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Competence of Language Teacher Trainees. A Comparative Study

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Abstract. Digital competence plays an essential role in the work of teachers in general, and it has its specific challenges regarding language teachers. In their future profession, teachers will need to be able to respond to challenges of the digital world and to develop 21st-century competencies in a conscious, goal-oriented way supported by digital tools. Our survey proposes to map the level of development of digital competence among first-year translation and interpretation students, also enrolled in language teacher training. The tool of the survey was a questionnaire. In compiling the questions, we relied on the digital competence elements of the five competence areas of the European Union DigComp 2.1 reference framework. The results suggest that students' digital competence level is advanced, but there are areas and competences that require targeted intervention.

Keywords: teacher training, translation and interpretation students, DigComp 2.1 competence areas

1. Introduction

In Romanian higher education, teacher training takes place within the framework of teacher training institutes, which are under the authority of universities but can operate as independent institutions as well. Teacher training programmes are organized at two levels of education (Level I and Level II) during undergraduate studies (in our case, in parallel with studying translation and interpretation) or in the form of postgraduate studies (after obtaining a university degree and a master's degree). Completion of the Level I pedagogical module provides an opportunity to work as teachers in the compulsory phase of public education (from preparatory grade to the 10th grade). By completing the Level II module, the teacher candidate will have the possibility to teach in all grades (from preparatory to the 12th grade) and in university education.

The Teacher Training Institute of Sapientia University operates in three locations (Târgu-Mureş, Miercurea Ciuc, Cluj-Napoca) and provides training in three fields of study: technology and engineering, language and communication, humanities and social studies. The goal of the institution is the training of teacher candidates who will be able to convey the knowledge content of their field and to develop key competencies using effective pedagogical methods and procedures (Pletl (ed.) 2019).

Due to the emergence of new digital tools and applications, the development of digital competencies is a considerable challenge in education. The subject Computer Aided Education, which is included in the national curriculum of teacher education, provides an opportunity to develop students' digital literacy and competency.

In this study, we propose to examine the level of digital competency among the first-year translation and interpretation students also enrolled in language teacher training, as compared to students from other fields in order to determine the areas and levels of proficiency where there are appropriate results and where there are deficiencies. We also assess the knowledge, skills, and abilities that need to be further developed in order to help them become proficient in the effective use of digital resources as teachers.

2. European frameworks of reference for digital competence and for languages

As a result of the European Commission's 2005 study *Learning and Skills in the Digital Age*, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) published an EU document in 2013 providing a common reference framework for the interpretation and development of digital competences. In a document known as DigComp 1.0, the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens defined a level of proficiency in five other competence areas in three dimensions (basic, intermediate, and advanced).

The current document, DigComp 2.1 (Carretero et al. 2017), distinguishes eight proficiency levels in five competence areas in four dimensions: basic level (levels 1 and 2), intermediate level (levels 3 and 4), advanced level (levels 5 and 6), and master level (levels 7 and 8). It illustrates the overlapping levels of digital competencies through practical examples. The Framework is an EU basic document that defines digital competence levels and thus makes them measurable. The following competence areas are identified in the framework as part of digital competence: information and data literacy; communication and collaboration; digital content creation; safety; problem solving.

In the field of digital transformation of educational institutions, education and learning, a number of other frameworks and assessment tools have been developed with the aim of helping to assess and identify areas of competence that need targeted development. These include the DigCompEdu and DigCompOrg digital competency frameworks and the OpenEdu framework agreement.

DigCompEdu is "a scientifically sound framework describing what it means for educators to be digitally competent. It provides a general reference frame to support the development of educator-specific digital competences in Europe."[1] It describes 22 competences within six areas. Instead of technical skills, the framework focuses on giving details regarding how digital technologies may be used to innovate and enhance training and education.

According to Redecker (2017), the six main areas of competence are the following:

> Area 1: Professional engagement
> Using digital technologies for communication, collaboration and professional development.
> Area 2: Digital resources
> Sourcing, creating and sharing digital resources.
> Area 3: Teaching and learning
> Managing and orchestrating the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning.
> Area 4: Assessment
> Using digital technologies and strategies to enhance assessment.
> Area 5: Empowering learners
> Using digital technologies to enhance inclusion, personalisation and learners' active engagement.
> Area 6: Facilitating learners' digital competence
> Enabling learners to creatively and responsibly use digital technologies for information, communication, content creation, wellbeing and problem-solving. (Redecker 2017: 16)

The progression model proposed in DigCompEdu was designed to help educators discover and understand their strengths and weaknesses. It describes six different levels or stages of digital competence development. These levels are linked to the six proficiency levels ranging from A1 to C2 used by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR),[2] for easier use and understanding.

1 https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC107466.

2 https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions.

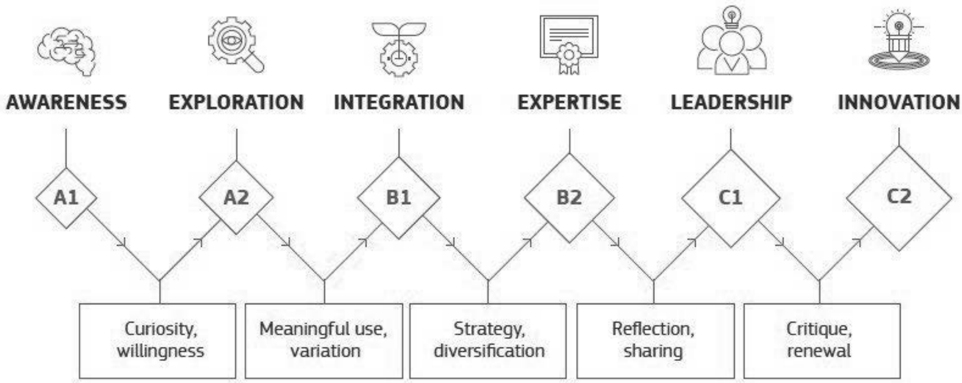

Figure 1. *DigCompEdu progression model* (Redecker 2017: 29)

DigCompOrg[3] is a competency framework describing the digital competencies of educational institutions, the aim of which is to help the institution's internal motivation-based self-development by assessing the IT infrastructure and to provide policy support for planning various short- and long-term strategies and specific interventions. It contains seven main competency areas:

1. Leadership and management practices,
2. Teaching and learning practice,
3. Professional development,
4. Assessment practice,
5. Content and curricula,
6. Collaboration and networking,
7. Infrastructure.

OpenEdu[4] is a framework agreement designed to provide a specified number of free educational applications and services to institutions. It provides students with an in-house operating system, free office suites, and a multimedia-based learning environment. It recommends educators to monitor, account for, and evaluate the process of teaching and learning. It is "a mode of realising education, often enabled by digital technologies, aiming to widen access and participation to everyone by removing barriers and making learning accessible, abundant, and customisable for all. It offers multiple ways of teaching and learning, building and sharing knowledge, as well as a variety of access routes to formal and non-formal education, bridging them."[5]

3 https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/european-framework-digitally-competent-educational-organisations-digcomporg_en.
4 https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/what-open-education_en.
5 https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/what-open-education/openedu-framework_en.

3. Previous studies

As part of a previous nationwide research related to the situation and problems of mother tongue vocational education in a bilingual education system, focusing on the conditions and participants of education (Pletl 2016), we conducted a questionnaire survey in the 2015–2016 school year, which examined the proficiency of teacher trainees in the use of ICT tools and their views on the role of ICT in education. The experience gained in this analysis helped us to design our current research. Students considered it necessary to use ICT tools in education. The usefulness of the knowledge available on the Internet in the learning process was emphasized, as it allowed home-based, self-paced learning. They had skill-level user competence, could use web 1.0 applications with a little help, but they already needed help with web 2.0 applications, and they could only be considered experienced in using certain online services (Harangus 2015).

Our research conducted in the 2019–2020 academic year can be considered a similar antecedent, in which two months after the transition to online education, we examined how teachers and students in higher education felt about the efficiency and form of online education. The students' answers supported the results of our previous research, meaning that the use of digital tools in everyday education was considered necessary, but the transition to full online education did not prove to be effective for them (Harangus et al. 2021).

Both studies show that the target groups are not actively involved in editing information and sharing knowledge. Although they are part of an Internet generation for whom opinion forming and community collaboration are an integral part of everyday life, they do not take the opportunity to share knowledge and produce and share content based on interaction.

In another study (Kovács 2020: 62), we demonstrated that:

> the concept of training language teachers only for face-to-face teaching (eventually complemented by the use of some ICT tools) has to be abandoned, and a more flexible approach is needed, with a stronger emphasis on the seemingly endless and continuously developing possibilities offered by familiarity with the experience and good practices accumulated in the domains of online, blended and adaptive learning and teaching.

Our present research is the initial stage of a three-year longitudinal study. We conducted it with the aim of exploring among teacher trainees what skills, abilities, and knowledge need further development and improvement based on self-evaluation.

4. Methodology

Our target group consists of first-year teacher candidates of Sapientia University, Faculty of Technical and Human Sciences, Târgu-Mureş. We proposed to provide a comprehensive picture of their digital competence levels. We started from the assumption that digital education can only be successful and productive if students have the necessary skill level to use digital competence. For our questionnaire, we used the practical examples of the DigComp 2.1 digital competence framework for citizens. Therefore, we designed the set of questions according to the five competence areas identified as part of digital competence: information and data management: 4 items; communication and collaboration: 4 items; digital content production: 3 items; security: 3 items; problem solving: 4 items. According to each area, the assessment of knowledge was measured on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 meant *not at all* and 7 meant *completely*. Instead of 21 competences, the questions referred only to 18, omitting those that are not closely related to learning such as the Health and Welfare Protection or Environment competences in the Safety competence area.

The survey was conducted in the second semester of the 2020–2021 academic year, among 106 (80% of the total number) first-year teacher trainees. Distribution of students by fields of study: engineering sciences: 44.30%, humanities (translation and interpretation studies): 30.38%, and social sciences: 25.32%. In this article, we focus on the results of translation and interpretation students (also language teacher trainees), comparing their answers with those of students from other fields.

5. Results

With the introductory question, we asked students to determine their general digital competence level necessary for studying. We used the levels proposed by the DigCompEdu framework: Newcomer (A1), Explorer (A2), Integrator (B1), Expert (B2), Leader (C1), and Pioneer (C2) (Redecker 2017: 30). Students were provided an explanation about what each competence stage meant (e.g. Newcomer (A1) – rarely uses digital technologies for communication or Pioneer (C2) – analytically examines communication strategies and renews them), which they understood easily because the stages are linked to the proficiency levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

As it is shown in *Chart 1*, most students believe that they can integrate digital technologies effectively (Integrator 44.83%) and use them confidently, creatively, and critically (Expert 35.63%) in learning. More language teacher trainees (translation and interpretation students) consider themselves integrators and pioneers than the average, while there are no self-declared newcomers, explorers, or leaders among them.

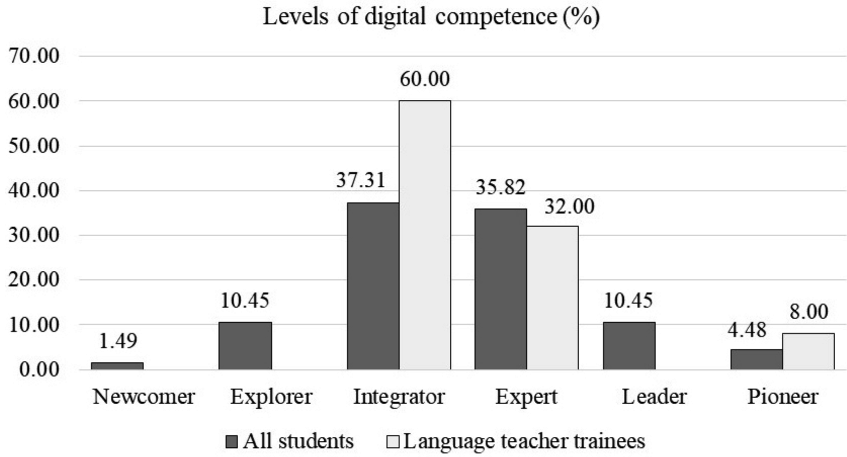

Chart 1. *Self-classification of students based on competence levels*

The following questions were designed to determine students' level of competencies belonging to each competence area.

Information and data literacy competence includes the following:

– "to articulate information needs, to locate and retrieve digital data, information and content;

– to judge the relevance of the source and its content;

– to store, manage, and organise digital data, information and content."[6]

In our questionnaire, the following questions measured this competence (using a 1 to 7 scale):

To what extent can you:

– evaluate the reliability and authenticity of information sources;

– recognize digital content from a variety of sources suitable for creating a report;

– store information, data, and content in an organized and easily retrievable form;

– use various Internet search engines and search strategies to find the information you need?

According to the averages obtained (*Table 1*), students are able to use a variety of Internet search engines and search strategies to select the information sources they need. They can evaluate the validity and authenticity of the data, the received information and content. They have a backup strategy and can store content in an organized and easy-to-retrieve format.

6 https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp/digital-competence-framework_en.

However, some differences can be observed regarding the average of students from different fields of specialization. The average of engineering students is the highest (5.97) followed by language teacher trainees (5.69), while the level of social sciences students is significantly lower ($p = 0.017$).

Table 1. *Information and data literacy – Average of students from three different fields*

Specialization	Average
Engineering students	5.97
Translation and interpretation students	5.69
Social sciences students	5.36

Communication and collaboration competence includes the following:

– "to interact, communicate and collaborate through digital technologies while being aware of cultural and generational diversity;

– to participate in society through public and private digital services and participatory citizenship;

– to manage one's digital identity and reputation."[7]

In our questionnaire, the following questions measured this competence (using a 1 to 7 scale):

To what extent can you:

– communicate and collaborate digitally;

– select, adapt, and combine different digital solutions for effective communication;

– to present the results of individual or group work in digital form;

– to adapt the appropriate communication strategy in the digital environment to the given target audience (e.g. address)?

There is no significant difference between the three specializations (*Table 2*). Engineering and translation and interpretation students use a wider range of digital communication tools to communicate with each other, share information and content, and use online services more actively than social sciences students.

Table 2. *Communication and collaboration – Average of students from three different fields*

Specialization	Average
Engineering students	5.78
Translation and interpretation students	5.79
Social sciences students	5.43

7 https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp/digital-competence-framework_en.

Digital content creation includes the following:

– “to create and edit digital content,

– to improve and integrate information and content into an existing body of knowledge while understanding how copyright and licenses are to be applied,

– to know how to give understandable instructions for a computer system.”[8]

In our questionnaire, the following questions measured this competence (using a 1 to 7 scale):

To what extent can you:

– create digital content (e.g. edit videos, audio, photos, presentations, text documents);

– apply copyright and licensing requirements for data, information, and digital content;

– write a computer program or macro to solve a task.

Student-estimated averages are lower in digital content creation (*Table 3*). The average of the technical students' level of competence (5.39) is the highest, significantly higher than that of their colleagues (average of translation and interpretation students = 4.37, p = 0.001; average of social sciences students = 4.38, p = 0.049). Due to their specialization, they are more familiar with licences required to use various information and content. They can alter settings or apply changes in various applications and programs. They are more familiar with the media tools that can be used to compile digital content.

Table 3. *Digital content creation – Average of students from three different fields*

Specialization	Average
Engineering students	5.39
Translation and interpretation students	4.37
Social sciences students	4.38

Safety includes the following:

– “to protect devices, content, personal data and privacy in digital environments;

– to protect physical and psychological health and to be aware of digital technologies for social well-being and social inclusion;

– to be aware of the environmental impact of digital technologies and their use.”[9]

In our questionnaire, the following questions measured this competence (using a 1 to 7 scale):

To what extent can you:

– identify misleading information and prejudices;

– behave safely and responsibly in the online space;

8 https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp/digital-competence-framework_en.

9 https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp/digital-competence-framework_en.

– implement secure protection of personal data (e.g. with complex passwords, encryption, and frequent software updates)?

Student averages are high in assessing skills and competencies related to security (*Table 4*). There is no significant difference between the three fields of specialization: they all believe that they can behave safely and responsibly in the online space. They know how to implement secure protection of their personal information, identify misleading information and prejudices.

Table 4. *Safety – Average of students from three different fields*

Specialization	Average
Engineering students	5.88
Translation and interpretation students	5.70
Social sciences students	5.60

Problem solving includes the following:

– "to identify needs and problems and to resolve conceptual problems and problem situations in digital environments,

– to use digital tools to innovate processes and products,

– to keep up-to-date with the digital evolution."[10]

In our questionnaire, the following questions measured this competence (using a 1 to 7 scale):

To what extent can you:

– identify a technical problem that arises when using a digital learning platform,

– customize the digital environment to meet user needs,

– clarify conceptual problems in the digital environment,

– resolve technical situations in the digital environment?

The averages for problem solving are also lower compared to the other competence areas, similarly to the averages for digital content (*Table 5*). Compared to the averages of students with a basic technical education, the average of translation and interpretation students are significantly lower than the average of engineering students ($p = 0.001$). Translation and interpretation students are less able to identify a technical problem that arises while using a digital learning platform or to solve problems arising from the use of technology. It is difficult to choose the means to achieve a given goal. Even if they know the technologies that would help solve the problem, they may not be able to use it.

The results show that, overall, students perform well in all fields (*Table 6*). They are good in the areas of security (5.70), information and data management (5.69), and communication cooperation (5.79), while they are less experienced in problem solving (4.55) and digital content production (4.37).

10 https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp/digital-competence-framework_en.

Table 5. *Problem solving – Average of students from three different fields*

Specialization	Average
Engineering students	5.66
Translation and interpretation students	4.55
Social sciences students	4.98

Table 6. *Students' averages in different areas of competence*

	All students	Engineering students	Translation and interpretation students	Social sciences students
Safety	5.72	5.88	5.70	5.60
Information and data literacy	5.67	5.97	5.69	5.36
Communication and collaboration	5.66	5.78	5.79	5.43
Problem solving	5.02	5.66	4.55	4.98
Digital content creation	4.83	5.39	4.37	4.38

A comparison of the language teacher trainees' self-classification with their digital competence level assessed with the help of their answers to the questions (*Chart 2*) shows that almost all of them classified themselves in a lower category than where they belong to. The students underestimated the level of their own digital competence. Based on the scores of the questionnaire, they all belong to the top three categories. There is a weak correlation between the data, with the majority of students having a higher level of competence based on the questionnaire than where they initially classified themselves, but there were also some students whose self-classification was higher than their knowledge based on the questions.

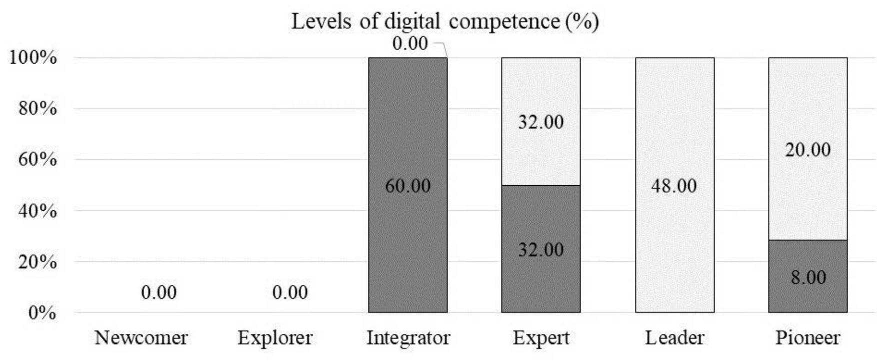

Chart 2. *Language teacher trainees' self-classification compared to their assessed levels based on the results of the questionnaire*

6. Conclusions

Digital competence is one of the eight key competences identified by the European Union. Its role in e-learning is decisive, and its lack hinders the realization of an effective learning process. It includes skills that may help develop other key competences. The aim of the IT subject in school education is the development of digital competence and knowledge. However, in reality, more emphasis is placed on computer use and less on actual IT knowledge. In high school, the chosen classes or specializations determine the number of hours per week in the subject of informatics and the content of the subject. The higher the number of hours per week they have in IT, the more emphasis is placed on developing digital competence. Students' level of competence entering university education is largely determined by the quantity and quality of the IT education they received in their school years.

One of the features of our measurement tool (questionnaire) is that it helps us classify students into categories corresponding to the European Digital Competence Framework for Teachers (DigCompEdu) based on self-assessment. The survey took place in the second semester of the first year of university studies, at a time when students had been studying online for a year, using digital technologies to communicate and access information. It is therefore surprising that about 7% of them consider that they do not have the digital competences necessary for studying.

The data of our series of questions assessing the students' digital competence level by competence area show an overall positive result. In all areas of the DigComp 2.0 framework, students scored significantly higher than the average, suggesting that their level of digital competence is advanced.

Not surprisingly, the averages of engineering students are higher in all fields. For admission, they must have a high school diploma in computer science, mathematics, or physics, i.e. they can enter university from high school classes where the teaching of these subjects is more emphasized. The scores of translation and interpretation students (language teacher trainees) and social sciences students are also higher than expected. Despite the fact that online education has been challenging, the tools, technologies, and strategies used for learning have developed their digital competence. Examining the variance values of the competence areas, it can be stated that there are students, regardless of their basic education, who lack certain competencies, so it is recommended to plan targeted development, focusing on their specific needs. The areas for improvement we have identified are those of digital content production and problem solving. Translation and interpretation students (language teacher trainees) may need to use these competencies in their future professions.

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Discrepancies between CLT Principles and the Romanian Language and Literature for Hungarian Minority Curriculum and Its Implementation

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Abstract. The study of the Romanian language and literature is a compulsory subject for students of Hungarian minority in Romania. However, the most effective language learning methods and paradigms take into account and exploit students' language awareness and linguistic repertoire. Such a didactic approach builds on students' language skills and teaches children to use their language resources through teaching situations embedded in everyday school life that focus on observing and comparing different languages. In recent years, there have been several attempts to bring about a paradigm shift in the teaching of the Romanian language and allow Hungarian students to learn Romanian as a foreign language. However, a significant shift can be observed between the levels and contents of the 4th- and 5th-grade textbooks, causing serious difficulties for 5th graders. Our study presents the initial stage of a textbook analysis. We examine the extent to which the available textbooks for the 5th grade follow the methodological changes in communicative and post-communicative language teaching and the extent to which they take advantage of the language opportunities provided by students' linguistic repertoire.

Keywords: CLT principles, Romanian language, Hungarian minority, curriculum, textbook

1. CLT: Method, paradigm, principles

Communicative language teaching (CLT) has become increasingly influential since its appearance as a methodology (Richards 2006). The Council of Europe has also played an important role in the introduction of the communicative approach in second and foreign language teaching by "promoting methodological innovations and new approaches to designing teaching programmes".[1]

Any language teaching and learning activity can be considered communicative if it motivates students to interact with each other in the target language. According to Richards (2006), communicative activities can include information gathering, task completion, information transfer, opinion sharing, reasoning, and role plays in the form of pair work or group work.

The fact that foreign language teaching has started to shift towards post-communicative language teaching proves that CLT is an innovative approach that still displays some weaknesses. Among these, we mention the following (cf. Nagy 2019: 130–131):

– CLT textbooks (for example, English teaching textbooks) – however appealing and interesting they may seem to be – have quite a lot of flaws as well, such as too many visual aids, which sometimes make pages rather chaotic and disorganized;

– little emphasis on language accuracy and more on appropriacy;

– no bilingual wordlists, mini-dictionaries, which are actually needed by learners;

– cultural aspects are quite out of reach and are often non-familiar, and thus sensitization towards interculturality is often false and artificial;

– replication of real-life situations is sometimes awkward;

– authentic texts are frequently uninteresting, dull and lack relevance from the viewpoint of learners in audio, audiovisual, and printed versions alike.

The post-communicative approach aims to correct these flaws of CLT by:

– presenting the forms of grammar and vocabulary: grammar still tends to be taught inductively, but grammar explanations should be based on contrastive and comparative approach;

– introducing task-based classroom activities, pair and group work, collaborative dialogue between learners, individual work with the Internet;

– reintroduction of mother tongue and translation tasks in the language classroom;

– the use of all good and effective teaching practices established in every previous approach that proved to be efficient;

– return of long forbidden techniques such as repetition or drilling in case of structures, as drills facilitate memorization, especially with adult learners;

1 https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions.

– rehabilitation of essay writing, texts about cultural and intercultural issues and literature – (cf. Nagy 2019: 134, Molina et al. 2006: 27, Celce-Murcia 2014: 9, Erdei 2002: 48).

2. The communicative shift and the shortcomings of the communicative curriculum in teaching Romanian to Hungarians

The topic of teaching Romanian language to children of Hungarian minority is a controversial and much-debated topic among teachers, parents, and researchers involved in the process. Tódor (2020), for example, encourages teachers and teacher trainees to contemplate on the efficiency of the teaching-learning process of Romanian language in classes of national minorities, especially Hungarians. She uses the term "non-native language" for Romanian to highlight the complex situation of Hungarian minority language learners, emphasizing the fact that it has a different status from foreign languages. On the other hand, Pop (2020) points out the need to teach Romanian to Hungarian pupils as a second or a foreign language, given the social realities in areas where the majority of the population is of Hungarian origin.

The main principles and guidelines of teaching Romanian for the Hungarian minority are described in the Romanian language and literature curriculum for schools where the language of teaching for other subjects is Hungarian.[2] The most notable shift in the teaching of Romanian language to Hungarians came in 2012 when the new curriculum was issued for first-grade pupils. This new curriculum was meant to promote a functional approach to language teaching, based on the principles of communicative language teaching.

The methods and strategies used to implement such a course are those borrowed from modern language teaching. The curriculum is correlated with the European Language Portfolio, an instrument based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.[3]

The curriculum states that learning the Romanian language as a second language of communication for the Hungarian minority begins at birth and continues throughout life, being the means of expressing thoughts, feelings, and personal experience.[4] However, in reality, the learning of Romanian for most children born in Hungarian families does not start at birth. Their first encounters

2 http://programe.ise.ro/Portals/1/Curriculum/2017progr/02Limba%20si%20literatura%20romana%20pentru%20minoritatea%20maghiara.pdf.

3 https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages.

4 http://programe.ise.ro/Portals/1/Curriculum/2017progr/02Limba%20si%20literatura%20romana%20pentru%20minoritatea%20maghiara.pdf.

with the official language may depend on the demographic and ethnic structure of the area where they live and the social relations of their family. A large number of children rarely hear Romanian until their first school years because in the family and among friends they hear and speak their mother tongue. In elementary school (the first five school years),[5] they study Romanian as a foreign language, starting with the development of the listening and speaking skills and building basic vocabulary and grammar knowledge in the first two years. Later, from the 2nd grade, basic (A1-) level development of the four main skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) follows. Starting with the 5th grade, the development of the communicative skills according to the children's language level and previous knowledge is suppressed by the study of theoretical knowledge related to language structures and literature. Children who barely reach A2 level when they start the 5th grade and who have serious difficulties in forming correct and acceptable sentences in Romanian are suddenly faced with texts that are not simplified and adapted to their level, containing a large amount of new vocabulary rarely used in current everyday language.

Some of the teaching principles enlisted in the national curriculum do not seem to be reflected in the textbooks and teaching practice. For example, the curriculum states that the interactive character of language acquisition should be emphasized, considering the imposition of the language approach not as an abstract system of signs but as a "working language", in its oral and written variants, as an instrument of expression and self-expression. In reality, students have to learn and understand theoretical concepts and definitions, facing a lack of listening comprehension practice and speaking opportunities. It is also stated that an active, playful practice of the language should be implemented. Textbooks do not seem to offer many ideas for such activities, which would not be a problem in itself because teachers could create, plan, and introduce them based on their group's level and interests. But in classes with large numbers (25-30) of learners the use of playful practice and games may be very difficult, often leading to chaos, therefore most teachers tend to avoid them. A creative capitalization of previous linguistic experiences would be expected, based on the curriculum, by designing didactic scenarios related to the capitalization of life experience and language knowledge, by developing linguistic sense and linguistic awareness. This may also be very challenging with large groups of learners because very little time can be dedicated to verbal interaction; therefore, it is mainly restricted to written tasks and homework, often done by students with the help of their family or the Internet, precisely because they lack the necessary "prior" linguistic experience.

The teaching principles state that in the constitution of meaning through reading a gradual familiarization with the text should be followed, starting from the global understanding of the text (the constitution of the global meaning) and

5 Prior to the first grade, there is a preparatory class in the Romanian educational system.

arriving at the analytical reading (the constitution of meaning at the lexical level). It is also stated that texts must comply with the following criteria: accessibility, attractiveness, formative character, adequacy to the age peculiarities and to the linguistic specificity of the students for whom Romanian is the non-native language.

Another mentioned didactic principle is the stimulation of linguistic consciousness, of metalinguistic and metacognitive thinking, by capitalizing on mother tongue acquisition based on the contrastive (comparative) approach of language and culture phenomena.

3. Textbook analysis

Our study was inspired by feedback received from parents and children regarding the difficulties they face in studying Romanian language in the fifth grade. This interview is the topic of another study; therefore, here we summarize only some of the main problems they described:

– The reading texts and the texts from different exercises contain too many unknown/new words and expressions.

– The explanations related to grammatical concepts and structures are too complex and difficult; students at this level find them very complicated and difficult to comprehend.

– Explanations and definitions are not always demonstrated with sufficient examples.

– Texts from literature are not adapted, simplified to the level of the students.

– Fifth graders learn notions of literary and communication theory, whereas they understand and speak the language on approximately pre-intermediate or intermediate (A2/B1) level.

– Children find learning Romanian difficult and frustrating compared to learning other languages (for example, English).

In search of answers to these problems, in this study we propose to analyse the first two chapters from two accredited textbooks published for the 5th grade, also examining the way in which CLT principles are applied:

1) Maxim Andreia-Nicoleta, Kibédi Nemes Ildikó, Militar Adela, Bărbos Liana-Cecilia. 2017. *Limba şi literatura română pentru şcolile şi secțiile cu predare în limba maghiară. Manual pentru clasa a V-a*. Bucharest: Editura Corint. (Textbook A – TA)

2) Hedwig Bartolf. 2017. *Limba şi literatura română pentru şcolile şi secțiile cu predare în limba maghiară. Clasa a V-a*. Deva: Editura Corvin. (Textbook B – TB)

Our analysis is based on the following viewpoints: application of CLT principles, age characteristics, and methodological aspects.

3.1. First exercises of the textbooks, first impressions

In Romania, children in the fifth grade start studying subjects with different teachers, and this brings significant changes for Hungarian students in studying Romanian language as well. Therefore, a revision or introductory unit, or at least some speaking activities related to finding out more about their classmates and the new teacher would be definitely welcome. TA, however, starts with a sudden dive into the world of Romanian literature. TB starts with three speaking exercises related to mountains, which contain questions about students' opinion and preferences related to their country, travelling, and holiday. These exercises involve group discussions and group work, descriptions of different pictures, expressing opinions and giving arguments. The CLT principles are definitely better followed in TB, and they offer more possibilities for using the language related to everyday life and topics than the introductory exercises in TA.

3.2. Literary texts

Both textbooks contain literary texts and numerous exercises based on them and theory related to the characteristics of literary and non-literary texts.

3.2.1. The pre-reading tasks

The first unit of TA starts with reading exercises related to a literary text. The first, rather simplistic pre-reading task (*Imagine a story that begins like this: One morning, after waking up, the child discovered that all the objects around him were talking. Suddenly*...) might be more efficient from a communicative viewpoint if it were personalized, such as *I woke up/I discovered*.

The first literary text in TB is in the second unit. Pre-reading tasks in TB rely on students' personal experience, by asking them to talk about domestic animals that live in the countryside and recognize different cereals and talk about them in groups. The pre-reading activities rely on communicative principles of language teaching based on integrated skills. They include a listening task (a fragment from the reading text to come, *Păcală* by Ion Creangă) combined with two vocabulary exercises and an oral communication exercise. The level of difficulty is gradually increasing.

3.2.2. The reading tasks

In TA, the literary text is an extract from the story *Băiet sărac* 'Poor Boy' by Ioan Slavici, and in TB the text is *Păcală*, an anecdote by Ion Creangă.

The literary text to be covered in TA is longer than the text in TB, and it contains more unknown vocabulary. The number of archaic words is significant though the story may work due to its message (the role of bravery and faith in good). The text is only a fragment from the original text signed by Slavici, and because of its difficulty, it should have been tailored to pupils' skills and needs. Adapting literary texts for didactic purposes is nevertheless seldom used by textbook writers though the simplification of the text and some stylistic refashioning would have been permitted and welcome.

Table 1. *Example 1*

„Ajungând la codrul de al şaptelea, unde se sfârşea împărăția bosoarcei, mânzul cel răpciugos se scutură o dată şi pe nesimțite se prefăcu într-un frumos cal înaripat, cum nici mai înainte de aceea, nici după aceea n-a mai fost altul." (Maxim et al. 2017: 13)	'Arriving at the seventh forest, where the kingdom of the witch ended, the wicked colt shook himself once and suddenly turned into a beautiful winged horse, like no other before or since.'

Such a text seems rather difficult to decode, as some terms such as *bosoarca* 'witch' and *răpciugios* 'wicked' are dialectal terms, very rarely used these days and not part of the lexical inventory 5^{th}-grader pupils need. An adapted and simplified version of the same fragment, which would probably make the reading more enjoyable, would look like:

Table 2. *Example 2*

Ajungând la codrul de al şaptelea, unde se sfârşea împărăția bosoarcei (boszorkány), mânzul (csikó) se scutură o dată şi se transforma într-un frumos cal cu aripi.	Arriving at the seventh forest, where the kingdom of the witch ended, the colt shook once and turned into a beautiful winged horse.

Archaic and dialectal lexical units are perceived as very difficult to deal with, therefore their usage should be restricted in the 5^{th} grade. In case their presence is absolutely necessary, a proper translation in the mother tongue within the body of the text would make the message clearer.

The vocabulary of the text is provided at the end of the lesson only under the form of a monolingual word list though a bilingual Romanian–Hungarian glossary of new lexemes would have been more useful.

The literary text in TB is shorter, and though it belongs to the same literary epoch as the text from TA, it displays fewer vocabulary problems. It contains archaic and dialectal units (*păpuşoi* 'corn', *iaca* 'here it is', *aista* 'this', *bucate* 'dishes', *terciu* 'porridge', *fert* 'boiled', *văleu* 'alas') as well, but the reading task is followed by an exercise that is meant to make pupils understand the difference between standard and sociolectal versions of words.

3.2.3. Post-reading tasks

The literary text in TA is followed by 15 diverse exercises (matching words with their definitions, true/false, fill in the sentences, summarize, retell, question/answer, continue the story). One non-communicative feature is that most of these exercises rely on writing (write a paragraph, write a short text, bring arguments in writing).

The authors of this textbook have designed a set of exercises that hardly take into account the age characteristics, the specific level of spiritual and social maturity of the students, using quite often language and style that is not appropriate for the age of the Hungarian students aiming to learn a foreign language.

One such example is the exercise that asks students to select from the given list the main meaning they associate with the text and justify their answers in a text of 30–50 words (page 15, Exercise 2). The list of characteristics contains a series of Romanian words Hungarian pupils might have difficulty with (e.g. *senzațional* 'sensational', *amuzant* 'funny', *emoționant* 'touching', *instructive* 'instructive'), which raises doubts regarding the motivational power of an exercise like this.

The lesson displays a remarkable amount of information related to literary theory embedded in texts with a series of unfamiliar words not suitable for the age group.

Table 3. *Example 3*

„Literatura înseamnă şi invenție, plăsmuire, adică ficțiune. Scriitorul inventează o altă lume care este inspirată din realitate. Aşadar, autorul se inspiră din realitate, dar nu o copiază. El selectează elemente din lumea reală şi le îmbină după propria sensibilitate pentru a transmite idei, gânduri şi sentimente. (…)" (Maxim et al. 2017: 16).	'Literature is also invention, i.e. fiction. The writer invents another world that is inspired by reality. So, the author is inspired by reality but does not copy it. He selects elements from the real world and combines them according to his own sensibility to convey ideas, thoughts and feelings (…)'

The principle of transdisciplinarity is also neglected here as such elements of literary theory are included in the Romanian lesson, without having studied these concepts in the mother tongue. These concepts are also inserted in highly non-communicative tasks such as Exercise 6 on page 16, in which pupils are asked to read some statements implying concepts of literary theory and decide whether they are true or false such as: *textul reflectă realitatea, precum ştiinţa* 'the text reflects reality, like science'; *textul are scopul de a sensibiliza cititorul* 'the text is intended to make the reader aware'.

One peculiarly unsuitable exercise is nr. 7 on page 16, which literally asks some 5th grader minority pupils struggling to get acquainted with the Romanian lexicon to transcribe two terms that are spatial indices (*Transcrie doi termeni care constituie indici de spaţiu*). An instruction like this makes us wonder why they did not use instead a speech act like: *Găsiţi în text cuvintele care se referă la locul acţiunii* 'Find the words in the text that refer to the place of the action'.

The pompous fragments regarding literary theory and stylistics are followed by more theory based on Roman Jakobson's drainpipe model of communication.

In TB, the literary text is followed by 20 exercises, among which there are pronunciation exercises, vocabulary exercises (fill in, find the plural of nouns, find the synonyms, find the antonyms, make up sentences, etc.), and classical reading comprehension tasks (multiple choice, find the mistake, summarize, true/false, role play based on the text, dramatization, etc.). The last two exercises also focus on students' evaluation of the text and their personal opinion on the usefulness of reading Romanian tales. One exercise integrates listening skills as well (listen to the full text of the tale), and for most of the exercises organization tips are provided (individual work, pair work, group work).

3.3. Further reading

In TA, the literary text proposed for further reading is Mircea Sântimbreanu's *Poştaşul* 'The Postman', while in TB it is *Boierul şi Păcală* 'The Boyar and Păcală' by Ioan Slavici.

In TA, all the exercises that accompany this short fragment are meant to practise the theoretical information presented previously. Most of these exercises are themselves rather theoretical.

Table 4. *Example 4*

"Precizează cele patru elemente ale comunicării pe care le identifici în următoarea secvenţă: – Nu-i nimic, Lică, zisei, uite un leu. Te duci la Alimentara şi iei halva pentru vrabie. Nu-i aşa?" (Maxim et al. 2017: 21)	'Specify the four elements of communication that you identify in the following sequence: "It's nothing," Lică, said [s/he], "here's a coin. You go to the Alimentara and get the halva for the sparrow. Isn't that right?"'

There are two assignments following the principles of CLT, namely a dramatization exercise and a role-play (continue the dialogue). The text has only one illustration, whereas the first text has two illustrations.

In TB, the exercises accompanying the second literary text follow the same pattern as the previous set of exercises – there are pronunciation exercises, vocabulary exercises (fill in, find the plural of nouns, find the synonyms, find the antonyms, make up sentences, etc.), and classical reading comprehension tasks (multiple choice, find the mistake, summarize, true/false, role-play based on the text, dramatization, etc.).

The students' social surrounding is replicated with the help of two exercises, which ask them to write an email (fill in) and an SMS (invite Păcală to dinner). Role-plays and dialogues are also exploited. Intercultural elements are present in Exercise 49 on page 39, which asks students to find similar characters in Hungarian tales. The practising of different past tenses and conditional structures follow the onomasiological approach (Exercise 50 on page 39).

The literary theory fragment is short and selects the most important items of information, focusing only on the concept of literary character (definition, classification). The information is further applied to the main character from the text they have just read, in the form of a post-reading discussion about what kind of character Păcală really is.

After the first non-literary text, some additional information is provided regarding the text typology, but these theoretical elements are also replicated in exercises and discussions that do not exceed students' level of linguistic competence and age characteristics.

We believe that understanding concepts of literary and communication theory can be very strenuous and frustrating for pre-intermediate or intermediate language learners at the age of 11–12. They should study and understand these concepts in their native language, presented with a more interesting, playful, communicative approach, and not in a second language.

3.4. Non-literary texts

In TA, the first non-literary reading text is in the second unit, which is a text adapted from a blog related to animals: *Bucefal, un cal demn pentru Alexandru cel Mare*[6] 'Bucephalus, a horse worthy of Alexander the Great'. There is one pre-reading exercise, asking students whether friendship is possible between humans and animals. It is not specified if this question should be discussed in pairs, groups, or the whole class.

The text relates the story of how the young Alexander the Great managed to tame Bucephalus, a horse that nobody else managed to master. It would be an

6 https://blog.pentruanimale.ro/bucefal-un-cal-demn-de-alexandru-cel-mare/.

interesting story to read for 11–12-year-old children, but there are too many possibly unknown words that can make the reading experience frustrating (words such as *străvechi* 'ancient', *călăreț* 'horseman', *şa* 'saddle', *a stăpâni (un cal)* 'master (a horse)', *aprig* 'fierce', *încrezător* 'confident', *nesăbuire* 'recklessness', *pariu* 'bet', *prinsoare* 'catch', *da dovadă* 'prove', *căpăstru* 'halter', *blândețe* 'gentleness', *armăsar* 'stallion', *elimina* 'eliminate', *încordat* 'tense', *răsuflare* 'breath', *măreție* 'greatness').

There are nine exercises related to the text, three of which are vocabulary exercises where students are asked to search the meaning of some of the above-mentioned words in dictionaries, write sentences with them, and fill in the gaps with the given expressions from the text. Such exercises are useful in practising and memorizing new vocabulary items and can be found in many communicative language textbooks. These are followed by two comprehension check exercises (answer the questions, fill in) related to the text and three exercises that focus on theoretical issues related to the differences between literary and non-literary texts. One of these is particularly difficult although introduced as a playful activity, asking students to compare the literary text *Poor boy* and the text *Bucephalus, a horse worthy of Alexander the Great* using a chart:

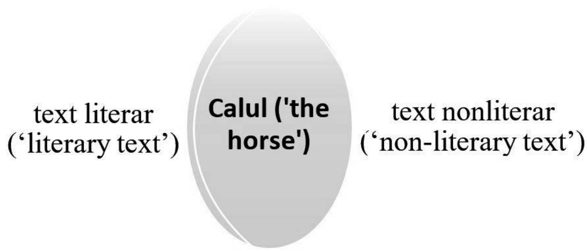

Figure 1. *Comparing literary and non-literary texts*

The last exercise is a writing task, asking students to give arguments why they should remember this story, which they also have to present in front of the class. For this, students need to understand the global meaning and the message of the text, and also be creative in expressing their opinion.

The language and wordings of the instructions of most exercises are complicated, and it may be difficult for students to understand what they are asked to do.

In TB, there are three speaking exercises and three listening exercises that serve as pre-reading tasks, because they are all related to the topic or the text itself. All these exercises follow the principles of CLT, but one of the problems is again the level of difficulty of the reading text, which contains a large number of vocabulary items related to mountains, geography, and hiking. Children who are unfamiliar with this type of activity may not know them (e.g. *ienuper/jneapăn* 'juniper', *şa* 'saddle', *chei* 'gorge', *împrejurimi* 'surroundings', *ochi de mare* 'lake', *mare de pietre* 'sea of stones', *vale glaciară* 'glacial valley', *pragul glaciar* 'glacier threshold', *regiunea alpină* 'alpine region', *trepte glaciare* 'glacial steps'). The other issue may be the topic itself because not everyone (especially children) is interested in planning hiking trips.

There is also a monolingual vocabulary after the text and ten various short vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation exercises related to the new words. These are followed by two comprehension check exercises (multiple choice, answer the questions) and creative exercises related to planning trips (what objects, equipment, and food students would take on a hiking trip). Nineteen other exercises follow, all related to vocabulary and activities related to hiking and geography, some of them interactive, encouraging discussions, pair work and group work.

This unit contains two other texts related to mountains and mountaineering: one of them is the story of an expedition to Mount Everest and the other a text about the Ice Castle at Bâlea Lake, a popular tourist attraction in Romania. Altogether, there are 83 short exercises connected to the topic, practising and developing various skills. The language and wordings of the instructions of all the exercises are simple and easily understandable. At the end of the unit, there is also a short test related mainly to the new vocabulary introduced in this unit.

Comparing the use of non-literary texts and the related exercises in the first two units of the two textbooks, we can conclude that TB follows more closely the CLT principles. The texts are more interesting and inspiring, the exercises more diverse, and the instructions more understandable for fifth graders. The new vocabulary is more thoroughly practised, interactivity and creativity are encouraged, the illustrations are more inspiring, colourful and diverse, and the pages are less crowded. There is less theory related to characteristics of literary and non-literary texts and less exercises related to theoretical concepts. Based on our observations, the texts and tasks in this book suit better the needs and level of the students.

3.5. Listening tasks

In the first unit of TB, there are three listening exercises related to the topic of planning a trip and hiking in the mountains. In the first one, students listen to a text they will later read, but this time without seeing and reading it, and they have to identify from a list of words the ones that can be heard in the recording. Then, while listening again, they have to write down the mentioned numbers. In the third task, they have to choose from pairs of expressions the ones they could hear in the recording. The other two recordings of this unit contain the other two reading texts – in each case, the students first listen to the recording, do one or two related exercises, and then read the text. The same voice reads the texts, which is rather monotonous. In the second unit, there are two listening exercises for pronunciation practice, and again all the reading texts are recorded, and there are exercises based on listening to them as well. The same monotonous voice reads these texts as well, which makes the listening activities a less authentic experience.

In TA, there are no exercises based on listening. Some of the reading texts are recorded, but there are no tasks based on listening to them.

3.6. Videos

Both textbooks have digital versions as well and video materials. However, the videos from TA and some of those from TB may seem strange to children because most of them are in fact audio recordings of the reading texts or explanations of theoretical concepts related to literary and non-literary texts or grammatical structures. This means that the children are looking at still images and written definitions while listening to a voice reading or explaining something. Children who are used to watching real films, scenes, and animations in other language classes (for example, in the digital version of their English textbook) may find these videos strange and boring, and not authentic at all.

3.7. Intercultural elements

In TA, intercultural elements are discussed separately in a subunit, and they are introduced based on reading another literary text – this time, two short fragments taken from the tale *Şoricelul cel bun la suflet* 'The little good mouse' by Marie-Catherine de Jumel de Bernaville, translated into Romanian.

The pre-reading exercise consists of a question asking students what super power they would like to have and why. This is followed by a multiple-choice question referring back to *Poor boy*, asking which of his characteristics helped him to overcome the difficulties he faced. After reading the texts, there are exercises related to describing the main characters and comparing the extracts from the studied literary works also with similar texts from Hungarian literature. The last exercise from this subunit is a game aiming to develop students' vocabulary, creativity, and ability to work in a team, but not intercultural competence.

The subunit dedicated to intercultural elements from the second unit of TA focuses on comparing three films, based on writings from Romanian, Hungarian, and American literature. This subunit does not focus on developing intercultural communication, but instead they focus mainly on comparing literary works from different countries.

In TB, very few cultural and intercultural elements can be found in the first two units, and they are not discussed in separate subunits.

3.8. Grammar

In the first two chapters of TA, the main grammar focus is on Romanian phonetics. The amount of theoretical information is tremendous and complicated:

Table 5. *Example 5*

„De obicei, cuvintele terminate în consoană sunt accentuate pe ultima silabă (felinàr), iar cuvintele terminate în vocală sunt accentuate pe silaba penultimă (feméie). Atunci când ultimul sunet al cuvântului este *a* (cu excepția cazurilor în care *a* este articol, ca în casa), accentul cade pe ultima silabă (musacà, tremurà). Cuvintele accentuate pe silaba antepenultimă sunt mai puțin frecvente, iar cele accentuate pe cea de-a patra silabă începând de la cea finală sunt extrem de rare: vèveriță.” (Maxim et al. 2017: 28)	‘Words ending in a consonant are usually stressed on the last syllable (*felinàr*), and words ending in a vowel are stressed on the penultimate syllable (*feméie*). When the last sound of the word is *a* (unless *a* is an article, as in *casa*), the stress falls on the last syllable (*musacà*, *tremurà*). Words stressed on the antepenultimate syllable are less frequent, and those stressed on the fourth syllable from the final syllable are extremely rare: *vèveriță*.’

The exercises focus on ordering, selecting words that contain certain sounds, pronouncing words, etc.

In the first chapters of TB, the grammar items that are practised are related to the plural of nouns, present and past tenses, synonyms and antonyms, and, most importantly, elements of the Romanian sound system. TB replaces the old semasiological approach (name, concept>>object, meaning) with an onomasiological approach (object, meaning>>name, concept), as grammar explanations are completely absent, and elements of phonetics and morphology are dissipated in exercises of the following type: copy the words containing the groups *ge/gi*, find the nouns, recognize the singular/plural forms, provide the plural of the nouns, etc. What seems a rather non-communicative approach is the integration of grammar exercises among post-reading tasks, in the sense of asking pupils to put different past structures into other two past tenses and do further *if clause* exercises though no explanation is provided regarding any of these grammar items. The curriculum for 3rd and 4th graders does not include the teaching of these tenses, nor does it include any conditional structures. What is even more surprising is that these curricula referring to the previous two years of study permit reference to morphological or syntactic issues only by intuition, strictly forbidding overt usage of grammar terminology. The textbook for the 5th graders, nevertheless, displays a lot of grammar-related terminology, as if all these items had been studied by pupils before: asking pupils to transform structures according to the model presupposes that they are familiar with aspects of verb conjugation, which they are not.

4. Conclusions

Teaching Romanian to minority students should be based on post-communicative principles. However, as our study shows, the textbooks published and accredited often fail to respect them.

Authentic texts are not always the best option to introduce lexis or grammar. Authenticity is not equal to appropriateness or pedagogical relevance, therefore text selection in Romanian textbooks should also include texts adapted to or constructed for didactic purposes.

Appropriacy cannot replace accuracy, as relying on appropriacy only may end up in not teaching enough lexis for later real-life communication. What is more, focusing on appropriacy may lead to problems in the sense that exams and tests usually measure accuracy, which is of secondary importance in classroom situations. The over-generalization of appropriacy does not solve the paradox that children need words and rules for communication, not instructions in strategies for communication.

Replacing traditional grammar categories and the focus on structures with teaching of functions and the pragmatic approach to language may prove to be a dead-end in a couple of years. Functional categories around which textbooks are built may be too abstract, and sometimes it is difficult to establish what to teach: functions without vocabulary are not better than grammar structures without vocabulary. Efficient language teaching should combine communicative teaching with focus-on-form teaching. Simply replacing the teaching of rules of grammar with the teaching of rules of communication is not a solution. Romanian textbooks are filled with theoretical notions related to literary theory or theory of communication. These explanations are quite long and teach notions that are useless for 11-year-old pupils. Is it more useful to learn information about the Saussurean communicative theory or notions related to text typology and literary theory at the expense of teaching grammar structures?

It is questionable whether the focus on pragmatic concepts such as *utterance* or *structure* instead of using morpho-syntactic structures such as *sentence* or *word* will further students' knowledge of Romanian.

Transdisciplinarity is another principle that fails to be implemented, in the sense that the teaching of Romanian language should be harmonized and coordinated with topics taught in pupils' mother tongue.

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On the Importance of Raising Collocational Awareness in Translation Practices

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Abstract. The knowledge of medium-strength and field-specific collocations is a prerequisite for sounding native-like and as such an essential skill to have for future translators. While students are usually familiar with the use of idioms and fixed expressions, they may struggle with recognizing and also producing collocations, especially the ones they do not encounter with enough frequency. They may tend to overuse certain common word combinations and often create constructions through false analogy that result in unnatural sounding language. In order to acquire collocations, students need to notice them first – noticing, either incidental or guided, is considered to be an essential step in this process. After presenting some of the factors that hinder the accidental noticing of collocations, which also motivates the necessity for the teacher's guidance, the paper gives examples of exercises that can help to draw students' attention to collocations. An important objective is to raise students' collocational awareness and also to motivate them to use resources that allow the noticing of collocations (collocation dictionaries, electronic databases, electronic corpora). A task-based approach as understood by Ellis (2003) combined with the theoretical considerations of the lexical approach (Lewis 1993) can be suitable for this purpose; the exercises presented are based on general and also semi-specialized texts and target students studying translation and working with the Hungarian–English language combination.

Keywords: collocations, translation, noticing, tasks, lexical approach, electronic corpora

1. Introduction

While collocations are generally understood as two or three words that tend to co-occur (the Latin term *collocare* meaning *col* + *locare* = place together), there is a great variation in literature with respect to how collocations are understood and defined. There are frequency-based or semantically motivated interpretations of collocations and also approaches that show a mix of the two. In the first category, we find several definitions such as Lewis's (2000: 132): "the way words co-occur in natural text in statistically significant ways", Sinclair's (1991: 170): "the co-occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text", or Conzett's (2000: 73): "two or more words that tend to occur together". Other interpretations focus rather on the semantics of these constructions, so Benson et al. (1986) define collocations as "fixed, identifiable, non-idiomatic phrases and constructions" and Demir (2017: 293) as "the recurrence of two or more words in a way more than arbitrary, and is instinctively used by writers heavily in academic text". Analysing collocations from a semantic point of view, Schmid (2003: 235) considers them as "half-way entrenched word combinations with a half-way gestalt character", representing a transition between free combinations of words and idiomatic expressions. These characteristics of collocations, their mediocre value on the scale of idiomaticity can partly explain the difficulties linguists face when trying to define them (Schmid 2003). Finally, Bartsch (2004: 76) in her definition of collocations attaches importance to a series of factors such as the pragmatic restriction of collocations, the syntactic relation between the constituent elements and also their frequency, and she defines them as "lexically and/or pragmatically constrained recurrent co-occurrences of at least two lexical items which are in a direct syntactic relation with each other".

In the present paper, collocations will be understood as constructions, pairings of form and meaning with varying degree of transparency and compositionality, where the constituent elements mutually expect each other and also co-occur with enough frequency. This definition fits well into Goldberg's (2006) understanding of constructions as both unpredictable form-meaning pairings and frequent word combinations. Collocations are considered as symbolic in nature (representing a mapping between a particular form and its associated meaning) and have unique morphological, syntactical, and pragmatic functions that result at the level of the construction as a whole. In order to provide a thorough analysis of collocations, it is believed that the consideration of both the frequency of these constructions and their semantic-syntactic properties need to be considered.

2. On the nature of collocations

Collocations occupy an intermediary position between free combinations and fixed constructions, and as a consequence they vary considerably with respect to compositionality and transparency. They are more or less transparent, so the following collocations with 'run' show varying degrees of transparency and idiomaticity: *run a program*, *run an errand for someone*, *run the risk of*, or *being run down*. In addition, collocations can be more or less prototypical, ranging from recurrent binary constructions, such as *earn a living* (verb + noun phrase), *key question* (adjective + noun phrase), etc., to constructions that are less typical (in the sense that they include prepositions and other function words) such as *feel the need to do sth.* (verb phrase + to infinitive).

From a semantic point of view, collocations consist of the base that carries most of the meaning of the construction and its collocator (McKeown–Radev 2000). The base can take several collocators (e.g. in the case of *carry out/make/conduct/do/undertake research*, the base 'research' takes several collocators) or only a few (e.g. the verb 'commit' meaning 'dedicate' appears in constructions such as *commit yourself to something* or *commit time/money to something*). In some other cases, the collocator itself is semantically empty; so, for example, in the construction *take a bath*, 'take' only changes the aktionsart category of the construction (focusing on the activity as a whole rather than on the process itself) without adding any additional meaning to it (McKeown–Radev 2000).

Not only are the constituent elements of collocations more or less interchangeable, but they also may or may not allow for additional element(s) to separate them. The collocations *large/big/huge problem* or *give/deliver/hold a lecture*, for example, contain interchangeable elements, with only a slight difference between them, and so do the collocations *shed/cast/throw some light* on; nevertheless, in this latter case, *shed light on* is more archaic sounding than the rest and is preferably used in formal contexts. The insertion of an additional element is often possible with V + N collocations (e.g. hold an *interesting* lecture, pay *honest* tribute to, etc.), which is not the case with set constructions, lexical bundles such as *in a nutshell*, *in other words*, *in terms of*, etc.

With respect to their morpho-syntactic characteristics, collocations can be grouped into lexical and grammatical collocations with respect to the part of speech the constituent elements belong to (Benson et al. 1986). Lexical collocations are combinations of lexical categories such as verb + noun (*make a mistake*), noun + verb (*plane lands*), verb + adverb (*argue intensely*), adjective + noun (*soured milk*), adverb + adjective (*incredibly difficult)*, or noun + noun (*conference hall*). Different from lexical collocations, grammatical ones take a preposition (e.g. noun + preposition (*hostile to/towards*)), preposition + noun (*by any means*, *with/in reference to*), a *to*-infinitive or a *that*-clause (such as *to be inclined to do sth.*), predicative adjective + to infinitive (*to fear that/for fear that*), verb/noun + that clause, etc.

Semantically, collocations are categorized as weak when the base selects for a high number of collocators (e.g. collocations with 'large': *a large amount/collection/number (of)/population/proportion/quantity/scale* (www.espressoenglish.net)), as medium-strength when the base selects for a limited number of collocators (e.g. *give/deliver/do a presentation* (examples of V + N collocations)), and strong collocations, which have a restricted number of collocators and so a very restricted use (e.g. *foster partnership*). Along with medium-strength collocations that are considered especially challenging for students, field-specific collocations require special consideration, for example, teaching *file a claim* – for 'making an official request' or to *resolve a party's legal claims* – for 'finding a solution to a request' may be important in case specialized legal texts related to procedural law are discussed.

3. Why teach them in translation practices?

Studies concerned with collocations (e.g. Kjellmer 1991, Waller 1993, Antle 2013, Demir 2017, just to mention a few) often analyse students' use of collocations in EFL and/or ESP classes and ponder over teaching methods that would lead to a better acquisition of these constructions. Lewis (1993), in particular, stresses the importance of teaching language chunks and also collocations to language learners. His *Lexical Approach* to language teaching underlines the importance of teaching more lexis and less grammar in foreign language classes, based on the assumption that "language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar" (1993: 34). The knowledge of collocations is generally considered to be beneficial at all levels as it contributes to better self-expression at lower levels, to moving past the "intermediate plateau", and to sounding more native-like in more advanced classes. While there are also studies that focus on collocation use in translation practices, e.g. on collocation errors that can be found in translations (Trang et al. 2021) or on collocation-centred activities based on corpus findings (Postolea–Ghivrigă 2016), their number pales in comparison to the ones tackling the use and teaching of collocations in foreign language classes. Nevertheless, teaching collocations in translation classes is equally important, and drawing students' attention to them is often necessary. In what follows, a brief overview will be given of factors that call for the necessity of drawing students' attention to collocations in translation practices.

3.1. Low metalinguistic awareness

Collocational awareness is an important prerequisite for a translation to be accurate with respect to not only grammar but style and register as well. It can often be the case that students' translations are grammatically correct yet the target text sounds unnatural because of collocation errors; while this is more often the case when students translate from their mother tongue into a foreign language, collocation mistakes can also be noticed when students translate into their native language. Low metalinguistic awareness is often due to the fact that students are not aware of the importance of collocations and language chunks, mostly because not enough emphasis has been laid on them previously in EFL classes (by the teacher and/or language course books). Despite the fact that students often know the constituent elements of a collocation, they may not regard them as collocations in their own right. In order to raise the quality of translations, it is therefore necessary that teachers help students improve their metalinguistic awareness by deliberately drawing their attention to these constructions.

3.2. Negative language transfer

Many collocational errors are a result of negative language transfer either from students' L1, L2, or even L3. As Herdina and Jessner (2022) point out in their *Dynamic Model of Multilingualism*, language systems are interdependent and constantly influence each other, which means that in case language learners speak several foreign languages, transfer and interference may result not only from their L1 but the other languages, too. Examples of negative language transfer can be noted in the excessive use of the definite article *the* (e.g. **according to the researchers*), wrong prepositions or elliptical structures where the target is missing (**arrive to the station, *leads to a complete falling apart (to a complete downfall)*), wrong word order that deviates from the SVO structure (**from here starts the movie*). Students tend to have the greatest difficulty with lexical collocations, especially medium-strength V + N constructions, so collocation errors such as **get to the realization*, **say the truth*, **make things differently* are not uncommon in students' writings. Occasionally, students also create unusual word combinations such as **to expand their admiration for folk costumes* (instead of *deepen admiration for folk costumes*).

3.3. Variation of collocations, not enough encounters within a short span of time

Certain ideas can often be expressed in different ways, and the collocation itself can also vary. An example of collocational variation is *run/do/perform/carry out tests,* which can be all possible in case of medical testing, e.g. in *Doctors need to run/do/perform/carry out more tests to determine the patient's diagnosis.* Due to the variation of collocations, learners might struggle to recall them, unless they have seen them in different contexts various times before and are already familiar with their use.

3.4. Semantic and perceptual salience of collocations

In order for students to notice and retain collocations in memory, it is important to notice them first. According to Boers et al. (2014), there are several factors that hinder the incidental noticing of collocations, among them perceptual and semantic salience. As Boers et al. (2014) point out, the effect of novelty plays an important role in noticing collocations. In case the constituent elements of collocations are familiar to students, they tend to overlook the entire construction and would probably not give it much importance unless they encounter it several times in a short span of time (2014: 46). Although collocations where students are unfamiliar with one of the constituent elements may catch students' attention, this is more likely to happen when both constituents are unknown to learners. The collocation *wreak havoc*, for example, may bring the novelty effect to students if they are not familiar with the meaning of the constituent elements and prompt them to look at it and try to guess its meaning (Boers et al. 2014). Lack of perceptual salience can also result from other factors such as the reduction of elements in a stream of discourse (frequent formulaic sequences, e.g. auxiliaries, prepositions, articles may be less clearly articulated in speaking), the fact that the elements of collocations are sometimes separated from each other in the sentence, and also the presence of a phonological neighbour (words that share all phonemes except for one) such as *take/*make a photo, on purpose/*in purpose.* In addition, lack of semantic salience can detract students' attention from collocations in case a construction contains a hot verb, e.g. 'do', 'make', 'take', 'get' as in *do a good job*, *make a wish, take time off*, *get the impression of.* As students often see these verbs, they tend to pay attention only to the word following them and fail to regard the collocations in their entirety. This is also because in such constructions it is often the accompanying word (very often the noun) that carries most of the meaning, e.g. in the collocations *give a smile* or *take a rest*, the verbs 'give' and 'take' affect the aktionsart of the construction (expressing willingness and completeness of an action) but do not contribute to its meaning in a considerable way.

3.5. Students' vocabulary learning habits

Wray (2002) makes the observation that post-childhood second language learners are much less inclined than pre-literate children to memorize and process texts in multi-word chunks. There is a general predisposition of post-childhood learners to focus on single words rather than on word combinations, and this predisposition may be strengthened over the years by the impulses they get in EFL classes (certain gap-fill or matching type exercises that focus on one particular element of a construction, teachers writing single words on the whiteboard, etc.). While it can be challenging to counteract this predisposition, teachers can use some strategies (manipulating a text to highlight collocations, writing entire collocations on the whiteboard, asking learners to paraphrase or give synonyms of a certain construction, etc.) to help students recognize and also acquire multi-word constructions in addition to individual words. An important step in this direction is to sensitize students about the importance of collocations and multi-word chunks and equip them with skills (cultural sensitivity, the ability to think about the way collocations are expressed in a language and also the ability to use electronic resources and databases efficiently) that are necessary for rendering them into the target text. Making students familiar with such databases can also help them to become more aware of the necessity of cultural sensitivity in translations.

4. How to teach them?

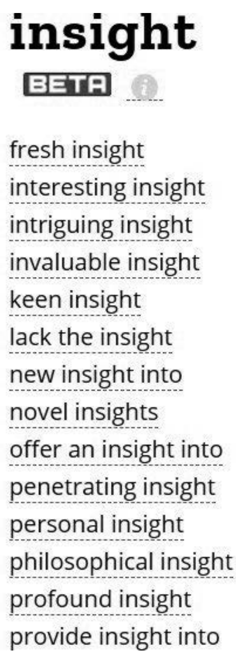
Despite the fact that there is no perfect method that would guarantee the acquisition of collocations, there are some useful considerations and guidelines that can help teachers to ease the learning process for students. In accordance with the *Lexical Approach* put forward by Lewis (1993), input and noticing are considered as especially significant in this respect. It will be assumed that the acquisition of collocations can only happen if students notice them in different contexts first. As Schmidt (1990) formulates it in his *Noticing Hypothesis*, any form of learning implies noticing, which makes it a necessary condition for an input to become intake. While incidental noticing is always possible and can occur during all phases of a language practice activity, due to the reasons given above, this is less likely to occur in case of collocations. As such, teachers' intervention may be more than desirable when the enhancement of students' collocational awareness is targeted. An important aspect in this respect is to allow students to notice a particular collocation together with their syntactic pattern (called colligation), e.g. 'opportunity' can appear in different syntactic patterns such as *opportunity for someone/something*, also *opportunity for/of doing something*, the difference in the latter case being that 'opportunity for + -ing' is less common than 'opportunity of + -ing' and also seems to appear with specific verbs that express the idea of discover/take a chance, whereas 'opportunity of + -ing' appears with a wide range of (more) dynamic verbs. Thus, the *opportunity for* + -ing turned 111 hits in the BNC, the most common verbs being 'testing', 'developing', 'giving', 'exploring', 'effecting', whereas the 'opportunity of + -ing' construction with 456 hits contained verbs such as 'making', 'seeing', 'getting', and 'meeting' (https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc/). Students should also learn about the semantic prosody and preference of collocations when noticing the use of these constructions. The two notions are closely connected: semantic prosody can be defined as the relation between a word form (lemma) and other semantically related words, while semantic preference shows the appearance of collocations in specific semantic environments such as formal/informal, having positive/negative connotation, etc. Louw (1993: 157) talks about a "consistent aura of meaning with which a word is imbued by its collocates", also reflected by the semantic preference of that specific word (e.g. the concordance lines for 'utterly' show an overwhelmingly bad prosody of this word, having collocates such as 'against', 'insensitive', 'destroying', 'exhaustive', 'meaningless', 'obsessive', 'ridiculous', etc. (Louw 1993: 161)). There are many studies on the semantic prosody and preference of collocations; one such comprehensive study is that of Begagić (2013) on the collocation *make sense*. Based on corpus findings (COCA – The Corpus of Contemporary American English), she manages to identify two main semantic sets of this collocation: that of difficulty and uncertainty (the most common collocates of this collocation being 'try', 'attempt', 'help', and 'struggle'), leading to an overall negative prosody. Interestingly enough, as Begagić (2013) concludes, while *make sense* seems to be linked to negative prosody, other forms of this collocation – *makes sense* and *made sense* – are more factual and express a more favourable semantic prosody. The semantic environment of collocations can be quite specific, as Sidupa and Wastono (2018) note in their analysis of 'increase' and 'improve'. They show that 'increase' appears mostly with words expressing quantity both directly and indirectly, collocating with words such as 'rate', 'number', 'level', 'cost' but also 'efficiency and 'productivity', whereas 'improve' refers to elevating the standard of something, e.g. *improve quality/performance/service/practice/communication*). Stubbs's (1995) analysis of semantically related lemmas, such as 'cause', 'affect', 'effect', 'create', 'happen', 'reason', and 'consequence', and Sinclair's analysis of 'set in' and 'happen' (1987, 1991) also contain valuable data with respect to the semantic prosody and preference of specific collocations.

Taking the above into consideration, it is essential to consider the sources that can help students notice and learn about collocations. In addition to different types of activities that can foster students' collocational awareness (some examples of which will be included in this paper), one of the most important steps in teaching collocations is making students familiar with the use of electronic databases (electronic collocation dictionaries and electronic corpora), as this allows them to notice authentic examples of collocational patterns in different contexts. Consulting these databases regularly enhances students' metalinguistic awareness, helping them to become autonomous learners, with the ability to think about the appropriateness of their language use. The translation of a specific text usually includes several steps: in the preparatory phase, after reading the source text, students make a glossary of useful terms and keywords and the corresponding terms in the target language. Looking up parallel texts and consulting print and also electronic dictionaries can be very useful at this stage. After a first draft translation is carried out, students put it aside for some time and then proofread it and alter anything they find necessary in terms of style, register, text-cohesive elements, etc.

In all phases of the translation process, the use of technology is highly desirable, especially of such resources that show collocations in their entirety. Below, a few examples will be given of resources that students may find useful during the translation process.

Online (collocation) dictionaries:

Dictionaries (in both electronic and paper format) are primary sources in translation practices. They have come a long way introducing collocations (Chukwu 1997), providing valuable information on their use. *Collins COBUILD Dictionary* and *Ozdic Collocations Dictionary*, for example, provide a deep insight into the use of a specific word, along with example sentences and including the most frequent collocations it can be found in. Moreover, *Collins COBUILD Dictionary* offers additional information on a specific word such as frequency, linguistic varieties, and its evolution over time; *Ozdic Collocation Dictionary*, on the other hand, categorizes collocators with respect to the part of speech they belong to. Other valuable resources include *BBI Combinatorial Dictionary of English*, which lays emphasis on collocations, set expressions and phrases and also differentiates American English from British English, and *The Collocation Dictionary of Prowriting Aid Grammar Checker* (https://prowritingaid.com/Free-Online-Collocations-Dictionary.aspx), which operates along the same principle as *Ozdic Collocation Dictionary* yet is more suitable for a quick check on the collocators of a specific word as neither example sentences nor additional information with regard to frequency or text type are included.



Source: Collins COBUILD Online Dictionary

Figure 1. *Collocations of 'insight'*

Electronic databases

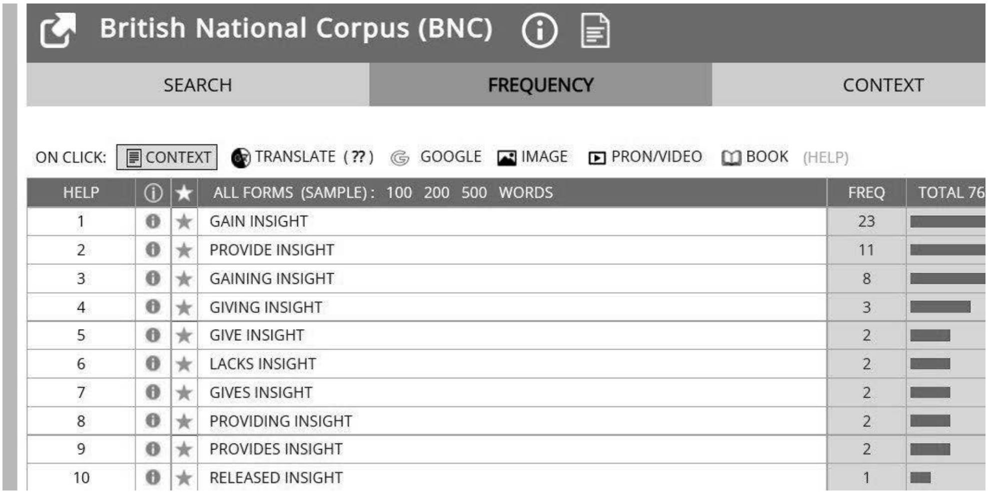
Online bilingual concordances, such as *bab.la* or *linguee.com*, show collocations in their entirety, including example sentences containing a specific word or word combination. While the validity of entries is not verified and the websites do not take responsibility for the accuracy of data, the reliability of the sources is quite high (*linguee.com* takes a considerable amount of data from the https://eur-lex.europa.eu/ website – an official website of the European Union). An important advantage of these databases is that they provide the context in which a specific collocation can be found.

When it comes to translating semi-specialized and specialized texts from the fields of law, commerce, and finance, the website *iate.europa.eu*, the terminology database of the European Union, deserves special mention. After selecting the source and target languages, queries can be made for a specific word; hits will contain all phrases that the word can be found in and will also indicate the field in which it is used. The hits for the Hungarian word *betekintés* [insight, introspection, access], for example, have returned phrases such as *a bizottsági aktába való betekintés* 'access to the Commission's files', *betekintési jog* 'right of access', *iratokba való betekintéshez való jog* 'right to inspect files', *betekintés a nyilvántartásba* 'consultation of the register', etc. The larger context of expressions is also available, and there is additional information on term reference, definition and uses of the expression (also indicating when the term itself has become obsolete), and reliability. A key role of this website lies in the fact that it sheds light on the importance of expressions and language chunks, highlighting the fact that the meaning of a specific word (in this case, the word *betekintés*) is derived from and can be defined at the level of the construction as a whole. Besides, the translation of a specific word depends on the context (both shorter and larger) it appears in (the distinction between context-free and context-sensitive translation).

Electronic corpora

Despite the fact that dictionaries and other electronic databases include relevant information on collocations, they show limitations with respect to the type and number of collocations they contain. Castro and Faber (2014), carrying out a comparative analysis of collocation dictionaries for English and Spanish, specify some of the characteristics that a collocation dictionary should possess: a description and at the same time some kind of classification of collocations, the possibility of accessing collocations in different ways, and also usage notes and examples of use. Enhancing dictionary entries with corpus-based data in form of word-associations (called task-driven word associations) is suggested by Kwong (2020). He considers it necessary to expand lexical access routes in dictionaries based on both paradigmatic and syntagmatic associations of words. Chukwu (1997) recommends that students use in addition to the information found in dictionaries also corpus-based data to create a textbase or textbases for different discourse types, which would serve as a ready-made material for checking the use of several word combinations. Common to these approaches is that they underline the need to retrieve and classify collocations in different ways and at the same time highlight the importance of corpora and corpus data in searching for and analysing collocations. Indeed, the concordance programs of electronic corpora and the various search options they allow for add to the use of dictionaries in significant ways. Sensitizing students about the importance of consulting them regularly can improve the quality of translations to a great extent.

An example of such a corpus is the BNC (British National Corpus), a 100-million-word collection of written and spoken language resources from the later part of the 20^{th} century onwards. Being developed primarily for linguistic research, electronic corpora can also be used during the translation process, as they provide valuable information on the uses of a specific word or word combination. There are many types of corpora (synchronic and diachronic, parallel corpora, learner corpora, multilingual corpora, etc.), and their use has become widespread over the last few decades. Their increasing popularity can be explained by the advantages they offer: the ability to search for smaller and larger units of language (morphemes, words, and also collocations), the possibility to display data in KWIC (keyword in context) format – with the searched items in the centre and highlighted –, obtain valuable information on the entries (frequency and the domain it can be found in, style and register – e.g. written or spoken language), and the fact that it provides samples of real-life language use. The BNC can be considered a useful tool for translators as it is large enough, is quite balanced with respect to the sources it contains (90% spoken, 10% written texts from a variety of sources: newspapers, research journals, periodicals from various academic fields, fiction books, blogs, TV/Movies, recordings of spontaneous conversations and events), and is free to use after registration for a limited number of queries per day. Below, we can find the most frequent collocators of the word ‘insight’ in the V + N constructions, as shown in the BNC.



Source: BNC

Figure 2. *Verb + Noun Collocations for 'insight'*

5. Task-based exercises

Dictionaries, electronic databases and electronic corpora play an indispensable role in translations but can equally be applied in other translation-related tasks, which can be all kinds of exercises involving the analysis/discussion of the source text and/or target text with regard to style and register. In this paper, the notion of a task will be understood as a type of activity that involves a communicative process and a goal that needs to be accomplished. Besides, as Ellis (2009) specifies, a task should focus on meaning (understood in both semantic and pragmatic sense) and involve some kind of "gap", a lack of information or detail that students need to obtain. Concerning the types of tasks, they can be both "focused", when the task itself involves the use of targeted linguistic constructions, and "unfocused", when learners are free to use any language structure they like in their attempt to complete a specific task. Both types of tasks enable a *focus-on-form* way of learning that implies paying (sometimes brief) attention to the form of specific constructions (together with their meaning) while carrying out a task. By implementing them in translation practices, teachers can manage to draw students' attention to collocations and at the same time appeal to their creativity and problem-solving skills. The next section will give examples of tasks that can be used to draw students' attention to collocations in translation practices.

5.1. Description of the tasks

In the light of the theoretical considerations presented above, the following factors have been considered when creating the tasks:

– *Input*: providing students with enough input so that they can notice collocations in context. In this case, input consisted of a reading text and also corpus data.

– *Showing collocations in their entirety*: giving students the opportunity to notice collocations in their entirety – exercises that allow students to use them for a specific purpose (e.g. paraphrasing, looking for keywords) are suitable in this respect; so are certain types of gap fill activities.

– *Content-relatedness*: it is assumed that learners find it easier to acquire collocations if they are related to a topic (e.g. the topic of the source text).

– *Making tasks challenging enough for students*: tasks where learners need to use their critical thinking and problem-solving skills provide a positive atmosphere for learning and may also prompt learners to pay a closer attention to input.

The tasks are based on the semi-specialized texts below, taken from *English for International Tourism*, an upper-intermediate workbook and coursebook. The objective of the tasks is to highlight the importance of collocations to students, and they can be implemented in two subsequent classes, taking into consideration the fact that the topics of the two texts are somewhat related. In line with the task-based approach as understood by Ellis (2003), the implementation of the tasks occurs in three steps: a pre-task, task, and post-task phase. Students will work in small groups (of three students) or in pairs, and the time allocated to the tasks can vary between 10 and 15 minutes.

Example 1. Excerpt from the text: Mammon Rampant in the City of Shrines

Outside the gates of the magnificent Kiyomizu Temple, there is a sign saying that the residents of the Kyoto Hotel are not welcome. The hotel, which will be formally opened tomorrow, has attracted the ire of many of the city's Buddhist monks as an unwelcome intrusion into the historic character of the former imperial capital.

"The city is celebrating its 1,200th birthday this year", said a monk, shaking his head sadly. "The American bombers carefully flew over and past Kyoto, doing no damage. Now, we Japanese are destroying the great beauty of the city."

He and other monks are angry because the hotel, apart from being in their view a graceless block, has been allowed to break the city's precious height restriction of 160 ft. At 16 storeys, in addition to four floors underground, it is twice the height of the hotel of the same name that it replaces.

"The hotel destroys the low-rise character of the city", the monk said. "Mammon has won."

The hotel owners were able to get a relaxation of the height restriction by giving 8,372 sq. yards of land – 40 per cent of the original site to create an uninspired public garden.

Kyoto was created in 794 as Heian-kyo, the City of Peace, but its inhabitants have always called it Kyoto, and the two Chinese characters of its name mean capital of the capitals.

It is a city that embodies the spirit of old Japan, where ancient arts and crafts – textile weaving, ceramics, kimono and kite making – live on.

In Kyoto, geishas practise their arts, whereas in Tokyo most of them have been driven away by karaoke and disco bars. There are lanes and corner shops, many filled with tourist trinkets for the 40 million Japanese and 1 million foreign visitors, but some of them still displaying traditional crafts.

Above all, Kyoto is famed for its palaces, castles, shrines, temples and gardens. It is estimated that there are about 1,500 Buddhist temples and 400 Shinto shrines and about sixty temple gardens.

Source: English for International Tourism. Upper-Intermediate Workbook, p. 62.

Pre-task phase: The teacher introduces the matter at hand (insight into the Japanese culture) by asking students some questions about Japan (e.g. what they associate with Japan and the Japanese culture, including religion), and then asks students to read the text. What does *Mammon* refer to in this text?

Task 1. The teacher asks students to determine the type and structure of the text and then summarize the main points made in each paragraph. Students will also need to give a title to each part of the text.

Task 2. After students have carried out the above-mentioned task, they compare their answers to that of their colleagues (whole-class discussion). As a follow-up, the teacher asks students to underline the keywords and expressions in the text.

Post-task phase: The teacher gets feedback from students and writes some of the collocations and expressions (that most groups have mentioned) on the whiteboard; in order to point out the similarities and also differences between particular constructions in English and Hungarian, students are asked to translate (some of) the collocations into Hungarian. Eventually, the teacher can choose a few words from the texts (such as 'damage', 'the ire', 'the spirit') and make students search for the collocators in the BNC corpus (V + N collocation, VERB damage/the ire/the spirit). Can any of the results returned by the concordance program replace the ones found in the book?

Example 2. Excerpt from the text: When it pays to complain

A dissatisfied customer who complains is just as likely to remain loyal as a completely satisfied customer. This **surprising state of affairs** has been observed by British Airways, which has turned **the handling of complaints** into something of a science.

Charles Weiser, BA's head of customer relations, calculates that about 13 per cent of customers who are **completely satisfied with BA's service** may not fly with the airline again. "Perhaps they changed jobs, found a frequent flyer programme which better **suited their needs**, or maybe they felt it was time for a change of airline", he says, writing in the July issue of Consumer Policy Review, the journal published by the UK's Consumer's Association.

Half of all customers who **experience problems** but do not complain do not intend to use the airline again. This contrasts with the customers who are dissatisfied but do complain – just 13 per cent of this group will defect, the identical rate of defection as the "satisfied" group, says Weiser.

Source: English for International Tourism. Upper-Intermediate Coursebook, p. 65.

Pre-task phase: Learners are asked to look at the title and make guesses what the text is about. After listening to their answers, the teacher asks students to consult the BNC corpus (or any other electronic database) and find constructions that contain the verb 'complain' and the noun 'complaint' (by searching for complain PREP/VERB complaint) – ultimately, the teacher can divide the groups into group A and group B and ask them to carry out one of the tasks mentioned. The teacher receives feedback from students.

Task 1. Students read the text and give a title to each part (a similar task to the one performed on the previous text). Does the text have the same structure as the previous one?

Task 2. Students look at the highlighted words and phrases in the text (highlighted by the teacher beforehand). Do they consider them keywords and key expressions? Why/why not? Are there any additional phrases in the text that they would consider as key expressions?

Post-task: The teacher gives part of the content (pertaining to the same text) to students, but this time with some collocations (or parts of a collocation) taken out and then asks them to fill in the gaps with any word or expression they consider suitable (the teacher should accept any expression that fits into the text).

Weiser's guide to satisfying complaints includes the following points:

– Apologise and ________________. Customers do not care whose fault it was – they want someone to say sorry and champion their cause.

– Do it quickly – customer satisfaction with the handling __________________ dips after five days.

– Assure customers the problem is being fixed. Complaints departments need to know their company inside out and work with front-line departments.

– Do it by phone. Many departments are frightened of the emotions customers often show when things go wrong, but customers _________________ a personal apology and reassurance the problem ____________________.

(*own the problem, handling the complaint, appreciate a personal apology, the problem will be solved*).

Additional task: paraphrasing: Students finish sentences containing a specific collocation with their own ideas, e.g.:

a. By *owning a specific problem*, we can……………….
b. Handling a complaint requires……………………….
c. It pays to complain when…………………………….

Alternatively, the teacher can ask students to look for synonyms for a specific collocation, and thereby use any sources they consider necessary (activity carried out in small groups).

5. Conclusions

Drawing students' attention to collocations is important not only in EFL and ESP classes but in translation practices as well. Due to the complexity of collocations and also other factors that hinder the incidental noticing of these constructions, it is often necessary that teachers draw students' attention to collocations. An important step in the acquisition of collocations is noticing, for which a sufficient amount of input is required. While students studying translation already have advanced language skills, their knowledge of collocations tends to lag behind, reason why providing them with input that would allow them to notice collocations and occasionally directing their attention to targeted linguistic constructions can yield positive results. There are many strategies that teachers can use to make students aware of collocations (e.g. writing them on the whiteboard, looking for collocates or synonyms in an electronic corpus or database, paraphrasing, reconstructing the ideas expressed in a text by some given collocations, etc.) that can also require the manipulation of the input (e.g. highlighting collocations in a text, gap filling). To use collocations correctly, students need to see a specific construction with enough frequency: analysing the vocabulary range of the source and target texts, looking up parallel texts, and also consulting corpus concordances can improve students' work to a great extent. Input helps students gather information not only on the collocates of a specific word but also on the frequency of a specific collocation, as well as its semantic preference and prosody. Finally, introducing input under the form of tasks is considered to be especially useful. Each task should be challenging enough for students (making them use their critical thinking and problem-solving skills), involve some kind of a "gap", some missing information that students need to obtain, and be possibly content-related; in addition, tasks should incorporate the focus-on-form method (paying (brief) attention to specific linguistic constructions while carrying out a task). It is believed that providing students with sufficient input will improve their metalinguistic awareness and hopefully lead to a better understanding of collocations and their manifestations in different languages. In order to properly direct students towards this goal, it is advisable that teachers include both "focused" and "unfocused" tasks when discussing about translations or planning translation-related activities.

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Comparative Study on Speaking Assessment Rubrics in Trinity and Cambridge Language Certificates

Adaptation to the Common European Framework Guidelines

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Abstract. The European Council has been instrumental in the standardization of language competence levels and certifications with the guidelines provided in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) published in 2001 and later reviewed in 2020 with the *Companion Volume with New Descriptors* (CEFRCV). Cambridge Assessment English and Trinity College are two of the highest regarded institutions at the international level that grant their language certificates following the language competence levels provided by the CEFR. For this reason, the current study is grounded on the conviction that those certificates should meet certain principles of the Framework as a form of guarantee that they are assessing the CEFR level correctly. In particular, this paper focuses on the speaking skill and the rubrics of assessment used by the two aforementioned institutions. The rubrics of Trinity and Cambridge for the assessment of the oral production at the B2 CEFR level were considered for the purposes of this study – in particular, the rubrics that assess the oral production in the Integrated Skills in English (ISE-II) exam and in the First Certificate in English (B2 First). With a qualitative document research approach, this study analyses these rubrics in order to determine to what extent they respect the criteria established by the CEFR.

Keywords: CEFR, assessment rubrics, language certificates, speaking skill

1. Introduction

The field of teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language in Europe has experienced great changes in the 21st century, mainly prompted by the establishment of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Teaching, Learning and Assessment* (CoE 2001). The strengthening of the European Union together with the market demands that globalization has imposed have brought about a greater focalization on the development of communicative skills. Before that, traditional foreign language lessons used to focus on learning vocabulary lists by heart and practising grammar with drilling and fill-in-the-blank type exercises. As a result, most learners were never fluent in the language.

The communicative approach promoted by the Council of Europe stirred up the existing methodologies. The aim is that the learner develops a good communicative competence. That is, being able to produce and receive oral and written text but also having knowledge of what is right and what is not in a concrete situation within a specific community of speakers. Moreover, it is essential that the learner develops some awareness of pragmatics, discourse and culture competences or some strategies to overcome possible difficulties.

In education, the implementation of the communicative approach has triggered the transformation of syllabi, tasks methodologies, and assessment processes. Besides establishing a scale of language levels of competence in a language, the CEFR works as a source of reference for the creation and design of education curricula and didactic materials, language certificates, and instruments of evaluation. The assistance in the creation of instruments of assessment, in particular rubrics (also called grading or rating scales), was indeed one of the aims of the CEFR. The Framework intended to be "a source for the development of rating scales for the assessment of the attainment of a particular learning objective and the descriptors may assist in the formulation of criteria" (CoE 2001: 179).

The CEFR also serves the purposes of establishing a background to "relate national and institutional Frameworks to each other" and "map the objectives of particular examinations and course modules using the categories and levels of the scales" included in the Framework (CoE 2001: 182). Thus, it established six levels of competence that range from users with a basic competence of the language (A1 and A2) through independent users (B1 and B2) to advanced users (C1 and C2). These levels have allowed the homogenization of official certificates, so an official B2 certificate obtained in Spain is supposed to be equal in level to any other official B2 certificate obtained in a different country.

The CEFR has been complemented and enhanced recently with the *Companion Volume with New Descriptors* (CEFRCV), which was published in 2020. In the Companion Volume, the notion of the learner/user as a social agent and the action-oriented approach are expanded. Furthermore, the concepts of mediation and plurilingualism (North 2020a: 554) are further explored.

In the current globalized world and the demanding labour market, foreign language certificates become highly relevant because they favour the mobility of citizens among countries. Without any doubt, the CEFR has played a fundamental role in the standardization of those certificates with the establishment of levels of language competence, also called levels of proficiency. The CEFR is not a prescriptive document, and countries and language institutions can decide to what extent they implement or adapt the Framework attending to their specific contexts. Nevertheless, the institutions that grant official language certificates of one specific level of the CEFR all over the world should certainly use valid instruments of assessment and should at least respect the basic guidelines included in the CEFR regarding the design of grading scales.

This study intends to analyse two of the best-known and recognized English Certificates at Spanish and European level: Cambridge Assessment First Certificate (B2 FIRST) and Trinity College ISE-II, which certify the most commonly required level: upper-intermediate (B2). Thus, the research questions defined for this study are:

RQ 1 Do Cambridge B2 FIRST and Trinity College ISE-II certificates respect the criteria established by the CEFR?

RQ 2 Can some patterns be established regarding the type of assessment speaking rubrics used by the selected official English certificates?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The CEFR and the CEFRCV

As cited in the CEFR, assessment is used in the document "in the sense of the assessment of the proficiency of the language user" (CoE 2001: 177). The CEFR provides the entire educational community with learning standards for the teaching of foreign languages. In addition, teachers can construct the specifications of a task or test items using the document as a valuable source of reference. For those purposes, users of the CEFR (2001) can find information related to task specifications in section 4.1: "the context of language use" (domains, conditions and constraints, mental context), section 4.6: "Texts", and Chapter 7: "Tasks and their role in language teaching". Concerning the construction of test items, information can be found in section 5.2: "Communicative language competences" (CoE 2001).

The CEFR can also provide learning standards and guidelines for the construction of tasks. The descriptors (short texts that contain a description of what each level of reference consists of) can be used both by teachers for assessment and by students for self-assessment. On the one hand, the descriptors for communicative acts, for instance, may be particularly helpful for giving feedback. Students get an overall impression of their performance in a task just by reading them. Scales may also be a good tool for summative assessment since teachers can build their rubrics or checklists on the grounds of the CEFR. The huge number of descriptors provided and classified according to their level are a great source for the development of rating scales and checklists. Furthermore, teachers can self-assess themselves or use the scale to implement student self-assessment. For instance, they can create a checklist or a type of grid for continuous assessment or for summative assessment at the end of each lesson/unit or course. Finally, the scales of the CEFR levels aim at enabling comparison among systems. In this regard, if the same descriptors are used in the examination, different tests can be compared as well as the results of those tests, so both national and institutional systems can be related.

As it has been mentioned, CEFR is very useful for the creation of rubrics – Chapter 9 gives guidelines on the construction of rubrics so that they can be feasible tools of assessment. This feasibility means that the teacher must be able to accurately assess all the criteria included in the rubric. With regard to this, the document emphasizes that "more than 4 or 5 categories starts to cause cognitive overload and that 7 categories is psychologically an upper limit" (CoE 2001: 193). This means that if a rubric measures 10 aspects or criteria, it is impossible for the teacher to assess each of them accurately with all the students. As a result, the CEFR recommends that in the event the limit is exceeded, features should be combined and renamed under a broader category.

Appendix A of the CEFR includes several specifications for the formulation of descriptors in a rubric. The first remark is *positiveness*. Previous research on proficiency scales detected a tendency to formulate lower-level descriptors with negative sentences. The CEFR acknowledges the difficulty in doing so: "it is more difficult to formulate proficiency at low levels in terms of what the learner can do rather than in terms of what they can't do" (CoE 2001: 205), but it also encourages the desire to revert that tendency.

Definiteness in the statements is also encouraged. *Avoiding vagueness* and describing concrete tasks are essentials for achieving effectiveness. However, definiteness should not lead to the production of excessively long descriptors since, as the framework notes, a "descriptor which is longer than a two-clause sentence cannot realistically be referred to during the assessment process" (CoE 2001: 207). *Brevity* also helps the independence of descriptors. Moreover, the descriptors must be *clear and transparent* so that both the examiner and the learner can completely understand what is expected in the assessment.

The CEFRCV added new descriptors and modified some of those already existing in the original document, but especially it added a new descriptive scheme with the definition and construction of mediation (Piccardo 2019: 6). Mediation implies that the teaching-learning process must be oriented towards learners. Thus, students must be able to perform in real-life situations. This is the reason why a focus on interaction and construction of meaning has been included in the CEFRCV (Foley 2019: 30). This construction of meaning may occur in different forms, as the learner can take it from other languages he/she knows or studies (translanguaging). The development of the concept of mediation is one of the fundamental key aspects of the CEFRCV (CoE 2020: 91). It is explained as follows: "the term mediation is also used to describe a social and cultural process of creating conditions for communication and co-operation, facing and hopefully defusing any delicate situations and tensions that may arise".

North et al. (2019: 21) define mediation as a process through which language is a vehicle to access other new concepts and that normally involves reception, production, and interaction. Nineteen scales for mediation activities and five scales concerning mediation strategies have been included in the CEFRCV. Among those, scales for explaining data in speech and writing, expressing personal response, analysis and criticism to creative texts, leading and collaborating in group work, facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreement, or simplifying a text have been created, too, for the CEFRCV. Those scales are accompanied by suggestions of activities and tasks to work and/or assess mediation. The following is one of the new scales added:

EXPLAINING DATA IN SPEECH (E.G. IN GRAPHS, DIAGRAMS, CHARTS ETC.)	
C2	Can interpret and describe clearly and reliably (in Language B) various forms of empirical data and visually organised information (with text in Language A) from conceptually complex research concerning academic or professional topics.
C1	Can interpret and describe clearly and reliably (in Language B) the salient points and details contained in complex diagrams and other visually organised information (with text in Language A) on complex academic or professional topics.
B2	Can interpret and describe reliably (in Language B) detailed information contained in complex diagrams, charts and other visually organised information (with text in Language A) on topics in his/her fields of interest.
B1	Can interpret and describe (in Language B) detailed information in diagrams in his/her fields of interest (with text in Language A), even though lexical gaps may cause hesitation or imprecise formulation.
	Can interpret and describe (in Language B) overall trends shown in simple diagrams (e.g. graphs, bar charts) (with text in Language A), even though lexical limitations cause difficulty with formulation at times.
A2	Can interpret and describe (in Language B) simple visuals on familiar topics (e.g. a weather map, a basic flow chart) (with text in Language A), even though pauses, false starts and reformulation may be very evident in speech.
	No descriptors available
A1	*No descriptors available*
Pre-A1	*No descriptors available*

Source: CoE 2020: 109

Figure 1. *One of the scales included for mediation in the CEFRCV with New Descriptors*

Mediation is not the only novelty of the CEFRCV. Two scales for online interaction and goal-oriented transactions have also been incorporated together with scales to deal with literature and sign languages as well as a development of a phonological scale. The original scales have been maintained although some of the descriptors have been retouched or expanded, particularly those related to the C2 level, the A1, or de pre-A levels. For instance, any reference to "native speakers" has been erased from the descriptors, as it is understood that C2 level is not equivalent to native level. In addition, the description for plus levels (B1+/ B1.2) has been strengthened. The following figure illustrates some of the changes. It shows one of the scales that was already part of the original document (parts in blue) combined with the new modifications (written in black):

SUSTAINED MONOLOGUE: DESCRIBING EXPERIENCE	PROSIGN
C2	Can give clear, smoothly flowing, elaborate and often memorable descriptions.
C1	Can give clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects. Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
B2	Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest. **Can describe the personal significance of events and experiences in detail.**
B1	**Can clearly express feelings about something experienced and give reasons to explain those feelings.**
	Can give straightforward descriptions on a variety of familiar subjects within his field of interest. Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a linear sequence of points. Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions. Can relate details of unpredictable occurrences, e.g. an accident. Can relate the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions. Can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions. Can describe events, real or imagined. Can narrate a story.
A2	Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. Can describe everyday aspects of his/her environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience. Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities. Can describe plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities and personal experiences. Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions. Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something.
	Can describe his/her family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job. Can describe people, places and possessions in simple terms. **Can say what he/she is good at and not so good at (e.g. sports, games, skills, subjects).** **Can briefly talk about what he/she plans to do at the weekend or during the holidays.**
A1	Can describe him/herself, what he/she does and where he/she lives. **Can describe simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases, provided he/she can prepare in advance.**
Pre-A1	**Can describe him/herself (e.g. name, age, family), using simple words and formulaic expressions, provided he/she can prepare in advance.** **Can say how he/she is feeling using simple words like 'happy', 'tired', accompanied by body language.**

Source: CoE 2018: 70

Figure 2. *Scale for speaking production included in the CFRCV with new descriptors*

The original CEFR, published in 2001, has been the object of multiple criticisms (Martyniuk–Noijons 2007, Bärenfanger et al. 2019, Deygers 2021). Most of the critical comments deal with the formulation of descriptors, their scope, the development and validation of descriptors or the density of the document itself. Brian North, co-author of the CEFR and the CEFRCV, addressed most of the criticism (2020b) arguing that the scales provided in the document were intended to be illustrative. Nevertheless, there are still authors with some concerns on the issue. They believe that if the arguments provided by the authors of the CEFR were consistent, the new CEFRCV would have not focused more than the original one on the scales, neither had it provided a closer look at their methodology (Foley 2019: 32). Notwithstanding, the impact of the CEFR on the teaching and learning of foreign languages worldwide is rather undeniable.

2.2. Speaking skill and rubrics

Productive skills involve the production of a text, either written or spoken. Currently, they are often assessed with a rubric. Before the publication of the CEFR, traditional methodologies, such as the Grammar–Translation Method, were still very common, so the spoken production did not use to be assessed. During the session, the student had to memorize vocabulary (frequently out of context) and had to translate texts. As a result, learners barely spoke in the foreign language. Luckily, the scenario has changed, and now the CEFR has promoted sessions grounded on the communicative competence.

The teaching and practice of the speaking skill in the classroom brings along quite a few changes in the evaluation system. In any oral exam, there are many different factors to bear in mind: for instance, the manner of articulation of the message or the body language. Bygate (in Baitman–Beliz 2012) states that the oral process consists of three main phases: conceptualization of the message content, linguistic formulation of the message, and articulation of the message. According to the same author, the evaluation of the speaking skill in L2 is particularly complex because it is time-consuming and it is very difficult to build up a real-life situation (in Baitman–Beliz 2012).

Rubrics or grading scales are charts that allow the assessment of a task on the grounds of some criteria and an established scale. The use of rubrics for the assessment of performance became a common practice in the late 20th and the early 21st century, particularly so with the publication of the CEFR. This is so because, as it was explained, traditional methodologies used in language classrooms up to the 80s did not focus as much on performance as on language learning with a main emphasis on vocabulary and grammar practice (Bobadilla-Pérez–Fraga-Viñas 2020: 162). A rubric normally consists of a grid with multiple cells. Rubrics may have only two sections (if they are holistic) or four (when they are analytic). When the rubric is composed of two main sections, there is one vertical column and a horizontal one as well. One of them corresponds to the language descriptors and the other one to the scores. The two sections are frequently assembled, and they form just one column in which each cell contains the score and the language description of that level.

Rubrics that have four sections normally contain a task description at the top. They usually have many columns, rows, and cells. The first horizontal row is usually the scale. The scale levels may be numbers, but they are often words that indicate the level of achievement (Excellent, Good, Poor, etc.). The first column on the left will contain the dimensions, also called criteria or categories. These will indicate the aspects that are being measured (Grammar, Vocabulary, Cohesion, Coherence, Fluency, Clarity, Visual Contact, etc.). Finally, the remaining cells in the grid are the descriptors of the performance for each criterion and level of the scale.

There is also a large variety of rubric types. The most common criterion to classify rubrics is according to how performance is assessed: as a whole or separately. If the assessment of the performance is divided into criteria (grammar, cohesion, content, etc.), it is an analytic rubric, and when the performance is assessed as a whole, it is holistic. Rubrics can also be classified according to the scale they used. Hence, rubrics can be quantitative (numerical scale), qualitative (nominal scale), or mixed (when they use both numerical and nominal scale). Rubrics can also be hyper-generalized, when they can be used to assess any skill, skill-focused, when they only assess one particular skill (e.g. speaking), or task-focused, when they are tailored to one particular task (e.g. rubric for the assessment of a speaking presentation). Finally, rubrics can also be distinguished by their function. Thus, when they are used to check to what extent the learner has acquired the content taught, they are called achievement rubrics, and when they are used to determine the learner's level, they are proficiency rubrics.

Surprisingly, there are not many studies on speaking rubrics. Among them, Luu Tron Tuan's (2012) research is worth mentioning. The study involved 104 students divided in two groups, and it was related to the use of holistic and analytic rubrics to assess speaking. The research consisted in examining students six times and allowing them to see their results after each of the examinations. It concluded that those students that had been assessed with an analytic rubric improved their qualification more than one point, while those who had been assessed with a holistic rubric barely improved.

The assessment of the speaking skill in general has been the object of much research. The one carried out by Brittany Baitman and Mauricio Veliz (2012) or the one conducted by Emrah Ekmekçi (2016) could be highlighted, as they refer specifically to foreign languages. Ekmekçi's research involved eighty students of English and six teachers (three native speakers and three non-native). The study concluded that the differences found between native and non-native raters were not statistically significant. However, Baitman and Veliz's study, which consisted of twelve teachers who assessed four TOELF tasks, proved that non-native teachers tend to give lower scores (2012: 186). Moreover, this research concluded that native teachers attach more importance to fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary, while non-natives teachers care more about grammar and vocabulary (Baitman–Veliz 2012: 191).

When assessing speaking, it is also essential to think of the elements that are going to be taken into consideration. Extensive research on rubrics found out which criteria are the most frequent. Vocabulary range, grammar control, organization and structure, cohesive devices, content and pronunciation were the most common assessment criteria, as they appeared in 95% of the rubrics analysed (Schreiber et al. 2012). Many of these rubrics also assessed performance, body language, visual contact, and visual support.

3. Objective and methodology

3.1 Objective

The objective of the present study is to determine to what extent the speaking rubrics of Cambridge B2 First and Trinity ISE II language certificates follow the guidelines provided by the CEFR in the assessment of their speaking tests. The two institutions officially certify CEFR levels, so they should at least follow the basic guidelines of the CEFR regarding the creation of rubrics.

3.2. Method

The Council of Europe established in 1971 that teaching must be planned as a coherent whole and must cover objectives, evaluation achievements, and effectiveness. This requires a coordinated effort between administrations, materials, examiners, teachers, and students that should always share objectives and criteria (Vez 2011: 89). The current research uses a qualitative approach and the technique of document analysis. Moreover, the implementation of this qualitative approach was made following the seven steps of Gil Pascual's research methodology. The first step was the establishment of objectives and context. As it has been stated before, the aim was the study of rubrics for the assessment of speaking in official English Certificates to check whether they follow the guidelines established by the CEFR.

The second step was the definition of the units of analysis, that is, the selection of the rubrics. There was obviously a wide range of official English certificates, but only European institutions were considered, taking into account that the

CEFR was created by the Council of Europe. The selected examination centres were Cambridge Assessment English and Trinity College. The level chosen was B2, as it is the upper-intermediate and the one most frequently required to work and study in Europe. The CEFR establishes that at this level a user can interact with fluency and spontaneity and that the interaction with a native speaker is possible without great difficulty for any of the parties (CoE 2001: 24).

B2	Grammar and Vocabulary	Discourse Management	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
5	Shows a good degree of control of a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a wide range of familiar topics.	Produces extended stretches of language with very little hesitation. Contributions are relevant and there is a clear organisation of ideas. Uses a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers.	Is intelligible. Intonation is appropriate. Sentence and word stress is accurately placed. Individual sounds are articulated clearly.	Initiates and responds appropriately, linking contributions to those of other speakers. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome.
4	*Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.*			
3	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms, and attempts some complex grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a range of familiar topics.	Produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation. Contributions are relevant and there is very little repetition. Uses a range of cohesive devices.	Is intelligible. Intonation is generally appropriate. Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed. Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly.	Initiates and responds appropriately. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome with very little support.
2	*Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.*			
1	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about everyday situations.	Produces responses which are extended beyond short phrases, despite hesitation. Contributions are mostly relevant, despite some repetition. Uses basic cohesive devices.	Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels.	Initiates and responds appropriately. Keeps the interaction going with very little prompting and support.
0	*Performance below Band 1.*			

Source: Cambridge English Language Assessment (2016)

Figure 3. *Rubric for the Assessment of Speaking in B2 FIRST*

ISE II Speaking & Listening rating scales

ISE II Speaking & Listening rating scale

This rating scale is used by the examiner to make a judgement of the candidate's performance in the speaking exam (the Topic, Collaborative and Conversation tasks).

Score	Communicative effectiveness ▸ Task fulfilment ▸ Appropriacy of contributions/turn-taking ▸ Repair strategies	Interactive listening ▸ Comprehension and relevant response ▸ Level of understanding ▸ Speech rate of examiner interventions ▸ Speed and accuracy of response	Language control ▸ Range ▸ Accuracy/precision ▸ Effects of inaccuracies	Delivery ▸ Intelligibility ▸ Lexical stress/intonation ▸ Fluency ▸ Effects on the listener
4	▸ Fulfils the task very well ▸ Initiates and responds with effective turn-taking ▸ Effectively maintains and develops the interaction ▸ Solves communication problems naturally, if any	▸ Understands all interventions on a first hearing ▸ Interprets examiner's aims and viewpoints accurately by making links with earlier information ▸ Makes immediate and relevant responses	▸ Uses a wide range of grammatical structures/ lexis flexibly to deal with topics at this level ▸ Consistently shows a high level of grammatical accuracy and lexical precision ▸ Errors do not impede communication	▸ Clearly intelligible ▸ Uses focal stress and intonation effectively ▸ Speaks promptly and fluently ▸ Requires no careful listening
3	▸ Fulfils the task appropriately ▸ Initiates and responds appropriately ▸ Maintains and develops the interaction appropriately (eg expanding and developing ideas, and showing understanding of what the examiner said) ▸ Deals with communication problems well	▸ Understands most interventions on a first hearing ▸ Interprets examiner's aims and viewpoints accurately ▸ Makes prompt and relevant response	▸ Uses an appropriate range of grammatical structures/ lexis to deal with topics at this level ▸ Shows a relatively high level of grammatical accuracy and lexical precision ▸ Errors do not impede communication	▸ Clearly intelligible despite some use of non-standard phonemes ▸ Uses focal stress and intonation appropriately ▸ Generally speaks promptly and fluently – occasionally affected by some hesitancy ▸ Requires almost no careful listening
2	▸ Fulfils the task acceptably with support ▸ Initiates and responds acceptably ▸ Maintains and develops the interaction, but contributions are not always appropriate and/or somewhat dependent on the examiner ▸ Manages to solve communication problems, but requires more than one attempt and/or does not always do this naturally (eg 'What?')	▸ Usually understands interventions; occasionally needs clarification ▸ Shows occasional uncertainty about examiner's aims or viewpoints ▸ Makes relatively prompt responses	▸ Uses an acceptable range of grammatical structures/lexis to manage topics at this level, but grammatical/lexical gaps still cause hesitation and circumlocution ▸ Shows an acceptable level of grammatical accuracy and lexical precision ▸ Most errors do not impede communication	▸ Intelligible despite some use of non-standard phonemes ▸ Uses focal stress and intonation acceptably ▸ Speaks promptly and fluently enough to follow ▸ Requires some careful listening
1	▸ Does not fulfil the task even with support ▸ Does not initiate or respond adequately ▸ Does not maintain and develop the interaction sufficiently ▸ Contributions are inappropriate and/or overly dependent on the examiner ▸ Has some difficulty in resolving communication problems	▸ Has difficulty in understanding interventions ▸ Frequently misinterprets examiner's aims and viewpoints ▸ Responds slowly due to difficulty in understanding input	▸ Uses a limited range of grammatical structures/ lexis that is not always adequate to deal with topics at this level ▸ Does not show an adequate level of grammatical accuracy and lexical precision ▸ Some errors impede communication	▸ Generally intelligible or sometimes unintelligible. Use of non-standard phonemes is sometimes or frequently evident ▸ Sometimes or often misuses focal stress and intonation ▸ Speaks slowly. Sometimes or often halted by hesitancy ▸ Requires (some) careful listening
0	No performance to assess (candidate does not speak, or does not speak in English). Also use if no topic is prepared.			

Source: Trinity College London (2017)

Figure 4. *Rubric for one of the Tasks in the ISE-II*

The third step was the definition of the principles that were going to be used to determine whether the rubrics followed the CEFR guidelines. In this case, the CEFR establishes that rubrics, or grading scales must be feasible and should not have more than five criteria. Concerning descriptors, they should be written with positive statements, must be brief but precise, and vagueness in their formulation must be avoided. Furthermore, rubrics were also classified according to their typology, scale, topic, level of application, function, type of examiner, and format. Regarding the formulation of descriptors, the CEFRCV states that it is essential that "each is brief (up to 25 words), is clear and transparent, is positively formulated, describes something definite and has independent stand-alone integrity – not relying on the formulation of other descriptors for its interpretation" (CoE 2018: 41).

Categorization and codification made up the fourth step. Tables were selected as the instrument for data gathering. The visual construction was very handy to categorize data extracted from the rubrics. The instrument gathered information regarding the general typology of the rubric (with different variables such as measurement, scoring, theme, application, function, or channel), as well as the relevance and validity factors mentioned above. Lastly, it gathered specific information related to the CEFR and the CEFRCV descriptors with regard to their positive formulation, briefness, and vagueness.

Gil (2011) recommends the measurement of reliability. This can be carried out through a reliability coefficient such as Cronbach's alpha, and it refers to how consistent the results obtained with a rubric are. Finally, data were analysed as a whole and were compared so that contradictions with the CEFR guidelines, if any, could be detected and to check whether some updates are needed in order to match the new CEFRCV.

4. Results and discussion

Following the comparative analysis of the rubrics used for the assessment of speaking in Cambridge Assessment English B2 FIRST and in Trinity College ISE-II, it was found that both rubrics are analytic and not holistic. Analytic rubrics have been proved to be more reliable, as the research carried out by Tuan (2012) explained or as checked by other studies in the same line (Sundeen 2014, Becker 2016).

Both rubrics are quantitative and use a numerical scale. Nevertheless, the B2 FIRST rubric uses a scale from 0 to 5, whereas the ISE-II scale is shorter: from 0 to 4. None of them contains any quantitative scale together with the numerical one. The rubrics used in English certificates normally contain quantitative scales rather than qualitative ones because they want to be as accurate and precise as possible. Notwithstanding, if the number were accompanied by a quantitative expression like "excellent for the level" or "acceptable for the level", as it is the case with the rubrics employed by the Spanish Official School of Languages, the feedback given to the student would be more complete.

According to the application, the ISE-II's speaking rubric is task-specific, which means that the rubric is especially built for the task being examined. In this case, the Trinity College's certificate assesses both the speaking and the listening skills in the same paper. This is the reason why there are two rubrics for the assessment of this part. One rubric (analytic) is for one task that involves speaking about a listening task, and there is also another rubric (holistic) for the assessment of an independent listening task. However, the rubric used in B2 FIRST is skill-focused, as the same rubric is used for the assessment of all the speaking tasks. Most of the English certificates use skill-focused rubrics to assess the speaking tasks (a monologue, describing a picture, interact in a discussion with a partner, etc.). However, in the ISE-II exam, the student has to listen to a track and, afterwards, summarize it using his/her own words so that the understanding of the audio is proven. Then, the examiner and the candidate hold a conversation that stems from the contents of the listening. This format allows for the assessment of the speaking and the listening skill together, as the new CEFRCV now encourages.

As far as the contrast with the CEFR guidelines for the creation of rubrics is concerned, the rubric used by Trinity College ISE-II consists of four criteria: communicative effectiveness, interactive listening, language control, and delivery – so, it could be a handy or feasible rubric in terms of criteria. As for the B2 FIRST's rubric, it assesses grammar and vocabulary, discourse management, pronunciation, and interactive communication – so, the total number of criteria, i.e. five, is also suitable.

Regarding the formulation of descriptors, the results of the analysis show that none of the rubrics really fulfils the recommendations either of the original CEFR or of the new CEFRCV. The rubric of the ISE-II contains negative descriptors, such as "does not maintain and develop interaction" although the attempt for using positive expressions is clear: "responds slowly", "occasionally needs clarifications", "uses a limited range of grammatical structures", "shows occasional uncertainty" (Trinity College London 2017). The B2 FIRST's rubric, on the other hand, does show positively worded descriptors, even at the lowest band: (band 1) "shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms", "uses basic cohesive devices", "keeps the interaction going with very little prompting and support" (Cambridge English Language Assessment 2016).

Regarding the vagueness or briefness of the descriptors, both rubrics have deficiencies. The rubric in B2 FIRST contains three vague bands of descriptors, e.g. "performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5" (Cambridge English Language Assessment 2016). This is obviously imprecise, and it also contradicts the new CEFRCV recommendations for the formulation of descriptors. Those recommendations state that each descriptor should "[describe] something definite and has independent stand-alone integrity – not relying on the formulation of other descriptors for its interpretation" (Council of Europe 2018: 41). The rubric used in Trinity's certificate is not vague, and it does have proper descriptors for all the levels but for the lowest one (0). Notwithstanding, in terms of briefness, the ISE-II rubric descriptors are the opposite of brief, and they do not fulfil the "up to 25-word-long" established in the CEFRCV (2018: 41). This rubric contains descriptors that are almost double that figure (49 words). This makes the assessment of students with the rubric tedious and more time-consuming.

In connection with the changes brought about by the CEFRCV, it must be mentioned that both rubrics already include descriptors to measure phonetics and phonology that are equivalent to those included in the new phonological scale of the CEFRCV. Nevertheless, only the paper for the Trinity ISE-II incorporates somehow the concept of mediation, as the skills are assessed in a more integrated manner. To exemplify this, it can be explained that the speaking exam includes an oral summary of the contents of listening and includes a conversation directly brought about by those contents, so the speaking and the listening skills are being assessed at the same time in an integrated way. This is an aspect that has not been incorporated in Cambridge Certificate, which assesses skills in four separate papers: reading and use of English, writing, listening, and speaking.

Finally, it is also recommended that research based on the reliability and validity of the certificates should be published. Cambridge does publish the results of reliability coefficients of its papers: Cronbach's alpha (0.84) and SEM (1.50) for its speaking paper. These results point out a high reliability of the exam. However, the results provided date back to 2010, so it would be strongly advisable to update those studies. On the other hand, the Trinity College web contains a downloadable report about the validity of the certificate, with a high reliability figure (0.983) for the Cronbach's alpha of the speaking and listening part. Nevertheless, this report is from 2007, therefore its revision and update are desirable.

5. Conclusions and implications

The research carried out has yielded some interesting findings that allow some reflections. The study was intended to check the suitability of the rubrics used by the two official English certifications to the guidelines proposed by the CEFR. To begin with, it should be noted that rubrics are not always publicly available for those interested in obtaining official English certificates. In this sense, it is commendable that both institutions, Cambridge Assessment English and Trinity College, publish their assessment rubrics on their respective websites. In consequence, candidates can know what is expected from them. The study conducted by Laurian and Fitzgerald in 2013 proved the importance of giving the students access to the rubric prior to the assessment process.

Concerning Research Question 2, the only patterns that can be established are that both certificates use proficiency rubrics and they both use analytic rubrics with numerical scales for the assessment of the speaking production. Nevertheless, while one is skill-focused, the other is task-focused. The number of criteria and the levels of the numerical scales are also different, being five in the case of the FIRST and four in the case of ISE-II. Although both certificates share high figures of reliability of these speaking tests, the figure for the Trinity College certificate is higher, which seems to indicate their assessment of speaking is a priori more reliable. However, it would be necessary to have more information about the conditions of the studies, the size of the samples, etc. as well as to update the results of that body of research in order to be able to do a meaningful interpretation of the results.

In answer to Research Question 1, it can be concluded that neither B2 FIRST nor ISE-II speaking rubrics completely follow the guidelines mentioned by the CEFR. Even though both rubrics have a feasible and manageable number of criteria, the descriptors for the rubric of ISE-II are not entirely written in positive sentences and they are not brief (they exceed the 25-word limitation). Meanwhile, the rubric used in B2 FIRST contains vague descriptors in the intermediate bands of levels. In addition, it also contradicts the guidelines incorporated in the new CEFRCV stating that descriptors should be completely independent from the ones in the level below and above (CoE 2018: 40).

A possible disadvantage of the CEFR or the CEFRCV is that the scales included in both documents are mainly holistic. North (2020b) argued that this is so because the scales provided are meant to be used only as a reference. However, it is undeniable that if an analytic scale must be designed taking as reference a holistic one, the process is much more complex. If the CEFR provided more analytic scales, the task of building a rubric tailored for one certificate would be speeded up and eased. There would also be many more examples of descriptors that are positively worded and brief but precise.

Finally, the CEFRCV with new descriptors has introduced some changes, but the most important one is the reinforcement and expansion of the concept of mediation. While some official certificates have already been updated to add tasks for the assessment of mediation in their papers, by the time this research had been conducted, neither the selected Cambridge Certificate nor the one of Trinity College has made any alterations to introduce mediation tasks, although the concept of mediation can be argued to be vaguely present in some of their current tasks (e.g. to speak about an image). Nevertheless, without any modification being made, the ISE-II tasks are more integrated since the different communicative language activities evaluated (reception, production) are assessed in pairs.

It is fundamental to restate that the CEFR and its new complementary version, the CEFRCV, are not prescriptive documents. This means that any country or institution can decide whether or not they want to implement their approach and to what extent. However, it seems coherent that if an institution is granting an official certificate of one CEFR level, it should follow the main and basic guidelines provided by the CEFR regarding assessment rubrics. To conclude, in the same way that a revision and update of the original CEFR was often demanded, any certificate granting CEFR-based levels should revise, improve, and update their exams, too, even if it is not mandatory. After all, revision and adjustment to new scenarios, realities, and problems are a constant in any learning process. Therefore, frameworks of reference, syllabi, materials, methods, and assessments should also be constantly under revision and adjustment in order to keep improving the learning process.

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From Linguistic Landscape to Semiotic Assemblages in a Local Market

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Abstract. Landscape can be seen as a set of signs, landscape is foreground rather than background, and signs are semiotic items rather than just forms of public signage (Pennycook 2021), therefore the present research moves away from the traditional, text-centred approach of landscape analysis in order to examine not only the linguistic signs but the non-linguistic elements as artefacts, which take place in the brand identity construction of a local small and medium-sized enterprise (SME). The article argues that these elements as assembling artefacts become parts of semiotic assemblages inhabiting the space and represent a key feature of brand identity construction with a focus on the commodification of languages, cultures, and identities. The data consist of observation notes, photographs, and interviews obtained from an ethnographic fieldwork in Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania. The analysis presents a case study based on the concept of semiotic assemblages. The assemblage of linguistic and other resources, such as the smell of smoked meat products, the tune of Szekler folk songs, together with assembling artefacts such as sausages and other Szekler products attract customers to participate in meaning making. The effects generated by an assemblage have the ability to make something happen, in our case attract customers to SMEs.

Keywords: linguistic landscape, semiotic assemblages, brand identity, bilingualism

1. Introduction

The visual and material representation of languages in public space has become an object of linguistic and sociological studies during the last three decades since the well-known study of Landry and Bourhis (1997). Linguistic landscape studies now focus also on the analysis of signs, cultural symbols, and notices found in public spaces. Traditionally, linguistic landscapes mirror the language situation of a certain area and involve questions of multilingualism, dominance of languages, and language policies (cf. Scollon–Scollon 2003, Shohamy–Gorter

2009, Blommaert 2013, Laihonen 2015, Gorter 2019). Most importantly for this paper, signs convey not only linguistic but sociocultural meanings, connecting a sign to a particular sociocultural and historical context.

The field of linguistic landscape studies is rapidly expanding, and new studies on different "scapes" have appeared. Landscape in general is a way of the external world and constructs "a visual ideology" (Jaworski–Thurlow 2010). It serves also as a context for human action and socio-political activity, and, as mentioned by Gorter (2006), it becomes a symbolic system of signifiers. Landscape is part of the regional and national identity building, which takes place through semioticizing processes (Jaworski–Thurlow 2010). In brief, landscape generates meaning, which is always constructed in the act of socio-cultural interpretation.

Linguistic landscape studies cover different segments from statistical analysis of identifiable languages in the public space to qualitative studies regarding the semiotics of the space, where texts may not even play a role. Although linguistic landscape studies are still mainly concerned with signage containing written text, there is a "holistic view that goes beyond the analysis of individual signs as monolingual or multilingual" (Gorter–Cenoz 2015: 65). This view moves the focus beyond identifying languages and shifts the attention onto the landscapes per se, "asking how such material spaces can be viewed in semiotic terms" (Pennycook 2021: 113). This, according to Pennycook (2021), does not mean eliminating the analysis of written texts, but it needs to be decided what we include as language; therefore, the focus can be "concerned with the landscape as a set of signs, where landscape is foreground, rather than background, signs are semiotic items, rather than forms of public signage" (Pennycook 2021: 113), and the term "language" is used as an umbrella term, where language does not refer to a particular linguistic variety.

The present research therefore departs from the traditional, text-centred approach of landscape analysis in order to examine not only the linguistic signs but the non-linguistic elements as well which inhabit the space of a local small and medium-sized enterprise (SME), in the process of brand identity construction. The medium-sized enterprise in the analysis is located in Szeklerland (in Hungarian: Székelyföld), a historic and ethnographic area in Transylvania, Romania, inhabited mainly by the Szeklers, a subgroup of Hungarians. Originally, in the Middle Ages, the Szeklers (in Hungarian: Székelys) were mostly free warriors and guards of the kingdom's borders and enjoyed administrative, judicial, and fiscal rights. With the Treaty of Trianon of 1920, Transylvania, including Szeklerland, became part of Romania. Today, Szeklerland mostly corresponds to the counties of Harghita, Covasna, and central and eastern Mureş.

Hungarians make up nearly 80% of the population of Szeklerland. According to the Romanian census, the remaining 20% consists of Romanians, Roma, and a tiny minority of Germans.

Table 1. *Population distribution by ethnicity in Szeklerland, 2011 Census*[1]

Romanian ethnicity	Hungarian ethnicity	Roma ethnicity	German ethnicity	Other	Total number of population
84,217	408,175	13,593	184	326	521,044

The investigation of identity markers, semiotic elements are significant in this region. "The use of ethnic identity markers strengthens the contrast between Szeklerland and the rest of the country, in terms of regional identity, thus emphasizing the symbolic birth of a new region in Europe" (Dragoman et al. 2020: 37).

The article presents the semiotic landscape elements as assembling artefacts, which represent a key feature of brand identity construction with a focus on the commodification of languages, cultures, and identities. Data collection was based on observation notes and photographs taken in the commercial units of the SME as ethnographic fieldwork in Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania, completed by an interview conducted with an SME owner. The commercial units were visited over a three-week period, in April 2022. During this fieldwork, over 120 photos were taken, focusing on the presence of languages and on the presence of products with commodification of languages and Hungarian or Szekler identities. Data was categorized according to linguistic and other semiotic resources. From this point of view, all the Szekler symbolic constructions and signs can be considered as semiotic resources. They altogether may participate in the brand identity construction of the SME. This brand identity, however, is constructed in a bilingual, minority background, where the social, linguistic, and political factors may also impact the brand identity elements. The interaction of the elements, interlocutors, and meaning making are considered as semiotic assemblages, and, as such, the paper argues that semiotic resources as part of semiotic assemblages inhabiting the space represent a key feature of brand identity construction.

In the first part, the paper introduces the concept of ethnic market in Transylvania and localizes the Szekler symbols, followed by a brief exploration of the trending main concept of semiotic assemblages, while departing from the initial term of the linguistic landscape and the more recent term of the semiotic landscape. The connection between semiotic assemblages and brand identity is further examined, followed by the presentation of data collection and data analysis. Finally, as an extension to this present research, a semi-structured interview was conducted with one of the owners of a local SME, which shed light on the construction and use of linguistic and semiotic resources in their brand identity, from the perspective of a local entrepreneur.

1 http://statisztikak.erdelystat.ro/adatlapok/szekelyfold/3284 / (Last accessed: 20 March 2022).

2. The emergence of an ethnic market

Today's business environment is competitive. New brands emerge day by day, and the identity of a brand has become a vital issue for any company. Broadly said, brands include elements that are unique aspects of that particular brand such as name, logo, colour schemes, tone and voice, jingle, etc. – they together create the recognizable image for the business. These elements are essential because they develop the brand identity, which helps to identify and distinguish the brand in the consumers' minds. Therefore, constructing the brand identity is about the differentiation of their brands from the competitors', and it refers to the collection of tangible brand elements that together create one brand image. Brands convey ideas, emotions, and desires by using meaningful systems of signs. Customers can identify themselves with the meanings that brands communicate, and this can have an influence on whether they purchase products or services. The effort of the local brands may target the differentiation of the local aspects from the global ones (Csata 2019).

Economy in modern capitalism is not independent of social conditions or of ethnic relations, and the ethnic aspect appears in economic decisions, interactions, and processes (Csata 2019). In the last decade, in Transylvania, businesses have emerged that offer products and services specifically targeted at Hungarian minority consumers, and their business discourse is embedded in a Hungarian-speaking context. In Romania, following the EU accession, government regulations have become looser, hence ethnic markets have been created and ethnic products have gone through "commodification processes" (Csata 2019: 42). We can now witness the emergence of local and regional identities in the branding industry as well, which were unthinkable before 1990 in Transylvania and Romania in general. Due to economic decentralization, local brands have appeared in Szeklerland, and even a trademark, *Székely Termék* [Szekler Product], advertises the products of local Szekler/Hungarian minority entrepreneurs. The segment of consumers looking for local products is steadily growing, and entrepreneurs have begun to recognize the potential of the local ethnic market. More and more regional products are appearing that commodify the positive meanings that are constructed around the adjective "Szekler", based on a commonly shared and shaped historical experience (Csata 2019: 43). The ethnic, cultural market is emerging in the heart of Transylvania, built on prominent visual symbols of the Szekler identity. Although from a different point of view, Laihonen and Tódor (2017) analysed the Szekler symbols in the linguistic landscape of schools. These identity symbols have a mobilizing power not only in Szeklerland but also among the Hungarians in Romania and in the whole Hungarian ethno-cultural community. There is a social interest in thematizing "Szeklerism"; it is able to address the community and is no longer seen as a regional attachment but as an essential part of the Hungarian minority and the Hungarian national collective identity.

However, these processes have their not so hidden economic dangers as well because ethnic markets are limited, and this may hinder the effectiveness of ethnic marketing and the development of ethnic businesses and may also risk ethnic isolation and "economic enclavization" (Csata 2019: 43). The real objective from the point of view of ethnic markets and local brands would be the achievement of a balanced combination of bridging and bonding type of relationships (see Putnam 2000), the former relationship experienced between different social groups or communities and the latter within a single community, also investigated by Laihonen on the practices of Hungarian entrepreneurs in Slovakia (2015) and by Laihonen and Csernicskó on the semiotics of tourism among Hungarians in Ukraine (2019).

It is also relevant that by localizing semiotic artefacts, we can come closer to identifying the strengths of a particular landscape, be it a particular image, colour, smell, tune, touch, or taste, which emphasizes the role of semiotic resources in the meaning-making potential of a local brand identity. As Pennycook claims (2021), there is a "current push to reconfigure what counts as language and how social, spatial and material worlds interact" (2021: 113), and he particularly explores how to bring smells together into a broader semiotic assemblage (see Pennycook 2017). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, a brief questionnaire was designed to identify those artefacts that may potentially become elements of semiotic assemblages.

3. From linguistic landscapes to semiotic assemblages

With the current need to refrain from the term "linguistic landscape", the term "semiotic landscape" (Jaworski–Thurlow 2010), or "semioscape" (Thurlow–Aiello 2007) has recently gained interest. According to Thurlow and Aiello (2007), semiotic landscape refers to "the globalizing circulation of symbols, sign systems, and meaning-making practices", which could work as "more accurate descriptors to highlight the role played by all forms of semiosis in public spaces, where by language (as one semiotic system) may or may not play a prominent role" (Thurlow–Aiello 2007: 308), while the authors consider all landscapes being semiotic (Jaworski–Thurlow 2010). Therefore, from the visual and material display of languages, the focus has moved onto other discursive modalities, including visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory sensory aspects as semiotic resources (see Pennycook 2019). It has also become inevitable that the descriptions of space are not just about language, image, and space but more so about how interlocutors engage with any semiotic material in the space.

The engagement with a holistic concept of landscape requires a new approach, of which the semiotic assemblage was chosen for this study. The concept of assemblages goes back to Bennett's approach, where she refers to "ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts" (Bennett 2010: 23). When the focus is on assemblages, the objective of the research may move away from the exclusivity of language use and choice in order to consider a more holistic view of all semiotic resources. The idea of semiotic assemblages is developed in the studies by Pennycook and Otsuji (2017) and Pennycook (2019), where the authors address the complexity of interacting factors. Hence, they arrive at the conclusion that in order to better understand the multilingual, multimodal, and multisensory interactions in space, for example, in Bangladeshi-owned corner shops in Tokyo and Sydney, language is only part of "a set of distributed resources that come together in particular and momentary constellations" (Pennycook 2021: 114). The authors observed the linguistic and other semiotic consequences of particular material objects, such as fish and phone cards, and they developed the notions of assembling artefacts and semiotic assemblages to consider the relations these objects take part in and the effects they produce while coming together in particular assemblages, "as customers, goods and languages assemble and dissemble at particular moments" (Pennycook–Otsuji 2017). Pennycook (2019) also mentions that there is no need to map languages against other semiotic resources, but the approach of networks of semiotic relations between agents, objects, and symbols should be reconsidered.

In this view, there is no more constraining that demands the investigation of linguistic signs exclusively. The complex study of linguistic and non-linguistic artefacts requires more than the semiotic landscape analysis of the space. Therefore, in our case, the focus of the analysis shifts to the interaction of the linguistic and non-linguistic assembling artefacts as part of semiotic assemblages to describe the way they come together in the process of brand identity construction. In marketing, the concept of assemblage related to the brand and brand identity is not a new phenomenon (see Lury 2009).

Assemblages are seen as systems of various components that interact with one another. These components can include both people and the physical elements of the product itself, and consumers actively participate in the brand assemblage.

Based on Pennycook's (2019) concept of semiotic assemblages, I focus not only on the Hungarian-Romanian linguistic resources but also on other "assembling artefacts" (Pennycook–Otsuji 2017). The complex, non-hierarchical, and flexible framework of the assemblage lends itself to underscore a conception of language/languaging that accommodates the connection of different kinds of entities to produce situations, events, and possibilities (Buchanan 2017).

In my data, there were many instances where text inscriptions, linguistic resources constructed the characteristics of the material object – for example, the smoked sausages. The material object and bilingual textual inscriptions embedded within it collectively invite multisensory actions from customers. Overall, a detailed examination of the artefacts and inscriptions reveals that the semiotic assemblages function as materials for building rapport with brand identity. The ultimate goal of the material object and accompanying inscriptions is to build interpersonal rapport with customers and, as a result, to invoke a particular form of activity on the interlocutors – buying the products. This is built on very prominent symbols and symbolic constructions of Szekler identity, which, however, is not deliberately chosen as a constructive element of their brand identity. Still, Szekler artefacts become inevitable in semiotic assemblages.

These assembling artefacts, such as smoked sausages, homemade bread, or the image of a bear come together as part of semiotic assemblages of material and semiotic resources, which can be strategically used to construct brand identity. Moreover, assemblages can bring together elements that may otherwise be separated. As Pennycook (2021) claims, this approach accomplishes more complete linguistic ethnographies and also draws attention to the physical senses such as touches, sights, smells, movements, and material artefacts. Assemblages are interpretations, how things are brought together and function in a new way – in this case, they function as constructive elements of a brand. The small and medium enterprise owners have an abundance of cultural and semiotic artefacts in time and space to draw from, as well as ethnic and local values as semiotic resources, and they may also come up with novel concepts, ideas to construct the identity of their brands.

4. Local brand identity construction. Data collection and analysis

Data collection was based on observation notes and photographs taken in the commercial units of the SME as ethnographic fieldwork in Sfântu Gheorghe (in Hungarian: Sepsiszentgyörgy), Romania, completed by an interview obtained from one of the SME owners and by a Google Forms questionnaire to collect the most frequent Szekler symbolic items as semiotic resources.

4.1. Semiotic resources questionnaire. The Szekler sensory elements

In March 2022, an online Google Form questionnaire was created and filled in by 81 anonymous respondents, aged 18–59. All participants stated that they were members of the Hungarian ethnic minority living in Romania, 64 of them living in Szeklerland. 67% of them were undergraduate university students, and 33% were university graduates. The questionnaire included five questions that asked respondents to name at least five characteristic elements or artefacts they could associate with the Szeklers regarding the auditory, gustatory, olfactory, tactile, and visual sensory categories. Although it was a non-representative survey, diverse answers were recorded, with some overlapping items. The following table (*Table 2*) represents the most popular answers, grouped according to the sensory categories.

Table 2. *Most frequent items per sensory categories delivered by the respondents*

Sensory categories	Most frequent items
Visual images	**– folk costume** **– pine forest** – penknife – the Szekler flag – headboard [HU: kopjafa] – the Szekler gate – bear – tulip – old man with moustache – painted furniture – church – broidery
Sense of taste	**– kürtőskalács [chimney cake, a sweet pastry]** **– homemade bread** **– stuffed cabbage [HU: töltött káposzta]** **– pálinka [a kind of plum brandy]** – red onion – **smoked** sausage – **garlic** **– sauerkraut** – honey – curd – salt
Sense of smell	**– kürtőskalács** **– homemade bread** **– stuffed cabbage** **– pálinka** **– pine** **– hay** – **smoked** products **– sauerkraut** – garlic

Sounds	**– pine forest** – **folk** songs – **folk** dances – the Szekler anthem – water sound – bird song – church bell
Tactile senses	**– folk costume** **– hay** – pottery – textiles – carved wood – sheepskin – wooden board – untouched nature

Among the most frequently mentioned artefacts as Szekler identity symbols, there are items which fit more than one sensory category; these could represent core elements of the Szekler identity descriptors. The highlighted elements in *Table 2*, such as the sweet chimney cake, called in Hungarian *kürtőskalács*, or smoked products, such as *sausages*, create the knots in the web of semiotic artefacts, therefore these elements should be present in the brand identity construction as part of the semiotic assemblages of the SME. *Kürtőskalács* is a good example of an item widespread internationally, which can be associated with the Szeklers, being one of the most significant symbolic artefacts (*Figure 1*). Kürtőskalács is a sweet spit cake specific to the Szeklers in Transylvania; the first written record dates back to the 17th century.[2] Its name refers to the stovepipe, as the cone shape of the cake resembles a chimney, and when the cake is fresh, it is still steaming.

Figure 1. *Kürtőskalács [chimney cake]*[3]

2 http://kurtos.eu/dl/SzaboT_1971.pdf (Last accessed: 20 March 2022).

3 File:Kürtőskalács, 2.jpg - Wikimedia Commons/ (Last accessed: 25 March 2022).

Another item, the stuffed cabbage, or *töltött káposzta* in Hungarian, is a cabbage roll consisting of cooked cabbage leaves wrapped around minced meat filling. The dish is not particularly a Szekler one, as it is common to many cuisines; however, the seasoned filling and style of wrapping is specific to the Szeklers. Also, probably less known, is the Szekler headboard (*Figure 2*), which is usually used as a memorial: it is a man-high carved wooden column with a sophisticated harmony and design.[4] Its use goes back to an old Szekler custom. At the time of a burial, the coffin was carried to the cemetery on two of these poles, which were placed in the ground at either end of the grave.

Figure 2. *Kopjafa [headboard]*

The Szekler gate is also specific to this region. These gates are richly carved (and painted) wooden works of art (*Figure 3*). All over Szeklerland, such ornate, carved gates adorn the entrances to walled churches and cemeteries. The ornamentation of the Székely gate is rooted in the lore of the peoples of Inner Asia. It is very likely that the Székely Gate is a legacy of the Huns.[5]

4 http://www.kopjafa.hu/fuzet.php/ (Last accessed: 20 March 2022).
5 http://www.kjnt.ro/ertektar/ertek/a-szekelykapuk-1/ (Last accessed: 20 April 2022).

Figure 3. *Székely kapu [Szekler gate]*

The second phase of data collection involved on-site ethnographic note taking and photo taking during several visits to the supermarkets of the brand in April–May 2022. The linguistic and other semiotic consequences of a particular material object were analysed, where linguistic and other semiotic resources constructed the characteristics of the material object, namely sausages. Data collection was completed by a semi-structured interview carried out with one of the owners, in the third phase of the research, in May 2022. This interview was based on questions referring to the use of the Szekler symbols in the brand construction of the company, to how much awareness accompanies the presence or the lack of these symbols while constructing the identity of the brand.

4.2. The local SME: Bertis

The "Bertis" company is based in Sfântu Gheorghe (in Hungarian: Sepsiszentgyörgy), which is the capital city of Covasna County, located in the central part of Romania. In the census of 2011, 74% of the city's inhabitants categorized themselves as ethnic Hungarians, 21% as Romanians, 0.7% as Roma, and 2,562 as other ethnicities,[6] and 74% marked Hungarian and 21% Romanian as their first language in the Romanian census. Bertis was founded as a business in the early 90s by a Hungarian family. It operates mainly in the meat industry, food marketing, and catering. They have a team of over 500 employees. The company has opened nine food stores in the south-eastern part of Szeklerland, Covasna County. It also operates five restaurants and a ballroom in Sfântu Gheorghe, plus an industrial kitchen, catering, and home delivery services. Another important area of activity is the wholesale trade. They distribute their products with their own refrigerator cars to over 1,500 reselling companies and organizations.

The linguistic landscape of the commercial spaces of the company reflects the diversity of languages, the power relations between speakers of minority and majority languages. The majority of the linguistic signs are Romanian-only; however, the pastry, bakery, and meat products are provided with bilingual signage or label, with Romanian displayed on top (*Figure 4*).

Figure 4. *Romanian–Hungarian bilingual signage in the Bertis supermarket*

The company responds to local demands by selling typical local products such as homemade bread, kürtőskalács, pálinka, and smoked products at any time of the day.

4.3. Semiotic assemblages and the sausage

The role of materials becomes inevitable when interpreting semiotic resources; these material objects can shape language practices and contribute to meaning making within and across various social contexts (Sharma 2019). The semiotic assemblages may take into account the multisensory resources deployed in accomplishing the brand's communicative activities.

6 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sf%C3%A2ntu_Gheorghe.

I analysed the role of *sausage* as a semiotic artefact in the construction of semiotic assemblages which in their turn may contribute to the construction of brand identity as well, based on "the existence of interaction, interrelationship between objects and beliefs, objects and ways of life, objects and human behaviour, objects and identity" (Aronin–Laoire 2013: 4). Entering any store of the company, a large signage with bilingual inscription advertises the brand's signature sausages (*Figure 5*) while inviting customers to enjoy some barbecue time.

Figure 5. *Bilingual signage indoors with sausages in the foreground, inviting for a barbecue*

These objects, such as the sausage, have the potential to make activities and practices happen in a socio-material space (Sharma 2019). While bilingual linguistic resources call the attention of both the Hungarian- and Romanian-speaking community in the city, the photo in the ad connects the customers with one of the Szekler symbols, smoked sausage. It takes but two steps to get to the meat product counter, where one can choose from the various smoked meat products. The typical smoke smell as a semiotic resource takes an active role in assembling other objects and resources.

Usually, bilingual labels offer the names of these products. Among these products, as a further linguistic resource, the product name Székelyszalámi (Szekler salami) can also be found, indicating the Hungarian identity (*Figure 6*). This product is one of the main products of the company; however, the interview with the owner reveals that this is only an occasional identity element of their brand identity:

Interview excerpt 1: "Occasionally, the Székely name appears in the name of the product (such as Székely szalámi) or the use of Székely symbols on the product label (such as on the label of Téliszalámi), but these are only occasional motifs that can be identified by looking at the brand, i.e. they are not defining elements of the brand identity."

Figure 6. *Salami product with Szekler name and with the Hungarian national colours*[7]

Nonetheless, the sausage as an assembling artefact draws on several other Szekler and other semiotic resources and builds rapport between other artefacts, customers, and the brand identity. As revealed by the interviewee, in the past few years, the shops used to entertain customers with Hungarian folk songs as background music. The song as a semiotic resource was thus part of the semiotic assemblage in their stores.

The owner's declaration regarding the company's brand identity is reflected in *Interview excerpt 2*, which supports Csata's (2019) claims, namely that ethnic markets are restricted, and this may hinder the effectiveness of ethnic marketing and the development of ethnic businesses (Csata 2019).

Interview excerpt 2: "During the brand-building process, Szekler symbols played no role in the life of the brand. The Bertis brand is based on principles that allow consumers, regardless of their national identity, to identify with the messages conveyed by the brand. During the brand-building process, two important characteristics emerged that still represent the Bertis brand identity today: quality and family style."

Perhaps these ideas can be interpreted in such a way that local business owners build their brands so that they contain both local/ethnic belonging and more global attraction at the same time (see Laihonen 2015).

Another artefact that is strongly connected to the sausage is a plastic shopping bag (*Figure 7*), which can interact with all the assembling elements of the semiotic assemblage. The plastic bag reinforces brand identity by highlighting the brand's iconic products, among them the sausages.

7 www.bertis.ro/ (Last accessed: 18 April 2022).

Figure 7. *Shopping bag as assembling artefact*

The shopping bag as another assembling artefact comes together with all the previous elements. The visual image of the sausages, smoked meat products, and wooden barrels may connect together as core Szekler symbols, which were frequently mentioned by the participants in the Google Form survey. All these assembling artefacts are flexible enough to be used in different contexts by different customers, locals or non-locals; still, they can be recognized as things that go together. They become part of a larger semiotic assemblage that can deliver different economic, social, or cultural-ethnic interpretations in different contexts.

Bilingual linguistic resources are part of the brand identity, as shown in *Interview excerpt 3*; the company's main goal is to reach as many customers as possible, regardless of their linguistic or ethnic background.

Interview excerpt 3: "Our corporate communications are multilingual (Hungarian and Romanian), as we believe it is important to get our message across to all potential audiences in the areas where our products are known and consumed. We want to reach and engage customers and potential customers, regardless of politics, nationality, or language."

The corporate communication style shows commitment to bilingual signage and, at the same time, can serve the Hungarian consumers as well. Once again, although the SME's marketing communication is different, the semiotic assemblages, happening at a given place and time, provide a way of thinking which definitely includes connections with local, ethnic identity. Sausages have the assembling power to relate the local, minority values and also to work as assembling artefact at the core of the spatial organization of the stores and of the brand identity.

5. Conclusions

In Transylvania, those businesses have emerged that offer products and services specifically targeted at Szekler minority consumers, which is indicated by the bilingual signage, including Hungarian, and their marketing communication is rooted in Hungarian or Szekler context. The ethnic market builds on the symbolic constructions of the Szekler identity, and local brands use these as semiotic resources to construct their brand identities. However, it is too early to jump to the conclusion that all local brands heavily invest in the use of these linguistic and non-linguistic resources in order to connect with the target market. The risk of isolation probably seems too high a price to be paid. The brand in the present analysis prefers quality and family style to Szekler semiotic resources when constructing brand identity. Moreover, the Bertis brand is constantly trying to reach out for a broader segment of customers.

The concept of semiotic assemblages helps us to appreciate a much wider range of linguistic, artefactual, historical, and spatial resources brought together in particular combinations and in particular moments of time and space (Blommaert–Huang 2010). These combinations are both linguistic and non-linguistic, influenced by social, cultural, ethnic interactions and relations.

The linguistic and other resources, such as the bilingual signage, the smell of smoked meat products, the tune of Szekler folk song, together with the assembling artefacts, such as sausages and other Szekler products, attract various people as customers, and they participate in meaning making, in new assemblages. My interest here was not focused on the identification of an assemblage, although Szekler identity assemblage seems very promising, but on understanding that material and semiotic resources intersect at a given place and time, and they bring a diversity of elements, ideological and ethnic routes together at one intersection of time and place, be it a store in a bilingual community in Romania. The effects generated by an assemblage have the ability to make something happen, in our case a viable market. If this is true, the examined SME may avoid the hidden economic dangers of an ethnic market and achieve a balanced combination of intra- and interrelations. Brand identity construction with a focus on the commodification of languages, cultures, and identities can be delivered via semiotic assemblages, where senses, materials, and languages as different semiotic resources interact with and intersect each other.

Results show that, in addition to linguistic cues, semiotic elements that are part of marketing messages are consciously created and used by businesses to mark locality and ethnicity. However, this is carefully constructed in order to attract a diverse target group of consumers in local and national markets.

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Professional Identity in Narratives

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Abstract. The paper analyses six professional narratives in a workplace meeting. The first part presents the theoretical framework, namely definition, types of and approaches to identity and the main features of narratives, namely the structure, function, and narrator's roles. The underlying assumption is that speakers display particular facets of their identity considering the environment and the type of interaction in which they are engaged and that narratives change depending on their purpose and context. The theoretical framework relies on Tajfel's social constructionist approach to identity and on the Membership Categorization Analysis. The second part is the data analysis of the narratives presented by several employees of a multinational company during a phone conference meeting, with a focus on the professional identity in terms of narrative structure and values upheld by the narrators. The analysis presents the structure of the professional narratives, the values upheld, and the narrators' roles and concludes with a possible professional master narrative.

Keywords: identity, narrative, membership categorization, institutional talk

1. Theoretical framework

The paper analyses the way in which narratives are used to present professional identities in a joint company in Romania. During the last three decades, the setting up of such companies has been a common phenomenon in Romania, and this is the reason why the way in which professional identities, values, and communities are presented has been considered of relevance.

The theoretical part presents the two main concepts used in the paper: identity and narrative. The first subchapter of the theoretical part is related to identity and provides a definition and several types of identity; it briefly introduces the social identity theory, which is actually used in the analysis. The second subchapter of the theoretical part is related to the narrative and describes its main elements: the narrator's function, the audience's influence on the narrator, and the use of narrative in displaying identity. These theories are applied to the analysis of six self-presentations that constitute the data, with a view to identifying the manner in which professional narratives are used to present professional identity and values, thus contributing to the establishing of a professional group.

1.1. Definition of identity

Identity, also called "self, selfhood, position, role, personality, category, person formulation, person description, subjectivity, subject, agent, subject position and persona" (Benwell–Stokoe 2006: 5) has been studied by several sciences such as psychology, sociology, or linguistics.

Both sociologists and linguists approach identity as being the result of individual interactions and relations to social groups: in sociology, identity is defined as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1981: 255), while linguistics analyses identity as "a fragile construction of different facets of self and other, within social units such as interaction, encounters and situation, during which individuals draw from numerous material and symbolic resources including but not limited to language" (Schiffrin 2006: 110). The paper uses both approaches considering identity as the result of social interactions, individuals presenting different sides of their identity according to contexts.

1.2. Types of identity

For a long time, identity has been considered as essential, having fixed personal features that do not change in any context; this view has been opposed to the non-essentialist one, which considers interaction of paramount importance. The latter approach states that people have multiple selves that they display at various times. Identities emerge in discourse, where they are dynamically recreated (Androutsopoulos–Georgakopoulou 2003: 1). Antaki and Widdicombe (2008a: 196) also claim that identities are forged in interaction, they are not pre-given, with people exhibiting different features of identity at different times, depending on the type of interaction they are engaged in.

However, the last two statements should not be interpreted as individuals having no stable identity but rather that identity is an on-going process, with people changing (to a major or minor extent) their values, beliefs, and attitudes. Linguists have advanced the concept of multiple selves, namely the varying selves people might have or feel they ought to have (Ely et al. 2007: 160).

Below three types of identity are presented, namely social, cultural, and discursive.

Social identity is defined as the "selves that people construct with others […] through social interaction and the appropriation of resources, including language, space, time, and routinized practices" (Ayometzi 2007: 42).

Cultural identity considers people as being a product of discourse, which accounts for multiple identities co-existing in the same individual, as it takes into account traits such as ethnicity, race, gender, class, all having a share in identity construction. Identity is defined as the positioning of the individual in respect to social and cultural discourses, discourse being defined as a broader concept than talk or linguistic repertoires (Zimmerman 2008: 87) and including elements such as ideology and power. This type of identity considers the opposition of positive and negative groups, whom the individual feels close to or rejects; "identity is discursively established through classifications; it includes and asserts a certain 'horizon' of possible social positions as 'positive' and excludes others as 'negative'" (Chouliaraki 2003: 304). Individuals express their identities by resorting to acts of identity, defined by Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou (2003: 5) as a way in which speakers express belonging or rejecting particular communities. Acts of identity are considered to be markers of group identity in which specific linguistic features are used and which are directly associated with their group (Kisling 2007: 264); they are projected in a conscious way through language (Evans Davies 2007: 74) or can be stated in a more indirect way, being achieved linguistically in a variety of ways – use of narratives, "shared assumptions", choice of words (De Fina–Schiffrin–Bamberg 2007: 15). They are also expressed by resorting to non-linguistic means – dress style, activities, hobbies; Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou (2003: 9) call them an "identity kit including semiotic systems".

Discourse identity is closely related to the moment-by-moment exchange of roles, for example, speaker–listener, with situated identities adopted by individuals in particular situations, for example, interviewer–interviewee, client–provider, etc. All these identities combine and contribute to the formation of more global identities (De Fina–Schiffrin–Bamberg 2007: 14).

Conversation analysis studies identity as defined by interaction, identity being one of the participants' resources (Widdicombe 2008a: 203). Benwell and Stokoe (2006: 70) distinguish between visible indicators of identity, which are ways in which the individuals display their identity, and oriented-to-identity features, which are possible ways in which individuals expect themselves to act in a particular situation (Zimmerman 1998: 91). The type and context of interaction are very important, as different identity types can be resorted to – for instance, individuals can emphasize their professional identity if the interaction is at the workplace, and, as such, they can present themselves as experts, mediators, interviewers, customers, teachers, or students. Conversation analysis considers of paramount importance to start from the bottom-up meaning of the talk itself and move to theory, the aim being to show that "context and identity have to be treated as inherently locally produced, incrementally developed and, by extension, as transformable at any moment". This approach "charts the identity work of shifting selves, contingent on the unfolding demands of talk's sequential environment" (Benwell–Stokoe 2006: 37). Other linguists, such as Wetherell, consider that conversational analysis should be combined with wider macrostructures and cultural-historical context: "[t]he resulting analytical approach is a genealogical one which aims to trace normative practices, values and sense-making through both historical and synchronic intertextual analysis" (qtd. in Benwell–Stokoe 2006: 41).

The current paper relies on a combination of the three types of identity – social identity, adapted here to the professional environment (employers and employees), cultural identity, as the speakers are all Romanian young men, and discursive identity, as the narrators are speakers and listeners.

1.3. The social identity theory

There are two major trends in explaining identity – namely identity as a social phenomenon and identity as a psychological one.

The social constructionist theory defines identity as a process having the following features: it takes place in specific interactions, displays several identities of an individual rather than one, does not emanate from an individual but as the result of social processes, and assumes discourse work (De Fina–Schiffrin–Bamberg 2007: 2).

This paper is based on Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory, which claims that identity has a dual nature – it is both a social and a psychological reality. Social identity, however, is not automatically accepted by individuals, as they gradually come to understand the social categories and develop a preference for a particular social group, to which they become emotionally attached (McKinley–Dunnett 2008: 47). Tajfel also advances the self-categorization theory which accounts for the way in which individuals identify themselves with particular groups because of either emotional attachment or specific dispositions. As group members, individuals share a particular identity, are expected to possess certain characteristics, and have certain "motives" and "rights" (Widdicombe 2008b: 53). The group also defines itself by contrast to other groups, resorting to "relevant categories" and relying on "stereotypes" (Widdicombe 2008a: 193). In actual interaction, self-categorization is influenced by "salience", meaning that it is the features of the context that settle which of these social categories are probably perceived by "the interaction participants as most obviously applicable" (McKinley–Dunnett 2008: 47–48).

Similar to this theory is the Membership Categorization Analysis, which derives from conversation analysis and ethnomethodology and aims to identify categories used by participants to describe people. Membership Categorization Analysis studies the "locally used, invoked and organised presumed common sense knowledge of social structures which members are oriented to in the conduct of everyday affairs" (Hester–Eglin 1997: 3). These categories provide an understanding of the specific activity, of moral rules and values governing specific communities, pointing at accepted types of behaviours and responsibilities (Petraki–Baker–Emmison 2007: 111–112); they express the speakers' expectations of social norms and "what it means to be a certain kind of person or to act in a certain way. However, they are also fluid, as new predicates can be added, and thus new identities can emerge" (De Fina–Schiffrin–Bamberg 2007: 15). The theory explains the way categories are linked to each other and thus to particular actions ("category-bound activities") and characteristics ("natural predicates") (Benwell–Stokoe 2006: 38–39); predicates for categories may include, for example, "rights, entitlements, obligations, knowledge, attributes and competences" (Hester 2008: 135). These categories become one of the participants' main resources of "doing identity", and interlocutors may align or dissociate themselves with/from the features associated with these categories (Paoletti–Cavallaro Johnson 2007: 91). Linguistically these features are realized in a wide variety of ways – descriptions, explanations, narratives, exonerations, corrections, etc. (McKinley–Dunnett 2008: 48–49).

The analysis in this paper supports the social identity theory, and the self-presentations lend themselves to the Membership Categorization Analysis, as all the speakers share or orient themselves towards similar norms and rules; the predicates include knowledge (professional), competences (information technology), and obligations (permanent development of professional skills), all expressed by means of narratives.

1.4. Narratives

Narratives have been more recently studied as a way of constructing identity: "[n]arratives are central for the negotiation of identity, an ordering principle that imposes meaning on the individual's life" (Bamberg–de Fina–Schiffrin 2007: 5); they have been approached as "coping devices to create coherent identities, as institutional tools to regulate identities and as interactionally co-constructed texts to create community" (De Fina–Schiffrin–Bamberg 2007: 16).

Narratives have several features that make them recognizable as a particular text type: the narrator, characters, settings, plot, sequence of events (Benwell–Stokoe 2006: 133), their structure, with beginnings, middles, and ends, their space-time organization – as the events are structured by space and time. However, the beginning, middle, and end of personal narratives are sometimes "designed" by the narrator, being rather subjective interpretations. In many cases, narratives are longer texts, but linguists also comment on mini-tellings, which include the fundamental elements of a narrative in terms of events and the way they end (Georgakopoulou 2003b: 89).

In this paper, narratives are defined as stories concerned with "spontaneous personal experience" (Holmes 2007: 171), having a chronological sequence, a cause and effect structure, a resolution, a narrator, and a setting. Functionwise, narratives present personal experiences: "By telling stories, we convey to others a sense of who we are, of our beliefs and values. Narratives of personal experience have been related to many forms of social identification such as cultural belonging and gender affiliation" (Bastos–de Oliveira 2007: 190). Narratives are a way in which individuals can make sense of their life and can give meaning to the events that they have experienced. As such, "narrators interpret the past in stories rather than reproduce the past as it was" (Bell 2007: 235). Narratives are "a privileged mode for self-construction" (Georgakopoulou 2003a: 83), as well as a means of understanding, explaining, or displaying a particular identity, depending on the local and wider context (culture, time, etc.); "[n]arrative practices are ways of legitimizing social identities while rejecting others" (Wortham–Gadsden 2007: 324). The past is reshaped, and thus different identities arise (De Fina–Schiffrin–Bamberg 2007: 25); due to these features, narratives are also called "storied selves" (Benwell–Stokoe 2006: 138).

Narratives express not only personal but also group identity (De Fina 2007: 351), and they can adopt or reject master narratives (widely accepted stories).

Other functions of narratives are of entertaining, of conveying a moral message, of more or less directly judging the world shared by the teller and the audience (Ayometzi 2007: 44). They are also used to make or support a point, since claims can be made more plausibly by relying on a story (McKinley–Dunnett 2008: 39). The audience is intimately involved in the construction of the narrative, as audience members can ratify the stories, challenge or delimitate them (Georgakopoulou 2003b: 100).

Narrators have different roles. De Finna (2007) claims that they represent social worlds, which they also evaluate and within which they align themselves by means of linguistic or behavioural choices. The identity displayed in the narrative is often related in more or less direct ways to the general identities that exist in the group. Commenting on the narrators' roles, Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou (2003: 18) list "teller of events", "assessor", or "evaluator of the reported events", and "contester", while De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg (2007: 1) state that the narrators can fulfil the roles of the author, animator, or figure.

The current analysis focuses on professional identity and on the ways in which the narrators construct it both at the personal and collective level. The narratives are analysed temporally, having a cause–effect structure. All the narratives include professional values highly rated by the employees, which points to their belonging to the group and to the company.

1.5. Institutional talk

The workplace is a setting for displaying and negotiating identities, as employers and employees aim to align their job responsibilities and their identity. However, professional identities are complex, shift from context to context, and resort to a wider range of personality traits, as individuals aim to strike a balance between their professional and individual identity (Holmes 2007).

2. Data analysis

The data analysed below were recorded in a multinational company, whose headquarters are in Belgium and which has one of its branch offices in Romania. The activity of the company is information technology, and the Romanian employees are organized in teams, each one having a Belgian team leader; the teams and their leaders meet in face-to-face or phone meetings (Coposescu–Chefneux 2008: 5). The company is rather new, having been set up around eighteen months before the recording was made, which means that the organizational culture is in the making.

The analysis below studies a phone meeting during which the employees introduce themselves to a new colleague. These self-presentations resemble a CV, the speakers talking about their professional life from the present to the past. Their presentations are analysed as narratives because of the common elements these two text types share: the narrator (the employee), the setting (the workplace), the plot (the decision to change the job), and the resolution (the current job). The employees' success is based on their professional and personal qualities, which have helped them to get the current job. The function of these narratives is to make sense of the employees' professional life and to introduce them as valuable professionals.

The employees' professional identity is analysed based on the social identity theory and the Membership Categorization perspective; the narrators recount the experiences undergone during their previous employment periods and present themselves as sharing knowledge and skills with their colleagues. They describe themselves as a cohesive group, connected by homogenous competences and values. The narratives are triggered by the team leader, who invites the employees attending the phone conference to introduce themselves to a new colleague, F2.

Each analysis of the six narratives is structured around a similar pattern – the transition from the previous to the current speaker, the temporal sequence of the employee's professional experience, the language used, the values upheld, and the differences between the narrators. The aim is to identify the way in which the employees use narratives in order to build their professional identities.

The first speaker is F2, the new team member, who is based in a third country, followed by five Romanian colleagues working in the Romanian office. For transcribing conventions, see the *Appendix*.

2.1. Narrative 1

The first speaker is F2, who starts his self-presentation by specifying that he joined the company eight months before and then talks about his previous jobs. The narrative is divided into two parts, from the present moment (the meeting) backwards until the moment he joined the company; in the former part, F2 presents the teams he worked with in the current company and the responsibilities he had (ll. 4–8). The latter part of his narrative lists his previous jobs, being a mixture of information in terms of lengths of employment with the particular company, a description of the activity of the company, and his job responsibilities there. The final part of the narrative is focused on the present, namely the connection between his entire professional experience and its relevance for the current job:

1	F2:	hi actually ere uhm I joined XXX from eight nine months
2		before last August uhm,
3		uhm at XXX I joined here
4		and before that I was working with CAT group
5		basically I was working in high frequency domain
6		but but yeah, the the the whole experience
7		I, I, I have with CAT
8		and it was good and that sort of things
9		and and before joining XXX
10		I was working in the [unclear] systems for two years uhm
		(Coposescu–Chefneux 2008: 26–27)

In terms of the professional values emphasized by F2, professional experience comes first (ll. 4–5). The experience is presented as good, and F2 suggests that he would have more to add – "and it was good and that sort of things" (l. 8), but he is not specific about it; however, positive values are implied.

The repetition of the word "experience" (twice in F2's self-presentation) indicates the high value of this feature. The idea is also indirectly supported by the jobs presented in the narrative, all these being indirect claims made in support of F2's professional experience. He emphasizes it in the final part of his presentation again, where the word "particularly" is repeated.

Next, F1 invites the Romanian team members to present themselves.

1 F1: can you do the same on the other side in Braşov side
2 that each of you present a bit yourself to introducing?
(Coposescu–Chefneux 2008: 27)

From here onwards, the relationship between the speakers and their audience changes, as they mainly address F2, whom they have not met so far. Everybody is already familiar with the Romanian team members and with the team leader. It is worth noticing that the five Romanian narrators adopt F2's narrative structure, namely from the present towards the past.

2.2. Narrative 2

The first Romanian speaker is R5, who introduces himself and states that he has been with the company since February the year before:

1 R5: hi, I'm R5.
2 I've started with XXX R from Feb from February last year.
3 I worked in structure team only,
4 so uhm I worked on B mesh modelling for five B,
5 that was one of the major tasks I've worked on
[...]
6 R5: so in many ways for me this is the last call for CAT
7 because I moved, I was moved to MAV team so
8 F2: ah, ok, ok yeah ok
9 R5: and previously I worked mostly for for seven years for a company
10 which was involved in different a different type of software
(Coposescu–Chefneux 2008: 27)

R5's only job in the current company has been with the structure team, and as part of this job he mentions some of the most important tasks he has achieved (ll. 4–5). R5 considers that his job is a complex one, involving specific knowledge. The complexity of technical knowledge required by the job is the professional value that R5 seems to put forward. The next part of R5's narrative looks towards the future, as he states that he is going to switch teams (ll. 6–7). After this announcement, R5 continues his professional narrative by talking about the jobs he has had before joining the current company. The values upheld are indicated by the information R5 presents in his narrative – he mentions the length of experience in a particular IT area (l. 9) and the variety of tasks he had to carry out there, for which he uses the adverb "mostly" (which implies there were other tasks, too), such as "satellite data transfer", "multicasting", etc.

2.3. Narrative 3

The next speaker is R4, who also starts by stating the date he joined the company – sixteen months before. He adapts his narrative not only to F2's structure but also to R5's one, as he uses the adverb "also" to indicate the similarities between himself and his colleague (l. 3); therefore, he presents himself as a team member.

1	R4:	I'm also from the beginning in CAT team,
2		I work with IO features here
3		also a bit of over-connectors
4		and uhm in N solutions also
5		and automation.

Like the previous speakers, R4 starts with his current position (l. 1) and describes the tasks he performed as part of the CAT team – "IO features", "a bit of over-connectors", "N solutions", and "automation" (ll. 2–5), which indicates that he values wide professional experience.

In the next lines, R4 speaks about R2 and R5, who are the oldest members in this team, which is an unexpected turn of the presentation, indicating that R4 considers length of employment to be a significant detail; he joined the company in February and the other two colleagues a month earlier:

8	R4:	R2 and R5 are the two first
9		who joined the structure team
		(Coposescu–Chefneux 2008: 28)

In the last part of R4's presentation, he describes his previous experience acquired in the three companies where he previously worked, doing websites and web application "mostly". The use of the particularizer "mostly" (l. 12) points to the range of tasks performed by F2, something that he considers worth mentioning.

F2 asks R4 a question about his experience in Java technology and C++:

10	R4:	yes, I have uhm also some uhm three years of Java experiences
11		uhm and I'm I was a little bit new in C plus plus
12		when I joined the company
		(Coposescu–Chefneux 2008: 28)

R4 considers his Java experience as adequate – he mentions three years in his answer, and he diminishes what he considers lack of professional knowledge/ experience by resorting to the mitigator *a little* in "a little bit new" (l. 11), but the way in which he phrases it indicates that learning on the job is another professional value that R4 appreciates. He also uses the past tense ("I was a little bit new"), suggesting that this is no longer the situation.

2.4. Narrative 4

The next speaker is R3, who starts his narrative in the same manner as his colleagues:

1	R3:	hi, I'm R3.
2		so I joined CAT team and XXX in March last year,

He starts with the previous experiences he obtained during his former jobs:

3	R3	my background is more an engineering one than programming
4		so I worked in FEM as an a CAE engineer
5		for about two years

R3's narrative is slightly different from that of the previous speakers, as he mentions his personal interest, which was not related to the previous jobs but is linked to the current one (ll. 6–9).

6	R 3	but my personal interest is more programming and
7		but I did not have too much experience
8		when I joined XXX.
9		more in web programming (Coposescu–Chefneux 2008: 29)

As such, R3 seems to advance the idea that he values a job in which he can learn new things, and that his having obtained the current job is less the result of professional knowledge and more of personal interest and personal qualities, both matching the current company's field of activity.

2.5. Narrative 5

R2, the next speaker, is the newest team member, and his narrative overtly indicates it:

1	R2:	I came last year in May at XXX
2		no experience in CAE
3		I just have eight months
4		in microcontroller programming and that's all
		(Coposescu–Chefneux 2008: 28)

R2 directs his narrative to his colleagues, namely to R3, as indicated by the fact that he mentions no use in CAE (as opposed to R3, who worked as a CAE engineer and had two years of experience in this area).

Unlike his colleagues, R2 does not mention previous jobs and does not consider his eight months' experience in microcontroller programming as adequate – as indicated by the use of the diminutive "just" (l. 3) and by the way he finishes his presentation: "and that's all" (l. 4). R2's narrative points to the fact that he values professional experience despite his not having too much.

2.6. Narrative 6

The last speaker is R1, who starts his narrative on a more personal note, reminding F2 that they had met earlier in the main office, a remark pointing to his valuing professional relations. He then starts his narrative, which he signals by the use of "so":

1	R1	ok, so I think uhm we know some some words about
2		uhm so I joined XXX in August last year
3		uhm and then we have some we had some uhm trainings here

R1 begins by stating the date he joined the company, but the next thing he mentions about his job is the trainings he attended, which indicates that he considers knowledge and training a strength and that he appreciates the company that has offered them (l. 3).

Next, R1 lists the responsibilities he had in the current company, apparently implying that he has been able to carry them out as the result of the training, after which R1 lists the jobs he had done in his current position (ll. 6–9):

4	R1:	and then I worked for IO restraints
5		then for uhm N automation test objects,
6		and then for uhm offsets
7		and for FRS test objects also (Coposescu–Chefneux 2008: 29)

The temporal sequence emphasized by the use of "then" (ll. 4–6) underlines the variety of tasks performed by R1.

F1 asks whether this is R1's first job, and R1 replies that he has worked six months for another company. However, he does not mention what experience he acquired there and even says that his current job could be considered to be the first, which points to the importance he assigns to it.

R1's professional values suggested by his narrative are professional experience, learning, a wide range of tasks, and good working relations with his colleagues.

3. Conclusions

The speakers display their identity by resorting to narratives. These self-presentations are interpreted as professional narratives, as they include many features of narratives: temporal sequence, cause–effect structure, narrator, setting, plot, and resolution. The time orientation is from the present towards the past. The employees reshape their professional past, which is presented as the cause that has led to their obtaining the current job.

The narrators position themselves very carefully against their colleagues (both new and old) and their team leader. They adopt the narrative structure used by the first speaker, adapting it to their own story – they all begin by saying when they joined the company, mention the current tasks and responsibilities and their previous professional experience. The differences in their narratives point to their varying experiences and values.

In terms of narrative roles, the team members are mainly tellers and evaluators of themselves and of the other storytellers. Their narrative explains how they came to obtain the job for which they present themselves as efficient and good. Their past is interpreted in such a way as to indicate that what they have done before has prepared them for the current job.

All the employees present themselves as part of a group, joined by common professional beliefs and values; their identity is mainly collective but also individual, as the digressions from the pattern indicate (for example, R3's personal and professional interests).

The six narrators position themselves against each other and present themselves as sharing similar values, thus affirming their group membership; the common values are wide experience, on-going learning, previous employments involving various responsibilities; the length of stay in the current company appears to be an important element according to which the members self-categorize. They value professional knowledge and display it during the narratives.

The master narrative to which these six narratives can be connected is that of becoming a good professional and the values associated with it: acquiring experience, changing jobs (always to a better one), learning new things, doing new and challenging tasks, having the capacity to solve complex tasks and the ability to learn on the job, being a good team member and colleague.

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Appendix

Transcribing conventions

Symbol	**Significance**
Arabic numerals	line numbers
[ ]	laughter
[work]	guess
.	clause-final falling intonation
?	clause-final rising intonation
,	slight rise
//	the onset of overlapping talk
[unclear]	non-verbal information and/or unclear passages
XXX	words not transcribed to provide confidentiality

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When Egos Collide: The Linguistics of Aggressiveness in English, German, and Hungarian Business Letters – A Contrastive Approach

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Abstract. The subject of verbal aggressiveness seems to be marginalized in the context of business correspondence. Our paper sets out to fill in this niche, as it exposes the linguistic patterns of this phenomenon within business letters. The study commences with a conceptual framework within which the most relevant theoretical findings applicable to business correspondence in general and to verbal aggressiveness in particular are foregrounded. Next, through a descriptive approach, it presents a series of linguistic markers to identify the morphological, syntactic, and semantic constructions for the expression of aggressiveness. For this purpose, the article scrutinizes authentic business letters in English, German, and Hungarian, and then it juxtaposes data contrastively to conclude that offensive emotions materialize in relatively similar linguistic structures in these languages, i.e. through verbs and modal verbs of obligation, necessity, and impossibility, verbs in the first-person singular, conditional and result clauses, and time adverbials. Furthermore, given the linguistic characteristics of the aforementioned languages, business letters also exploit specific tools, such as inversion, fronting, and the emphatic "do", to communicate hostile and threatening messages. Due to the large variety of linguistic resources provided, we deem that verbal aggressiveness alters, reshapes, and enriches the business discourse. It therefore deserves a proper place in the rhetoric of business correspondence.

Keywords: verbal aggressiveness, business letters, descriptive analysis, contrastive analysis

1. Introduction

Pervasive and omnipresent, aggressiveness seems to take over everyday life, as it penetrates work, school, traffic, and personal relationships. It is a multifaceted phenomenon, which detonates forcefully and often unexpectedly or which sneaks in subtly and undisguised. Otherwise, it simply abides in passivity and wordlessness.

In a very rudimentary perception, business correspondence involves communication, human interaction, and implicitly a wide range of emotions. It is the reverberation of people's inner selves and, apparently, cannot be devoid of anger, frustration, annoyance, or hostility. Our paper expounds the linguistic dimensions of verbal aggressiveness in the context of business letters. It tracks the linguistic manifestations of this phenomenon, takes an inventory of them with the aim to postulate observations that can complement the hiatus of this field.

The article analyses English, German, and Hungarian business writings in a descriptive way. First, it provides a theoretical overview of the most pertinent studies related to business correspondence in general and of the very few linguistic aspects linked to aggressiveness in particular. Later, in the practical section, it compiles a list of indicators both to pinpoint and to gauge the linguistic nuances of aggressiveness within business letters. Eventually, within the confines of a contrastive study, it sheds light on the prevailing characteristics and construes the underlying analogies among the observed trends.

2. Literature review

We seek to grasp business letters from numerous perspectives, i.e. discourse analysis, pragmatics, communication with emphasis on emotional content, verbal aggressiveness and style as well as impoliteness associated with negativity. Our approach rests on the results that prior investigations have proffered in this field. With the substantiation of the most relevant facts, we prepare the rich ground of business correspondence in an effort to determine an array of morphological, syntactic, and semantic structures based on which verbal aggressiveness will be captured in the ensuing practical part of the paper. In this respect, we view aggressiveness in accordance with Dominic Infante's definition:

> An interpersonal behavior may be considered aggressive if it applies force physically or symbolically in order, minimally, to dominate and perhaps damage or, maximally, to defeat and perhaps destroy the locus of attack. The locus of attack in interpersonal communication can be a person's body, material possessions, self-concept, position on topics of communication or behavior. (Infante 1987: 158)

As a consistent explanation of the concept, it encompasses the different nuances of aggressiveness, covering hidden, subtle forms and open, direct, and forceful ones.

2.1. English business letters

A review of the literature regarding English business letters offers many-sided viewpoints, as the analysis of such letters often reveals multidimensional approaches. Therefore, the literature abounds in examples of linguistic surveys ranging from structure and form to language content.

Pilegaard (1997) is one of the first authors to make a linguistic introspection in the pragmatics of business letters, pointing out the way requests are formulated. In Hollinger (2005), the stress is on persuasion intended as a strategy, while in Ren and Liu (2020) the concept of politeness is taken into account. This is considered to be a basic principle in a business letter, embodied by "different transmitting ways of positive information and negative information" (Ren–Liu 2020: 64).

A plethora of studies outlines the politeness strategies used in business letters by native and non-native English speakers. This subject is developed by Goudarzi, Ghonsooly, and Taghipour (2015) based on Brown and Levinson's theory of negative and positive politeness. Maier (1992: 189) argues that there are "striking differences" in the strategies employed by native and non-native speakers despite a general awareness of the existence of politeness strategies in business letter writing. Sims and Guice (1992) conduct similar research deriving from the "assumption that cultural factors beyond language greatly affect communication, factors such as the knowledge of the business communication practices and of the cultural expectations of other countries" (Sims–Guice 1992: 23).

The relationship between cultural influences and persuasion in English business letters is also investigated by Zheng (2015). Elsewhere, persuasion and its linguistic patterns are evaluated by Zamanian (2014). The cultural aspect in this type of letters is explored by Aimoldina and Zharkynbekova (2014). Other elements, such as euphemism and empathy, are assessed by several researchers. More precisely, euphemism in business letters is sketched by Wang (2016) and Wang (2018), whereas pragmatic empathy is featured by Zhanghong and Qian (2018).

Aggressiveness in English business letters is presented by Kovács (2021). The paper stems from Friedemann Schulz von Thun's theories and discloses the aggressive-devaluing communication style in letters of complaint. It also determines several facets of aggressiveness, namely criticizing, reproach, accusation, interpretation, lecturing, cursing, swearing, irony, threatening, mistrust, attack, directness, insistence, impatience, and harsh honesty. Nonetheless, the examples enumerated here are the reflections of the teaching-learning process and list functions and phrases for the expression of verbal aggressiveness.

The topic of interpersonal function through mood and modality is portrayed by Xu (2012). Different aspects of referring to mood and modality in business letters and their role in expressing politeness are discussed by Vergaro (2004) and Qian and Pan (2017). Moreover, Someya (2010) is concerned with the use of modal verbs and their semantic functions in a business letter corpus.

A genre analysis on inquiry letters across cultures is carried out by Jalilifar and Beitsayyah (2011). Besides, the business letter is examined through the lenses of critical discourse analysis (Iqbal and Anwar 2013).

2.2. German business letters

German business letters are widely discussed in the academic community, their structure and discourse being subject to meticulous evaluations. Various studies offer insights into the style and the content (Reiners 2001) or into the typology, the layout, and the structure of these letters (Wurm 2002). Alternative bibliographic sources provide practical examples of linguistic tools meant to declutter written business communication (Sauer 2008).

German business letters are also viewed from intercultural angles, with emphasis on how they can bypass cultural difficulties and dispel stereotypes in order to facilitate effective business communication (Slawek 2009). Similarly, intercultural approaches to their discourse have garnered much attention. Kegyes's contrastive analysis (2018) on German and Hungarian business letters delves into the linguistic structures of offers and enquiries. Zorica (2011) dissects a corpus of business letters on the basis of power distance, the relation I–you and we–you, politeness and persuasion strategies as well as mitigation techniques.

Concerning the emotional content, it is highly recommended for letter writers to be friendly and positive. On the other hand, it is implied that emotions and intricate issues should not be given place in business letters (Birgelen 2013). Positive and negative feelings coupled with their potential effects are brought into discussion in the case of advertisements (Lutzer 2010) and sales letters (Brückner and Reinert 2007).

Verbal aggressiveness per se is, however, scarcely or insufficiently depicted in the context of business correspondence. In fact, the little research conducted in this field uncovers only the contours of this phenomenon. As for the rules of business letter writing in general and the use of the singular and plural forms of nouns in particular, it has been found that the singular number should be avoided since it may add an aggressive connotation. Instead, one should resort to the so-called "diplomatic plural", which can alleviate negativity (Mielow-Weidmann and Weidmann 1998). Again, the capitalization of salient ideas in the body of the business letter can incorporate an offensive effect (Goldmann 2007).

2.3. Hungarian business letters

Studies on Hungarian business letters delineate some of the conventions of letter writing in terms of layout, structure, and content (Langer–Raátz 2003) or pertaining to their style and typology (Borgulya–Somogyvári 2009). In addition, Honffy (2000), Borgulya and Somogyvári (2009) devise a rich repertoire of samples for the different types of business writings.

Szabó (2002) advances that business letters with a negative content should have a positive or a neutral opening. Elsewhere, Hofmeister-Tóth and Mitev (2007) underline the importance of style, content, and positive tone since these leave their imprint on both the sender and the company.

Radó (2009) broaches the subject of our interest and views diplomacy and tactfulness as fundamental principles along which business letters should be guided. He hints that if a letter is to convey unfriendly messages, the personal pronouns in the second person singular or plural ("Ön", "Önök")[1] should be put aside, and passive verbal structures should be applied with the aim to soften the intensity of negative feelings.

In summary, English, German, and Hungarian business letters have been unravelled mostly based on their style, discourse as well as aspects linked to interculturality, politeness, and negativity. Nevertheless, current studies fall short of addressing them from the perspective of verbal aggressiveness. This has prompted our research into how aggressiveness can be channelled into business texts and what linguistic patterns it can take shape in.

3. Descriptive analysis

In this section, we devise the linguistic structures of aggressiveness separately in English, German, and in Hungarian business letters. This descriptive part is followed by a discussion where we draw a parallel between the data and subsequently interpret the common traits permeating the studied texts.

The corpus of the research is made up of twenty-four business letters in English, eighteen letters in German, and eighteen in Hungarian. Our samples are authentic texts that have been put at our disposal by several companies. We have chosen original writings in the belief that these can better describe today's rhetoric of business letters. Given the partially confidential information processed in the article, the organizations have requested anonymity. On this ground, our article pins down solely the morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of the phenomenon.

1 "Ön" (singular form) and "Önök" (plural form) are the polite equivalents of the personal pronoun "you" in Hungarian.

From the point of view of the genre, the collected texts comprise predominantly complaints but also apologies, enquiries, offers, answers to offers, decisions, and requests. Hence, they have been used for both internal and external communication.

3.1. The aggressive tone in English business letters

The following markers of verbal aggressiveness can be observed in the corpus of English business letters:

– direct, unequivocal requests and explicit formulations without prior introductions or explanations, asking for a cooperative and obedient behaviour on the part of the reader, e.g. "I wanted to get your view on", "I wanted to understand […] if you see any issues", "[u]pon his departure, J.'s team will report directly to me", "I wanted to alert you", "will therefore not be changed", "we will work directly with all B2B customers", "[i]f you look at brand distribution in the world, it works in this way", "for 2021 I want the full […] territory", '[f]or your information, we opened". Even if, apparently, from a semantic or linguistic point of view, the traits of aggressiveness in these examples may not be particularly discernible, as long as they lack an introductory or preparatory message to indicate the larger context or the circumstances, they can be interpreted as impolite, urging, and aggressive from a pragmatic perspective;

– the expression of impossibility, obligation, and necessity, communicating various degrees of constraint and leaving no other choice for the addressee, e.g. "it is impossible", "have to be checked", "they will need to continue working", "that needs to happen", "we need to be more professional", "we cannot have a second or a third company for the distribution", "you need to be strong and have one distribution company", "I cannot say", "we will not be able to propose", "our turnover will not be able to be";

– first conditionals suggesting restrictions, e.g. "[i]f we distribute your brand with exclusivity, we will not work with", "[i]f you really want to keep the other distributors, we will not be able to propose";

– the fronting of wh-clauses to insist on essential points, e.g. "[w]hat I will be looking for is";

– the passive voice instead of a polite request, e.g. "[p]lease be informed that";

– elements of orality, including the use of the emphatic "do", to increase the persuasive power of emotions, to sensitize the reader, and to confirm messages more resolutely, e.g. "[p]ut yourself in our position", "what would you do when receiving these goods?", "[w]hat would differentiate grade A from grade B?", "[w]e did bring this up", "[o]ne example?", "I am discussing with you", "I did not say";

– the display of emotions, such as bewilderment, anger and irony, e.g. "I am really confused about this picture", "[t]his is outrageous", "as our Google champion";

– clauses of reason to reinforce hostility, explain situations on the basis of some existing evidence or justify measures more clearly and firmly, e.g. "as you can see in the attached picture", "as you can see in the attached photos", "companies which import […] ask for […] because it will not appear in their products", "[a]s we have already discussed", "as you would have experience in the frequency of the problem", "as we will have our sales people on the road", "[b]ecause we had a long-term collaboration with this company";

– expressions of defensive-aggressive response to threatening or intrusive behaviour, represented by facts and documents provided as proof, e.g. "to investigate with workers", "to check cameras in your facility", "it shows that […] are clean", "is difficult to be among the goods", "please revert to the second page of the sent specifications", "that I have sent […] with quotation and pictures", "it is normal that", "we usually document pictures for marketing", "kindly find the attached pictures for your goods […] to check yourself the quality", "this is the legal and non-conflicting way to solve the problem", "it is a normal way to work on the B2B market".

3.2. The aggressive tone in German business letters

The morphological, syntactic, and semantic constructions below render the aggressive tone in German business letters:

– passive constructions to maintain distance and objectivity, e.g. "Nachbarn dürften aber nicht gestört werden" ('neighbours should not be disturbed'),[2] "in einen angemessenen Ausgleich gebracht werden müssen" ('an appropriate balance must be struck'), „[na]chdem nun bestätigt ist" ('after it is confirmed'), "[d]er Vorgang wurde [...] gemeldet" ('the process [...] was reported'), "werden berechtigte Ansprüche bezahlt" ('rightful claims will be paid');

– modal verbs expressing obligation, necessity, and impossibility, e.g. "Herr X. kann […] den Mangel nicht abstellen" ('Mr X. cannot [...] rectify the fault'), "[d]amit sollte der [...] Schaden ausreichend entschädigt sein" ('with this, the [...] damage should be sufficiently compensated for'), "[e]s kann nicht sein" ('it cannot be'), "ich kann nicht beurteilen" ('I cannot assess');

– infinitive constructions with a passive meaning for a detached and impersonal style, e.g. "sei zu bestimmen" ('it is to be defined'), "[d]em […] sind Zeiträume freizuhalten" ('one has to keep time intervals free'), "[d]ie [...] Folgeschäden sind somit von Ihnen zu tragen" ('one is held liable for consequential losses'), "ist mit dem [...] direkt abzustimmen" ('has to be directly agreed on with');

– reference to law and other regulations, e.g. "Mieter haben […] das Recht" ('tenants have the right'), "[d]as muss man dann entweder akzeptieren oder im Zweifel ausziehen" ('one must either accept it or, if in doubt, move out'), "[l]aut

2 The translation of the German examples is our own throughout the article.

den [...] Informationen" ('in accordance with the information'), "Zeugenaussagen sind dazu jederzeit verfügbar" ('testimonies are available at any time'), "[m]einer Kontrolle nach" ('according to my inspection'), "[d]iese Regeln sind ab sofort [...] für alle gültig" ('these rules are from now on in force for everybody');

– the present tense in assumptions and expectations, in a categorical and indisputable sense, urging the recipient to take action, e.g. "[w]ir gehen davon aus" ('we expect'), "[f]olglich sehen wir uns dazu gezwungen" ('consequently, we will feel obliged to');

– the subjunctive mood to express negligence, e.g. "Sie sollten sich vielleicht [...] orientieren" ('you should probably […] turn to'), "einmal sollte man sich rühren" ('one should once move to');

– marks of oral communication, e.g. "Sie haben vielleicht Nerven!" ('you've got some nerves'), "[u]nglaublich" ('unbelievable'), "hören Sie Ihr Versteckenspiel jetzt auf" ('stop your game of hide-and-seek'), "[s]eien Sie bitte vernünftig" ('please be reasonable');

– inversion and/or fronting to add emphasis, e.g. "[g]ängig ist in solchen Fällen" ('it is usual in such cases'), "[s]icher finden Sie zeitnah einen Weg" ('surely you will soon find a way'), "[n]ichts davon hätte ich tun müssen" ('there was nothing I could have done');

– fronting and inverted complex sentences to point out core information, e.g. "[d]ass […] Kosten produziert, von denen wir nichts wissen" ('that it [...] produces costs, about which we know nothing'), "[s]ollten Sie die Kaution einbehalten, werde ich" ('should you retain the deposit, I will');

– conjunctions and adverbs implying subtle threat, e.g. "ansonsten" ('otherwise'), "letztmalig" ('for the last time'), "nicht länger" ('no longer'), "spätestens" ('not later than');

– personal pronouns used in the singular to intensify the offensive tone, e.g. "mit dieser Vorgehensweise bin ich nicht einverstanden" ('I do not agree with this procedure'), "[h]iermit möchte ich Sie letztmalig bitten" ('I am asking you for the last time'), "[i]ch werde nicht länger auf eine Nachricht [...] warten" ('I will no longer wait for an answer').

3.3. The aggressive tone in Hungarian business letters

The linguistic indicators of aggressiveness in Hungarian business letters are as follows:

– the expression of obligation, necessity, and constraint, e.g. "az adózó […] köteles teljesíteni" ('the taxpayer is held liable for'),[3] "köteles megfizetni" ('you are liable for'), "számlájára kell fizetni" ('it has to be paid into […] the account'), "összegben kell fizetnie" ('it has to be paid in a total of'), "ezt meg kell lépned"

3 The translation of the Hungarian examples is our own throughout the article.

('you have to take this step'), "kénytelen leszek felfüggeszteni a szállítást" ('I will feel obliged to suspend the transport');

– first conditionals and clauses of result imposing limitations to particular actions, e.g. "[h]a a tartozás […] meghaladja, […] kezdeményezheti" ('if the dues exceed […], you can initiate'), "[a]mennyiben a szülő […] a […] bizottság eljárásával nem ért egyet" ('insofar as the parent does not agree with […] the procedure of the board'), "[a]mennyiben a szülő […] nem tesz nyilatkozatot" ('insofar as the parent does not issue a statement'), "[h]a […] e határozat nem válik véglegessé" ('if the present resolution does not become definitive');

– reference to laws, rules, and agreements, e.g. "gazdasági jelentések alapján" ('in accordance with the economic reports'), "nyilvántartása szerint" ('according to the […] register'), "aki […] szándékosan figyelmen kívül hagyja […], szabálysértést követ el" ('who deliberately disregards it […], will be in contravention of the law'), "számú szerződésben" ('in contract no.');

– verbs and pronouns in the singular urging a person to do an action, e.g. "kötelezem" ('I oblige you'), "összegű adót állapítok meg" (I levy a tax of'), "[k]érem Önt, hogy ezeket a lépéseket minél hamarabb tegye meg" ('I am asking you to take these steps as soon as possible'), "kérem visszaigazolni" ('please confirm'), "[b]ízom benne" ('I trust');

– verbs in the indicative mood but in their objective conjugation forms, prompting the addressee to act in a particular way, to comply with terms and recommendations, insinuating a certain degree of threat and without providing an alternative for action, e.g. "[t]ájékoztatjuk" ('we inform you'), "felhívjuk figyelmét" ('please note'), "[f]elszólítjuk" ('we call on'), "kérjük" ('we ask you'), "[n]yomatékosan kérem" ('I solicit'), "kérem, javítsák ki" ('please correct it');

– adverbs of time and adverbial clauses setting a strict deadline, e.g. "mihamarabb" ('as soon as possible'), "nyolc napon belül" ('within eight days'), "amíg nem késő" ('until it is late'), "még csütörtökön is" ('even on Thursday');

– emotional involvement, e.g. "[a]ggodalmam […] az is fokozza" ('it also worries me'), "mélységesen felháborított" ('I feel outraged at'), "csak nekem okoznak gondot" ('it is only for me a cause of concern');

– characteristics of oral communication (in informal letters), e.g. "[e]legem van ebből az összevisszaságból" ('I'm fed up with all this chaos'), "[n]ekem az egészségem mindennél többet ér" ('my health is more important than anything else'), "itt emberek, nem robotok dolgoznak" ('there are people working here, not robots'), "[p]ardon, hogy kiabálok" ('sorry for shouting').

4. Contrastive analysis and discussion

The section below hinges upon the key findings of the descriptive analysis and throws light on both the convergent and divergent facets of verbal aggressiveness within the analysed business letters.

By and large, the broad spectrum of linguistic examples detected in all three languages underscores the fact that verbal aggressiveness clearly seeps into the business discourse. It emerges in numerous linguistic formulations to stress an urgency, prompt an immediate action, place constraints and conditions on the recipient, invoke the law and other regulations, or call attention to terms and agreements. For these multiple purposes, the studied languages make use of relatively similar morphological and syntactic structures, namely modal verbs or verbs expressing obligation, necessity, and impossibility ("it is impossible", "have to be checked", "they will need to continue working", "that needs to happen", "Herr X. kann […] den Mangel nicht abstellen" ['Mr X. cannot [...] rectify the fault'], "[e]s kann nicht sein" ['it cannot be'], "számlájára kell fizetni" ['it has to be paid into […] the account']), time adverbials ("nicht länger" ['no longer'], "spätestens" ['not later than'], "mihamarabb" ['as soon as possible']), conditional and result clauses ("[i]f you really want to keep the other distributors, we will not be able to propose", "[s]ollten Sie die Kaution einbehalten, werde ich" ['should you retain the deposit, I will'], "[h]a a tartozás[…] meghaladja, […] kezdeményezheti" ['if the dues exceed […], you can initiate'], "[a]mennyiben a szülő […] a […] bizottság eljárásával nem ért egyet," ['insofar as the parent does not agree with […] the procedure of the board']).

Linguistically viewed, verbal aggressiveness plays on emotions mainly obliquely. On the one hand, as the case of the German business letters indicates, aggressive communicators resort to passive constructions for an impersonal and detached style. On the other hand, personal pronouns in the singular are used with the aim not only to reinforce views and arguments but also to give voice to more powerful messages. The same trend can be witnessed within the letters written in Hungarian, where the objective tone can shift to a more personal and thus stronger one, through more direct ways to address a problem or situation. These overlaps between tones are determined by the intentions of the sender, as gaining advantages and the focus on own interests are of paramount importance for the writer of the letters. Likewise, in all studied languages, the usage of the verbs in the first-person singular places a heavy emphasis on the core information to be transmitted to the recipient (e.g. "I am really confused", "I did not say", "I'd like to understand", "[i]ch werde nicht länger auf eine Nachricht [...] warten" ['I will no longer wait for an answer'], "összegű adót állapítok meg" [I levy a tax of']).

Additionally, the appeal to emotions comes to the fore through oral elements of communication. In spite of being written documents, the surveyed texts reveal more expressive outbursts of reactions in line with more personal remarks and comments (e.g. “[p]ut yourself in our position”, “Sie haben vielleicht Nerven!” [‘you’ve got some nerves’], “[e]legem van ebből az összevisszaságból” [‘I’m fed up with all this chaos’]).

In regard to the divergent aspects, it can be noted that our contrastive study on English, German, and Hungarian business letters does not yield any significant differences. In fact, the only dissimilar features are owed to the particular linguistic repertoire of each language, i.e. each of the three languages has some specific linguistic tools for the expression of aggressiveness. For instance, the English language employs fronting and the emphatic “do” as a means of emphasis. For the same effect, German letters rely on fronting and inversion. In Hungarian, the verbs in the objective conjugation forms impose reasons or further action.

5. Conclusions

As previous studies on business correspondence have failed to assess the linguistic manifestations of aggressiveness, our study proposes to unveil those morphological, syntactic, and semantic structures that express it. Consequently, in a descriptive and contrastive analysis, we have investigated authentic business letters in three languages, in English, German, and Hungarian, so as to draw up a list of linguistic markers meant to elucidate the particularities, indicate the correlations, and highlight the differences.

Based on the observed data, we can infer that verbal aggressiveness is externalized in an abundance of linguistic patterns. In all three languages, it becomes primarily visible through verbs and modal verbs of obligation, necessity, and impossibility, through verbs in the first-person singular, conditional and result clauses, through time adverbials. Next to it, hostility appears in other morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic patterns such as fronting, inversion, and orality. More precisely, fronting and the emphatic “do” in English, fronting and inversion in German, and the objective conjugation form in Hungarian account for the linguistic expression of aggressiveness. Otherwise, as a strong negative feeling, aggressiveness can be strategically insinuated, so it remains unobserved beneath the surface.

All in all, our results underline the fact that special attention should be attached to the study of verbal aggressiveness in the context of business correspondence because of its great potential both to mould and to enrich the business discourse.

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Nomen Est Omen Socialis

Designation as Means of Stereotyping

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Abstract. Functioning in media discourse as reference points for shaping people's worldview, sociocultural stereotypes are considered cognitive-linguistic phenomena, formed in the process of evaluative categorization. A lexical item that represents a sociocultural stereotype in media discourse is determined in the study as a nomen of a stereotype. The aim of the paper is to outline strategies of nomen formation that are found in American media discourse. Nomina of stereotypes are formed by phonetic, morphologic, and semantic means. As phonetic means, onomatopoeia creates a nomen on the basis of a sound representation of a stereotyped group. Morphological nomina are conditioned by available in the language through word formation means such as suffixation, compounding, blending, and acronymization. Semantically motivated nomina of sociocultural stereotypes are formed according to logical, allusive, and figurative strategies. Logical strategy is based on the unbiased perception of a social group, regardless of its emotional and evaluative perception. Transference of a well-known name of a figure or an event to a sociocultural stereotype determines allusive strategy. Figurative strategy lies in the sensory portrayal of stereotypes, which takes place according to metaphorical, metonymic, and eponymous patterns. The results of the research can be applied in lexical discourse analysis, media linguistics, and cognitive semantics studies.

Keywords: sociocultural stereotype, media stereotyping, designation strategies, designation patterns

1. Introduction

In the era of widespread digital technologies, media has become a powerful tool shaping people's worldview by means of sociocultural stereotypes. A broadcast platform for interactions in all their diversity (O'Keeffe 2011), media discourse has become a verbal-audio-visual reality (Potapenko 2021) in which sociocultural stereotypes perform the roles of symbolic objects. The most efficient way to form and preserve stereotypes is language; therefore, linguistic means of representing stereotypes deserve to be thoroughly studied. This imperative conditioned the aim to derive patterns of lexical representation of sociocultural stereotypes. The study is part of a major research devoted to a cognitive-linguistic aspect of media stereotyping and the evolution of sociocultural stereotypes in American media discourse.

A century ago, the term "stereotype" was introduced into social sciences by American political scientist and journalist Walter Lippmann (LaViolette–Silvert 1951: 257). Originally, it was used as a printing term denoting a solid plate for making copies (Skeat 1980: 518), which was designed by French printer F. Didot in 1798 to speed up the typing process (Kubler 1941: 23). A related term, "stereotypy", was introduced into psychiatry in 1889 to denote a repetition of the same, typically purposeless movement, gesture, posture, vocal sounds, or utterances (Merriam-Webster). The original meaning of stability and immutability of the Greek word *στερεος* (Liddell–Scott 1853: 1382) was preserved in the term "stereotype", which is used in the humanities that study the social phenomenon from different angles. Although the stability of stereotypes is greatly overestimated (Yzerbyt Corneille 2005: 181), their linguistic embodiment remains as a marker of a certain historical and cultural period in the language for quite a long time (Lyubymova 2020).

In his book *Public Opinion*, Walter Lippmann outlined essential aspects of stereotypes. They have emotional ("stereotypes are highly charged with feelings" (Lippmann 1997: 64)), mental ("They are the pictures inside the heads… pictures which are acted upon by groups of people" (Lippmann 1997: 7)), and ideological value ("the stereotype… censors out much that needs to be taken into account" (Lippmann 1997: 74)). Nowadays, stereotypes are recognized as identification patterns with strong affective attitudinal components (Brewer–Pierce 2005, Fiske 2017, Fiske et al. 2021) that assume membership within a certain group (Fiske 1998, Tajfel 1969). They appear as a result of detecting similarities and distinctions with already established categories (Ashmore–Del Boca 2015, Crisp et al. 2022, Quasthoff 1978). In American culture, stereotypes of social groups are most often formed in accordance with "the dominant stereotype: white, young, employed, heterosexual, conventionally attractive" (Fiske 2005: 159).

Stereotype formation is the process of evaluative categorization that depends entirely on the perspective, which is "a personal point of view", or "vantage" (Hill–MacLaury 1995: 279) or "a way of seeing" (MacLaury 1997: 536) of a social group. "When people categorize, they are active agents inseparable from the viewpoints they so construct and name" (MacLaury 1995: 269). By distinguishing a group's salient features and estimating them from a certain perspective, the relationship between the image of the group and its designation is established. "The viewer names his vantages rather than naming the category as disengaged from himself, and he thinks of the category in that engaged manner" (MacLaury 2007: 142).

Thus, a speaker names not the category itself but their idea of a category. That is why the process of designation of sociocultural stereotypes is seen as entirely subjective and multiple in results.

It has been experimentally proven that linguistic designation eventually becomes related to the content of the stereotype (Maass et al. 2014). Therefore, the name of a sociocultural stereotype, functioning as its representative in media discourse, produces semantic and cognitive associations connected with the group. Instantiated in linguistic signs, the meaning of a sociocultural stereotype is admittedly studied through means of its designation.

2. The approach and methods of study

"Absence of absolute truth does not limit what we can learn in a scientific approach (…) we are faced with a particular path in our quest…" (Dane 2017: 36), which in this study is directed to detect regularities of linguistic coding of sociocultural stereotypes in American media discourse. The "path in our quest" is a cognitive linguistic approach, which is determined as a usage-based view of language phenomena that are conditioned by general abilities such as perception, attention, memory, categorization, and abstraction (Dąbrovska–Divjak 2019). The methodology involves studying linguistic devices and strategies as a way of thinking determined by cultural experience (Talmy 2007). The study of stereotypes in a cognitive-linguistic perspective is aimed at the description of linguistically fixed categories of a social world and the mechanisms of its evaluation. The analysis considers extralinguistic information about cultural traditions and the historical background of stereotype formation.

The research methodology rests on the premise that stereotypes are results of sociocultural reality interpretation that takes place within the scope of cognitive models by means of linguistic signs (Bartmiński 2017, Burgers–Beukeboom 2020, Lawton 2016, Ross 2019). Stereotypes are manifested on different levels of the language. On the level of discourse, stereotypes evince their presence in communicative style (Furkó 2013), genre choice (Lyubymova 2021), and visual images (Romera 2015). Stereotypes are instantiated by rhetorical and stylistic devices (van Dijk 1996), pragmatic predispositions, and attitudes (Lawton 2016, Lyubymova 2020). They become evident on the syntactic level of the language in propositional structures that represent subjective views on descriptive and evaluative features of social groups (Bartmiński 1997, Quasthoff 1978). On the lexico-semantic level, stereotypes are represented by lexical items that codify and interpret categories of a social world (Bartmiński 1997, 2017; Coulmas 1981). Connotations of a lexical item make a stereotype prominent as a "social meaning" in communicative context (Coulmas 1981: 14), as their meaning is created by speakers that are engaged in social interaction (Du Bois 2014). Designation of sociocultural stereotypes is closely connected with word-forming motivation, which reflects the causal connection between the formation of categories of the social world and cultural experience, values and norms of the society.

The research design is made up of a several-step analysis of the language material, retrieved from different sources of web-based digital media. I distinguish two types of media discourse on the basis of prevalence of verbal code in stereotyping: informative and representative. Quality periodicals, popular magazines and blogs constitute informative media discourse, in which stereotypes are propagated mainly by verbal means. This type is characterized by emotional intensity, instructiveness, and fast response to significant changes in public opinion that influence stereotyping. Representative media discourse that comprises films, commercials, and memes is conditioned by non-verbal signs, which guide the pragmatic interpretation of stereotypes and create new meanings of them.

The extraction of lexical items that express sociocultural stereotypes is carried out by the method of media monitoring (Graffigna–Riva 2015), which involves the observation of language material and its fixation for further processing. As the method used in communication studies and adopted for the analysis of verbalized stereotypes, media monitoring is restricted to the language (in this case, English), the country domain relevant for the study (the USA), and a given period of time (from the end of the 19th century to the present).

The discursive indicators of verbalized stereotypes are semantic and grammatical features of generalizing information about social groups: the plural form, e.g. "Karens" (Romano 2020), or an indefinite article, e.g. "a WASP" (Mann 2016); compatibility with adjectives, e.g. "the typical yuppie" (Hendrick 1987), "a genuine flapper" (Time 1979), or quantifiers that indicate typicality of a social group, e.g. "practically all hippies" (Browning 1969), "most rednecks" (Englade 1976); evaluative predicates, e.g. "White Trash is an angry, lazy, dirty… sunburned, stupid racist" (Donnella 2018). The messages detected in the first step of the study are carefully analysed according to their rhetoric and linguistic features in order to reveal the key lexical items that represent sociocultural stereotypes in media discourse.

The fundamental step of the study is cognitive analysis (Croft–Cruse 2004, Góralczyk–Paszenda 2020, Potapenko–Shcherbak 2020, Syzonov 2015, Talmy 2007), which is a procedure largely based on introspection (Talmy 2007) that focuses on contextually construed meaning (Croft–Cruse 2004: 97) and motivation, concealed behind linguistic structure. The analysis combines various kinds of techniques that involve knowledge of the concepts of a social world and their impact on designation.

First, the lexical items are interpreted in isolation of the domain of meaning and within the domain of surface expression (Talmy 2000: 21). The next step is the consideration of lexical items from the perspective of conceptual metonymy and metaphor (Lakoff–Johnson 1980, Radden–Kövecses 1999, Turner–Fauconnier 1995). In the course of analysis, it has been revealed that conceptual metaphor, which "is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another", and metonymy, which "allows us to use one entity to stand for another" (Lakoff–Johnson 1980: 36–37), produce the patterns of designation of sociocultural stereotypes. Conceptual metaphors are determined by national culture and human experience, which is a major force in shaping metaphors, while conceptual metonymies correspond to various kinds of physiological, behavioural, and expressive reactions (Kövecses 2010: 202–204). Relying on pragmatic reasoning, metaphorical, metonymic, and eponymous patterns related to them provide an insight into the mechanisms of the designation of sociocultural stereotypes.

3. Designation as means of stereotyping in media discourse

Stereotyping is the process of formation; anchoring and propagating by language means simplified, emotionally perceived and evaluated images of social groups in media discourse (Lyubymova 2022). On the stage of their formation, the deep processes aimed at the categorization of a social world are manifested externally in linguistic forms. A sociocultural stereotype, embodied in a lexical item, i.e. a word or a word combination, is defined as a nomen (from Latin "name"), e.g. "Karen", "Trophy husband", "WASP". A nomen of a sociocultural stereotype (hereafter NS) is a kind of anthroponym used to designate a social group or a representative of a group, estimated from the perspective of compliance with social standards and cultural experiences. NS is a specific sign that correlates not with intrinsic qualities of people but with a conventional opinion of them, which is very often created and/or fortified in media discourse. As designation of sociocultural stereotypes depends on a perspective from which a social group is considered, NS can be multiple and versatile in their pragmatic meaning. In certain periods, NS could become extremely popular. Circulation of NS as "vogue words" (Crystal 2003: 179) in media discourse conditions their integration into the existing vocabulary.

3.1. Morphological and phonetic stereotype designation

As a sign of a social category, expressed by a word or fixed collocations that "behave like single words" (Wulff 2012: 291) and display idiosyncratic syntactic combinations (Kay–Sag 2014: 4), NS represent stereotypes in media discourse. Though pairing of form and meaning is not separable, for the purposes of analysis, NS are divided into phonetically, morphologically, and semantically motivated types. Regarding the number of constituents, NS are divided into mono-constituent and binary representatives of stereotypes. Mono-constituent NS are single words, mostly nouns, which is explained by their semantic function to identify a category of people.

Onomatopoeic, i.e. phonetically motivated, mono-constituent NS appear in direct relations between acoustic features ascribed to a social group and its image. E.g. distorted pronunciation of the phrase "I do not speak English", which sounded like "No speaka de English" or "No spigotty English" (Sun 1910), resulted in the appearance of the onomatopoeic mono-constituent NS *spic* (*spick*) (Dalzell 2018: 741) that conveys the inability of a social group of Latin American origin to speak English properly. Although the origin of the word *spic* is hypothetical, the term is usually described as going back to the beginning of the 20th century, when journalists of *Saturday Evening Post* and *Scribner's Magazine* mentioned a word used by white troopers at Fort Bliss in reference to Mexican workers at the construction of the Panama Canal (Vidal 2015).

Another example of onomatopoeic mono-constituent NS is "chink" (The Adams Sentinel 1827), which was fixed in American dictionaries in 1878 (Dalzell–Victor 2013: 451). In the 20th century, "chinki-chonks" and "ching-chong" as NS of Asian Americans appeared: "'ching chong' hurled as an insult at Asian folks in the U.S. stretches back all the way to the 19th century, where it shows up in children's playground taunts" (Chow 2014). Motivated by the imitation of the sound of the Chinese language, onomatopoeic designations of Asian Americans convey their alien character for English-speaking Americans. Later, NS "chinkie" and "chinky" (Dalzell–Victor 2013: 451) were morphologically derived from the word *chink* with the diminutive suffixes -ie and -y to express derogation of the sociocultural group. The process of stereotyping on the ground of linguistic features of social groups continues in American media discourse. The latest example of onomatopoeic derogatory designation of Asian Americans is the use of "ching-chong ding-dong" by Stephen Colbert in his TV show in 2014: "Colbert stepped into the fray by declaring (…) he was launching the 'Ching-Chong Ding-Dong' Foundation for Sensitivity to Orientals or Whatever" (Yang 2014).

The process of morphological derivation is constrained by the available language tools and patterns such as suffixation (e.g. greaser, hipster), compounding (e.g. tacobender, bean-eater), blending (e.g. wigger), and acronyms (e.g. *WASP*, yuppie).

The meaning of a mono-constituent NS derived by suffixation fully depends on the meaning of the base word to which a suffix is added. Usually it is -er, which indicates the person or thing belonging to or associated with a specified action. E.g. the noun "greaser" appeared in the 19th century for designating Mexican drovers, considered coarse, brute, and greasy: "The greaser is the lowest-class Mexican" (Sun 1910). Since the 50s, the term with the same pejorative connotation reappeared in language use as the NS of a subcultural group of Latin American youngsters. Based on the visual characteristics of car mechanics who pomaded their hair, the word implied a low social status: “The loud motorbikes, the short, black leather flight jackets, the jeans and white t-shirts all became the symbol style for anyone called a ‘greaser’” (Retrowaste 2014). The parties, pilferage, motorcycle races, and rock-n-roll music of Greasers scared conventional older generations and favoured the fixation of its meaning as “a poor and brutal young man” (Dalzell 2018: 357).

A suffixed mono-constituent NS, “hipster” defines a sociocultural stereotype of a middle-class city dweller who follows the latest trends and fashions. “The aristocrat of the Beat generation is the hipster, who differs from others of his generation by virtue of his greater insight into his problems and by his extreme behaviour” (Masters 1958). The word “hipster” originates from the base “hip” or its doublet “hep”, which means experience and ingenuity in the latest trends of music, fashion, and language (Dalzell 1996: 57). The word “hip” was recorded in American dictionaries in 1902 with the meaning of “knowing, understanding” and in 1944 as “in style, fashionable, admired” (Dalzell–Victor 2013: 1147). The suffix -er establishes the association with a quality of being aware, informed, and sophisticated. This meaning is preserved in the word “hipster”.

Compounding in forming NS is usually accompanied by other morphological means, e.g. “tacobender”, which is an endocentric verbal compound (*taco* + *bend-er*) that shows the function of a person to prepare tacos – a traditional Latin American dish of rolled-up corn cakes filled with various mixtures. NS “tacobender” and other morphologically derived NS indicate an eating habit that is associated with a social group of Latin American origin: “food-based ethnic slurs still in circulation: beaner, pepper belly, taco bender” (Arellano 2012). Though traditional restaurants are very popular around the world, people are easily stereotyped by the way they eat.

Compounding is a means of conventionalization of NS that were semantically derived. E.g. the metonymic blending “hillbilly” defines a social group of country dwellers who are considered uneducated and rude because they come from the countryside. Associated originally with the remote regions of the Appalachians, which is reflected in part of the compound: “hill”, and the diminutive form “Billy” of the widespread, simple, and ordinary name “William”, it has become a nomen of sociocultural stereotype: “The hillbilly stereotype is prevalent in American pop culture. Stereotyped as poor, uneducated, unclean and white” (Adams 2021).

Such NS as “redneck” can be classified as a compound because of its one-word spelling, but it has been originated from a binary lexical collocation: red neck – “a redneck is that who lives in trailers, drinks beer, isn’t the brightest of people, wears overalls un-ironically, and can usually be found in rural areas” (Wilson 2020). Occurring in similar semantic and pragmatic contexts of media discourse, NS “redneck” and “hillbilly” are synonymic designations of working-class white Americans from the countryside.

A kind of compounding, resulting from the junction of parts of words that merged to produce a new meaning is blending. E.g. “whigger” designates a sociocultural stereotype of a white man, who, acquiring certain characteristics inherent in black Americans, violates society’s expectations of white people’s behaviour: “hip-hop’s transformative powers, going so far as to embrace the status of the lowly ‘wigger’, a pejorative term popularized in the early 1990s to describe white kids who steep themselves in black culture” (Hsu 2009). Evaluative stance is implied in the apocopic word “nigger”, which is known as a highly offensive slur in American linguistic culture.

Acronymized NS is another type of compounding that merges words together to produce semantic and phonetic unity from the initial letters of words to designate a sociocultural stereotype, e.g. “WASP”: “The hallmarks of the WASP – besides being white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant – are good taste and good manners” (Mann 2016). NS “WASP” arises from the first letters of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant. The cumbersome phrase was converted into the acronym “WASP” by E. D. Baltzell in his book *The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy and Caste in America* published in 1964 (Baltzell 1964). Conventionalized in media discourse, this acronym became the NS of an influential and powerful group of white Americans whose ancestors came from England: “unofficial but nonetheless genuine ruling class old WASP” (Epstein 2013).

Formed in the 1980s, the NS “yuppie” indicates a stereotype of a social group of well-paid young middle-class managers who live a luxurious lifestyle: “Young urban professionals are known and want to be known by what they do, eat, wear and say” (Stugh 1984). The NS “yuppie” is the result of adding the suffix -ie to an acronymized phrase, “a young upwardly mobile professional: “We can’t bring back the old yuppie, but perhaps we can adapt the stereotype into something so much more realistic to today’s world” (5OClockShado 2017). The pattern proved to be productive as new words to designate other social groups appeared in the 1990s, e.g. “buppie” (black upwardly mobile professional) and “choppy” (Chinese upwardly mobile professional) (Dalzell–Victor 2013: 2468).

3.2. Designation strategies

Binary NS are formed in compliance with semantic properties of their constituents. E.g. expressed by a gerundial phrase, the NS “acting white” indicates a sociocultural stereotype of Afro-Americans whose mode of life and values resemble that of successful white Americans: “African Americans who say they were good students in school accused of acting white” (Desmond-Harris 2017). Conveying the ongoing behaviour of a social group, the collocation “acting white" acquires in media discourse the evaluative connotation of condemnation of those who seem to betray African-American community values.

In spite of their non-predictable, creative character, NS do not appear ad hoc for "perception is not innocent; it is an exercise of our concepts" (Putnam 1988: 20). Stereotyping is an activity that is fulfilled according to cultural schemes, which are defined as designation strategies. Considering regularities of NS formation, I distinguish logical, allusive, and figurative strategies.

Focusing on social experience and knowledge determines the logical strategy of designation, which is based on conveying physical properties and features of social groups regardless of their emotional and evaluative perception. NS that designate people on ethnic grounds, e.g. "American Indian", "Asian American", etc., or their affiliation to a particular subculture, e.g. "biker", "emo", etc., are formed according to this strategy. E.g. the NS "Valley Girl" refers to a fashionable and affluent teenage group of girls who were born and lived in the 1980s in the San Fernando Valley, where the biggest part of Los Angeles is located: "elementary and junior high school children and Valley mothers are better examples of the Valley Girl stereotype" (*Los Angeles Times* 1983). The designation was motivated by the place of residence, which is associated with the frivolity and conspicuous consumption of Hollywood. In media discourse, the NS "Valley Girl" has acquired the connotation of extravagance, flippancy, and narrow-mindedness through the interpretation and evaluation of the social and linguistic behaviour of the girls: "the language and life style of the clothes-crazy upper-middle-class girls who swoop through the shopping malls of California's San Fernando Valley" (Alexander 1982).

Allusive strategy directs reflection by pragmatic presuppositions connected with a name of a noted figure, a well-known event or situation. Designation of a sociocultural stereotype is the result of the transference of an evaluative meaning of the name to a social group. The cognitive mechanism of allusion is close to that of conceptual metaphor, as it creates meaning that unfolds simultaneously in the domain of reference and target. E.g. the Biblical name Jezebel was applied to a sociocultural group of African-American women on the ground of negative evaluation of behaviour and appearance associated with the impudence and shamelessness of Jezebel, a Phoenician princess and the wife of King Ahab: "Jezebel is a Biblical queen whose name has become shorthand for a woman who is manipulative, seductive and wicked" (Clayson–Raphelson 2021). The name Jezebel has acquired a negative connotation of disapproval because of the princess's fierce energy directed to destroy those who opposed her. She organized orgies in the name of Baal and used cosmetics – her actions were especially condemned by Puritans as a sign of vanity and debauchery. Associated with her sexual appearance, vitality, and evil actions, the name Jezebel became the NS of a social group of young, boldly dressed African-American women: "a Jezebel signifies that she's a bad, untrustworthy woman who is misusing her power" (Clayson–Raphelson 2021).

Most often binary NS are formed according to figurative strategy by conceptual metaphors, metonymies, conceptual blends, and eponyms. Metaphorically created NS are motivated by the visual or sensitive impressions of a social group, the image of which arises in the interaction of target and source domains, e.g. "flapper": "The flapper has charm, good looks, good clothes, intellect and a healthy point of view" (Hall 1922). The NS "flapper" appeared on the ground of perception of a social group of daring girls of the 1920s as inexperienced fledglings (Lyubymova 2017). The immaturity and weakness of fledglings convey the instability of young girls' morals, attributed to the social group (Lyubymova 2020).

Metaphorical blending produces junctions of parts from different input spaces, which correspond to prominent features of a social group, e.g. "trophy wife": "[The magazine] *Fortune* coined the term 'trophy wife' in 1989; the phrase was used to describe the young, beautiful and accomplished second-wives of powerful men" (Coplan 2015). The NS "trophy wife" is a result of the conceptual integration of two sources: a specific thing – a "trophy", which is a prize received by the winner for the achievement in competitions or hunt, and a "wife" – a married woman considered in relation to her husband. Projected into the image of a social group, the parts of input spaces convey a sociocultural stereotype of women who are chosen to marry successful and wealthy men of a high social status. The metaphor focuses on the properties of social categories that are perceived inconsistent with the general principles of culture (Fiske 2005: 129).

Metonymic NS arise on the basis of conceptual metonymy, which establishes the contiguity of image of a social group and its designation. Motivated by our experience, metonymy usually contains physical and causal associations. E.g. a sign of a reddened neck of a peasant who has worked in the field for a long time or a red bandana of striking miners motivated the designation of lower-class white Americans from the countryside: "probably originated in the cotton fields, where (…) one's neck would get sunburned" (*Imperial Beach Star News* 1976). The NS "redneck" is formed in metonymic association of the part and the whole, focusing on the prominent visual feature of a social group.

Eponymous NS appears as a result of the transition of a proper name to a social group, e.g. "Karen" or "Trixie": "Despite slight differences, there are unifying Trixie characteristics" (Usher 2004). Eponymization establishes a relation between the characteristics of a person who bears the name and the image of a social group. Although the cognitive mechanism of eponymization is very close to that of allusion, it does not establish reference with a well-known personality. It is rather "a special case of social cooperation in determination of reference" (Putnam 1975: 166), conditioned by a certain situational context. E.g. a personal name, "Karen", has been used to designate white middle-class fastidious women, whose appearance and behaviour are assumed to be inherent in this social group: “A ‘Karen’ now roams restaurants and stores, often without a mask during this coronavirus era, spewing venom and calling the authorities to tattle, usually on people of color and often putting them in dangerous situations” (Goldblatt 2020). The feminine name Karen enjoyed popularity in the USA in the second part of the 20th century (Goldblatt 2020), so many of those who bear now the name are middle-aged women who prefer conventional style in clothes and hairdo – the outward features of the social category. The association with a defiant and aggressive behaviour of this kind of women who disrespect people yielded the pejorative meaning of the NS “Karen.” Gaining popularity in memes, the NS “Karen” is used in the formation of new words such as “Karenish”, e.g. “very Karenish lack of self-awareness” (Romano 2020), or “Karening”, e.g. “Karening from all genders were abruptly everywhere” (Romano 2020).

4. Conclusions

The emergence of sociocultural stereotypes in media discourse is based on the process of evaluative categorization, the result of which is delivered by a word or a phrase, termed in the study as “a nomen of a sociocultural stereotype”. A nomen represents socially conventional and culturally determined information about stereotypes in a word or binary-constituent lexical form.

The analysis of the linguistic material gathered from different sources of American media discourse resulted in distinguishing morphological, phonetic, and semantic motivation of nomen formation, which are presented in the following chart (*Chart 1*).

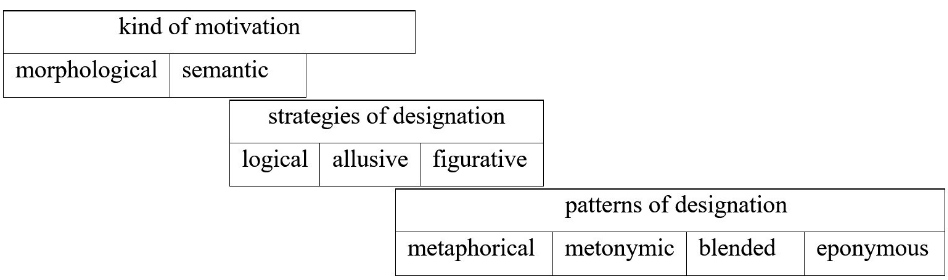

Chart 1. *Morphological, phonetic, and semantic motivation of nomen formation*

Onomatopoeic nomina appear in the direct relation between acoustic features ascribed to a social group and its image. Morphological motivation includes suffixation, compounding, blending, and acronymization, which reorganize meaning existing in the language lexical units. Unlike onomatopoeic ones, most morphologically derived nomina of stereotypes acquire their evaluative connotations in media discourse. Establishing designation strategies and patterns give an insight into the mechanisms of stereotyping of social groups in media discourse by means of language.

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Functional Transposition of *ABOUT* in the 9th–21st Centuries

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Abstract. The paper exemplifies a unique attempt to trace the evolution of the preposition and the adverb *ABOUT* as initial and transposed categories. The study focuses on the development of both interwoven categories since 850 and up to the early 21st century and covers 16 time spans. The paper proves that despite being registered during 850–950 as the representative of both categories, *ABOUT* initially represented the category of preposition. The research showcases that since its functional transposition in Old English, the category of the adverb *ABOUT* has been undergoing a continuous decrease, which is significantly enhanced in the second half of Late Modern English and reaches its peak in the early 21st century. The reasons for the growth of the preposition *ABOUT* lie not in the phenomenon of transposition but in the emergence of a new function: 'in reference to', which developed in Early Modern English and provided the impetus for a further increase of the preposition *ABOUT*.

Keywords: prepositions, adverbs, functional transposition, Old English, Middle English

Introduction

The functional transposition of the lexical unit *ABOUT* and the subsequent overlapping between the categories of the preposition and the adverb are contingent on its morphological structure, which combines the Old English prepositions *A (in/on/at)*, *BE (near to)* and the adverb *UTAN (out, outside)*. Such morphological structure predetermines the formation of wide semantics of a newly coined lexical unit or the transformed unit. While analysing overlapping between the preposition and the adverb, it has been identified that the number of definitions, which fix the meanings of *ABOUT*, is higher for the category of the adverb than for the preposition – 11 and 6 respectively. The correlation between the fully institutionalized meanings is quite the opposite, as 83% of the definitions are fully institutionalized for the preposition, whereas it is 45% for the adverb. These figures showcase higher versatility of the adverb concerning the represented meanings though the majority of them are not fully institutionalized, i.e. they are undergoing the process of either institutionalization or deinstitutionalization. A significant fact is that fully institutionalized meanings, which are shared by the prepositions and the adverbs, are of the same locative nature, can be represented directly or indirectly, and are additionally characterized by close ties with temporality and attributiveness. Therefore, I hypothesise that in the case of *ABOUT*, functional transposition starts on the basis of the seme of locality, and the transposed category has been shifting other meanings from the initial category or developing new meanings itself. The aim of the paper is to study the functional transposition of *ABOUT* by deducing its initial and transposed categories and establishing ties between them by tracing back the core meanings of each category and comparing the results of the diachronic corpus analysis.

Previous studies

The evolution of any language is a continuous dialectical battle and accord of two tendencies – striving of the system for stability and sustainability and constant response to the impact of intra- and extralinguistic stimuli. Modification and development of the language commence not only as a result of its enriching with new lexical units or deprivation of the old ones but also by means of functional, formal, and semantic variations of the existing units. Thus, at any synchronous stage of any language, it is possible to register various elements of transient nature, lexical units whose linguistic status is dubious and obscure, phenomena that have not acquired regular and systematic character or have not been unequivocally defined in linguistics.

One of such ambiguous universals is transposition (Bloch-Trojnar 2013, Hacken 2015), which is observed in different languages (Braasch 2008, Sapir 1921, Tesniere 1959) and overlaps with such processes as conversion (Balteiro 2007, Valera 2017), zero derivation (Lipka 1990, Marchand 1960), transitivity (Aldai–Wichmann 2018, Komarek 1999), recategorization (Dubinsky–Williams 1995, Vea 2015), transcategorization/transcategoriality (Ježek–Ramat 2009, Robert 2016), and transfer (Tesniere 1959). The main thing in common with these processes is their word formation nature, which leads to the emergence of new lexical units with identical or changed (by affixation) forms, which actualize the syntactic and semantic functions of a transposed class of words. Following these approaches, transposition is interpreted as grammatical and morphological, syntactic and semantic changes of a lexical unit, which lead to the formation of a new lexical unit (Žele 2017: 245) and are applied to the processes between open word classes. Nevertheless, in English, there are processes which are not subjects to the aforesaid approaches because they involve lexical units which represent open and/or closed word classes, i.e. notional and/or functional parts of speech (PoS); secondly, these lexical units do not obtain any morphological or syntactic markers either in the process of their transposition or as a result of it; thirdly, they do not form new lexical units (Kovbasko 2022a, b). Functional transposition shifts lexical units from one word class into another in order to actualize functions inherent in the transposed class, while the lexical unit itself remains within its initial class. Functional transposition is defined as a cognitively and communicatively preconditioned diachronic and synchronic process and its result, which presupposes the ability of lexical-grammatical units by means of grammaticalization and lexicalization, without morphological and/or syntactical markers, to implement functions of the transposed category, while the units themselves remain within their own initial category.

The paper is an attempt to test a hypothesis that functional transposition is an independent and unique phenomenon that does not belong to word formation processes but exists in parallel with them. The key difference between functional transposition and word formation is the shift of the morphological form of an initial lexical unit from the open class into the closed class or vice versa without a formal genesis of a new lexical unit. The additional factors to distinguish between the processes are the mechanisms of the shifts – grammaticalization or lexicalization; the absence of morphological and/or syntactic markers in the process of transposition and as a result of it; the presence of a common initial semantic category –, locality and/or temporality, and speakers' cognitive activity, which form the basis of functional transposition.

Methodology

Traditional periodization (Hogg–Denison 2006) divides English into Old English/OE, Middle English/ME, and Modern English/ModE. However, as "the historical development of a language is a continuous uninterrupted process without sudden breaks or rapid transformations" (Rastorgueva 2003: 49), it seems inadequate to study any linguistic phenomenon on the basis of such a generalized approach. Therefore, the research on functional transposition requires a meticulous analysis that is grounded on a detailed periodization of the language. The current paper traces back the evolution of functional transposition in 16 historical scopes.

1	–850	**5**	1150–1250	**9**	1500–1570	**13**	1780–1850
2	850–950	**6**	1250–1350	**10**	1570–1640	**14**	1850–1920
3	950–1050	**7**	1350–1420	**11**	1640–1710	**15**	1920–1990
4	1050–1150	**8**	1420–1500	**12**	1710–1780	**16**	1990–2020

The OE period (–850–1150) is composed of 4 scopes, each equalling 100 years; the next 4 scopes cover the ME period (1150–1500) with the time spans from 70 to 100 years; the other 8 scopes constitute ModE (1500–2020), each of which is 70 years. The ModE period is divided into Early ModE/EModE (1500–1710), Late ModE/LModE (1710–1920), and Present-Day English/PDE (1920–2020). It has been proved that the span of 70–100 years is the most preferable, as it is enough for the lexical unit to appear in the language and start its institutionalization or disappear from it. The span of 100 years, used for the sub-periods before 1350, is explained by the necessity to collect a reasonable number of manuscripts and lexical units. The spans of 70–80 years, which are applied after 1350, aim at balancing the diachronic corpus research, taking into account a constantly growing number of manuscripts and texts under analysis.

The analysis of the empirical basis of the research, viz. *The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts: Diachronic and Dialectal (HCET)*, *The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (CLMET)*, *The Corpus of Historical American English (COHA)*, and *The British National Corpus (BNC)*, made it possible to retrieve 46 examples from the OE texts, 341 examples from the ME texts, and 645 examples from the EModE texts, all of which have been manually extracted, analysed, and tagged as corresponding PoS; 42,942 examples from the LModE texts that have been automatically tagged by means of the corpus toolbox Lancsbox; 580,350 examples from PDE, the compiled statistics on which have been provided by the COHA and the BNC. The obtained data are represented in percentage correlations for each of the 16 historical scopes and are specified in tables. On the basis of the overall data, the corresponding graph, which illustrates the process of functional transposition of *ABOUT* in the English language, has been constructed.

Results and discussion

1. Diachronic semantic analysis

The preposition ABOUT

Due to its morphological structure that combines three different units, all of which representing the seme of locality, *ABOUT* started acting as a locative unit that embodied in a single entity various semantic components of its morphological constituents, viz. *A (in/on/at) + BE (near to) + UTAN (out, outside)*. From the very beginning, it potentiated *ABOUT* to embrace numerous locative relations, for instance 'around', 'on the outside', 'on every side':

(1) *Ond suǽ suǽ se here sceolde bion getrymed onbútan Hierusalem* [And so as the army should be arrayed about Jerusalem] (OED: K. Ælfred *Pastoral Care* xxi);
(2) *Þu tæcst Israhela folce gemæro abutan þone munt & cwyst* [You transfer Israel people borders about the mountain and speak] (OED: Ælfric: *Exodus* xix: line 12).

The examples showcase that since its emergence *ABOUT* has been used to designate movement, direction, and spatial arrangement. Along with the direct representation of the seme of locality, *ABOUT* is characterized by metaphorization and indirect representation of locality (see (3)) and temporality (see (4)):

(3) *Abuten us he [beelzebub] is for to blenchen*. [About us he (Beelzebub) is in order to mislead us] (OED: *Lambeth Homilies*: line 55);
(4) *Þer efter in þe Lengten þestrede þe sunhe and te dæi, abuton non tid dæies, þa men eten*. [Thereafter in the Lent eclipsed the sun and daylight, about noontime, when people were eating.] (OED: *The AS Chronicle* (Laud. MS): line 1140).

Metaphorization contributed to meaning extension, and *ABOUT* started to represent the 'relation towards something/somebody' or 'connection with something/somebody':

(5) *Hu hire stont abuten vleschliche tentaciuns, ȝif heo ham haueð* [How it stands about carnal temptations, if she has them] (OED: *Ancrene Riwle*: line 344).

By means of metaphorization, locative relations, which represented the mutual physical spatial arrangement of two or several objects/subjects, were transformed into abstract relations, which have become established and are currently dominating among other functions of *ABOUT*. Further on, only some superficial modifications have been registered within the range of the existing functions of *ABOUT* (see (6)) or the transposition of the adverb *ABOUT* into the preposition within the primarily adverbial meaning 'of a point in a scale of quantity' (see (7)):

(6) *Vor hi zyeþ briȝtliche and ine hare herten, and al abote ham*. [For they see clearly into their hearts and all about them.] (HCET: Michel, D.: *Ayenbite of Inwyt*: line 150);
(7) *How tall was she? Jul. About my stature*. (OED: Shakespeare, W.: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, iv: line 163).

As the functions implemented by both the preposition and the adverb *ABOUT* are almost identical, I presuppose that their development did not occur in parallel, within each grammatical category individually, but it is the result of functional transposition from one category into another.

The adverb ABOUT

According to *The OED*, the adverb *ABOUT* is registered around 1000 in the meaning of 'round':

(8) *Seo firmament tyrnð symle onbutan us ... & ealle ða steorran ... turniað onbutan mid hyre*. [The firmament turns perpetually about us … and all the stars … turn about with it.] (OED: Ælfric: *Manual of Astronomy*: line 10).

However, following the results of the current research, one of the first meanings of the adverb *ABOUT* was 'all round/on every side':

(9) *… ac oftrædlice he wæs mid hloþum on hi hergende, & onbutan sierwende oþ hie eft totwæmde wæron* [but frequently he was with troops on plundering, and scouting about, till they were separated] (HCET: Anonymous: Ælfred's *Orosius*: line 796).

It testifies that primarily the adverb *ABOUT* represented the seme of locality, which at that time was intrinsic to the category of preposition (see (9)). The fact that *ABOUT* was used in the language as a preposition and an adverb does not let us draw categorical conclusions even on the basis of the diachronic corpus analysis. To define the primary PoS *ABOUT* belongs to, it is feasible to carry out the comparative semantic analysis of the OE lexical units that contain the component *UTAN* in their structure, viz. *EMBUTAN*, *YMBUTAN*, *BE-UTAN*, *ONBUTAN*, and *ABUTAN*. Apart from the common element *UTAN*, they include locative prepositions: *EMB*, *YMB*, *BE*, *ON* + *BE*, and *A* + *BE* respectively. It proves that *EMBUTAN*, *YMBUTAN*, *BE-UTAN*, *ONBUTAN*, and *ABUTAN* not only comprise the seme of locality but also represent the identical categories, as they all follow the same structure: *preposition(s) (locative) + UTAN*. *ONBUTAN* and *ABUTAN* behaved both as locative prepositions and adverbs, whereas *EMBUTAN* and *BE-UTAN* were used only as locative prepositions:

(10) *Guton embútan ðæt weofod* [They poured (the blood of the calf) round the altar] (BTASD);
(11) *Ða be-útan beóþ earce bordum* [That about are the boards of the Arc] (BTASD).

YMBUTAN represented both the preposition and the adverb; however, the seme of locality was inherent exclusively to the preposition (see (12)), whereas the adverb functioned in the meaning 'alone' (see (13)):

(12) *and ymbútan ðone weall is se mǽsta díc* [and about the wall is the great dike] (BTASD);
(13) *Fýr bið ymbútan on ǽghwylcum* [Fire is about on everyone] (BTASD).

The five lexical units under analysis function as the prepositions and represent the seme of locality, and only two of them are registered as the adverbs and aimed at the implementation of locative relations. It proves that *ONBUTAN* and *ABUTAN* were primarily prepositions, which later transposed into adverb.

At first, the development of the transposed adverb *ABOUT* was grounded on the seme of locality, which formed the frame for further functional transposition:

(14) *& se cyng mid his here ferde æfter & besætt þone castel abutan mid swiðe mycele here fulle six wucan* [and the king with his army went after and beset the castle about with a large force full six weeks] (OED: *The AS Chronicle* (Laud. MS.): line 1090);
(15) *Þa bi-sæh þat wif abuten; whar þe eotend come buȝen.* [Then looked the woman about, where the giant should arrive.] (OED: *Layamon's Brut*: line 26);
(16) *Arwen fluȝen ouer wal al abuten ouer al.* [Arrows fly over wall all about over all.] (OED: *Layamon's Brut*: line 12577).

Examples 14–16 showcase the locative relations within the meanings of 'around the outside', 'all round', 'on any side', 'near', i.e. they actualize the same functions as the preposition *ABOUT* does when its complement is already mentioned in the context or is abstract.

By means of metaphorization carried out on the basis of the locative meaning 'without defining the exact direction, location' (see (17)), a new generalized meaning, 'nearly', 'approximately' appeared and was used to provide undefined information concerning the number or the temporal relations (see (18)):

(17) *And þanon wendon in Wiht-land, and þær him ferdon on buton swa swa hi sylf woldon.* [And thence went into Wight land, and there they roved on about, even as they themselves would.] (OED: *The AS Chronicle* (Laud. MS.): line 1001);

(18) *Man slóh ðær mycel wæl, abutan feower hund manna, oððe fife.* [A major force was slain there, about four hundred men, or five.] (OED: *The AS Chronicle* (Cotton MS.): para. 1055).

In example (17), *ABOUT* represents the meaning 'in a circuitous, winding or indefinite course', and in example (18) it denotes an undefined number of people. The use of the adverb *ABOUT* for denoting undefined/ambiguous notions contributed to its functioning as a constituent of phrasal verbs, where the ambiguous semantics of the unit allowed it either to be used within the frames of the existing functions or to represent metaphorical meanings that have already been institutionalized in the language.

2. Diachronic corpus analysis

ABOUT emerged in the second stage (850–950) of the OE period as a representative of the categories of the preposition (see (19)) and the adverb (see (20)):

(19) *& foron west onbutan þæt hie gedydon innan Sæferne muþan* [and went west about till they entered into the Mouth of the Severn] (HCET: Anonymous: *Chronicle MS A Early* (O2): line 1530);

(20) *& foran to þære byrig æt Wigingamere, & ymbsæton hie utan, and fuhton lange on dæg on, & namon þone ceap onbutan* [and went to the stronghold at Wigmore and besieged it, and fought it long into the day, and seized the cattle about] (HCET: Anonymous: *Chronicle MS A Early* (O2): line 1604);

Despite the fact that the complement *WEST* precedes it, *ABOUT* functions as the preposition (see (19)), which is explained by the peculiarities of the OE word order in the sentence. In example (20), the semantics of *ONBUTAN* is sufficient enough to omit the repetition of the indicated place, *WIGINGAMERE*, or to substitute it with other nouns. Another option used for omitting the complement is the introduction of the desemantized *THERE* (see (21)) that contributed to the development of the lexical units *THEREABOUT/THEREABOUTS*:

(21) *& slogon monige men æt Hocneratune, & þær onbutan* [and slew many men at Hookerton and there about] (HCET: Anonymous: *Chronicle MS A Early* (O2): line 1521);

Therefore, the preposition *ABOUT* by means of lexicalization (activating its semantic components) and grammaticalization (applying the desemantized *THERE*) was undergoing functional transposition into adverb.

The second half of the OE period is characterized by a higher frequency of *ABOUT* and a parallel growth of the preposition and the adverb:

(22) *seo gæð onbutan ðæt land ðe is gehaten Euilað* [it goes about the land that is called Havilah] (HCET: Ælfric: *The Old Testament*: line 115);

(23) *… se ne gæð næfre adune under ðissere eorðan swa swa oðre tunglan doð. Ac he went abutan hwilon up hwilon adune* [… it never goes down under the earth, as other stars do. But it goes about sometimes up, sometimes down] (HCET: Ælfric: *De Temporibus Anni*: line 551);

In sentence (23), the adverb *ABUTAN* is actually used in the function of a modern particle. If one analyses the part of the sentence "Ac he went abutan hwilon up hwilon adune", it would appear that to interpret the phrase "went abutan" correctly, it is necessary to know the exact meaning thereof. Studying the sentence in discourse, it becomes clear that *ABUTAN* is not a particle but an adverb that was transposed from the category of the preposition by means of lexicalization, due to the extension and specification of its own meaning and the presence of the antecedent:

(24) *Seo firmamentum tyrnð symle onbutan us under ðyssere eorðan & bufon* [The firmament turns perpetually about us under the earth and above] (HCET: Ælfric: *De Temporibus Anni*: line 343);

(25) *Feower & twentig tida beoð agane, þæt is an dæg & an niht, ær ðan ðe heo beo æne ymbtyrnd & ealle ða steorran þe hire on fæste sind turniað onbutan mid hire.* [Four and twenty hours have passed, that is, one day and one night, before it is once turned round and all the stars which are fixed in it turns about with it.] (HCET: Ælfric: *De Temporibus Anni*: line 346).

The use of the adverb in example (25) is explained by the presence of the antecedent *US* in "tyrnð symle onbutan us" in example (24). It means that *ABOUT* in the word group "turn about" is not an adverbial particle but an adverb, the meaning of which can be reproduced from the context. Such structures are widespread, which can be explained by the high frequency of their verbal parts, as well as their idiomatization, i.e. such constructions have undergone lexicalization. Another factor that confirms the process of lexicalization is fossilization (see (26)), when the adverb loses the ability to express certain meanings; however, being already idiomatized, they are still functioning within certain phrasal verbs:

(26) *Þei gredyly gon abowt to geyt al þat þey may* [They greedily go about to gate all that they may] (OED: *Apology for Lollard Doctrines*: line 113).

The phrase "go about" in sentence (26) is used to express 'to bestir', the meaning which had been institutionalized and came into active use, but later it has fossilized, and now is referred to as obsolete.

At the end of the OE period, the frequency of the transposed adverb *ABOUT* hovers at the same level due to a frequent use of *ABOUT* in certain constructions:

(27) *Syððan he ferde abutan swa þæt he com to Lammæssan to Searebyrig* [Afterwards, he journeyed about so that he came to Salisbury for Lammas] (HCET: Anonymous: Chronicle MS E (Late): line 309);

(28) *Her on þissum geare ferde se here abutan Defnanscire*. [Then on this year went the army about Devonshire] (HCET: Anonymous: Chronicle MS E (Early): line 130).

The lexical item *ABUTAN* in "feran abutan" functions as an adverb and a preposition, and this admittedly testifies to the absence of any preconditions for the further introduction of the term particle. Moreover, the adverb and preposition *ABOUT* are used in the sentences in which they are not connected with the verbs of motion:

(29) *& se cyng lett awestan þæt land abutan þa sæ* [and the king laid awaste the land about the sea] (HCET: Anonymous: Chronicle MS E (Late): line 271).

Over 50% of the examples, registered during this period, are the combinations of the adverb or preposition *ABUTAN* with the verbs of motion *FERAN*, *WENDAN*, and *CUMAN* or the verb *SITTAN*. It proves that the semantics of *ABOUT* was limited to a certain group of verbs that propelled its usage in combination with them. This fact stimulated the process of idiomatization of constructions where both the adverb and the preposition *ABOUT* are used, preventing the semantic expansion of *ABOUT*. The general correlation of the adverb and the preposition *ABOUT* in OE is represented in *Table 1*.

Table 1. *Correlation of the preposition and the adverb ABOUT in Old English*

PoS	**–850**	**850–950**	**950–1050**	**1050–1150**
Preposition	----	*57.1%*	*53.3%*	*53.8%*
Adverb	----	*42.9%*	*46.7%*	*46.2%*

The data in *Table 1* fail to ascertain the initial category of *ABOUT* by means of diachronic corpus analysis. Due to reconstruction of the historical semantics of *ABOUT*, it has been discovered that *ABOUT* was initially formed as a preposition. In the first half of the OE period, the correlation of the adverb and the preposition *ABOUT* was almost the same, and this showcases a high level of institutionalization of both categories. At the end of the OE period, the frequency of the adverb *ABOUT* came close to that of the preposition, owing to the use of the former in combination with the verbs of motion.

The early ME period is characterized by a reduction of constructions in which *ABOUT* is directly connected with the verbs of motion due to the sporadic use of the adverb *ABOUT* in them (see (30)) and the further development of temporal meanings (see (31)):

(30) *Constu bulden a bur inwið þin heorte al abute bitrumet* … [Can you build a city within your heart, all about surrounded …] (HCET: Anonymous: *Katherine*: line 271);
(31) … *þe schal abute midniht makie þe to iwakien* [… which shall wake you up about midnight] (HCET: Anonymous: *Hali Meidhad*: line 724).

During the next stage of the ME period, temporality gained a foothold, and a reduced frequency of the preposition can be noticed:

(32) *Aboute seint ambrose day ido was al þis*. [about Saint Ambrose day was done all this] (HCET: Gloucester, R.: *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*: line 726).

The reduction is also explained by the functional transposition of the preposition *ABOUT* into adverb, which takes place due to the frequent use of the combination *verb of motion* + *ABOUT* (see (33)) and the emergence of the combination *verb of perception* + *ABOUT* (see (34)):

(33) *He bitok him sir henri is sone to be is compainoun Wiþ him to wende aboute to sywe him vp & doun*. [Sir Henri betook his son to be his companion with him to walk about to scatter with him up and down] (HCET: Gloucester, R.: *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*: line 944);
(34) *Þis guode sone souȝhte wide a-boute* [This good son searched wide about] (HCET: Anonymous: *The Life of St. Edmund*: line 164).

During the previous stages, the adverb *ABOUT* was used together with the verbs of motion only when there was an antecedent in discourse. The early ME period is marked by lexicalization of the adverb *ABOUT*, i.e. the extension of its semantics and the ability to denote personal deixis, which contributed to its development and enhancement within the category of the adverb.

The extension of the semantics contributed to the frequency growth of the adverb, as well as the lexical unit *ABOUT* in general. On the other hand, various changes and shifts in genres and types of discourse are observed, and they make the specification of the storytelling, time and place of action, etc. come to the foreground. Therefore, these changes in discourse and storytelling testify to the necessity to specify both the speech and certain constructions that have previously been characterized by the abstract semantics of the adverb *ABOUT*:

(35) *For ȝif þei ben born in right mariage the serpentes gon aboute hem & don hem non harm* [For if they been born in right marriage the snakes go about them and do them no harm] (HCET: Anonymous: *Mandeville's Travels*: line 271);
(36) *Therfor the Jewis camen aboute hym, and seiden to hym* [Therefore, the Jews came about him and said to him] (HCET: Anonymous: *The New Testament* (Wycliffe): line 908).

The adverb *ABOUT* is also developing new additional functions that cannot be introduced by the preposition:

(37) *we schul be aboute to make vs clene of cotidian defautes by* [we shall be about to make us clean of daily faults by] (HCET: Anonymous: *Aelred of Rielvaux's De Institutione Inclusarum* (3): line 107).

The extension of the semantics within the categories of the adverb and preposition *ABOUT* in ME contributed to the general growth of their use in discourse. However, the need to specify the discourse details made authors use more prepositions with the noun phrase complements, which caused the reduction of the transposed adverbs, which has been clearly testified by the statistics (see *Table 2*).

Table 2. *Correlation of the preposition and the adverb ABOUT in Middle English*

PoS	1150–1250	1250–1350	1350–1420	1420–1500
Preposition	*64%*	*54.8%*	*65.9%*	*62.2%*
Adverb	*36%*	*45.2%*	*34.1%*	*37.8%*

An abrupt reduction in the use of the adverb *ABOUT* occurred at the beginning of the ME period. It happened due to the decline of the number of combination *motion verb + ABOUT*, which, in fact, contributed to the functional transposition. An increase in the use of the adverb is registered in the next stage, when the preposition *ABOUT* started being transposed into the adverb by means of new constructions in which *ABOUT* was used with verbs of perception, and this led to a stabilization between the frequencies of both categories.

The development of the function ‘in reference to’ (see (38)), which took place in the ME period, significantly directed the correlation between the adverb and the preposition in the EModE period, whereas the function ‘be ready to do smth’ (see (39)) did not become widespread, and this has caused the dissonance between the categories:

(38) *Sey þus aboute þe hors* [Say in this way about the horse] (HCET: Anonymous: *A Treatise on Horses*: line 196);
(39) *… and put vs out of the trewth of the thynge or matter, that we be aboute to talke of* [… and put us out of the truth of the thing or matter, that we be about to talk of] (HCET: Colville, G.: *Boethius*: line 148).

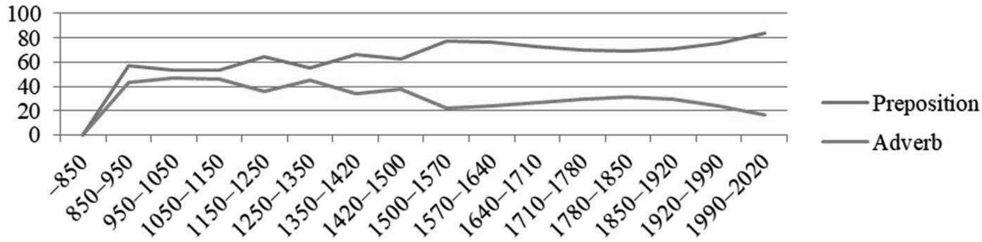
In more than one third of all examples, *ABOUT* is registered in the function ‘in reference to’, which had a significant impact on the general correlation between the adverbs and prepositions. This tendency is observed throughout the ModE period (see *Table 3*).

Table 3. *Correlation of the preposition and the adverb ABOUT in Modern English*

PoS	**1500–1570**	**1570–1640**	**1640–1710**	**1710–1780**	**1780–1850**	**1850–1920**	**1920–1990**	**1990–2020**
Preposition	*77.5%*	*76.3%*	*73.2%*	*70.2%*	*68.7%*	*70.7%*	*75.7%*	*83.7%*
Adverb	*22.5%*	*23.7%*	*26.8%*	*29.8%*	*31.3%*	*29.3%*	*24.3%*	*16.3%*

Therefore, due to the newly developed function ‘in reference to’, the frequency of the prepositions has increased by over 10% if compared with the ME period. In the second half of the ModE period, there is a slight decline in the use of the prepositions, which is connected with the rise in number of phrasal verbs, registered at that time. New functions or constructions – if they happened to be institutionalized in the language – were at first characterized by some growth, but later their frequency has stabilized. The same tendency can be observed within the category of the adverbs, namely between the adverbs and so-called particles. Their correlation at the end of the EModE period was 13% for particles and 87% for adverbs. A century later, this correlation has dramatically changed – 39% to 61% respectively –, but then the process of stabilization started, and the proportion 30% to 70% became fixed. Such burst of activity and frequency is a common phenomenon both within the category and between the categories.

As a result, the development of functional transposition in English is represented in *Graph 1*.



Graph 1. *Functional transposition of ABOUT in the English language*

The graphical representation illustrates the interwoven evolution of the initial and transposed categories of *ABOUT* since its emergence as a preposition and its transposition into an adverb. Despite minor divergences in their use throughout history, a turning point is registered at the beginning of the EModE period, when the development pathways of the categories became finally determined. From then on, the interdependent development has been undergoing subtle fluctuations and the transposed category of the adverb has been shrinking to the current figures of around 15%.

Conclusions

The paper has confirmed the assumption that *ABOUT* was formed as a preposition of locality in early OE and forthwith was transposed into an adverb. It means that in 850–950, the adverb *ABOUT* was already institutionalized in the language, at least within its fundamental meanings and functions. In the OE period, the correlation between the initial and transposed PoS remained almost unchanged. This is explained by a repeated use of the adverb *ABOUT* in combination with verbs of motion, which frequently functioned in discourse.

In the early ME period, the abovementioned tendency started diminishing, and the number of adverbs decreased by 10%. Previously dominating and numerous constructions of *verbs of motion + adverb ABOUT* gave place to the constructions *verbs of perception + adverb ABOUT*, which at first increased the number of the adverbs *ABOUT* in discourse, but later the correlation between the prepositions and adverbs stabilized and returned to the previous indices. This can be explained by a general tendency that new meanings or functions of lexical units are exposed to some growth because the speakers test them considering whether to institutionalize or obsolete them. Such tendency is observed in the case of the adverb *ABOUT*, whose new functions found their place in the language; however, they did not change the overall statistics of the adverb against the preposition.

The beginning of the ModE period is marked by the introduction of a new function, 'in reference to', in the category of the preposition. Contrary to the previously described case, this function found its place among other functions and led to a substantial growth in the frequency of the preposition *ABOUT*. A new correlation between the categories has been roughly fixed and fluctuated within the range of -7% to +7% over the last 500 years.

From the beginning of the LModE period, the usage of *ABOUT* has started its rapid increase. Thus, the lexical unit *ABOUT* was registered 639 times in 1810; in 1820 – 6,211; in the 1870s – 26,147; in the 1920s – 45,850; in the 1970s – 54,008; in the 2020s – 70,946. So, the number of the unit *ABOUT* has increased by 10 times over the last 200 years. It is seen that the growth rate has been slowing down; thus, the use of *ABOUT* has reached its plateau.

Therefore, further research on functional transposition in the English language is to be focused on linguistic and extralinguistic factors that predetermine the use of *ABOUT* as preposition and as adverb throughout the most important stages of its development.

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Research Report: *Cross-cultural Pragmatics*

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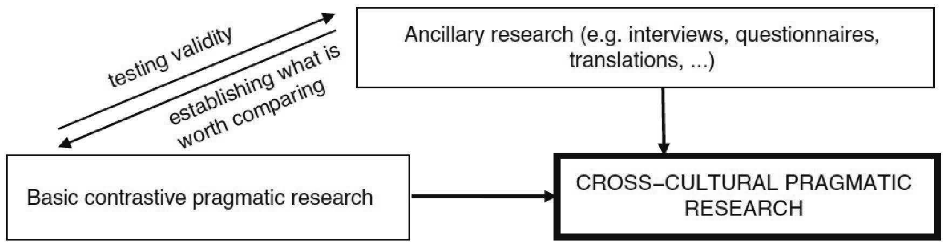
In this research report, we present some of the outcomes of our joint work dedicated to cross-cultural pragmatics, i.e. the field of studying language use in a contrastive way across languages and language varieties. We use the vague wording "some" here because it is clearly beyond the scope of a brief report like this to include all or even most of the outcomes of four years of joint work. Also, we are aware of the fact that *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica* is a journal with an interest in many areas of linguistics, and pragmatics is only one of these areas, and so we wish to avoid bombarding the reader with technical details of our research. Instead, we believe that it is much better to proceed in this research report by introducing those aspects of our work that are relevant to other areas of linguistic research as well. For readers with interest in more details of our work, we would like to refer here to the following book: Juliane House and Dániel Z. Kádár 2021. *Cross-cultural Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The field of cross-cultural pragmatics is an area that was established in the 1980s and gained momentum with the publication of the volume *Cross-cultural Speech Act Realisation Project*, edited by Shoshana Blum-Kulka, Juliane House, and Gabriele Kasper, published in 1989. Following the publication of this book, cross-cultural pragmatics has become one of the most influential areas in pragmatics. However, until recently, the field had largely focused on simply applying the framework and methodology of the above 1989 book, without infusing it with new ideas and research findings. In our joint work, we attempted to reinvigorate the field of cross-cultural pragmatics as it was pioneered in the CCSARP Project by going back to its basic principles and integrating these principles into present-day pragmatic theory.

A distinctive characteristic of cross-cultural pragmatics is its cross-disciplinary relevance: it has been widely used in research on applied linguistics, translation, linguistic politeness, and other areas. The reason for the relevance of cross-cultural pragmatics for other fields is related to its key principles. In the following, we outline these principles, and by doing so we also describe various empirical studies described in our recent (2021) book:

1. Bottom-up research: We believe that cross-cultural pragmaticians should follow a bottom-up take on language use. Thus, instead of analysing data through cultural preconceptions such as "speakers of Chinese are face-sensitive", "British speakers of English are indirect", and so on, and also instead of relying on non-linguistic notions such as "emotions", "values", and "identities," the cross-cultural pragmatician first needs to examine his/her data and attempt to identify recurrent patterns of language use in it. As part of this endeavour, the cross-cultural pragmatician is advised not to set out to "confirm" the validity of their assumptions but rather to intend to disconfirm any hypothesis they might have formulated. While such research may appear to be less grandiose than what one can carry out through a top-down (typically intercultural) approach, a key advantage of the bottom-up take is the replicability and rigour of the outcomes. To provide an example, in our book we studied war crime apologies realized by representatives of the German and Japanese states following the Second World War. In the study of such apologies, a body of previous research has used sweeping cultural overgeneralizations such as that the Japanese is a "shame culture", "Germans apologized more appropriately than the Japanese", and so on. While such notions may seem to help the researcher in interpreting his data, in empirical research they are problematic because they reflect the researcher's own overgeneralizing attitudes to the linguaculturally embedded data involved, and so their use precludes studying data with a cold eye. So, instead of relying on such notions, we studied corpora of WWII war crime apologies in an "innocent" way, by examining the realization patterns of Head Acts of these apologies and categorizing such realization patterns. Our research has revealed both similarities and differences between the two linguacultures studied. For example, it has become clear that the Head Act Strategies "explanation and account" never gets involved in the realization of war crime apologies because the crimes involved can never be explained or justified. On the other hand, we have shown that German and Japanese representatives of states had linguaculturally preferred Head Acts Strategies: for example, the German apologies frequently involved the Head Act Strategy of "expressing guilt and shame" much more than their Japanese counterparts, which flies in the face of the claim that Japanese is a so-called "shame culture".

2. Multimethod approach to researching language use: The cross-cultural pragmatician is advised to rely on multimethod, or "mixed-method" approaches to language use. The following figure from House and Kádár (2021: 3) shows the way in which a multimethod approach can be operationalized in cross-cultural pragmatic inquiries.



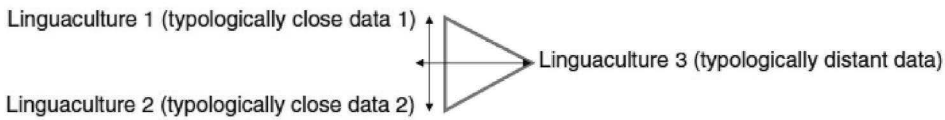
Source: House and Kádár 2021: 3

Figure 1. *The components of cross-cultural pragmatic research*

As *Figure 1* shows, cross-cultural pragmatic research may depart from a basic contrastive analysis, through which the researcher achieves the main outcomes. One is advised to test the validity of such outcomes with the aid of what we call ancillary research in our framework, which frequently consists of interviews, DCTs, questionnaires, and other data-eliciting methods. Basic contrastive and ancillary research may be based on different data types (see more below), i.e. the mixed-method approach may involve the use of both naturally occurring and elicited data. The following is an example for how such a multimethod approach can be carried out: In our 2021 book, we presented a case study of how second-person T and V pronouns are used in IKEA catalogues published in many different languages and the ways in which T and V pronouns in such catalogues tend to be perceived by speakers of these languages. This research was based on the issue that IKEA traditionally prefers using the T pronoun to promote the Swedish convention of egalitarianism. Our basic contrastive pragmatic research included the study of T/V pronominal choices in the catalogues – the study of such choices in the catalogues only could have already allowed us to reach research conclusions about linguacultural preferences of T/V pronominal choices. However, by considering language user evaluations through our ancillary take, we could triangulate our research and at the same time avoid relying on our own analyst interpretations only. Such a triangulation can be particularly important in cross-cultural pragmatics where the researcher may need to work on several different languages, as in the case of the IKEA catalogues that we studied. As *Figure 1* shows, the relationship between ancillary and basic research can also be reversed, that is, one may conduct ancillary exploration first in order to set the parameters of the subsequent main contrastive inquiry. For example, in our 2021 book, we conducted an applied linguistics inquiry to explore how Chinese learners of English and British learners of Chinese assess appropriate and inappropriate uses of expressions that are conventionally associated with the speech acts of Request and Apologize. In this research, we identified the expressions to be featured in the assessment task provided for our learners through a corpus-based investigation, i.e. our corpus research provided the ancillary lead-in for the subsequent main study. Optimally, both the basic contrastive and the ancillary approaches are qualitative and quantitative in scope in cross-cultural pragmatics. Simply put, in quantitative research, the cross-cultural pragmatician examines and compares data by looking into the frequency of occurrence of a given pragmatic phenomenon. In qualitative research, the cross-cultural pragmatician engages in a detailed comparative examination of instances of language use in order to gain a deeper understanding of the pragmatic phenomenon under investigation.

3. Relying on interrelated but distinct units of analysis and finite typologies of these units: In conducting strictly language-anchored cross-cultural pragmatic analysis, the researcher is advised to identify a particular unit of analysis to examine linguaculturally embedded data. In our 2021 book, we proposed three basic units of analysis: expression, speech act, and discourse. All such units are, of course, interrelated – for instance, speech acts are indicated by expression and discourse can be systematically broken down into exchanges of speech acts. Thus, choosing a particular unit of analysis does not imply that one should (or can afford to) disregard other units, but simply that any analysis needs to depart from one particular unit of analysis as a "gateway" to the data studied. For instance, in our above-outlined study of WWII war crime apologies, we conducted a speech-act-anchored investigation, even though such apologies themselves are not confined to simple utterances, i.e. they represent the realm of discourse. Importantly, any unit that one studies needs to be described with the aid of finite typologies. For example, in the study of speech acts, we relied on a typology of Edmondson and House (1981; see also Edmondson et al. 2022) consisting of 25 interactionally defined speech act categories. In cross-cultural pragmatic research where the analyst compares data from different linguacultures, relying on such finite typologies is particularly important because finiteness ensures that all our analytic categories are actually comparable. As Edmondson and House (1981: 48–49) argue about this sense of finiteness: "We must attempt to be *systematic* if possible. It is no use introducing illocutions rather like a conjuror producing rabbits out of a hat, such that nobody knows where they come from, how many more there might be left in, or whether, indeed, the whole procedure is an illusion."

4. Variation and/or more than one language: Cross-cultural pragmaticians may pursue interest in intracultural and intralinguistic variations of languages, including social and regional dialects, style levels, variations of language according to gender and age, and so on. As such, cross-cultural pragmatic research involves what has been covered under the umbrella of so-called "variational pragmatics", but it also includes many other aspects of variation beyond the simple sociolinguistic parameters studied by variationists. More importantly, cross-cultural pragmatic research most often includes various different languages. The more typologically distant these languages are, the more challenging it may be to contrastively examine them. For example, in our 2021 book, we often presented contrasts of such typologically distant languages as Chinese and English. Contrastive work may also involve the study of more than two linguacultures – in the case of the above-mentioned IKEA catalogues, we examined seven different languages and language varieties. Furthermore, the cross-cultural pragmatician can engage in complex contrastive work, e.g. by comparing how a particular pragmatic phenomenon is realized in typologically close and distant linguacultures – a procedure we call "double contrasting" in our book. For example, we contrasted patterns of speech act realization in the closing phase of historical family letters written in English, German, and Chinese, by first contrasting our linguaculturally close English and German data and then comparing the outcomes with what we found in our Chinese data. The following figure illustrates this scheme of contrasting.



Source: House and Kádár 2021: 204

Figure 2. *Our scheme of double contrasting*

By following this contrasting design, we were able to venture beyond the boundaries of the phenomenon under investigation: our research outcomes also allowed us to revisit discussions on the so-called "East–West Divide".

5. Relying on corpora and the Principle of Comparability: Cross-cultural pragmatic research is ideally based on corpora. The term "corpus" refers to any searchable collection of texts. Cross-cultural pragmaticians use both small and large corpora. In any rigorous cross-cultural pragmatic research, the size and other features of the corpora investigated need to be as comparable as possible. This leads us to what we call the Principle of Comparability in our book: A fundamental issue in cross-cultural pragmatic research is how one conducts the comparison itself by identifying *tertia comparationis*. The principle of comparability applies to both the corpora and the phenomena analysed in cross-cultural pragmatic research. Whenever we use corpora compiled by others, we need to consider whether the generic, temporal, and other features of the corpora are actually comparable. As to the phenomena to be contrastively examined, we need to consider how representative and conventionalized they are in their respective linguacultures. This latter pursuit of conventionalizedness also largely precludes studying idiosyncratic behaviour in the realm of cross-cultural pragmatics. Conventional patterns of language use can be teased out from data mainly through quantitative analysis (see above). For example, in our above-mentioned study of expressions, we considered whether expressions popularly associated with speech acts are "speech-act-anchored" or "non-speech-act-anchored" in our English and Chinese corpora. Speech-act anchoredness refers to whether a particular expression actually indicates the speech act it is popularly associated with. Our study has shown that while English expressions associated with the speech acts of Apologize and Request are nearly always speech-act-anchored, their English counterparts afford alternative "giveaway" uses such as self-correction. This outcome does not mean that we could not observe giveaway uses at all in our Chinese corpus, but statistically the number of such uses was so low that we could reliably argue that the "giveaway" function of such expressions is much more conventionalized in English than in Chinese.

6. Using linguistically-based terminology: Cross-cultural pragmatics ideally operates with a linguistically-based terminology, reflecting an endeavour to avoid using cultural and psychological concepts such as "ideology", "values", and "identity" (see also above). A typical example of a cross-cultural pragmatic term – which we used throughout our book (and also in the current research report) – is "linguaculture", by which we intend to describe culture manifested through patterns of language use. We prefer this term over "culture" because it emphasizes the inherently close relationship between language and culture.

We hope that by overviewing the above principles of cross-cultural pragmatics and some outcomes of our research, we presented concrete examples of what cross-cultural pragmatics is actually like in the practice of research. We also believe that such principles are relevant to any area of linguistics where the analyst examines larger chunks of linguaculturally embedded data in a non-predetermining bottom-up way.

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