könyv-et a padló-ra.*  
 John down- put the book-ACC the floor-onto  
 ‘John put down the book on the floor.’
- b. *János A KÖNYVET tette le a padló-ra.*  
 ‘It was THE BOOK that John put down on the floor.’
- c. *JÁNOS tette le a könyvet a padló-ra.*  
 ‘It was JOHN that put down the book on the floor.’
- d. *A PADLÓRA tette le János a könyvet.*  
 ‘It was ON THE FLOOR that John put down the book.’

As the English translations suggest, preverbal focus is exhaustive and is therefore identificational focus in É. Kiss' terminology. Since it is a grammaticized discourse function, it is represented in f-structure. Note, however, that to trace its presence, f-structure needs input both from c-structure and p-structure (for not every preverbal constituent is focused, only those that themselves receive the main stress of the clause).

One type of focus constructions in English (a left-dislocated constituent associated with a pitch accent) also occurs preverbally, albeit in a clause-initial rather than in an immediately preverbal position. É. Kiss (1998: 251) shows that this construction codes information focus, as is justified by the exhaustivity test introduced in 2.1:

- (6) “A HAT, Mary picked for herself.”  
 “No, she picked herself a coat, too.”

Focus left-dislocation is configurationally coded (and, naturally, prosodically marked). Being information focus, it does not affect the truth-conditions of the sentence, and, consequently, we assume that it is primarily an i-structure phenomenon, which does not receive f-structure encoding.

### 3.2. End focus

The most frequent type of focus in English is clause-final. This is a consequence of the fact that the focused constituent must contain the main stress of the clause (cf. 2), and the nuclear stress rule places the main stress on the rightmost constituent in English (Reinhart 1995, Szendrői 2004).<sup>6</sup> É. Kiss (1998) shows that this type of focus also exist in Hungarian, see (7b) below.

- (7) a. *Mary gave a book TO JOHN.*  
 b. *Mari ad-ott egy könyv-et JÁNOS-NAK.*  
 Mary give-PAST.3SG a book-ACC John-DAT  
 ‘Mary gave a book TO JOHN.’

In Hungarian, this type of focus has a marked nature, as the default focus marking is preverbal (3.1).

<sup>6</sup> End focus can be shifted in English to a non-final constituent:

(i) *Mary gave A BOOK to John.*

Reinhart (2006) presents psycholinguistic and acquisition evidence that shifted focus is indeed more marked (i.e., a more costly operation) than neutral end focus. É. Kiss (1998) remarks that such a focus shift in the postverbal field is rare in Hungarian. In fact, the direct equivalent of (i) verges on ungrammaticality, the focused NP would be placed in the regular preverbal focus position.

End focus is information focus in both languages, recall the discussion of (3) in 2.1. As such, we do not introduce it into f-structure, but represent it directly at i-structure.

### 3.3. Clefting

A cleft construction is essentially a reduced biclausal structure that serves to express identificational focus (see É. Kiss 1998). The focused constituent is transposed into a matrix clause that has an expletive subject in English:

- (8) a. *It was JOHN who/that walked into the room.*  
 b. *It was INTO THE ROOM that John came.*

Clefting is the primary device of coding identificational focus in English.

Clefts are also productive in Hungarian, although they are probably less frequently used than in English. This is, again, due to the fact that information focus is generally placed locally into the preverbal position. Note that it is the matrix focus position that is targeted in clefts, too:

- (9) a. *JÁNOS volt az, aki/\*hogy be-jött.*  
 John was that.NOM who.NOM/that in-came  
 ‘It was JOHN who came into the room.’  
 b. *\*A SZOBÁ-BA volt az, ahova/hogy János be-jött.*  
 the room-into was that.nom where.to/that John in-came  
 ‘It was INTO THE ROOM that John came.’

As (9a-b) testify, the Hungarian cleft construction is not full grammatical equivalent to its English counterpart. First, the subordinate clause can only be introduced by a *who*-pronoun, but not by a *that*-type complementizer. Second, the Hungarian construction does not license the focusing of oblique phrases (9b)<sup>7</sup>.

Nevertheless, both languages have an obviously grammaticalized and truth-conditionally relevant cleft-construction to be employed for expressing focus. Therefore both cleft-constructions are to be represented in f-structure as well as in other relevant representational modules.

<sup>7</sup> We plan to develop a comprehensive and comparative analysis of English and Hungarian cleft sentences in future work.



#### 4. Outlines of an LFG account

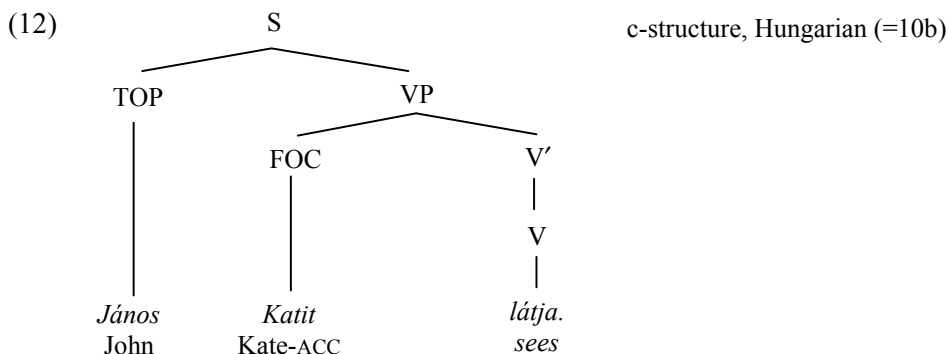
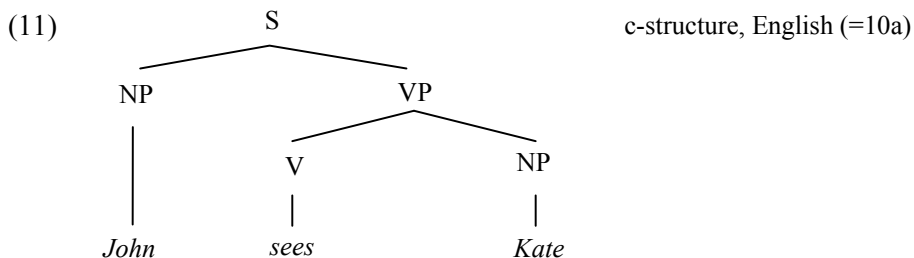
Space limitations confine us to offering only the outlines of an LFG account. In particular, we will concentrate on the treatment of the following English and Hungarian focus constructions:

- (10) a. *John sees KATE.*  
 b. *János KATI-T lát-ja.*  
 John Kate-ACC see-3SG  
 ‘It is KATE that John sees.’

As discussed in the previous section, end focus is the most frequent focus construction in English, whereas Hungarian generally employs preverbal focus. We have also seen that the two constructions also differ in their function: (10a) contains information focus, whereas (10b) has truth-conditionally relevant identificational focus.

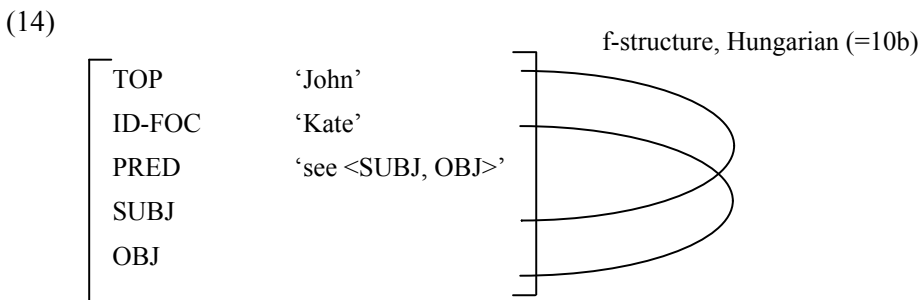
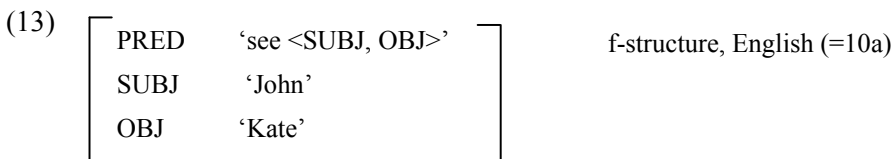
In what follows, we present an LFG-style analysis of the two constructions, focusing on what is most directly relevant to the comparison: c-structure, f-structure, and i-structure. For expository purposes, we omit features that have no significant contribution to the presentation.

Let us start with the two respective c-structures.



The obvious difference between the two structures is that whereas the discourse functions Topic and Focus are directly coded in Hungarian syntax, they are not in English. English places the subject and the object in a designated syntactic position, and though subjects are frequently topics, and clause-final constituents often receive focus interpretation, neither correspondence is necessary.

The functional structure of both constructions is the same with respect to the predicate-argument structure of the two respective verbs, and with respect to the assignment of the basic syntactic functions to the arguments. Where they differ is that the Hungarian f-structure will include an identificational focus and a topic feature, for both are grammaticized in Hungarian. Quite unlike their English counterparts in (10a), which are not represented at f-structure.



The arches in the Hungarian f-structure mark the relevant dependencies: the value of the TOPIC attribute is identical to the value of the SUBJECT attribute, and the same holds for ID-FOC and OBJ, respectively. Features that are not immediately necessary for us (agreement features, tense, etc.) have been omitted.

Finally, i-structure is utilized to represent the impact focusing has on the information structure associated with the utterance of the two test sentences. Here the only difference between the two constructions is that one contains information focus, and the other identificational focus.

$$(15) \left[ \begin{array}{ll} \text{INF-FOC} & \text{'John'} \\ \text{GROUND} & \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{'Kate'} \\ \text{'sees'} \end{array} \right\} \end{array} \right] \quad \text{i-structure, English (=10a)}$$

$$(16) \left[ \begin{array}{ll} \text{ID-FOC} & \text{'John'} \\ \text{GROUND} & \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{'Kate'} \\ \text{'sees'} \end{array} \right\} \end{array} \right] \quad \text{i-structure, Hungarian (=10b)}$$

We follow King (1997) in assuming that the value of the background attribute (ground) is an unordered set. This is so because i-structure is not identical to a semantic representation, and what matters is how focusing partitions the clause in two.

## 5. Summary

In this paper, we have briefly overviewed parallel focus phenomena in English and Hungarian, and argued that they can be analyzed in the framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar in a principled manner. The parallel architecture of LFG is well-suited to represent such interface phenomena as focus, especially when the classical LFG architecture is augmented by the introduction of information structure.

The empirical coverage and the analysis presented is necessarily partial, but we believe we have succeeded in demonstrating the power of the LFG model. Our most important research goal is to work out the details of the analysis, and apply the result directly to the LFG-based computational grammar that we are currently developing<sup>8</sup>.

Our research plans include the following areas to be addressed in the next phase of our project. First, the empirical coverage needs to be extended to include, among other phenomena, multiple focus constructions, single and multiple *wh*-questions, as well as a detailed analysis of topicalization. Second, we need to elaborate the mapping mechanisms that determine the information flow among the modules we discussed in Section 4, paying special regard to cases of mismatch between the different types of representations.

<sup>8</sup> Continuously updated information about this computational linguistic enterprise can be read on our homepage at <http://hungram.unideb.hu>.

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## **The Need for Linguistic Creativity in Foreign Language Classroom Discourse**

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**Abstract.** The aim of this study is to propose that the concept of linguistic creativity, traditionally applied to aesthetic and literary use of language, should be extended so as to bridge the gap between language and literature teaching. Creativity not only contributes to increasing students' motivation but also promotes problem solving, a higher order thinking skill.

Language learners' ability to manipulate linguistic and semantic units for fun may be considered as a vital component of metalinguistic awareness. The role that explicit knowledge about language plays in language learning and teaching needs to be clearly identified. The paper intends to deal with a possible relationship between language ability and metalinguistic knowledge.

Since double meaning or ambiguity is a relevant feature of language play and verbal humour, the study also attempts to illustrate how lexical and structural ambiguity, puns and riddles can contribute to developing learners' language proficiency. The paper discusses some possibilities to develop learners' linguistic creativity through language play from a psycholinguistic and cognitive aspect.

**Keywords:** linguistic creativity, metalinguistic awareness, cognitive control, verbal play

### **1. Linguistic creativity revisited**

The concept of creativity in general is still difficult to define, in spite of numerous empirical investigations within different scientific disciplines and qualitative ones within human and social sciences. Carter (2004) presents an

overview of the construct from a variety of perspectives including psychological, pragmatic, psychometric, psychodynamic, biographical, cognitive and sociocultural approaches. His conclusion is that a “systems” approach, which takes into consideration the multiple components of creativity is probably the most valuable one. The Hungarian psychology professor Csíkszentmihályi is also positive that “Creativity is not the product of single individuals, but of social systems making judgments about individuals’ products” (cited in Carter 2004: 37). If we agree with such a definition, it stands to reason to accept the importance of a constant interaction between the individual as creator, the field in which he or she works and the reaction of people who assess the abstract, virtual or physical product. This socially and culturally established systems view can probably most fully answer the question what creativity is.

The concept of linguistic creativity, the topic of the present paper, has also been approached from a variety of perspectives. Looking at the construct from a historical aspect, we will discover generative, lexical, cognitive and cultural dimensions appearing through time.

One of the numerous definitions claims: “Creativity is an all-pervasive feature of everyday language. ... Linguistic creativity is not simply a property of exceptional people but an exceptional property of all people” (Carter 2004: 13). Creativity in language has been investigated from several aspects since its generative perspective was presented by Chomsky in the 1960s (Chomsky 2009). Zawada (2006) claims that this view fails to account for the ability of all human beings to create and innovate in various ways and for various motivations. By now the Chomskyan view has been replaced by the view in semantics of lexical creativity, according to which human beings can create new meanings whenever necessary. The possibility of combining these opposing views of linguistic creativity provides the basis for the cognitive perspective.

Similarly to Carter (2004), Maybin & Swann (2007) also talk about the democratization of creativity and examine recent work by researchers who claim that creativity in language is not only a property of especially skilled and gifted language users, but is pervasive in routine everyday practice. Language users who creatively design meaning are in the focus of attention, with the consequence of interactional functions of creativity being shed light on alongside the textual analysis of poetic form. Literariness, language play and humour are approached from a much broader perspective.

### **1.1. Homo ludens**

More than 50 years ago the Dutch cultural theorist and professor Huizinga (1955) discussed the importance of the play element in culture and society.

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Creativity, language play or ‘ludic’ language (Crystal 1998) has not received appropriate attention in linguistic studies, although the importance of features of language that may make people laugh is stressed, among others, by Ross (1998). Riddles, limericks, haikus, jokes, playful uses of accents break the rules of language for the simple reason of being funny. Language play has importance in children’s metalinguistic development, and like other forms of play, in fact, contributes to children’s educational and social development according to Cook (2000). Humour very often results from the conflict between what is expected and what actually appears in the joke. He is positive that “the most obvious feature of much humour is: an ambiguity, or double meaning, which deliberately misleads the audience, followed by a punchline.

*Do you believe in clubs for young people?*

*Only when kindness fails* (Cook 2000: 7).

A common feature of literature and verbal humour is that special care is taken in terms of variations in self-expression, as Crystal (1987) remarks. Pomerantz & Bell (2007) consider how instances of spontaneous, creative language play can afford access to a range of linguistic practices that are often devalued or ignored in classrooms. University students in an advanced Spanish conversation course jointly manipulate linguistic forms, semantic units, and discursive elements for the amusement of themselves and others. These humorous moments provide opportunities for new and more varied forms of participation and language use, contributing to the expansion of learners’ overall communicative repertoires.

Language play has recently come into increasing focus in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, at least according to Bushnell (2009). In addition to research findings in L1 that have long shown the prevalence of language play in both the language data available to the learner and learner production, recent research in L2 has shown that language play is also a prominent characteristic of the language production of both child and adult L2 learners. The author argues that language play is potentially of great benefit to the linguistic development of L2 learners – echoing Cekaite & Aronsson’s argument in favour of a *ludic* model of language learning, in which they contend that “we need to take non-serious language more seriously” (2005: 169). In the authors’ study of an immersion classroom it was found that children with limited L2 proficiency recurrently employed form-focused language play in spontaneous peer conversations. Playful mislabellings and puns often generated extended repair sequences that could be seen as informal “language lessons” focused on formal aspects of language. Simultaneously, shared laughter and shifting alignments between peers were central aspects of the local politics of classroom life. Yet joking included artful performance and collaborative aestheticism, involving alliteration and other forms



of parallelisms, as well as code switching, laughing, and artful variations in pitch, volume and voice quality.

## **2. The notions of metalinguistic awareness and knowledge**

Meta-linguistics, according to Mora (2001), is the ability to consciously reflect on the nature of language and it incorporates the following skills: 1. knowing that language has a potential greater than that of simple symbols (it goes beyond the meaning) 2. knowing that words are separable from their referents (meaning resides in the mind, not in the name) 3. knowing that language has a structure that can be manipulated (language is malleable, you can change and write things in many different ways; for example, if something is written grammatically incorrectly, you can change it). Metalinguistic awareness is also known as metalinguistic ability which is closer to metacognition (“knowing about knowing”).

The ability to manipulate linguistic and semantic units for others’ and/or one’s own amusement may be considered as a vital component of metalinguistic awareness, with the help of which learners’ attention is focused on formal rather than functional aspects of language. This special dimension of language performance or skill, (cf. Cazden 1974) which probably requires more cognitive control than the acquisition of speaking skills, should play a particularly important role in education. Furthermore, Cazden (1974) claims that metalinguistic awareness is a unique construct because endowed with this ability people attend to language forms in and for themselves. Establishing links between metalinguistic awareness and figures of speech, Carter states that “different figures of speech in use require different degrees of conscious processing effort by speakers and listeners” (Carter 2004: 126). Mora’s definition seems to be the most concise one: it is an ability to objectify language as a process and as a thing. In Birdsong (1989: 163) metalinguistic awareness is described as “a perceptual and cognitive trait involving sensitivity to formal aspects of language”, whereas Roth, et al. (cited in Zipke 2008) emphasize that metalinguistic awareness enables one to deal with the linguistic code independent of meaning.

Birdsong (1989: 58-59) gives an overview of at least 15 metalinguistic task types with their relevant demand on cognitive control. As can be seen, judgments of ambiguity seem to require a higher level of cognitive control than grammaticality judgments since analysis of structure involves ignoring initial reading of sentence and subsequent analysis.

### **2.1. Metalinguistic awareness in L1**

Evidence for the early development of metalinguistic abilities in the native language is provided by Clark (1978), among others, observing that two-year-old

children are able to attend to linguistic structure and function, and their cognitive and linguistic development enhances their metalinguistic abilities. In Birdsong's (1989) overview of metalinguistic abilities and activities that are arranged by the chronological order of their emergence, the starting point is the age of one and a half, when the child, wishing to imitate adult pronunciation, repeats words. Depending on individual differences, major metalinguistic abilities – including the ability to judge acceptability, to recognize paraphrases and to understand structural ambiguity – develop by the age of 12. The child's creativity, high verbal intelligence and sophisticated use of language as a tool for communication have been found as variables influencing metalinguistic development (Van Kleeck 1982). As metalinguistic awareness grows, children begin to recognize that statements may have a literal meaning and an implied meaning. They begin to make more frequent and sophisticated use of metaphors such as the simile, "We packed the room like sardines". Between the ages of 6 and 8 most children begin to expand upon their metalinguistic awareness and start to recognize irony and sarcasm. These concepts require the child to understand the subtleties of an utterance's social and cultural context. Children develop a creative repertoire of interactive linguistic skills from around the age 7, as Crystal (1987) reports. Such skills include learning to tell jokes, riddles and make up language games. The ability to talk backwards is one of the most remarkable skills.

## **2.2. Similar or different: metalinguistic ability and language ability**

Contradictory views have been presented with regard to the concept of metalinguistic ability. According to some experts it must be recognizable as a distinct achievement while integrating into other aspects of linguistic and cognitive skills. Metalinguistic ability may be considered to equal knowledge about language, but then "the problem is to separate that knowledge *of* language from the knowledge that is needed to *use* the language" (Bialystok 1993: 4). However, by giving it a separate label, a knowledge base of its own together with a separate course of development, might result in assuming that metalinguistic ability is independent of linguistic ability that is responsible for using language. The advantage of treating metalinguistic ability as an autonomous skill is that in this case accounts of linguistic development have no relevance for its development. If metalinguistic ability is a mechanism separate from linguistic ability, then there may exist unique explanations for its functions and development.

In contrast, there is another view in which metalinguistic ability forms an integral part of linguistic ability allowing the possibility to be similar to it in certain aspects and different in others. If it is not a different kind of thing from linguistic ability, then presumably it does not need a different kind of label and certainly does not need a different theory to account for its development. It is clear that a proper

definition of metalinguistic ability must be a compromise between these two positions. Accepting such an approach to the definition of metalinguistic ability, one should find out how to relate it to linguistic ability, and how to reconcile its development with the facts and theories of linguistic ability. Nonetheless, most accounts of metalinguistic ability tend to treat it distinctly from the notion of linguistic ability.

Metalinguistic knowledge and language proficiency, though both appear to be part of linguistic ability, are usually considered to constitute its separate factors. As a result, teaching one is no means of improving the other. Formal metalinguistic knowledge, in other words a conscious awareness of the formal properties of the target language, is regarded to be less important than the ability to detect systematic and meaningful patterning in it.

Bialystok (1993: 7) conceptualizes it to be an identifiable body of knowledge to be distinguished from knowledge of grammar. It is the level of explicitness characteristic of metalinguistic knowledge that distinguishes it from linguistic knowledge. "One is able to identify, understand, and produce grammatical sentences without much access to the system of rules and conditions that makes those sentences grammatical". Metalinguistic knowledge necessarily includes some detailed representation of those rules. While knowledge of grammar may be part of what is meant by metalinguistic knowledge, it seems to be inadequate to equal the concept of metalinguistic. Metalinguistic knowledge should be knowledge of the abstract structure of language, and obviously, knowledge of the abstract principles is distinct from knowledge of a particular language. The content of metalinguistic knowledge must be broader than any that applies to knowledge of a particular language.

### **2.3. Metalinguistic awareness in L2**

Roehr (2008) claims that existing research indicates that instructed learners' L2 proficiency and their metalinguistic knowledge are moderately correlated. However, the operationalization of the construct of metalinguistic knowledge has varied somewhat across studies. Metalinguistic knowledge has typically been operationalized as learners' ability to correct, describe, and explain L2 errors. More recently, this operationalization has been extended to additionally include learners' L1 language-analytic ability as measured by tests traditionally used to assess components of language learning aptitude. The study reported employs a narrowly focused measure of L2 proficiency and incorporated L1 language-analytic ability into a measure of metalinguistic knowledge. It was found that the linguistic and metalinguistic knowledge of advanced university-level L1 English learners of L2 German correlated strongly. Moreover, the outcome of a principal components analysis suggests that learners' ability to correct, describe, and explain highlighted

L2 errors and their L1 language-analytic ability may constitute components of the same construct. The theoretical implications of these findings for the concept of metalinguistic knowledge in L2 learning are undoubtedly important.

### 3. Definitions and types of ambiguity

The study attempts to illustrate how lexical and grammatical ambiguity, in other words local and global ambiguity, and language play can contribute to developing learners' language proficiency. Without metalinguistic skills language learners cannot understand or generate verbal humour. The paper intends to shed light on some possible pedagogical implications involved in preparing learners to become competent language users.

Depending on the particular aspect of life or scientific discipline, various definitions have been provided. For social psychologists the term is inseparable from situations characterized by some kind of uncertainty. For language teachers it may function as a challenging task with the help of which learners can be forced to disambiguate sentences containing syntactic ambiguity. From a linguistic point of view McArthur (1996: 36) defines "ambiguity", which derives from Latin *ambiguitas* – as "acting both ways, shifting from *ambi* – both ways, *agere/actum* to drive, act. Actual or potential uncertainty of meaning, especially if a word, phrase, or sentence can be understood in two ways." The presence of context definitely enables one to disambiguate many statements that are ambiguous in isolation.

The traditional approach to identifying and resolving ambiguity usually distinguishes lexical (part of speech or category) ambiguity (Sample sentences without the source given in brackets have been devised by the author of the article):

[1] *Father looked very hard.*

For some authors like Radford (1999) the categorial status of a particular phrase would belong to the simple case of structural ambiguity. Others (cf. Pinkal 1995) claim that lexical ambiguity includes only instances of homonymy and polysemy:

[2] *I deposited \$100 in the bank.*

The importance of context in which an ambiguous word is used cannot be forgotten. According to Cruse (2000) what used to be called as ambiguity tests are more likely to be labelled as tests for discreteness:

[3] *Mary is wearing a light coat; so is Jane* (Cruse 2000: 106).

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Antagonism is criterial for ambiguity, and in case a sentence calls for two antagonistic readings to be activated at the same time, it gives rise to the phenomenon of zeugma, or punning:

- [4] *When the Chair in the Philosophy Department became vacant, the Appointment Committee sat on it for six months* (Cruse 2000: 108).

Many syntactic ambiguities arise from the possibility of alternative constituent structures:

- [5] *We need more highly trained scientists* (Close 1988: 103).

Quantifiers and quantifying adverbs are to be found as causes for ambiguity as to the range of applications, whereas pronouns and indexical adverbs may lead to referential ambiguity. A different kind of structural ambiguity occurs when a given word or phrase can be taken as modifying any one of two (or more) different constituents:

- [6] *I saw the man with the telescope* (Hindle & Rooth 1993: 103).

In another example:

- [7] *The President could not ratify the treaty* (Radford 1999: 66),

ambiguity relates to the scope of the negative particle so for this reason this type is commonly known as scope ambiguity. We talk about elliptical ambiguity when certain predicates can occur in multiple argument positions:

- [8] *He loves his dog more than his children.*

Semantic ambiguity arises when a word or concept has an inherently diffuse meaning based on widespread or informal usage:

- [9] *Iraqi head seeks arms* (Pinkal 1995: 75).

Ambiguity is different from vagueness, which arises when the boundaries of meaning are indistinct. Pinkal (1995) considers the two phenomena to be related, however declares that they refer to different things. "Ambiguous expressions can assume an arbitrarily but finitely large number of readings, whereas vague expressions allow infinitely many precisifications" (Pinkal 1995: 75).

### 3.1. Types of structural ambiguity

A detailed analysis is provided on the topic in Hirst (1992: 131-163). Whenever a sentence has more than one possible parse, structural disambiguation is necessary. The author introduces four basic types of structural ambiguity and labels the first type as ambiguity due to attachment problems emphasizing the importance of modifier placement. Due to its flexible position in a sentence, it is the Adverbial realized by a Prepositional Phrase that will typically be the reason for such type of ambiguity. Sentences [10]a.- 14 can be found in Hirst (1992: 131-163):

[10] a. *The door near the stairs with the 'Members Only' sign had tempted Nadia from the moment she first entered the club.*

Interestingly, hardly anyone would have a problem to accept the sentence:

[10] b. *The police will shoot terrorists with rifles.*

to be ambiguous, and the other one:

[10] c. *Last week an 18<sup>th</sup> century chair was bought by a dealer with beautifully carved legs.*

unambiguous. Therefore, the priority of meaning should be acknowledged. When a sentence contains a sub-clause, both clauses may contain places for the attachment of the Prepositional Phrase or the Adverb Phrase:

[10] d. *Nadia knew that Ross fried the chicken with garlic.*

Analytical ambiguities are also quite common and they occur when the nature of the constituent is itself in doubt:

[11] a. *The tourists objected to the guide that they couldn't hear.*

The preferred reading is that the '*that clause*' is a relative clause modifying the guide. However in the sentence:

[11] b. *The tourists signalled to the guide that they couldn't hear,*

the preference is that it is a sentential complement modifying the verb ‘signal’. Sometimes it is problematic to distinguish a Present Participle from an Adjective in an isolated sentence like:

[12] *They are cooking apples.*

Similarly, to distinguish between a Present Participle and a Noun:

[13] *We discussed running.*

Participles and adjectivals can be troublesome when they occur at the end of the clause:

[14] *The manager approached the boy smoking a cigar.*

The use of non-finite clauses can easily lead to more than one interpretation, at least without context. Close (1988) invites students to expand each dependent clause in two different ways:

[15]a. *I ran over a dog crossing the square.*

[15]b. *Dressed in white robes, we thought the visitors looked like priests in some strange ceremony.* (Close 1988: 95).

If two sentences differ in syntactic structure, they will also differ in semantic structure. There are at least four different structures that can underlie sentences with the following structure: NP+be+Adjective+to Infinitive:

[16] a. *He is splendid to wait.*

[16] b. *He is slow to react.*

[16] c. *He is furious to hear it.*

[16] d. *He is hard to convince* (Close 1988: 114).

The third type of structural ambiguity, viz. gap finding and filling ambiguities occur when a moved constituent has to be returned to its pre-transformational starting point and there is more than one place that it might go:

[17] *Those are the boys that the police debated about fighting* (Hirst 1992: 154).

Taking the first gap gives the meaning that the police debated with the boys on the topic of fighting; the second gives the meaning that the police debated among themselves about fighting the boys.

Finally, Hirst (1992) declares that if a word is categorially ambiguous, a sentence containing it can be structurally ambiguous:

[18] *The Japanese push bottles up the Chinese.*

The term that is used for such a type is the interaction between categorial and structural ambiguity. As has been illustrated there are many different kinds of structural ambiguity, and there is at present no agreement on any general principles that can be used for disambiguation. Knowledge from several different sources is used. For the reasons mentioned above, the methodological significance of controlling subject and task related factors in metalinguistic tasks like ambiguity judgments should be emphasized.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The aim of the present paper has been to illustrate that linguistic creativity and language teaching should not be separated in L2 classroom discourse. If teachers looked for sample sentences to illustrate ambiguity per se in literary sources instead of relying on examples from grammar books, they would make an important step in combining literature and language teaching. L2 learners' literary and linguistic knowledge ought to be exploited in an interactive way in order to offer them the possibility to become not only better users of the foreign language but also better human beings. In case creativity is applied to teaching, old issues are dealt with in new ways, in which verbal humour and language play may function as language teaching and learning tools contributing to intellectually challenging, pedagogically stimulating and enjoyable lessons.

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## **Effects on the Linguistic Awareness of Foreign Language Learners**

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**Abstract.** The last decade has witnessed a rapid increase in interest in multilingualism and the benefits of multilingual education have been advocated by many scholars during this last period. The aim of the study is to reflect upon how multilingualism is incorporated in the educational setting under investigation. In other words, the study focuses on multicompetent foreign language users and their language behavior during EFL classes. Several studies on multilingualism have shown that there are qualitative differences between second and third or additional language learning and that these can be ascribed to an increased level of metalinguistic awareness in the learner. The question is: Do the teachers' language behavior have an effect on the language awareness of the students? In order to answer this question the following qualitative research methods were used: classroom observation and interviews with learners. Results show that teachers' language behavior has a major effect on students' language use.

**Keywords:** multilingualism, language awareness, multicompetence, language use, EFL

### **1. Introduction**

The last decade has witnessed a rapid increase in interest in multilingualism on the part of researchers, educators and policy makers. In Europe, this development is certainly linked to the commitment of the European Union to maintain and support a multilingual Europe. In 1995 it was proposed that EU citizens should be proficient in three European languages, their L1 and two other

community languages, to ensure multilingualism as an essential characteristic feature of the European identity.

Although, on a socio-political level, it is considered to be important to learn other European languages, multilingualism may possibly be seen as an exception by the European population because it is misunderstood in many important respects. Multilinguals are still expected to be as multiple monolinguals in one person, which most of the time necessarily leads to the treatment of multilinguals as incompetent speakers in each of their languages.

The benefits of multilingualism and multilingual education have been advocated by a number of scholars (Cook 2002, Laufer 2003, Pavlenko 2003, Jessner 2008) during the last decade. In particular, findings that emerged from new research fields like Third Language Acquisition (TLA) and inquiries that have been made around the notion of multicompetence, have contributed to a better understanding of multilingual processes and language use.

Until very recently (and this is still true for some of the schools and teachers), the only guarantee for successful instructed language learning seemed to be a strict separation of the languages in the multilingual learner and in the classroom. As has been just mentioned, in the traditional classroom the language subjects are often kept totally apart, and contact between the languages in the curriculum is rejected (sometimes even forbidden) since it is considered a hindrance to successful language learning. Consequently, teachers keep knowledge about other languages, including the L1, out of the classroom in order not to confuse students.

Yet, as recent research on TLA and multilingualism clearly shows, during multilingual production links are established between the languages in the multilingual mind and made use of. Additionally, metalinguistic awareness and metacognitive skills are developed as part of multilingual development and should also be fostered in an instructed context (Jessner 1999, 2006).

## **2. Multicompetence**

Using multicompetence as a framework, this study intends to explore the behavior and language use of Transylvanian Hungarian minority students in an EFL classroom setting.

Over the last decade or so, the concept of multicompetence has attracted significant research attention in the field of applied linguistics and, in particular, in the study of multiple language use and learning. The idea of linguistic multicompetence was first proposed in the early 1990s as “the knowledge of more than one language in the same mind” (Cook 1991) and I believe it is the best notion that describes the linguistic competence of multilinguals. With the emergence of the notion of multicompetence, the term “language user” has also become preferred to that of “language learner” as the former regards the speaker not as an

unsuccessful native speaker but a different kind of person in their own right. Thus, the multicompetence perspective allows us to view language learners not as incompetent speakers of a language but as language users who have at their disposal an “extended and integrated linguistic repertoire” (Edwards and Dewaele 2007: 35) that is grounded in the actual linguistic practices they engage in.

This interpretation of the term multicompetence was further developed first by Dewaele and Pavlenko (2003), then by Edwards and Dewaele (2007), who defended the idea that multicompetence should not be perceived as a fixed, ideal end-state but rather as a dynamic, ever-evolving system. To explain the dynamic nature of the languages in contact in one mind Dewaele and Pavlenko (2003: 137) use the metaphor of liquid colors,

[t]hat blend unevenly, that is, some areas will take on the new color resulting from the mixing, but other areas will retain the original color, while yet others may look like the new color, but a closer look may reveal a slightly different hue depending on the viewer’s angle.

According to Dewaele and Pavlenko’s view (2003: 137), multicompetence is a never-ending, complex, nonlinear dynamic process in the speaker’s mind. This does not mean that parts of the system cannot be in equilibrium for a while; but a change in the environment, i.e., a change in the linguistic input, may cause widespread restructuring with some “islands” remaining in their original state (Edwards and Dewaele 2007: 225). Using the metaphor of a juggler, Edwards and Dewaele conclude that multilingual language use relies on “basically the same technique” linked to that individual’s unique multicompetence (Edwards and Dewaele 2007: 235). Moreover, this ability to use several languages that speakers’ have at their disposal becomes more complex as the input is more complex (Hall et. al 2006: 230).

The quote suggests that the term multicompetence has been introduced, not only to avoid making differences between the never-ending lines of bilingual, trilingual, quadrilingual, etc. competencies, but to stress the importance of the techniques and strategies that underlie the linguistic behavior of multilingual individuals. Concentrating on the behavior of multilingual individuals, I can state that they have a special ability of how to deal with languages in certain situations and what language to use in what circumstances. I understand this ability to handle effectively several languages as a technique possessed by multicompetent language users. Among the several factors that contribute to individual multilingualism one major ingredient is education, more specifically, foreign language education.

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## 2.1. Application of the concept to foreign language teaching

This subsection first discusses Cook's (2002, 2006) proposals for language teaching based on the concepts of multicompetence and the L2 user, then I will present my own views on the application of this concept to FL teaching. Cook proposes that the external goals of language teaching should be related to the L2 user and not to the native speaker. While traditional methods of language teaching set the native speaker's use of language as their goal, the goal of language teaching from the L2 user perspective should be achieving proficient L2 users who have the ability to use languages in a variety of contexts. Teaching should help the students with L2 uses of language, most obviously translation and code-switching, and the standards against which L2 users are measured should also be L2 user standards, not L1 native speaker standards. The success of these students should be measured by the ability to use the second language effectively (Cook 2002: 335-6).

The role models should be successful L2 users and not native L1 users. If the proper goal is the L2 user, native speaker teachers have no intrinsic advantages. On the one hand, they are not using an L2 form of the language; on the other hand, their inability to speak the students' first language may be a less efficient role model for success in L2 learning. A non-native teacher may set the students a more feasible goal since, as Kramsch (1998: 19) puts it, "non-native teachers and students alike are intimidated by the native-speaker norm" and students may prefer the more achievable model of the fallible non-native speaker (Cook 2002: 337).

A further proposal is that the value of the L1 in the classroom should be emphasized. As I have mentioned in the introduction as well, earlier language teaching methods tried to avoid the L1 in the classroom. At one level, national syllabuses insisted that the L1 should be used as little as possible. In the classroom, then, students are never encouraged to see the first language as something that is part of themselves, whatever they do, and they are prevented from using their L1 as a tool in learning the second language (Cook 2002: 339-40).

As we could see from Cook's proposals, foreign language education faces rapid changes and challenges. We must also bear in mind that the so-called 'traditional' foreign language education was provided for elites and not for all learners where language learning was seen as a gateway to "high" culture and elite international communication. Today's society is experiencing a shift, which is gaining more emphasis together with the European Union's proposals to achieve a multilingual Europe. These changes mean that the expansion of the language repertoire is seen as important for all, not just for the elite (two languages in addition to one's mother tongue proposed by the European Council) and language learning goals are reconceptualized in functional/instrumental terms. Thus education, as one of the key factors in achieving multilingualism, is facing not just new views on linguistic norms but also new linguistic needs. The plurilingual

approach in the European educational discourse emphasizes the fact that as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other people, he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact (CoE 2001: 4).

Thus returning to Cook's proposal on the use of the L1 in the foreign language classroom, I would also add that additional language knowledge should also be taken into account when learning a foreign language. In our case, Transylvanian high school learners are already considered to be multilingual individuals, who, besides their L1, also have knowledge in at least two or three languages. In this way, English language teaching could also draw on this multilingual repertoire of the students, taking into account that both the L2 (Romanian) and the possible German or Italian languages are typologically closer to English than their Hungarian mother tongue.

### **3. Research Questions**

Since the concept of multicompetence has been treated theoretically so far, the aim of the research was to show and describe its ways of manifestation in foreign language (FL) classrooms, thus reflecting upon how multilingualism is incorporated in the educational context under investigation.

Several studies on multilingualism have shown that there are qualitative differences between second and third or additional language learning and that these can be ascribed to an increased level of metalinguistic awareness in the learner as learners tend to rely on prior knowledge and they "try to connect the new elements to whatever linguistic and other knowledge" that they have (Ringbom 2007: 1). Thus, the following research questions focus on the learners' language awareness:

- Do students consider the use of other languages during EFL classroom as an asset in learning English?
- What are the languages that are viewed to help students in learning English?
- Do the teachers' linguistic behaviors and the language used as a medium of instruction have an effect on learners' language awareness?

#### 4. Subjects/Setting

The research included the investigation of eight schools (both primary and secondary) from Central Transylvania but for the purpose of this paper I am using data collected in three secondary schools.

Fieldwork was carried out in two towns from Central Transylvania, two secondary schools from a bigger town with a population of 145,000 out of which 46% Hungarian minority population and one secondary school from a smaller town with a population of 18,000 out of which 25% Hungarian minority population. This region is selected, first, because it is multilingual in nature, consisting of a high rate of ethnic minority population, and, secondly, for practical reasons, it being my actual residence where I can have an insider's knowledge of the community and can, therefore, gain easier access to schools and the student population.

The reason for selecting these three schools is that all students are Hungarian minority high school learners. Students were in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, their age ranging between 18 and 19. The chart below shows the description of the classrooms visited:

	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3
School type	Hungarian	Mixed <sup>1</sup>	Mixed
Teacher L1	Hungarian	Hungarian	Romanian
Student L1	Hungarian	Hungarian	Hungarian

At the beginning of the research process field relations were established, consents were gained from stakeholders. The data gathering procedure included several steps from which I am going to analyze the data from classroom observations and interviews with students. In each classroom there was an EFL class recorded, placing several digital recorders around the classroom. Observations are a useful means for gathering in-depth information about such phenomena as the types of languages, activities, interactions, instruction and events that occur in second and foreign language classrooms (Mackey and Gass 2005: 186-7). Then semi-structured one-to-one interviews were conducted with 3 students in each class. The interviews aimed to explore the students' perception on language use during the EFL class and their views on their own multicompetence and language use. The interviews were carried out in Hungarian, the mother tongue of the students and were recorded by digital voice recorders. Unlike observations that focus on people's behavior, interviews examine people's views and values, and therefore can be much more in-depth in discovering, uncovering, unmasking feelings, thoughts, views and

<sup>1</sup> Mixed schools are schools with two parallel sections, Hungarian and Romanian. This does not mean that students are mixed within one class, but there are for example two 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes, one Hungarian and one Romanian.



conceptions. As Jones (2003: 258) argues, “in order to understand other persons’ construction of reality, we would do well to ask them”.

## 5. Classroom observation results

In order to analyze the recorded classroom interaction, a qualitative means of data analysis was used. As I am particularly interested in the language use and linguistic behavior of teachers and learners, the transcripts were analyzed mainly for code choice and code-switching patterns. The framework used for classroom discourse analysis was ethnography of communication approach, which “recognizes the influence of culture and social realities in seeking to find holistic explanations for meaning and behavior” (McKay 2006: 102).

Concentrating on the behavior of multilingual individuals I examined teachers’ and students’ language use during English classrooms. Understanding multicompetence as a technique and an ability to use the languages existent in an individual’s linguistic repertoire I focused on code-switching and language shift inside the English class.

A general overview of classroom language use in these settings would look like the following:

<b>Hungarian school/ HU teacher</b>	<b>Mixed school/ HU teacher</b>	<b>Mixed school/ RO teacher</b>
Teacher language use: <b>ONLY ENGLISH</b>	Teacher language use: English and Hungarian	Teacher language use: English and Romanian
On-record student language use: English mainly and some informal matter in Hungarian	On-record student language use: English, Hungarian and Romanian	On-record student language use: English, Romanian
Student-student interaction: Hungarian	Student-student interaction: Hungarian	Student-student interaction: Hungarian

Research has observed that teacher-initiated code switches are most likely to occur in cases of giving explanations, asking/answering questions and exercising discipline. As for student-initiated code switches, they are most frequent in asking and answering questions, which are “on-record” and student-student “off-record” conversations and during group work.

The recordings from the Hungarian high school showed that the teacher used TL (English) for classroom management, for presentation of material and for interaction with learners. The dominant classroom discourse was TL discourse and the mother tongue of students/teachers was totally disregarded, although they shared the same mother tongue. In the Hungarian school there is one attempt from

the part of the learners to use their mother tongue in relation to some off-task interaction with the teacher about a tap that went wrong. The teacher clearly rejects the use of the students' mother tongue and she exerts her authority in class by repeating the students' explanation in English. Her authority is clearly manifested as well as her preference for using exclusively the target language.

There is an important observation to point out in the case of the mixed school with Hungarian teacher, namely, if both teachers and students learning English are of Hungarian mother tongue, what role does the occurrence of Romanian language have there? The variety of languages used in mixed schools is wider and teachers are more flexible in terms of code switches. In this case, a student signals that she has problems with translating a part of the text and after the teacher's encouraging and eliciting words she does the translation into Romanian. The teacher repeats the same words in Hungarian and continues to translate the text.

In the mixed school with a Romanian teacher again there are at least three languages used. The children speak Romanian to negotiate disciplinary issues and to ask for clarification in both meaning and task instructions. As students are native speakers of Hungarian they also use Hungarian among themselves for off-task communication, group discussion and meaning clarification. Hungarian is not used in communication with the teacher as she lacks Hungarian language knowledge. Therefore there is no explicit reference to the students' native language, though it is present in the transcript.

In spite of the great variety of in-settings there are some general "trends" that could be traced. Teachers and students draw on (parts of) their plurilingual repertoire in a common sense way, to advance the orderly progress of instruction (code-switching between languages, e.g., to negotiate new meanings, to manage the classroom and to discuss metalinguistic concepts). Still the setting/environment and the teachers' linguistic repertoire in particular, have a great influence on language use in the classroom. Teachers model and control classroom language use through their linguistic behavior and practice (manifest authority or prove flexibility). Although classroom observations reflect the existence of at least three languages (Hungarian, Romanian and English), these languages are not compared or contrasted; the other language (RO/HU) serves as a tool in making the target language more accessible.

## **6. Student interview results**

Semi-structured interviews were carried out in order to gather information about students' perspective on classroom language use and their language awareness. Thus, 9 students were interviewed in the three high schools from Central Transylvania. The interviews were recorded with a digital recorder and are between 15-40 minutes.

Interviews also show a great variety in the languages used during an English lesson. Students confirm our results from classroom observations, namely, other languages than English are used as well during an English class. The use of these languages differs from class to class as it was presented before.

The most surprising observation for me was that students from the Hungarian school – when asked about which languages they consider helpful in learning English – did not mention Romanian at all as being helpful in learning English but referred to their German teacher using English as language of instruction. This could be partly explained by the attitudes of Hungarian students towards learning Romanian, perceived as an obligation and partly by the official status of the school, being a monolingual Hungarian high school. Though the school is officially a monolingual institution, its teachers and students cannot be called monolinguals as they are to a greater or lesser degree already multilinguals.

The interview results show that students who come from the town with a smaller Hungarian population (Classroom 2) or students who have Romanian native-speaker English teachers (Classroom 3) claim to use more Romanian during class. Interviewees who have a greater exposure to Romanian language tend to be more aware of the help that Romanian language represents in learning English.

Below I am going to present some extracts from the interview transcript showing students' perception of the help of Romanian in learning English.

(1)

Könnyebb nekem angolról románra fordítani, mert könnyebben megtalálom a szó értelmét, magyarra pedig nehezebb, mert könnyebb angolról románra, mert hasonlítanak a szavak.

(IntMSPrim)

[It is easier for me to translate from English into Romanian, because it is easier to find the meaning of the word; translation into Hungarian is more difficult, because it is easier to translate from English into Romanian, because the words resemble.]

(2)

Milyen más nyelveket használtok angol órán belül?

A magyar, és a román is egyszer-egyszer.

Azt mire használjátok?

Amikor nem tudjuk lefordítani magyarra, könnyebb románra, egyszerűbb.

(IntLUDSec)

[What other languages do you use during English classes?

Hungarian and sometimes Romanian.

What do you use them for?

When we cannot translate it into Hungarian, it is easier into Romanian, it is simpler.]

What we can see from the two interview extracts above is that Romanian represents mainly an aid in the case of translations, due to its typological closeness and cognates viewed by students as “words that resemble”. It is interesting, how the typological closeness between learner’s L2 and English, mentioned as a resource already at the beginning of this paper, is being noticed by the students and perceived as a useful strategy in foreign language learning. The perceived typological closeness between languages can represent further evidence for Ringbom’s statement that language learners, when learning a new language, tend to rely on their prior knowledge and connect new elements to whatever linguistic or other knowledge they have (Ringbom 2007: 1).

(3)

A tanárnő elmagyarázza románul, van amikor angolul is.

Miket szokott románul elmagyarázni a tanárnő?

Hát például a szavak értelmét elmagyarázza, hogy ha lefordít egy szöveget, elmagyarázza, hogy mit jelent, mert vannak nekünk is olyan szavak még, amiket románból nem tanultunk s még nem értjük, s még nem tudjuk azt a fogalmat.

(IntMSPrim)

[The teacher explains it in Romanian, but sometimes in English as well.

What are the things that are explained in Romanian?

Well, for example, she explains the meaning of the words, or when she translates a text, she explains what it means, because we also have some Romanian words we haven’t learnt yet and we don’t know, and we don’t know that notion.]

Using more languages in the class is thought to be beneficial and students say that they spare time by having things explained in their mother tongue or second language, as they can understand it better and move on to the next task. They understand grammar better if it is explained in Hungarian or Romanian respectively. The most common picture of an English class, on the basis of the interviews, is that “things are explained to us in Hungarian, the examples are in English” (translated from Hungarian). During group activities students use their mother tongue to discuss the task and present their answers in English. Interviewees favour multiple language use in the foreign language classroom and formulate their needs referring to the use of the other languages they are competent in.

As a concluding remark, we can say that interviews also witness the existence of multiple language use during English classes no matter what classroom setting

we are looking at. Students tend to use those languages in which they are more proficient or languages they are exposed to at most as strategies in foreign language learning. The three interview transcripts above bring evidence not solely to the need of using more languages but also show a certain degree of learners' linguistic awareness existing mainly at an intuitive level.

## **7. Conclusions**

Both classroom observations and student interviews showed that the use of multiple languages is indeed present in a real-life, natural classroom context, where both students and teachers bring other languages into class.

We have seen examples of teacher and student code switches serving different purposes: enhancing understanding, encouraging, resolving problems, etc. The differential effects of teacher code switches had already been rendered in previous research (cf. Lee 2009) and the author's conclusion was that code-switching young and adult learner groups qualified significantly better in comparison to the English-only groups. Looking at our data, where both teacher and student code switches are present and where students perceive teacher code-switching as a useful strategy in language learning we may suggest that teacher's code-switching might be more beneficial as translations or quick discussions may save time for more or other type of learning.

We have also seen examples of student's code switch, where the other language served as a resource to solve a language problem during translation exercises. Several studies touch the topic that language users choose the typologically closest, i.e. the most similar language to transfer. Learners who know a number of languages are more likely to show influence from the foreign language typologically nearest to the target language (cf. Williams and Hammarberg 1998, Ushioda 2007).

We could see that even if some teachers try to stick to the idea of separating languages in the class (Classroom 1), these other languages are still activated during an English class and switches between languages occur. Instructional goals, target language activities and metalinguistic activities concern target standard language only and other languages are invisible from this point of view. The results of the present study show how teachers' linguistic behaviour and practice model and control classroom language use. While teachers from monolingual schools favour an exclusively target language education, mixed-school teachers allow for a more varied use of the available languages, however, these languages are not used consciously for an integrative foreign language learning. Thus teachers may need to develop ways in which to promote multicompetence in the foreign language classroom, firstly by they themselves modelling and reflecting upon multiple language use and communication strategies.

Overall, on the basis of these findings, I suggest that instructional goals in language education should be reviewed and adjusted to the needs of today's multilingual society. If we accept the multicompetence approach, then language education needs to move on from an additive view of multilingualism towards a more integrative one, where prior linguistic knowledge of the students can be exploited and metalinguistic awareness is developed within foreign language instruction.

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## **Facing Difficulties in the Acquisition of the English Passive by L1 Speakers of Hungarian**

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**Abstract.** Hungarian learners of English encounter difficulties when learning the passive constructions. Based on my classroom experience, passive is one of the most difficult phenomena when it comes to teaching it, and therefore it is well worth some investigation. Furthermore, the direct method does not allow possibilities for presenting Hungarian structures corresponding to the passive voice in English, as a consequence Hungarian students learning English as a foreign language use the passive constructions erroneously or will totally avoid using them. The present paper will demonstrate with empirical evidence that, leaving the direct method aside for a while, presenting properly the characteristics of the English passive and its Hungarian counterpart structures, with some practice, we can get students to understand, form and use the passive constructions in appropriate contexts. The intervention provides a methodological model for teaching the English passive voice.

**Keywords:** passive construction, L1 conditioning, SLA

### **1. Introduction**

The aim of the present paper is to map the difficulties Hungarian children encounter when learning and using the English passive voice, and also to propose some solutions for the enlisted problems. At the same time, we will provide



empirical evidence that with practice students can be guided towards properly understanding and correctly using structures that are different in their mother tongue.

## 2. The problem

Some linguists argue that there is no real passive voice in Hungarian (see Siewierska 1984, MacWhinney, Pléh and Bates 1985); others claim that there is (e.g., Alberti 1996, or Márkus 2008), considering the *predicative verbal adverbial construction* a real passive structure.

- (1) *A cég meg van alapítva.*  
 the company PERF be:3SG.PRESENT found-ADV.PART  
 ‘The company has been founded.’ (Kertész 2005: 12)

As an English teacher, I have experienced that the passive voice is one of the most difficult phenomena when it comes to teaching it, explaining it and using it. In spite of the fact that L1 speakers of Hungarian in Transylvania also learn about Romanian passive structures, which are very similar to the English passive constructions regarding their structure, form and use, students commit a series of mistakes when using the passive structures, and in essays and other freely composed texts they almost totally avoid using the passive.

The question arises: to what extent do native speakers of Hungarian understand and acquire the English passive voice? An important issue of the problem is that, from an information-structure point of view, the English passive has several corresponding structures in Hungarian.

### 2.1. The third person plural form of the verb, generic reading

- (2) *Meg-vizsgálják a gyermek-et.*  
 PERF-examine: 3pl.present the child-ACC  
 ‘They examine the child.’

Though the sentence in Example (2) literally means [*They*] *examine the child.*, it is more commonly meant as *The child is examined.* The fact that this sentence behaves like a passive voice is shown by the fact that the above (third person plural) form can be used even when only one agent is meant (i.e., *The child is examined by one doctor*). This is due to the fact that whereas English uses word order as the main way to case/role assignment (Bates et al. 1982), Hungarian allows word order to vary and relies on case marking in order to determine “who does what to whom”.

## 2.2. The predicative verbal adverbial construction

In the perfect aspect, passive can be expressed by the existential verb *van* ‘to be’ plus the adverbial participle form ending in *-va/-ve*, e.g., *be van csukva* ‘it is closed’. This construction is used when the result of the action is emphasized.

- (3) *Az ajtó be van csuk-va.*  
 the door PERF be:3SG.PRESENT close-ADV.PART  
 ‘The door has been closed.’ (de Groot 1989: 196)

It is important to highlight that this type of structure is compatible with transitive and unaccusative verbs, as shown in the examples below:

- (4) a. *A kávé meg van őrl-ve.*  
 the coffee PERF be:3SG.PRESENT grind-ADV.PART  
 ‘The coffee has been ground.’  
 b. *A tó be van fagy-va.*  
 the lake PERF be:3SG.PRESENT freeze-ADV.PART  
 ‘The lake is frozen.’ (Kertész 2005: 2)

Grétsy and Kovalovszky (1980) mention that the predicative verbal adverbial construction implies a change of state. According to Alberti (1996, 1998), the change must be physically noticeable, otherwise the structure will not be correct. Compare the following sentences:

- (5) a. *Az autó le van fest-ve.*  
 the car PERF be: 3SG.PRESENT paint-ADV.PART  
 ‘The car has been painted.’  
 b. *\*A könyv el van olvas-va.*  
 the book PERF be: 3SG.PRESENT read-ADV.PART  
 ‘The book has been read.’ (Kertész 2005: 6)

In contrast, English passive structures are acceptable even if no physically noticeable change occurs as a result of the action denoted by the verb.

- (6) a. *The book has been read.*  
 b. *Tom was seen at the cinema.*

We can form the predicative verbal adverbial construction by replacing the existential verb with *lett/lesz* ‘become’, as well, thus introducing more dynamicity

into the sentence. From the point of view of dynamicity, the predicative verbal adverbial construction with *lett/lesz* resembles the English get-passive.

- (7) a. *Az asztal le lesz fest-ve holnap.*  
 the table PERF become: 3SG.FUTURE paint-ADV.PART tomorrow  
 ‘The table will be painted tomorrow.’
- b. *Az asztal le lett fest-ve tegnap.*  
 the table PERF become: 3SG.PAST paint-ADV.PART yesterday  
 ‘The table got painted yesterday.’ (Laczkó 1995: 190)

### 2.3. Active sentence with the direct object in topic position

- (8) *A könyvet be-csomagoltam.*  
 the book-ACC PERF-pack: 1SG.PAST  
 ‘I have packed the book.’

The topic is an element extracted from the verbal phrase and occupies the position on the left periphery of the Hungarian sentence. It names the individual about which the predicate of the sentence states something (É. Kiss et al. 2003). Regarding its form, it has to be definite, as it denotes an individual asserted to be existing by both the speaker and the listener (É. Kiss 2008).

### 2.4. Active sentence with the DO in topic position and the subject in focus

- (9) *Ezt az autót ÉDESAPÁM vásárolta.*  
 this-ACC the car-ACC father.my buy: 3SG.PAST  
 ‘This car has been bought by my father.’

Compared to the previous construction, here the subject, too, occupies an emphasized position (besides the direct object), i. e., it is in focus position, carrying the main accent. The focus exhaustively identifies a subset of a previously (contextually or situationally) determined set of individuals for which the assertion contained by the verbal phrase is true (É. Kiss 2006a, 2006b, 2009). The element carrying the main accent occupies the pre-verbal position, and no modifier can intervene between them. The first element of the predicative phrase is supposed to be stressed, however the focus extirpates the accent of the element standing right next to it (É. Kiss et al. 2003).

## 2.5. The archaic synthetic passive form

Hungarian used to have a synthetic (verbal) passive, formed with the suffix –*tat/-tet*. In the codices these passive forms are used very frequently. However, they occur extremely rarely in contemporary Hungarian, and only with certain verbs. For example: *születik* ‘be born’, from *szül* ‘give birth’, *adatik* ‘be given’, from *ad* ‘give’, *viseltetik* ‘owe somebody certain feelings’, from *visel* ‘bear’, *foglaltatik* ‘be included’, from (*magába*) *foglal* ‘include’. It must be also mentioned that though used, most of these forms (except for *születik*) are considered archaic.

For students who are not really familiar with the characteristics of the enumerated structures, it seems rather difficult to choose from so many possible verbal forms and passive-like constructions. Given the complexity of the phenomena in Hungarian, in the present phase of the research we will consider only two of the constructions which, from an information-structure point of view, can be considered counterparts of the English passive, namely active sentences with the direct object in topic position and active sentences with the direct object in topic position and the subject in focus.

## 3. The hypotheses

Due to the relatively free word order in Hungarian, Hungarian learners of English might find passive structures useless in English, consequently they might avoid using them or might form incorrect constructions. The problem seems to be that they do not sense the difference between the two languages regarding focus and topic positions: they fail to recognize that in Hungarian the focus is in pre-verbal position, while in English it is at the end of the sentence.

The issue is even more important, as it provides evidence / counter-evidence for the hypotheses regarding the influence of the first language parameters on second language acquisition (Avram 2002). If the mother tongue has, indeed, influence on second language acquisition (SLA), and this is true in the case of passive / passive-like constructions, L1 speakers of Hungarian are expected to commit mistakes, at least in the initial stages of learning English. At a more advanced level, learners acquire the correct passive constructions as a result of general learning mechanisms and use well-formed English passive sentences.

Our main hypothesis is that L1 conditioning helps SLA. The paper provides empirical evidence that practice of certain structures could help children understand and use correctly structures absent in Hungarian. If the parameters of the L1 impress upon SLA, the parameter in our case being the relatively free word order in Hungarian, we will find that Hungarian students learning English consider passive structures useless, they generate incorrect constructions, and/or they avoid using them.

Our second hypothesis is closely connected to the first one. We hypothesize that if they understand that the Hungarian counterpart of an English passive construction can be an active sentence, where the direct object is in topic position (e.g., *Az autót megjavították.* ‘The car has been mended.’), furthermore, if they understand that the focus position in English is in the *by*-phrase at the end of the sentence, while in Hungarian the focus is on the pre-verbal position (e.g., *Az inget ANYÁM mosta ki.* vs. ‘The shirt was washed *BY MY MOTHER.*’), they will use correctly the English passive construction. Consequently, our hypothesis is that explaining all these characteristics and practising these structures will lead to a proper use of the English passive voice.

## **4. Research methodology**

### **4.1. The subjects**

The empirical research examines the use of the passive constructions by eighth graders studying English in traditional and step-by-step learning environments in the “József Attila” Elementary School in Miercurea Ciuc (n=64). The participant students were 13-14 years old, they had been learning English in two hours per week since third grade. They had more or less the same level of foreign language knowledge; based on the Cambridge University English Language Examinations level test<sup>1</sup> at the beginning of the current semester the majority of learners could be considered pre-intermediate level students. The research was carried out in December 2009.

At this point, we will ignore the Romanian influence, as very few subjects can be considered bilingual speakers of Hungarian and Romanian. The great majority of the tested subjects had been learning and using Romanian exclusively at school, having 4-5 classes per week. The test was carried out on 64 subjects: the control group consisted of 15 students who completed the test without previous training; the other two groups consisted of 49 students who benefited from previous exercises and explanations.

### **4.2. The training**

Before completing the test, with one of the groups we gathered and discussed sentences where the direct object occupies the topic position in Hungarian, comparing them to English passive constructions (e.g., *A házat felépítették.* ‘The house has been built.’), with the other group (other than the control group) we did the same thing with sentences where the subject appears in pre-verbal focus position, following the accent-deprived direct object topic (e.g., *A levelet BOTOND*

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<sup>1</sup> Test available online: [http://www.englishjet.com/english\\_courses\\_files/test\\_level.asp](http://www.englishjet.com/english_courses_files/test_level.asp).

*írta*. ‘The letter has been written by Botond.’). The test is intended to measure to what extent the proper explanation and exercising of the described phenomena clears up the use of the English passive voice.

### 4.3. The test

The test used in this experiment had two versions. Both versions contained three tasks: two translation tasks and a sentence completing task. Among the Hungarian sentences to be translated into English there were some with the direct object in topic position and some with the subject in focus and the direct object in topic position (É. Kiss et al. 2003; Kiefer 1992). Furthermore, in each test there were three regular active sentences, that served as distractors. Regarding the English sentences to be translated into Hungarian, the first test contained passive constructions without the agent *by*-phrase, while the second test always included the agent. In the third task, both variants of the test included some pictures, each being attached to an incomplete sentence beginning with the direct object.

Testing was carried out exclusively during English classes. The intervention, where it was the case, lasted for about 20 minutes and it included observation, explanation and exercises with the already described structures, except for the control group, where there was no intervention whatsoever. Each subject had 30 minutes to complete the tasks: to translate six English sentences into Hungarian and six Hungarian sentences into English, also to continue six incomplete sentences based on the given pictures. When evaluating the tests, we took into account the total amount of sentences a group had to translate and complete. Thus, in the first test we examined 90 sentences in case of the control group and 138 sentences in case of the other group, while in the second test we analysed 156 sentences in case of the group with intervention and the same 90 sentences in case of the control group.

Meant for testing the first part of our hypotheses, the first test was completed by a total of 38 (23+15) subjects. These students had English passive sentences to translate into Hungarian, also to translate Hungarian active sentences into English, each with the direct object in topic position (e.g., *Az ablakot betörték*. ‘The window has been broken.’). Testing our second hypothesis, the second test was completed by a total of 41 (26+15) students. Their task was also to translate English passive sentences into Hungarian, and further Hungarian active sentences into English, each with the subject in focus position, following the direct object in topic (e.g., *A pizzát a BARÁTNŐM készítette*. ‘The pizza was made by my girlfriend.’).

All subjects in all groups were allowed to use dictionaries. This was to avoid problems due to poor vocabulary or bad spelling, as it was no intention of ours to measure these. When evaluating the tests, we neglected the following types of mistakes: spelling problems; the incorrect past participle form of the verb (e.g.,

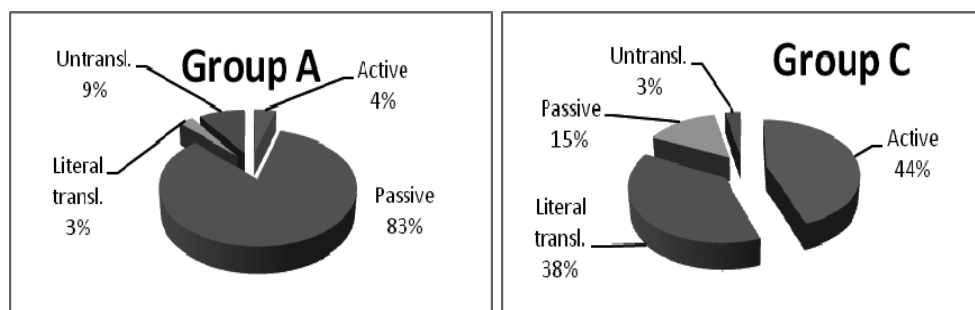
verb with *-ed* instead of an irregular form or the second form instead of the third form in the case of the irregular verbs); leaving out the definite article; using another verb instead of the given one, if the construction was correct in all other respects; using a nominative form of the pronoun after the preposition *by*; translating the singular with a plural or the other way round and leaving out the particle *for* when translating the Hungarian verb *fizet* ‘pay for’.

In turn, we paid special attention when it came to recognizing the agent/patient roles, the pre-verbal position of the internal argument (direct object), the correct construction (proper form of the existential verb, agreement with the subject, suitable form of the main verb – the form with *-ed* or the past participle) or the placement of the external argument (logical subject) in the *by*-phrase at the end of the sentence.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. The first test

As already mentioned in section 4.3, in the sentences of the first test, the internal argument occupied the topic position. When translating these sentences, only 15% of the control group used the passive voice, while in the other group 83% of the subjects did the same (see the results presented in Figure 1, and Table 1).



**Figure 1.** Results of translating Hungarian sentences (with the DO in topic position) into English

In the figures *Active* means that the subjects used active voice when translating an English passive sentence; *Passive* refers to the use of passive voice; *Untranslated* means that they did not provide any translation whatsoever; *Literal translation* refers to improper, word-by-word translation.

As expected, these results lead us to acknowledge that, though they have learnt about the English passive voice, the subjects in the control group do not really

know the characteristics of a passive sentence, they are not able to recognize the contexts where passives are to be used; furthermore, they do not identify the Hungarian passive-like constructions.

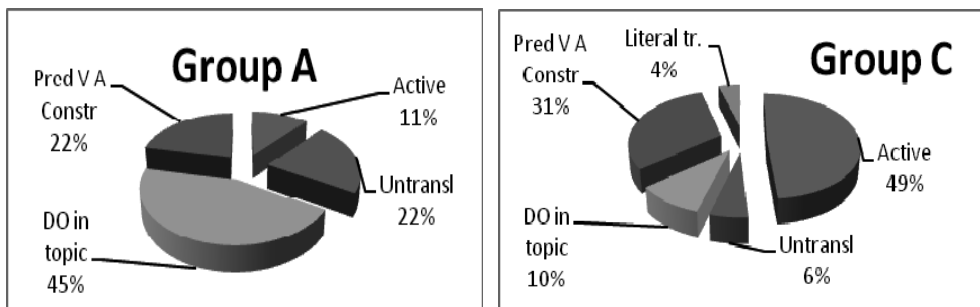
<b>Hungarian sentences translated into English (with the DO in topic position)</b>				
Group	Literal translation	Active sentence	Passive sentence	No translation
Trained gr.	4	6	115	13
Control gr.	15	34	38	3

<b>English passive sentences translated into Hungarian</b>					
Group	Active sentence	No translation	Active sentence, DO in topic	Predicative verbal adverbial constr.	Literal translation
Trained gr.	16	30	62	30	---
Control gr.	44	5	9	28	4

**Table 1.** Summary with the results of the first test

As opposed to the control group, the majority of subjects of the other group, due to the explanation and brief exercising, were able to recognize contexts suitable for a passive structure, as well as to identify the corresponding Hungarian structures (e.g., an active sentence where the direct object occupies the topic position).

In the case of translating English passive sentences into Hungarian we have more complex results, because subjects had more possibilities to choose from. Only 10% of the control group translated the passive with an active sentence with the internal argument in topic position, 49% of them giving a regular active sentence as counterpart of the English passive structure (see Figure 2, and Table 1).



**Figure 2.** Results of translating English passive sentences (without agent) into Hungarian



A significant proportion of the mentioned subjects (31%) found the predicative verbal adverbial construction best for translating the English passive. At this point we must mention that the predicative verbal adverbial construction is not suitable in every situation, because it cannot be used with unergative verbs (Kertész 2005).

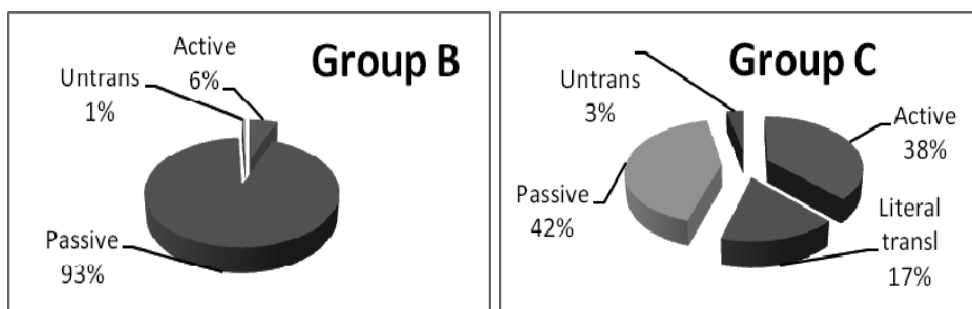
In the figures *Active* means that the subjects used active voice in translation; *Pred V A Constr* refers to the use of predicative verbal adverbial construction; *Untranslated* means that they did not provide any translation; *Literal translation* refers to word-by-word translation; *DO in topic* marks the active sentences with the direct object in topic.

Almost half of the trained group (44% of the subjects) used the observed structure (i.e., active sentence with the direct object in topic position) when translating the English passive sentences, while 22% of them chose the predicative verbal adverbial construction. Another 22% failed to fulfill the task. Though it may have other explanations, as well, most likely this was due to time limits. However, we do not wish to further comment on this issue.

In order to examine the magnitude and significance of the differences between the two groups, we have used statistical analysis. Applying the ANOVA test, we have reached the conclusion that differences between the two groups are relevant ( $P=.048$ ).

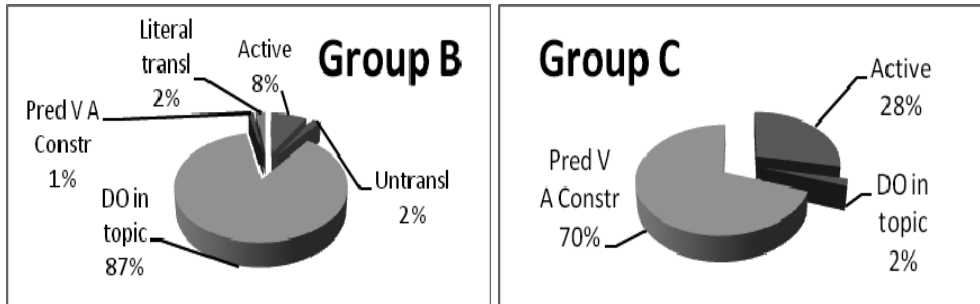
## 5.2. The second test

In each of the Hungarian sentences of the second test the subject was in pre-verbal focus position, following the direct object in topic. When translating these sentences, 42% of the control group used a passive structure, while 93% of the trained group did the same (see the results presented in Figure 3, and Table 2). This allows us to reason that more than half of the control group failed to recognize that English focus position is at the end of the sentence, in the *by*-phrase, while in Hungarian it occupies the pre-verbal position.



**Figure 3.** Results of translating Hungarian sentences (with the direct object in topic position and the subject in focus position) into English

Contrary to the control group, the subjects of the trained group had the opportunity of getting acquainted with the characteristics of the Hungarian and English focus and comparing the corresponding English and Hungarian structures, consequently the vast majority (93%) was able to recognize the contexts where the passive was required and identified the corresponding Hungarian structure (i.e., active sentence where the direct object is in topic, the subject is in focus position).



**Figure 4.** Results of translating English passive sentences (with agent) into Hungarian

When translating English passives into Hungarian, again, the results tend to be more complex, just like in the case of the first test. Only 2% of the control group used the expected active sentence with direct object topic and subject focus, while 28% of them used a regular active sentence to translate the passive constructions. As shown in Figure 4, and Table 2, the vast majority of the control group (70%) opted for the predicative verbal adverbial construction.

<b>Hungarian sentences translated into English (with the DO in topic and subject in focus position)</b>				
Group	Literal translation	Active sentence	Passive sentence	No translation
Trained gr.	---	9	146	1
Control gr.	34	40	13	3

<b>English passive sentences translated into Hungarian</b>					
Group	Active sentence	No translation	Active sentence, DO in topic	Predicative verbal adverbial constr.	Literal translation
Trained gr.	13	3	135	2	3
Control gr.	26	---	2	64	---

**Table 2.** Summary with the results of the second test

Contrary to the control group, 87% of the trained subjects used the observed structure (that is, active sentences with the internal argument in topic and subject in focus position), only 1% chose the predicative verbal adverbial construction. Running the ANOVA test of the SPSS statistical analysis program, we have reached the conclusion that differences between the two groups are relevant ( $P=.032$ ).

It is important to highlight that in both tests there were three regular active English sentences to be translated into Hungarian, used as distractors. The great majority of the trained subjects translated these active sentences with passive-like Hungarian structures, while nobody from the control group attempted to do so. Here we might be dealing with a phenomenon known in the literature as overgeneralization (Avram 2002).

## **6. Conclusions**

Observing the results of the two tests presented above, we can conclude that native speakers of Hungarian tend to avoid using the English passive voice; those who rarely use it have problems with recognizing the differences between the English and Hungarian focus. As the present empirical research shows, knowing the corresponding phenomena from Hungarian helps in the process of acquiring the English passive. It seems adequate to use knowledge from the L1 during English classes from time to time. As such, we wish to take stand against the exclusive use of the direct method during foreign language classes.

A further step in the present research is a post-testing of the same subjects that would strengthen our hypotheses, and at the same time it would exclude the possibility that the subjects apply their knowledge from L1 only when they are warned about the similarities and differences, forgetting to do so without previous training.

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## The Organization of Early Bilingual Mental Lexicon in Light of a Picture-Naming Task

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**Abstract.** The past decades have witnessed a growing interest in the study of L2 mental lexicon. Word association studies have indicated changes in the pattern of associative responses with an increase in age and maturity of the respondents (Cook 1996, Gósy 2005). While younger children tend to produce syntagmatic associations (which form sequential links with the stimulus words, e.g., *dog-bark*), older children are likely to produce a higher proportion of paradigmatic responses (which fall into the same grammatical class as the stimulus word, e.g., *dog-cat*). The present pilot study examines these lexical relations in the responses provided by Hungarian-Romanian kindergarten aged children during a picture naming task. The main hypothesis was that not only age but the grammatical class of the stimulus words would also affect the quantity of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic answers. A very high percentage (over 80%) of paradigmatic answers was recorded in case of animal pictures (nouns as prompt words) and a higher percentage (over 90%) of syntagmatic answers in the case of action pictures (verbs as prompt words). This clearly demonstrates that even in the case of young children the grammatical class of the stimulus words influences the organization of their mental lexicon (Navraicsics 2007).

**Keywords:** bilingual mental lexicon, early childhood

### 1. Introduction

The study of the mental lexicon belongs to the field of psycho- and neurolinguistics and as such it is defined as the internalized knowledge of properties of words. If we think about bilingual language development, which is

understood as a complex process then the definition of the bilingual mental lexicon becomes even more complex.

Nowadays, there is convincing evidence coming from neurolinguistic studies that a bilingual's languages are stored close to each other. On the basis of available research, Paradis (2004) claimed that the bilingual mental lexicon consists of one conceptual framework linked to two language subsystems within one mind. The conceptual system is a set of all non-verbal and language independent concepts, developed through experience and later through acquired languages. It serves both languages in a bilingual mind.

In the context of psycholinguistic research focus has been on lexical access and retrieval procedures as well as on the organization or functional architecture of the bilingual mental lexicon, mostly through different word association tests. The target groups have been mainly children older than 6 years of age, adolescents and adults. To date, however, less attention has been paid to the internal organization of early childhood's mental lexicon. By the term 'early' I am referring to the age of 2.5 and onwards as this is the point when children expand their vocabulary at a much faster rate. As more words are acquired, they work out where each one fits in and narrow down the domain formerly covered by over-extensions (Clark & Clark 1977).

The general conclusion of earlier word association tests carried out on young children was that they tend to produce syntagmatic associations and older ones are likely to provide a higher proportion of paradigmatic responses. This shift from syntagmatic to paradigmatic may differ from language to language. For example, it seems that in the case of native English speakers this transfer ends around the age of 7 (Berko Gleason & Bernstein Ratner 1998). The same shift seems to be true for bilingual children (Navracscics 2007).

In syntagmatic relations the stimulus word and the response go together in a syntactic structure. For example, if the stimulus word is *dog*, and the answer to it is *bark*, they form a predicative clause together, while with a response such as *big* the result would be a subordinate clause. The associative answer might be a whole syntagma, a shorter or a longer one, depending on individual differences (e.g., *This dog is scary*).

In paradigmatic relations the stimulus word and the response are to some degree grammatically substitutable for each other and they belong to the same grammatical class. For example, if to a stimulus word such as *dog* the response is *cat*, they are paradigmatically related words as both of them are nouns.

Taking into consideration the fact that I am analyzing young children's answers, it is noteworthy to mention a third type relation, namely the associative or idiosyncratic one. In this category "peculiar answers" can be found, where there is no logical relationship between the response and the stimulus word. As these types of responses are not meaning-related, they most often elicit some particular

experience or feeling (e.g., *sister-summer*, *yellow-father*), and according to Clark & Clark (1977: 479), they “may be of interest to the psychiatrist”.

## 2. Aim

This study aims to challenge the above-mentioned general assumptions with regard to the organization of young children’s mental lexicon, by addressing the following research questions:

- Is age the most important factor that influences the proportion of syntagmatic and paradigmatic associative answers in test situations?
- How and to what extent does the grammatical class of the stimulus words affect the response types?
- Is the distribution of syntagmatic/paradigmatic answers similar in the two different languages (in the case of bilinguals)?
- Is there a preference for one of the languages when providing one or the other type of answers?
- Does the language of the wider linguistic environment affect this distribution in any way?
- Are the words of the two mental lexicons linked to a shared conceptual store? Is there interference between the two languages, or are there translation equivalents in the two languages during the test?

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. The participants and their bilingualism

The main subjects were 6 bilingual children (age group 3 to 4) who have acquired Hungarian or Romanian as L2 since a very fragile age, both in authentic communicative situations and through formal instruction in the kindergarten. The control group was formed by 6 monolingual Hungarian children from Hungary. The bilingual participants’ distribution on the basis of their dominant language:

Romanian (L1)- Hungarian (L2)	Hungarian (L1)- Romanian (L2)
4 children (attending a nursery with Hungarian as the language of instruction)	2 children (attending a nursery with Romanian as the language of instruction)

The bilingual subjects, as early bilinguals, have the opportunity to acquire not only the formal aspects of the two languages (sounds, words, meaning relationships), but at the same time they are also learning to use these languages as tools for understanding and manipulating the world around them. Therefore, the two languages are essential ingredients of the children’s socialization processes.



Hoffmann (1991: 35) points out that “early bilingualism will, in most cases, be the natural, ascribed sort, especially in the case of the pre-school child”.

It is noteworthy to mention that the above groups are producing a specific type of bilingualism called “bilingualism in the minority and majority language” (Vančóné 2009: 139). The successful development in the two languages depends on exposure, consistency, perceived need and social support from both majority and minority communities. In those families where a minority language is spoken by one or both of the parents, the aim is very often to introduce the two languages to the child from birth. Many parents consider that when the child is older the input from the weaker language may be too one-sided, too limited in register and style for the two languages to develop on the same level.

Researchers interested in the differential processing routes in children’s bilingual lexicon have suggested that in the case of early bilinguals there are stronger representations at output, therefore, this type of bilingualism might shed the best light on the internal organization of the early mental lexicon. This is the reason why early bilingual children were chosen as subjects of the present pilot study.

It is important to highlight the fact that children participants of this study (both Hungarian- and Romanian-dominant ones) live in a Romanian town where Hungarians constitute the majority of the local population, therefore, they are more prone to the influence of the Hungarian language outside of kindergarten in their everyday life and in their interactions with peers. The dominant language of the bilingual environment as a factor that might influence language choice during the task will be taken into account in the analysis.

### **3.2. The method**

#### The task

In order to learn about the organization of our subjects’ internal lexicon, in the present study, the picture naming paradigm was employed. The advantage of using picture naming is that the investigator has a high degree of control over the target word to be produced. It is unquestionable that this task requires not only linguistic work, but also visual and semantic interpretation. Nevertheless, it is well known that “young children are excellent readers of pictures, and so picture naming seems a suitable research tool for exploring their vocabulary knowledge” (Masterson et. al. 2008: 379).

#### The stimuli

The stimuli were 30 black and white animal and action pictures. The sources were the LAPP Picture Collection (Lőrík et al. 1995) and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (Dunn & Dunn 1997). As stimulus words, these were

classified into two grammatical classes: nouns (15 pictures of animals) and verbs (15 pictures of basic activities).

#### The design and procedure

All the bilingual children were in bilingual speech mode (Grosjean 1988) as they were speaking to an experimenter who shared their languages. They were greeted and instructed in both Hungarian and Romanian. (It was pinpointed that they may provide their answers in any of the two languages):

“I will show you some pictures. Your job is to name each of them. You should always wait and listen for my question first. If there are any pictures you do not know the name of, or cannot remember, or that you are unsure of, just say ‘pass’. Just say the first thing that pops into your mind in any of the languages.”

All participants were seen individually in a quiet room, with only the tester and the subject present. The 360 answers were voice-recorded and transcribed, and then analyzed with the Microsoft Excel Program.

The stimuli were presented in two sets: first the pictures of animals, then, after a 5 minutes break the ones illustrating basic activities. Each set of stimuli were preceded by the orienting question formulated in Hungarian and Romanian, as it follows:

- In the class of the animal pictures:  
“*Mi ez? / Ce este?*”  
‘What is this?’
- In the class of the basic-activities pictures:  
“*Mit csinál? / Ce face?*”  
‘What is he/she doing?’

In each set of stimuli the pictures were held up for a maximum of 5000ms in the following order:

- Animals: *dog, mouse, snake, crab, turkey, grasshopper, spider, seal, panda, lizard, rhino, eagle, deer, stag-beetle, swallow*
- Activities: *sitting, opening, combing, skiing, raking, laughing, falling, cutting, consulting, planting, taking photos, hammering, signalling, lifting, serving*

#### 4. The results of the picture-naming task in light of the proportion of syntagmatic/paradigmatic answers

As presented in Charts 1 and 2, a very high percentage of paradigmatic answers was recorded for nouns as prompt words, both for the bilingual (88%) and for the monolingual group (93%). Most of these answers are lexical equivalents of the illustrated concept. For example, for ‘snake’ as the prompt word all the answers were the Hungarian *kígyó* or the Romanian *șarpe*; for ‘dog’ as the prompt word the answers were *kutya/kutyus* and *câine/cățeluș* (where the second term is characteristic of children’s language: ‘doggie’). Some animal pictures as stimuli attracted more subordinate and superordinate semantic categories of the represented concept. For the picture of the ‘swallow’ the bilingual group provided in both languages the hyponyms (*fecske/rândunică*, which mean ‘swallow’) and the hyperonyms (*madár/pasăre*, which mean ‘bird’) of the represented concept. The word ‘bird’ as a general term and its subcategories such as ‘rooster’ and ‘hen’ were listed when the picture of the ‘turkey’ was presented (*kakas/cocoș, tyúk/găină*). The picture of the ‘rhino’ attracted meronyms both in Hungarian and Romanian (*szarv/corn*, which mean ‘horn’). However, the monolingual group had greater overall accuracy than the bilingual group. Their accuracy was greatest in the presence of the precision in defining the illustrated concepts mainly with hyponyms.

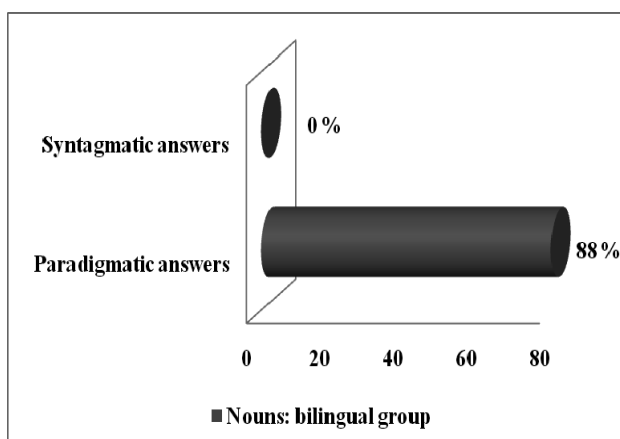


Chart 1. The distribution of the lexical relations in the bilingual children’s answers. Prompt words: nouns

The reason for the smaller percentage of the bilingual children’s paradigmatic answers lies in the fact that they tended to give more “I don’t know” answers where they could not find the correct lexical term for a picture (11% of “I don’t know” answer for the bilingual group and 7% for the monolingual one).

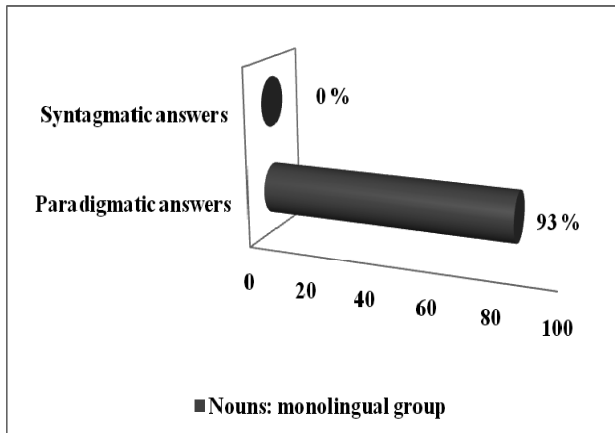


Chart 2. The distribution of the lexical relations in the monolingual children's answers. Prompt words: nouns

It is noteworthy that none of the 180 animal picture namings indicated a syntagmatic relationship with the denoted concept, and only one bilingual child provided an idiosyncratic answer (when he saw the picture of the 'seal', he said "UFO", by this activating his associative memory).

Charts 3 and 4 show similarly high percentages for verbs used as prompt words but this time in favor of the syntagmatic relationships in children's picture-naming: 96% for the bilingual group and 91% for the monolingual one.

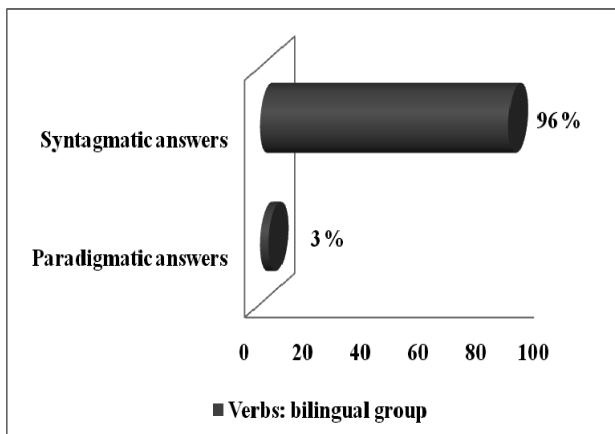


Chart 3. The distribution of the lexical relations in the bilingual children's answers. Prompt words: verbs

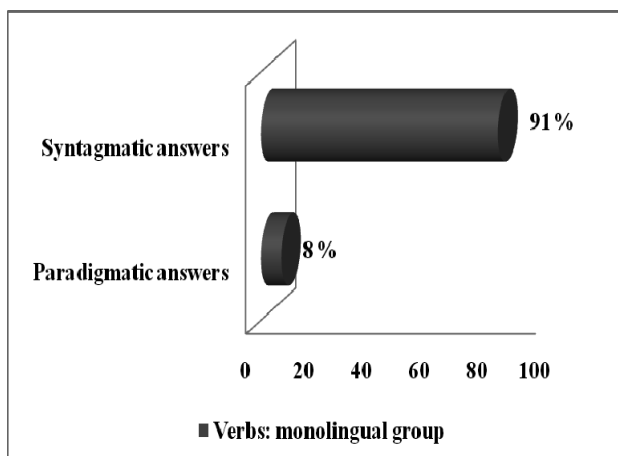


Chart 4. The distribution of the lexical relations in the monolingual children's answers. Prompt words: verbs

This result may be explained by the different nature of the pictures denoting actions: in comparison with the ones that represent animals, which are static, these ones are more dynamic and show different objects, tools or elements of nature near the person who is performing the activity. Probably this is why I found two different end points in the children's answers:

(a) They simply denoted the person or one of his/her main characteristics, thus forming a predicative or a subordinate clause with the represented concept: e.g., when they were shown a picture of a girl sitting, and therefore the prompt word itself was the verb 'sitting', most of the children said *kislány* (Hungarian) or *fetiță* (Romanian), which means '(little) girl' in both languages. As a result, they formed predicative clauses with the concept represented in the picture: *a kislány ül* (Hungarian)/*fetița stă* (Romanian), which both mean 'the girl is sitting'.

(b) The children's answers were whole syntagms, which in some cases were short and simple like the above mentioned example of 'the girl is sitting', and at other times were more detailed such as *a szomorú kislány ül* (Hungarian), which means 'the sad girl is sitting'.

The percentage of paradigmatic answers for verbs as stimulus words is relatively low for both groups of children: 3% for the bilingual group and higher, 8% for the monolingual group. This result reflects the fact that the monolingual children are somehow more confident when naming concrete actions, while the bilingual ones are less sure of themselves and tend to describe the details rather than find a specific verb in their mental lexicon. For example, when the prompt verbs were *gereblyél/greblează* ('raking'), *fényképez/fotografiază* ('taking a

photo'), the monolingual children provided the expected verbs as paradigmatic answers, while the bilingual ones named the persons performing the action: *bácsi/nene* ('man'), *fiú/băiat* ('boy'), again forming mostly syntagmatic answers rather than paradigmatic ones.

### 5. The results of the picture-naming task in light of the proportion of L2 answers

Having analyzed the language choice in bilingual children's answers, we can see that in most cases the Hungarian language was the starting point. On average, the bilingual subjects said many more words in Hungarian, and the two Hungarian-dominant children did not provide any Romanian answers despite the fact that they attend a nursery with Romanian as language of instruction. On the other hand, the Romanian-dominant children, whose L2 is Hungarian, provided Hungarian picture namings for both nouns and verbs as prompt words; therefore, their answers require further analysis.

In the case of nouns as prompt words, 22% of the Romanian-dominant bilingual children's paradigmatic answers were provided in Hungarian, some of which appeared in both languages as lexical equivalents, e.g., *patkány/șobolan* ('rat'), *sas/vultur* ('eagle'), *szarvas/cerb* ('deer'). In the case of verbs as prompt words, when naming pictures representing actions, 48% of syntagmatic answers came in their L2 (Hungarian).

The higher percentage (78%) of paradigmatic answers provided in their native language (Romanian) for the animal pictures demonstrates the fact that they still rely more on their L1 mental lexicon when needing concrete names while the much higher proportion of Hungarian syntagmatic answers for action pictures lets us conclude that they use the L2 terms more confidently when the pictures allow some sort of description and they can search in their L2 mental lexicon more freely.

### 6. Conclusion

In my research, even though I deliberately chose the youngest age group attending kindergarten, their age did not influence the proportion of the lexical relationships in their picture naming. It seems more appropriate to assume that the organization of young children's mental lexicon is influenced just as much by the grammatical class of the prompt words, as with adults (Navracsics 2007); thus, nouns attract paradigmatic answers and verbs syntagmatic ones. In the case of nouns (as prompt words) none of the answers reflected syntagmatic relationship with the denoted concepts although we might have expected this kind of answers taking in consideration the results and conclusions of earlier studies in this field. In this class the use of hyponyms, hyperonyms and meronyms as paradigmatic

answers suggests that children as young as age 3 and 4 do have the ability to organize their mental lexicon in a sophisticated way. These types of hierarchical and asymmetrical word categories could not be found in the case of the action pictures. When the subjects were asked “What is he/she doing in the picture?” both groups (bi- and monolingual) provided significantly less verbs as answers. Since they were not able to provide the synonyms or antonyms of the actions represented in the pictures, the majority of the tested children preferred the syntagmatic answers in this category.

The results revealed the often reported noun advantage in children’s language acquisition. The internal organization of the tested children’s mental lexicon illustrated very clearly that there are representational and processing differences between nouns and verbs. The semantic representations of verbs have traditionally been considered to be more complex than those of nouns. Concrete nouns, being labels of objects in the world, exist independently of other word categories, and they are, therefore, organized predominantly in relation to one another. Verbs, on the other hand, by virtue of their argument structure, always entail reference to related nouns. Since the debate about noun and verb acquisition is still unsettled, further study of this problem is needed among young Hungarian-Romanian bilingual children.

As the bilingual children, especially the Romanian-dominant ones, provided answers in both languages (with a higher percentage of syntagmatic relations in their L2 answers), we may conclude that bilingual children rely on the mental lexicon of both languages, and the two language subsystems are linked to the same conceptual system. They are able to give answers in L1 and in L2 (very often as lexical equivalents of the same concept) and the higher or lower percentage of some of their L1 or L2 language choices may well be dependent on factors like individual experience and exposure to specific words in those languages.

The dominant language of the tested children’s wider environment (in this case Hungarian) seemed to have a considerable influence on their language choice. We may assume that the opposite would be true for children who live in towns with a bigger Romanian majority population, where most probably Hungarian-dominant bilingual children display a higher level of proficiency in Romanian. All the conclusions remain to be tested against further evidence.

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## **Cognate Recognition and L3 Vocabulary Acquisition**

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**Abstract.** One of the new trends in applied linguistics is concerned with third or multilingual language acquisition. Several linguists suggest that prior language knowledge should be taken into consideration and relied on in third language (L3) vocabulary teaching. Starting from these suggestions, the present study aims to verify the positive effect of cognate recognition and cognate-based instruction in the process of third language acquisition. For this purpose, an English vocabulary test was carried out among Hungarian high school students with Romanian as a second language (L2) and learning English as an L3. Before the test, the study group was presented with the structural similarities between the L2 and L3 lexical items. The results show that the study group obtained slightly higher scores on the vocabulary test than the control group. Following instruction on cognate target words, the difference between the two groups became more accentuated. Furthermore, a positive correlation was found between the L2 proficiency and the L3 vocabulary test scores. The results of this study confirm the expectations that cognate-based instruction can positively influence third language acquisition for which a necessary prerequisite is a good command of the previously learnt languages.

**Keywords:** third language vocabulary acquisition, L2/L3 structural relationship, teaching through cognates

## **1. Introduction**

As a result of the increased importance of learning foreign languages within the European Union, where several countries are already bilingual, a new area of applied linguistics has emerged, one dealing with multilingual acquisition. Thus, the focus has shifted from studies in second language acquisition to studies in third language acquisition. Research in third language acquisition relies on research in second language acquisition, but it also takes into consideration the factors specific to its own area of studies. Being a recently emerging field, third language acquisition poses rather more questions than answers precisely due to its complexity. The present study seeks to answer some of these questions concerning the processes taking place in third language acquisition.

This paper commences with a definition of what third language acquisition stands for and a brief description of its characteristics. After reviewing some of the studies in foreign language vocabulary teaching, the findings of the present pilot study will be presented and possible perspectives for further research in the area will be discussed.

The aim of the present study is to investigate how knowledge of previously acquired languages can be utilized in L3 vocabulary teaching. More specifically, it seeks to verify whether pointing out the correspondences between the L2 and L3 lexical items can enhance L3 vocabulary acquisition. For this purpose, an English vocabulary test was carried out among Hungarian high school students whose L2 is Romanian and who are learning English as an L3. In order to verify whether focusing on the structural relationships between L2/L3 cognates has any effect on L3 lexical competence, the English vocabulary test scores of the students receiving instruction were compared to the scores obtained by the students who had not received instruction. Furthermore, the present study also focuses on possible correlations between L3 vocabulary knowledge and other factors, such as L2 proficiency, number of years of studying the L3, and number of foreign languages spoken.

## **2. Literature Review**

This section serves to provide the theoretical framework of the present study. First, the field of third language acquisition will be defined followed by an outline of its characteristics. Second, a selection of studies in foreign language vocabulary teaching will be presented. These studies served as a starting point for the present study.

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## **2.1. Third language acquisition**

The definition of multilingualism is somewhat controversial. In general terms, multilingualism can be defined as the command and/or use of two or more languages by a speaker (Herdina and Jessner 2002). Even though this definition suggests that bilingualism can be regarded as a form of multilingualism, a clear distinction between these two terms is provided by the same authors (2000) stating that multilingualism addresses only those languages that were learnt after a second one. Therefore, trilinguals can be considered to be multilinguals.

The definition of L3 acquisition is also a controversial one. L3 acquisition refers to the languages learnt after an L2 regardless of being a third, fourth or fifth language (Safont Jorda 2005). From this point of view, L3 acquisition and multilingual acquisition denote the same process.

## **2.2. Characteristics of third language acquisition**

Second language acquisition and third language acquisition share common characteristics; however, the latter is more complex due to several factors, such as the context of acquisition, variation in the order of learning of the languages, the perceived distance between the languages involved, and the sociocultural status of the languages involved in the learning process. Thus, third language acquisition involves unique and complex factors and effects due to the various possible interactions between the previously acquired languages and the one in the process of learning (Cenoz and Genesee 1998, Safont Jorda 2005). Consequently, L3 acquisition poses not merely a quantitative but rather a qualitative linguistic change in comparison to L2 acquisition (Safont Jorda 2005).

One of the complex features of third language acquisition is transfer. In second language acquisition transfer usually takes place from the first language (L1) to the L2. However, in L3 acquisition a phenomenon called interlanguage transfer can take place (DeAngelis and Selinker 2001). This means that transfer to the L3 can occur not only from the mother tongue but also from a non-native language. Learners of an L3 tend to borrow from those previously learnt languages which are typologically closer to the target language. This is clearly reflected in Cenoz's study (2001) where the English storytelling of Basque-Spanish bilingual students was examined. The results of the study showed that transfer mainly occurred from Spanish, which is typologically closer to English, regardless of whether Spanish was their L1 or L2.

Another feature of L3 acquisition that has to be taken into consideration is described by the extended version of the developmental interdependence hypothesis. Cummins' interdependence hypothesis (1978) proposes that a child's L2 competence depends on the level of the competence in the L1. Similarly, in the

case of L3 acquisition the different degrees of proficiency in L1 and L2 have an effect on the acquisition of the L3 (Cenoz 2000). Thus, learners who have a high level of competence in their first two languages will succeed in the acquisition of the L3 because of their highly developed common underlying proficiency, which will help the transfer from one language to the other.

A special characteristic of the trilingual or the multilingual speaker is multilingual competence, which can loosely be defined as the ability to use several languages appropriately and effectively (Cenoz and Genesse 1998). Multilingual competence does not designate the sum of several monolingual competencies, but it is a unique form of language competence due to the interaction of the languages known by a multilingual (Cook 1992).

### **2.3. Teaching vocabulary through cognates**

The present study seeks to find out how the above-described characteristics can be implemented in foreign language vocabulary teaching in the Transylvanian context, where minority students learn their first foreign language as an L3 after having acquired the state's language as an L2. The following section will present studies supporting the teaching of foreign language vocabulary through cognates.

One of the most widely accepted practices in foreign language teaching proposes that other languages should be excluded and that the target language is the only one allowed in the classroom. Contrary to this, Jessner (1999) recommends that prior language knowledge should be reactivated in the classroom and that students should look for equivalent expressions in their L1, L2 and L3. In accordance with Jessner, Carlo et al. (2004) consider it useful to teach students to draw on their cognate knowledge, which can serve as a means of figuring out the meanings of new English words.

Empirical studies focusing on teaching foreign language vocabulary through cognates were first carried out in the L2 acquisition context. Rodríguez (2001) proposes that English can be taught through meaningful reading and by relying on the students' knowledge and literacy in their L1. He also suggests that teachers should rely on L1/L2 cognates to teach students to analyze the L2 and be able to understand texts in the L2.

Dressler (2000, cited in August et al. 2005) carried out a research among Spanish speaking fifth graders learning English who had been taught to search for cognate relationships as a strategy in reading texts in English. The results of the study showed that those students who were taught to search for cognate relationships were more successful in inferring meaning for untaught cognates than their peers in the control group. Furthermore, Dressler points out that there was variability in the perception of L1/L2 cognates, the connection between the

phonologically more transparent ones being more easily perceived than between the less salient ones.

Caplan-Carbin (2006) proposed that teaching the systematic relationship of the historical sound changes between English and German would help English speaking learners of German to recognize cognates and as a result expand their vocabulary in German more easily. By comparing the pre-test results with the post-test ones, the author found a difference in scores which could be attributed to the instruction of the structural relationship between the two languages. Although the difference between the two scores was small, Caplan-Carbin suggests that these findings can be of considerable pedagogical value.

### **3. Research Question**

Based on the theory behind L3 acquisition, the present study seeks to rely on the findings of L2 acquisition studies concerning the method of teaching foreign language vocabulary through cognates and to implement these in an L3 acquisition context. Therefore, the main questions the present study proposes to answer are the following:

1. Does explicit instruction of the structural relationships between L2/L3 cognate pairs help in the L3 vocabulary acquisition?
2. Do other factors such as years of L3 studies, number of additional foreign languages spoken, or L2 proficiency correlate with the L3 vocabulary knowledge?

The expectations are that the students that have received instruction concerning the structural relationships between L2/L3 cognate pairs will perform better on the L3 vocabulary test. As far as other factors are concerned, the proficiency in L2 is expected to play an important role in L3 vocabulary proficiency. However, there are no clear expectations regarding the correlations between the years spent studying English or the number of additional foreign languages spoken and the participants' performance on the English vocabulary test.

### **4. Methodology**

In order to test whether the explicit instruction of structural relationships between L2 and L3 lexicon facilitates the acquisition of L3 vocabulary, the English vocabulary knowledge of 26 high school students was measured. The subjects were tenth graders who have Hungarian as their L1, Romanian as L2 and are learning English as an L3. The participants were divided into two groups, a study group and a control group. The study group (15 students) first was presented with possible

structural relationships between Romanian and English words. During the instruction phase, orthographic and suffix correspondences were pointed out and examples were given for each.

After the instruction, the students were asked to complete an English vocabulary test, namely Nation's levels test. This test was chosen for two reasons. On the one hand, the test contains a large number of words that are cognates in Romanian. More specifically, 48 out of 90 target words resemble their Romanian equivalents. On the other hand, it gives an opportunity to measure the vocabulary knowledge on different levels according to the frequency of the words. Each word level contains 18 word definitions and 36 words. The students were asked to find the right words for the definitions given. The control group (11 students) received no instruction but were only asked to complete the same vocabulary test.

After the test, some additional information about the students' linguistic background, such as years of studying English and additional foreign languages spoken, was also collected. In addition, the participants' Romanian teacher was asked to rate their proficiency in Romanian. The Romanian grades would not have served the right purpose for illustrating their proficiency in Romanian because they reflect mainly the student's knowledge of the subject (Romanian literature) rather than the ability to speak the language. The participants in the study group were also asked to reflect upon the instruction, whether they had found it helpful, whether they had made use of the material while completing the test, and whether they consider that this method should be applied in their English classes.

## 5. Results

After administering the vocabulary tests, the score of each participant was introduced in a database and descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) as well as inferential statistics (Mann-Whitney test) were carried out. As a first step, the overall test scores of the two groups was compared in order to see whether there was any difference in their performance.

**Table 1. Overall test scores on Nation's levels test expressed in percentages.**

	N	Mean	SD
Study group	15	53.11	11.76
Control group	11	45.05	18.88

As it was expected, the study group performed better on the English vocabulary test than their peers in the control group. The fact that the study group profited from the instruction is not only reflected by their higher mean score but also by a

smaller standard deviation, which means that their answers were more consistent than the answers of the control group.

Before carrying out an inferential statistical test to verify if the study group and the control group differed on the overall scores obtained on the English vocabulary test, the data set was tested to meet the necessary assumptions for an independent-samples t-test. Since neither the assumption of normal distribution of the data nor the assumption of equal variances was met, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyse the data. The difference between the scores of the two groups was not found to be statistically significant ( $p = 0.09$ ,  $U = 50.50$ ,  $Z = -1.66$ ), however, a medium effect size ( $r = 0.32$ ) was found for the difference between the study and the control group.

Given that the test itself gives opportunity to measure the lexical competence of the students at the different word levels based on the frequency of use of the words, the scores obtained on the test were examined on all these levels. Table 2. shows the mean results obtained by the two groups, broken down to the five word levels.

**Table 2. The test scores obtained on the different word levels expressed in percentages.**

	N	2,000 word level		3,000 word level		5,000 word level		University word level		10,000 word level	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		Study group	15	70.74	11.77	75.18	16.64	39.62	14.97	53.33	16.10
Control group	11	63.13	21.55	61.61	24.01	37.87	16.81	41.91	21.71	20.70	25.10

As the figures show, on each word level the study group obtained higher scores than the control group. The largest difference in scores were found on the word levels containing the highest number of cognates, exactly where the study group could profit more from the instruction. Thus, the difference between the mean scores of the two groups was of 13.57 on the 3,000 word level and of 11.42 on the university word level. As can be seen, the scores obtained on the university level interrupt the pattern of descending scores as the word levels get higher. This is most probably due to the fact that with a few exceptions, all target words are cognates. Therefore, the L2's facilitating effect may account for higher scores than on the lower level of 5,000 words.

In order to trace the possible positive effect of the instruction through which students in the study group would be more successful in recognizing cognates and

thus profit from the cognate facilitating effect, the mean scores obtained on cognate words were also compared. These scores are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Overall mean scores on cognates expressed in percentages.**

	N	Mean	SD
Study group	15	61.57	14.56
Control group	11	51.75	18.65

A closer look at the test results of the two groups revealed that the study group answered more test items correctly than the control group when the target words were cognates in Romanian. The standard deviation of the mean scores was also smaller for the study group than for the control group, which shows a more consistent performance, which can be attributed to the explicit instruction of the structural relationship between the L2 and L3 lexical items.

Because the necessary assumptions for an independent-samples t-test were not met, the Mann-Whitney U test was carried out to verify if the study group and the control group differed from the point of view of their performance on cognate items. Similarly to the overall scores, no statistically significant difference was found between the two groups' performance on the cognate items ( $p = 0.12$ ,  $U = 52$ ,  $Z = -1.58$ ). The test revealed a medium effect size difference between the study and the control group ( $r = 0.31$ ).

The comparison of the scores on the cognates belonging to the different word levels showed the same pattern as in the case of the overall scores. As shown in Table 4, the study group outperformed the control group on each word level and the greatest difference between the two groups was found on the word levels containing the highest number of cognates (a difference of 15.15 on the 3,000 word level and of 11.21 on the university word level).

**Table 4. The test scores obtained on cognates on the different word levels expressed in percentages.**

	N	2,000 word level		3,000 word level		5,000 word level		University word level		10,000 word level	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Study group	15	81.33	9.90	78.78	18.71	53.33	22.25	56.66	15.39	37.77	26.32
Control group	11	75.45	23.39	63.63	26.03	45.45	18.09	45.45	21.30	28.78	33.40



As a first step in searching for a correlation between the L3 lexical competence and the number of years spent studying the L3 or the number of foreign languages spoken, or the proficiency in the L2, scatterplots were consulted in order to verify if the relationship between the variables was linear or not. L1 proficiency was not included in the equation since it only shares a small amount of cognates with the L3, and the aim of the present study was to reveal the role of the L2 in teaching the L3 vocabulary through L2/L3 cognates. The inspection of the scatterplots showed that only the relationship between the variables of proficiency in Romanian, the overall scores and the scores on cognates were linear, therefore a Pearson's correlation test was conducted only for these variables. The results confirmed the expectations that there would be a positive correlation between the proficiency in the L2 and the L3 vocabulary proficiency. Table 5 reveals that there is a statistically significant correlation between the L2 proficiency and the overall scores on the L3 vocabulary test and the scores obtained on cognates ( $p = .03$ ,  $r = .42$ ;  $p = .006$ ,  $r = .52$ , respectively). Furthermore, a medium effect size ( $R^2 = 0.17$ ) was found for the correlation between proficiency in Romanian and the overall scores, while the correlation between proficiency in Romanian and the scores on cognates resulted in a large effect size ( $R^2 = 0.27$ ). Possible explanations for the fact that no relationship was found between the scores obtained on the test and the number of years spent studying English or the number of foreign languages spoken are the following. Starting early does not necessarily result in higher proficiency in a foreign language, because older learners advance at a higher rate in the first stages of language acquisition (Muñoz 2000) and thus they can level out their peers starting learning English at a younger age. The reason why the number of foreign languages showed no relationship with the test scores can be attributed to the fact that, as the additional information revealed, most students were learning one additional language, German, which was still at the beginning stage of the acquisition process.

**Table 5. Correlations between proficiency in Romanian and the overall scores and scores on cognates.**

		Proficiency in Romanian
Overall scores	Pearson Correlation	.420*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033
Scores on cognates	Pearson Correlation	.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

After the completion of the English vocabulary test, the students belonging to the study group were asked whether they had found the instruction helpful and whether they had made use of it while solving the test. As shown in Table 6, ten out of fifteen students found the instruction of structural relationships between the L2 and L3 words to be helpful in learning new lexical items. However, not all of them made use of the material during the test.

**Table 6. The students' opinions about the instruction and material concerning the structural relationships between the L2 and L3 lexical items.**

	considered the teaching helpful			used the cognate material	
	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
“not helpful”	5	33.3	“no”	7	46.7
“helpful”	10	66.7	“yes”	8	53.3
<b>Total</b>	15	100.0	<b>Total</b>	15	100.0

When asked whether they considered that foreign language vocabulary should be taught through this method or not, the students belonging to the study group provided valuable insights. The majority of students considered the method of teaching foreign language vocabulary through cognates to be useful. Most of those students who answered negatively considered that this technique should not be applied in foreign language classroom teaching because their proficiency in Romanian is not adequate for being able to profit from such instruction. Some samples from the students' answers are provided below:

- *Yes, it would be a good idea.*
- *Yes, but there are similar words as well that have different meanings.*
- *This would help in learning both Romanian and English.*
- *Yes, but first in Romanian classes, because it's easier for them to understand it.*
- *Not really because some don't even speak Romanian well, so it's pointless.*
- *It's better to keep the two languages apart. Besides, we should understand the Romanian words first.*

## 6. Discussion

The results of the English vocabulary test confirmed the expectations that instruction of the structural relationships between the L2 and L3 lexicon would have a positive effect on the students' performance on the L3 vocabulary test. The

study group did not only outperform the control group, but they also provided correct answers more consistently. The fact that the difference between the scores of the two groups became more accentuated on the word levels that contained the highest number of cognates shows that pointing out the similarities between the two lexicons and the explicit instruction of the structural similarities between the L2 and L3 lexical items enhances the noticing of cognates and thus facilitates the learning of L3 vocabulary. Moreover, the fact that one of the largest differences between the scores of the two groups was found on the university word level shows that this method can be of great help in learning English for academic purposes.

The statistically significant correlation found between L2 proficiency and the scores obtained on the L3 vocabulary test point at the relationship between the L2 and L3 of these students. In other words, the more proficient the students were in Romanian, the higher they scored on the test. This relationship suggests that students are likely to profit from instruction based on structural similarities of the L2 and L3 lexical items provided they have the sufficient knowledge of the L2, which can be then transferred to their L3. Therefore, it is not sufficient to focus only on L3 vocabulary teaching but adequate attention also needs to be paid to the teaching of L2. Moreover, as one of the students noted, such vocabulary teaching method may prove useful not only in the case of L3 vocabulary acquisition but also for improving L2 vocabulary.

In order to verify whether the difference between the study and the control group was significant or not, a Mann-Whitney U test was carried out both for overall test scores and for scores on cognate target words. Although the study group did obtain higher scores in both cases, no statistically significant difference was found between the two groups. However, taking into consideration the clear pattern of the results, further research in this area is recommended in order to have a better understanding of the effect of teaching foreign language vocabulary through cognates. Such research would entail a longitudinal study, focusing on a more extensive instruction period, repeated testing and larger sized groups.

Should the findings of such a large-scale study confirm the results of the present study, possible applications of this method should be considered in foreign language teaching. First, approaching the students' L2 as an aid in L3 vocabulary acquisition could contribute to economizing the learning process, thus making better use of the time spent on language learning. Second, these findings may be integrated in foreign language teaching through the creation of special learning materials designed for comparative instruction.

## 7. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether instruction of the structural similarities between the L2 and L3 lexicon facilitates L3 vocabulary acquisition. The results showed that the students receiving such instruction obtained higher scores both on cognate target words and overall on the L3 vocabulary test. Further analysis of the data revealed a positive correlation between L2 proficiency and the students' L3 vocabulary achievements. It was proposed that the method of teaching foreign language vocabulary through pointing out the similarities between the L2 and L3 lexical items is recommended because it may facilitate L3 vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, it was suggested that this method cannot only have a positive effect on L3 vocabulary acquisition, but it may also improve the students' L2 vocabulary.

In order to fully understand how instruction of structural relationships between L2 and L3 vocabulary items may affect L3 vocabulary acquisition, further research has been recommended. Finally, possible applications in the methodology of foreign language teaching have also been proposed.

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## Book Review

**Balázs, Lajos. *Amikor az ember nincs es ezen a világon*  
[*What Makes You Feel out of this World*]  
Csíkszereda: Pallas-Akadémia, 2009. 727 pp.**

Árpád KEMENES

Lajos Balázs's writing is part of a sequence of volumes in which the author provides an insight into the crucial turning points in the life of a Hungarian peasant community living in Csíkszentdomokos, a village situated in the Eastern part of Transylvania. After presenting a detailed, monographical description of the customs and rites connected to birth (1994), marriage (1995) and death (1999), in the present book Lajos Balázs highlights the sexual culture and morality among the people inhabiting the village.

The staggering amount of ethnographic material, which, as mentioned in the introduction, is the result of more than twenty years of field research, provides a meticulous description of the whole internal workings and organizing criteria of the interviewees' – and consequently the entire community's – sexual life. The approach to this sensitive topic adopted by the author is unique in the Hungarian ethnographic literature. Unlike the majority of the authors who have carried out research into this topic, Lajos Balázs does not try to draw an idealized picture of love and eroticism among peasants. Rather, he provides a bottom-view of the analysed problems by letting the interviewees talk about their personal experiences on love and sexuality. Thus he succeeds in recording some knowledge that has been handed over from generation to generation, but which is, at the same time, filtered through the personal life-experience of each individual. However, Lajos Balázs's writing did not appear "from the void". The guidelines stipulated by Gyula Ortutay in his essay entitled *A magyar parasztság szerelmi élete* [*Love-life*

---

among Hungarian Peasants] proved to be of major help for working out the methodology of the scientific study on sexual life among peasants. Another seminal work that had an influence on shaping the specific approach chosen by the author is Mária Vajda's essay *A parasztság nemi életének kutatása* [*Research into the Sexual Life of the Peasantry*]. The resulted approach reveals not only the social and ethnical characteristics of eroticism among peasants, but also its dependence on a number of geographical, economic, existential and historical factors.

The first chapters of the book highlight certain aspects of eroticism and sexual life as they manifest themselves in different periods of human life. After describing childhood eroticism, the author expounds on eroticism among adolescents and young people. One can find a detailed description on the environment in which children and adolescents can hear about sexuality, on the way they find the opportunity to discover its internal and external elements. The first signs of spiritual and bodily attraction towards people belonging to the opposite sex and the beginning of sexual life are also investigated in full detail. Special emphasis is laid on the role virginity used to play within the community, and on how people's attitude towards this issue has changed over the past decades.

After investigating the way eroticism and sexual life before marriage are approached by the people interviewed, Lajos Balázs provides a detailed inventory of the customs and practices connected to the bridal night, honeymoon and sexual life after marriage. The interviewees relate about problems newly married couples encounter during the process of initiation into the married life, about difficulties the young wife faces when she has to share the house with her in-laws, as well as about a number of disturbing factors that affect the sexual life of the couple. Separate chapters are dedicated to deal with the frequency of sexual life and with conflicts that stem from malfunctions of the husband-wife relationship such as cases of adultery or jealousy. The author also provides an account of the "symptoms" that signal the end of sexual life.

Apart from investigating the customs and practices related to the sexual life of different age groups, the writer also sheds light on sexual hygiene, on the social environment that favours the contraction and spreading of different sexually transmitted diseases, on practices of curing them, as well as on the community's attitude towards the person that suffers from a disease of this kind. Furthermore, a variety of contraceptive and abortive practices are presented in the volume, but not without mentioning the other side of the coin: the desperate struggle of some married couples for having an offspring.

Gossips, the impact of pornographic pictures and TV programmes, sexual deviancies, acts of perversion, as well as the way the people assimilate and comment on these experiences all have well defined roles in shaping the particular segment of culture into which the readers are initiated.

All the aspects of eroticism and sexual life presented in the volume converge towards the conclusion that there is a certain morality among peasants associated to each manifestation of sexuality, with its well defined social, economic and religious dimensions. It mirrors the living conditions, the traditions and the moral standards regulating these people's everyday life.



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