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NOVEL CHALLENGES FOR DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: CROSS-LINGUISTIC AND CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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Introduction

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Novel Challenges for Discourse Analysis: Cross-Linguistic and Cross-Cultural Perspectives

In the mid-20th century, linguistics saw a great paradigm shift from the formalist and structuralist frameworks inspired by de Saussure's seminal work to novel, multi-faceted and interdisciplinary approaches (Aronoff and Rees-Miller 2003). If the former primarily studied linguistic units on the well-known phoneme-to-sentence continuum in isolation – in other words, *the grammar* in its narrowest and traditional sense – the latter moved beyond these *per partes* investigations and tried to focus not only on *the grammar*, but also on the language in use, its functions, the participants involved, and the social context (van Dijk 2008). This meant that the new approaches had to take into consideration the at that time ground-breaking findings of the new and emerging disciplines in humanities such as, but not exclusively, psychology, sociology, ethnography, anthropology, and computer sciences.

One of these multi-faceted and interdisciplinary approaches is discourse analysis, which has since its beginnings become a very versatile and prolific field of linguistic research. As Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton (2001, 1) point out, there are many different definitions of discourse analysis ranging from the more traditionalist anything-above-the-sentence views to perspectives that pay special attention to language in use and different social practices. The multi-dimensionality of discourse analysis is perhaps best captured in Fairclough's (1989, 22ff) view that language should be analyzed as a special form of social practice, because it is an inalienable part of society, and it is a social process, conditioned by other (non-linguistic) societal features. In other words, language users never use language *in vacuo* but their language production is conditioned by their (current) social position/situation, by the desired social effect, by social conventions and other discourses. For this reason, discourse analysts can and should investigate only the naturally produced language data (i.e., attested data), at the same time rejecting any use of invented data (i.e., non-attested data) for their research.

To encompass all of these dimensions, Fairclough (1989) develops a hierarchically structured three-level framework of analysis, whose aim is first to focus on the formal properties of the text[1] (i.e., the level of description), second, to investigate the processes of text production and text interpretation (i.e., the level of interpretation), and, lastly, to explore the social context (i.e., the level of explanation).

At the stage of description, the analyst explores the formal properties of the text, such as the selection of various vocabulary items, the use of metaphors, the preference for certain syntactic patterns, etc. At this stage, the analyst wants to explore why the language user in a

[1] The author adopts the Hallidayan definition of a text as any meaningful instance of language (Halliday and Hasan 1976).

given social position/context makes certain lexical and syntactic choices. For example, in a student-teacher situation, the lexico-syntactic selection may be (completely) different than in a husband-wife situation.

The key elements at the level of interpretation are the discourse participants: the producer and the recipient of the text. Hence, at this level, the text fulfils two functions – it is both the final product of the process of production (i.e., the producer's perspective) and the resource in the process of interpretation (i.e., the recipient's perspective). The process of interpretation involves six distinct domains, as set out in Fairclough (1989, 140ff): (i) surface of utterance (knowledge of the language – phonology, grammar, vocabulary), (ii) meaning of utterance (semantic and pragmatic aspects of the utterance), (iii) local coherence (meaning connections between connected utterances), (iv) text structure and 'point' (text global coherence, social conventions, different types of discourse), (v) situational context (external cues such as the physical situation, properties of the participants, etc.), and (vi) intertextual context (connection to previous discourses).

At the last level, explanation, the analyst endeavours to present discourse as part of a social process, to determine to what extent the discourse is governed by existing social structures, and at the same time to what extent discourse shapes/changes the existing structures (Fairclough 1989, 163).

Fairclough's (1989) model of reference is very reminiscent of the text linguistics framework as set out by Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), who established the now well-known and referred to seven standards of textuality: (i) cohesion, (ii) coherence, (iii) intentionality, (iv) acceptability, (v) informativity, (vi) situationality, and (vii) intertextuality. In fact, all of these standards are included in the Faircloughian model, either at the stage of description and interpretation. What makes his model different, however, is the special focus on the role discourse plays in society, in particular, the use of language to exert (political) power, to manipulate, and to establish social inequalities (the level of explanation). For this reason, Fairclough's model is referred to as critical discourse analysis.

If original research in text linguistics and discourse analysis primarily focused on text produced by native speakers for native speakers, the turn of the 20th century brought a new challenge for text/discourse analysts: the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca. The designation English as a lingua franca (ELF) refers to interactions between speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, for none of whom English is the native language. One of its special features is also that the majority of its speakers have adopted it through learning English as a foreign language, i.e., via formal instruction rather than personal contact (Mauranen 2006, 126).

It was not until the beginning of the new millennium that ELF received attention as an object of systematic linguistic studies. The challenge of "accepting a language that is not anybody's native tongue as a legitimate object of investigation and descriptive research" (Seidlhofer 2009, 237) was underpinned by the long-standing paradox of having a language with the largest number of speakers, yet failing to categorize it as a world language. This "conceptual gap" (Seidlhofer 2001) called for a decisive reconceptualization of the nature and function of ELF, as well as language varieties and speech communities in general.

Over the first quarter of the 21st century, ELF has been promoted as the "chosen foreign language of communication for groups of speakers having different first language backgrounds" (Pakir 2009, 229), i.e., a legitimate alternative to English as a native language. Adopting the new perspective has gone hand in hand with a major change in orientation in linguistic research. Several studies have been published on the phonological, pragmatic and lexicogrammatical aspects of ELF. ELF corpora have been compiled in order to facilitate analyses depending on large amounts of data (the first version of VOICE, the first general corpus of ELF, was released in 2009). The focus of ELF description has shifted from the linguistic features as potential means of codification to the functions these indicate in communicative interactions. Departures from native-speaker norms have become to be interpreted as examples of variance rather than errors or signs of incompetence, and bilingual elements like code-switching as means of promoting one's own cultural identity (cf. Jenkins, Cogo, and Dewey 2011; McKay 2018; Seidlhofer 2009). The recognition of ELF speakers as language users in their own right, freed from the pressure of the normative tendency of English as a foreign language, has also had implications for English language teaching and learning. In particular, it has enabled a redefinition of non-native teachers of English from "perennial, error-prone learners of English as a native language" to "competent and authoritative users of ELF" (Seidlhofer 2004, 229).

A great deal of discussion has been devoted to distinguishing ELF from English as a foreign language (EFL). Jenkins (2006, 140) summarizes the differences as follows:

i) EFL adopts a "deficit" perspective, ELF a "difference" perspective on differences from native-speaker English: the former sees them as errors, the latter as variants;
ii) the EFL perspective explains deviations from native-speaker English in terms of transfer and metaphor, the ELF perspective in terms of contact and evolution;
iii) the EFL perspective has a conformative, monolingual bias, the ELF perspective a transformative, bilingual bias;
iv) the EFL perspective regards code-switching and code-mixing as interference errors, the ELF perspective as bilingual resources.

The use of ELF has been investigated in a number of discourse communities, in particular business, tourism, journalism, school settings and higher education. In these domains of social contact, the spread of ELF has accelerated significantly due to the forces of globalization and internationalization. Some of these communities are placed in the centre of investigation in this special issue of ELOPE, which comprises six research papers, all of which focus on the application of the discourse analysis framework to analyze various texts produced in the ELF context. In particular, in tourism, which has expanded greatly due to globalization, the use of language plays a key role in promoting tourist destinations and interacting with potential customers (see Vuković Vojnović, this volume). Transcreation, a process of adapting translated content to suit the target audience's context, culture, and expectations, is frequently employed in journalism (see Petrović, this volume). The internationalization of higher education, for example, has transformed language use within academic settings (see Ademilokun and Taiwo, this volume). English has emerged as the primary medium of communication among students, scholars and institutions from different first language

backgrounds, whose social interactions foster intercultural understanding and the exchange of different linguistic practices. In non-Anglophone countries, English-medium instruction programmes have gained popularity, where academic courses are delivered entirely in English. The adoption of ELF in higher education has significantly changed the dynamics of teaching and learning, as well as research (see Shabani; Jokić; Picciuolo, this volume). In turn, the constant shaping of ELF by its speakers opens up new perspectives for discourse studies.

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Part II

Special Issue Articles

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Discursive Construction of Higher Education Institutional Academic Identities in Nigeria

ABSTRACT

There is an increase in brand marketing on the websites of universities in a bid to present the kind of identities that will best promote them. This study examines the identities universities project to market their brands within the context of consumer culture of the contemporary higher educational setting. Data for the study were obtained from the websites of 24 public and private universities in Nigeria and were analysed based on Fairclough's (2015) dialectical relational theory and Roper and Parker's (2006) insights on branding. The findings reveal seven kinds of identity: professional, national, transnational, humanist, Afrocentric, ethnic and religious. These identities range from the ideal to narrow-interest ones. The study concludes that identity construction in any university should aim primarily at advancing knowledge and producing total graduates who would be able to adapt and survive in any part of the world and contribute meaningfully to societal development.

Keywords: identity, higher education, university, branding, marketization

Diskurzivno oblikovanje visokošolskih institucionalnih akademskih identitet v Nigeriji

IZVLEČEK

Na spletnih straneh univerz se povečuje oglaševanje le-teh kot blagovnih znamk, pri čemer se poskušajo predstaviti z identitetami, ki jih bodo najbolje promovirale. Predmet raziskave so identitete, ki jih univerze oblikujejo za potrebe samooglaševanja kot blagovnih znamk v kontekstu potrošniške kulture sodobnega visokošolskega okolja. Raziskava temelji na podatkih, pridobljenih na spletnih straneh štiriindvajsetih javnih in zasebnih univerz v Nigeriji in analiziranih na podlagi Faircloughove (2015) dialektične relacijske teorije ter razumevanja marketinga po Roperju in Parker (2006). Rezultati raziskave kažejo na sedem vrst identitet: poklicno, nacionalno, transnacionalno, humanistično, afrocentrično, etnično in versko. Končna ugotovitev je, da mora pri oblikovanju identitete vsaka univerza stremeti predvsem k visokemu nivoju znanja in produkciji odličnih diplomantov, ki se bodo znali prilagoditi in preživeti v kateremkoli delu sveta ter smiselno prispevati k razvoju družbe.

Ključne besede: identiteta, visoko šolstvo, univerza, blagovna znamka, oglaševanje

1 Introduction

This study investigates the construction of identities on the websites of universities in Nigeria, as these universities attempt to market themselves and present their brands to the public. In the last one and a half decades, the Nigerian government has embarked on policies and reforms leading to the liberalization of the economy with the goal of moving towards a market-driven economy. The liberalization policies have also affected higher education, leading to the massification of universities and other higher institutions in the country in line with the increase in demand for higher education. The National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institution Acts, which came into being in May, 1999 made the granting of licenses to private individuals and organizations to establish universities possible. The number of universities approved by the Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC) had grown to 219 as at the end of 2021, while several others are awaiting approval by the commission (www.nuc.edu.ng). This comprises 49 Federal universities, 59 state-owned ones and 111 private universities.

Due to the large number of universities in the country there is also a high level of competition, especially among the privately owned ones. Unlike the public ones, very few Nigerians can afford to pay the very high fees charged by private universities, therefore limiting their enrolments. It then becomes imperative for private universities to compete for the limited number of Nigerians who can afford them. The need to do brand marketing also becomes very important in order to attract students and other stakeholders. University websites are thus one of the most visible spaces for branding, presentation of universities' identities, and marketization. Public universities are also not left out in the process of marketization and identity formation, as they are conscious of operating in a very competitive market, where ranking in terms of performance indicators, such as teaching, research, citations, international outlook, and graduate employability play major roles in their recognition and patronage by the public. This study therefore examines how selected Nigerian universities brand themselves through identity formation on their websites, thereby leading to marketization of their institutions.

2 Literature Review

The increase in the number of universities in Nigeria has been motivated and necessitated by the tremendous growth in demand for university education in the country (Akpotu and Akpochafu 2009). This increase has naturally brought about strategic marketing efforts by these institutions through brand marketing (Mogaji, Maringe, and Hinson 2020), sloganeering (Ayinuola and Francis 2021; Farinloye, Adeola, and Mogaji 2020), the formulation of clear vision and mission statements (Ashiru and Oludare 2015; Efe and Ozer 2015) and strong institutional identities (Wayne, Farinloye, and Mogaji 2020), such as through "about us" texts on the related websites (Xiong and Li 2020), in order to compete favourably for patronage by stakeholders.

In spite of the challenge of affordability and in the face of the stiff competition among private universities with regard to the existing public universities, both kinds of institutions have developed strategies for attracting students and staff through brand marketing. While the

private universities capitalize on the deficiencies of the public ones to market themselves, emphasizing a stable academic calendar, good learning resources, conducive environment, ease of gaining admission, running courses that are in high demand, better research opportunities for faculties, and stronger lecturer-student relationships, among other factors, the public universities emphasize their experience and strength of faculty, among others.

Studies on the marketing, identity construction and branding of universities have identified specific contextual spaces for their display, such as the websites and hard copy publications of such institutions. Marketing elements are typically displayed in logos (Ead and Saleh 2021), vision and mission statements (Banda and Mafofo 2014; Ashiru and Oludare 2015), mottos and slogans (Shanaz and Qadir 2020), leaders' speeches (Teo and Ren 2019), and information about the university (about us) (Zhang 2017; Wu and Cheong 2020).

Studies on the marketization of universities include Fairclough (1993), Hoang and Rojas-Lizana (2015), Xu, Xie, and Lei (2021), and Ead and Saleh (2021), among others. For instance, Fairclough (1993) identifies an increasing tendency towards marketization and commodification of discursive practices in contemporary discourses that concern British universities, owing to their expectation to raise a proportion of their funding from private sources. He notes that major issues driving the marketization agenda of such universities include ranking, staff quality, citations per staff member as well as environment for learning. Hoang and Rojas-Lizana (2015, 3) focus on how universities have adopted academic marketing in their discursive practices by investigating "how two Australian universities represent themselves in response to social changes through the use of language on their institutional websites". The authors show that visual elements such as logos, images and videos play important roles in the representation of the universities.

Xu, Xie, and Lei (2021) also examine the marketization process of top-tier Chinese universities by scrutinising their self-promotional strategies over the past two decades. Their study focuses on the attitudinal markers in the "about us" texts of the selected universities with a view to identifying the major themes in the texts. The study identifies seven major themes that were positively appraised by the universities at both time points. Ead and Saleh (2021) is a critical discourse analysis of the shapes, images, symbols and colours used in logos of eight universities in Egypt. The authors observe that in marketing the various programmes the universities offer and project the relevance and images of the institutions. The logos project the cultural heritage, religious beliefs and past history of civilization.

There are also studies on the branding of universities, including Dogan (n.d.), Valitov (2014), Mampaey and Huisman (2016), Bhattacharya and Faisal (2020), among others. Dogan (n.d.) examines the corporate credibility of universities with three distinct naming strategies: strategies based on the name of a person, city or location and region of location. The study shows that the name of a famous person is preferred over the city of location, although the reverse is sometimes true. The study further shows that region of location-based names are the least preferred type of university name. Mampaey and Huisman (2016) examines the transformation to a more market-oriented steering approach in a European higher education context. The findings indicate that some similar tendencies are visible, although brand differentiation could also be identified between highly and lowly reputed institutions.

Bhattacharya and Faisal (2020) examine how the media were used for branding of higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors note that the emergence of COVID-19 altered the previous reliance on newspaper advertisements, radio jingles, career counselling workshops, education fairs, billboards, and so. However, the authors note that higher education started using social media in this time to get a competitive advantage.

There have also been a few studies on identity in academic discourse, such as Bucholtz and Hall (2005). The authors study identity and interaction from a socio-cultural linguistic approach, and assert that identity is a social and cultural phenomenon. In addition, they also observe that "identities encompass macro-level demographic categories, temporary and interactionally specific role and local ethnographically emergent cultural positions" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, 592). Much more important to the current study is the view that identities may be "linguistically indexed through labels, implicatures, stances, styles and linguistic structures and system" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, 594). As will soon be seen in the analysis presented below, institutional identities are often constructed by deploying different linguistic styles and discursive strategies to highlight prominent aspects of institutional identities.

Looking further into evaluative, affective and epistemic orientations in discourse, some scholars have studied authorial identities in an academic context, especially, students' writing and journal articles (Flowerdew and Wang 2015, Karoly 2009 and Rahimivand and Kuhi 2014). Flowerdew and Wang (2015) examine identity in academic discourse and stress the nexus between voice and academic identity. They also assert and demonstrate how identities are often constructed based on the conventions of specific communities of disciplinary practices (see also Hyland, 2004; 2005).

Karoly (2009) investigates the expression of authorial identity in some research articles and Master's theses written in English, and underscores the deployment of more author pronouns by less experienced writers rather than by expert writers. The author concludes that student writers need more training in English for Academic Purpose for them to be conversant with various aspects of style that take account of the students' stereotypical cultural, linguistic, academic and educational backgrounds.

The present study rests on the assertions that identity is critical to any form of writing, that authorial voice is the way individuals represent or identify themselves in their discourse, and branding through marketization is essential for identity. In spite of the surfeit of studies on authorial identities in academic discourse, there is a lack of knowledge on academic identity construction for the branding of universities on institutional websites in Nigeria.

3 Methodology

Data for the study comprise texts on the profiles of selected universities in Nigeria culled from the websites of the respective institutions. The data were obtained from four universities, two public and two private ones, in each of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria, making a total of twenty-four data samples. The decision to obtain data from institutions from all the geopolitical zones was informed by the need to reflect the diversity of Nigeria and universities in the country, while data from each of the regions was purposively obtained focusing of the

length of the profiles of the institutions and their richness. The data samples were obtained over a period of six months (from July to December 2021) after the websites of the institutions were monitored for changes in their self-descriptions in order to ensure that the data used for the research represent the current vision statements of the institutions.

Specifically, different texts such as the "about us", history, and vision and mission statements of the selected twenty-four universities constituted the data for the study. However, for data analysis we purposively selected different parts of the various texts from the different institutions that are relevant for the kind of analysis afforded by the precepts for analysis in Fairclough's dialectical relational approach and Roper and Parker's theory of branding.

After gathering the data, the researchers closely studied them and marked out the different identities that are constructed through different linguistic features, particularly lexical features and the issues raised in the profiles of the selected institutions. Through further close reading of the data, the researchers marked out various parts of the texts that yield to Roper and Parker's (2006) ideas on branding and subsumed them under the various identities already established from the data. We thus show how the expressive resources for creating the various identities were further used for branding the institutions. In the presentation of excerpts for data analysis, we purposively selected the marked parts of the data that specifically projected various identities, while at the same time trying to reflect the diversity of the institutions whose profiles constitute the corpus for the study. Table 1 presents basic information about the institutions whose webpages were analysed for the purposes of the present study.

Table 1. Basic information about the institutions included in the analysis.

SN	Name of Institution	Brief Information on Institution
South South		
1.	University of Benin	A second-generation federal university in Benin City, the capital of Edo State.
2.	Rivers State University	One of the first set of state-owned universities in Nigeria. It is located in Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State and owned by the Rivers State government.
3.	Benson Idahosa University	A private university owned by the Church of God Mission International. It is located in Benin City, Edo State.
4	Igbinedion University	One of the first set of private universities in Nigeria. It is located at Okada, Edo State. It is owned by Chief Gabriel Igbinedion, a business man.
South East		
5.	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	One of the first-generation universities in Nigeria owned by the federal government. It is located in Nsukka Enugu State.
6.	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka	A federal government-owned university located in Awka, the capital of Anambra State.
7.	Madonna University	A private university in Okija, Anambra State. It is owned by the Catholic Church.

8.	Renaissance University	This is a private university located in Enugu, owned by Chimaroke Nnamani, the former Governor of Enugu State.
South West		
9.	Obafemi Awolowo University	A first-generation university, owned by the federal government and located in Ile-Ife, Osun State.
10.	University of Lagos	A first-generation university owned by the federal government and located in Lagos, the commercial capital of Nigeria.
11.	Covenant University	A private university owned by the Living Faith Ministries and located in Ota, Ogun State.
12.	Redeemer's University	A private university owned by the Redeemed Christian Church of Christ and located in Ede, Osun State.
North Central		
13.	University of Abuja	A federal university located in Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria and within the Federal Capital Territory.
14.	University of Ilorin	A federal government-owned university located in Ilorin, Kwara State.
15.	Veritas University	A private university owned by the Catholic Church. The university is located in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria.
16.	Landmark University, Omuaran	A private university owned by the Living Faith Ministries. The university is located in Omu Aran in Kwara State.
North East		
17.	Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola	A federal government-owned university based in Yola, the capital of Adamawa State.
18.	Federal University, Wukari	A federal government-owned university based in Wukari, Taraba State.
19.	American University of Nigeria, Yola	A private university owned by Atiku Abubakar, former Vice President of Nigeria. It is located in Yola, the capital of Adamawa State.
20.	Kwararafa University, Wukari	This is a private community-owned university located in Wukari, Taraba State.
North West		
21.	Uthman Dan Fodio University	A federal government-owned university based in Sokoto, the headquarters of the Islamic religion in Nigeria.
22.	Federal University, Dutsinma	A federal government-owned university located in Dutsinma, Katsina State.
23.	Skyline University	A private university located in Kano, the foremost commercial city in the north-west of Nigeria.
24.	Al-Istiqama University	A private university located in Sumaila, Kano State.

4 Theoretical Framework

The study employs an eclectic theoretical framework for data analysis as it combines Fairclough's (2015) dialectical relational approach to critical discourse analysis with Roper and Parker's (2006) idea on branding. Fairclough's dialectical relational approach provides

for analysis of various discourse levels of analysis such as description, interpretation and explanation (Fairclough 2000). At the level of description, attention is paid to the formal features of a discourse such as vocabulary (lexis and metaphor), grammar, cohesion and text structure. For interpretation, attention is paid to how meanings of texts link the texts with their contexts. Finally, at the level of explanation, the analyst focuses on meanings relating to the broad ideological and topical issues underlying identity construction for universities in Nigeria. The choice of Fairclough's (2015) dialectical relational approach is based on its provisions for the explication of issues relating to social change and the analysis of expressive resources in discourses.

The other component of the theoretical framework, which is Roper and Parker's (2006) theory of branding, explicates branding as identification, differentiation, and personification, and the brand as asset. According to Roper and Parker (2006, 57), the original purpose of branding was for identification. Branding in this regard serves the purpose of ensuring that consumers recognize a product. At this level of analysis of a branded text, the analyst thus pays attention to the linguistic features that are used to identify the branded item, in the case of this study, the selected Nigerian universities. The second paradigm for analysis is the differentiation dynamic of branding. Here, according to Roper and Parker (2006, 57), due to the increased competition among companies and service providers, a brand needs to differentiate itself from other brands. In the context of this study, it will be interesting to analyse the linguistic features institutions use to create unique identities for themselves in the face of competition for students, staff and funding by the many universities in Nigeria.

Closely related to branding as differentiation is branding as personification. Here attention is paid to how the physical, aesthetic, rational and emotional elements of a brand are foregrounded to typify it. So, beyond differentiating themselves from other universities in Nigeria, this study will examine how the universities typically portray their inherent features and create identities for themselves. Finally, the analyst also examines a brand as an asset by focusing on the value of such a brand. Under this, it is possible to examine the value placed on the institutions by themselves regarding their leadership in provision of university education in Nigeria, internationality, stability, evolution of new trends, and perceived quality, among other factors.

5 Data Analysis

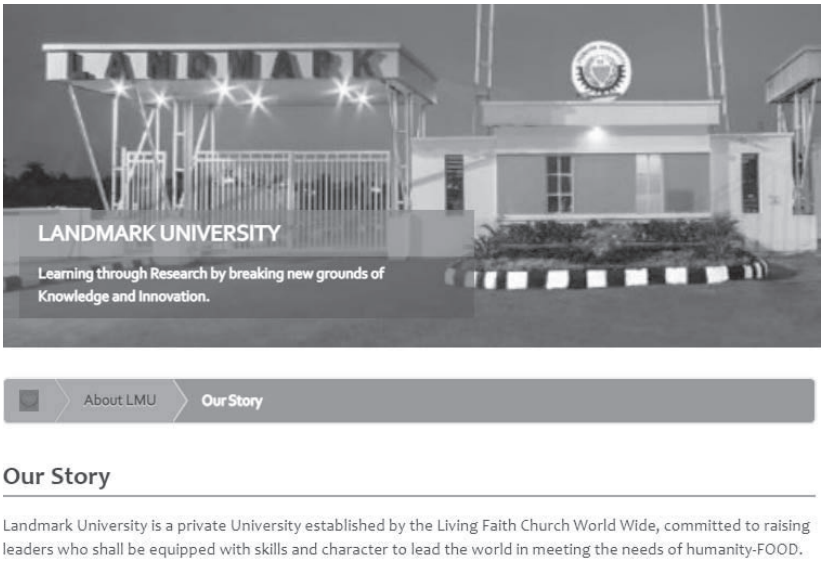
In the competitive educational context of Nigeria, Nigerian universities have been working hard to construct distinct identities which then form the basis for marketing themselves to potential stakeholders – students, parents, companies, funding agencies, etc. In earlier work, Shamaz and Qadir (2020) report that a corporate identity is the most prominent identity constructed by Pakistani universities. Kenway and Bullen (2001) find that students are constructed as educational commodities, while Ayaawan (2021) reports that educational institutions are constructed as businesses offering academic services in Ghana. Rogendorf (2008) shows that in New Zealand, corporate identity is often constructed, among other identities. In Nigeria, however, our data show that professional identity, national identity, transnational identity, ethnic identity, humanist identity, Afrocentric identity and religious

identity typify the marketization of universities. This section presents these kinds of identities projected in the data and a discussion on how they constitute marketization within the Nigerian education context.

5.1 Professional Identity

A very significant kind of identity that higher institutions construct in order to brand themselves is professional identity. For the purpose of this study, professional identity refers to the identity pertaining to career foci or job prospects which the programmes of the institutions sampled in this study focus on. This manifests in the attempts by higher institutions to portray themselves as focusing on certain fields or areas of research. Constructing a professional identity becomes necessary in a world where professionalism is gaining importance and students would prefer studying professional courses, which many universities offer. Moreover, the creation of specialized universities in Nigeria in response to specific national needs has brought about certain universities focusing on some specific subsectors of the economy, such as agriculture, technology, education, medicine, and petroleum, because of their importance for national development. For many of these specialized universities, their names are their first identities. It is, however, noteworthy that there are some universities in Nigeria that construct professional identities for themselves without necessarily reflecting such identities in their names. Let us consider an extract from what Landmark University, Omu Aran tagged "Our Story", shown in example (1).

(1)



In example (1) above, Landmark University creates a professional identity for itself by showing that their focus is on meeting one of the most basic human needs – food. This is graphologically expressed through the foregrounding of the lexical item "FOOD" in the text which is presented as the ultimate goal of the research focus of the institution. The vision of the university further constructs this professional identity as an agriculture-focused one. The

construction of a professional identity in the text reflects Fairclough's dialectical relational approach principle that "[t]exts semiotically construe identities and simultaneously seek to make these construals persuasive" (Fairclough 2016, 101). A close look at the example also shows that, through the text, Roper and Parker's (2006) idea of branding as identification is enacted. This manifests in the association of the institution with the Living Faith Church Worldwide as its owner, which conforms with Roper and Parker's (2006) prescription on branding for the purpose of identification. Similarly, through the same text there is the enactment of branding as personification. Since de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998, 418) state that "company, identity system, image, value system, personality, relationship and added value can be combined to form the personality of a brand", the presentation of Landmark University as concerned with producing leaders who will ensure the production of food is an effort in branding the institution for personification. The example below also indexes professional identity:

(2) *To be a leading world class university, by spearheading an agrarian revolution on the African continent through the exploration of hidden treasures in the mother-earth thereby restoring the dignity of the black race.* (Landmark University, Omu Aran, https://lmu.edu.ng/about-lmu/vision-and-mission)

The agricultural revolution has always been at the centre of most agro-economic policies of the Nigerian government, as it is a major way of diversifying the crude oil-based economy. Through these narratives, the university not only targets a set of students interested in agriculture-related courses, but also presents itself as committed to solving one of the problems in Nigerian society, which is the provision of food, that is metaphorically described as "hidden treasures in the mother-earth." Thus, there is the continuation of the streak of branding for personification in the profile of Landmark University as the university is portrayed as largely interested in the "agrarian revolution" even though there is also the idea of branding as differentiation implicit in the text as the university is distinguished as one that focuses on agriculture. Another example elucidating professional identity follows:

(3) *Brief History of the University*

Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola formally known Federal University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa state Nigeria was established in 1981 by the Federal Government of Nigeria to provide the much needed technologically skilled manpower for the nation. It is one of the Federal Universities recognized by National Universities Commission (NUC) to offer Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate degrees in different fields of Science and Technology. (Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, http://mautech.edu.ng/new/index.php/en/about-us/who-we-are/about-mautech)

Moddibo Adama University of Technology also creates a professional identity through the contents of its website. Technologically skilled manpower is essentialized in the discourse as "much needed for the nation" as a way of marketing the institution. Through this, there is a branding of the institution for personification using Roper and Parker's (2006) ideas as the institution is portrayed as basically typified by science and technology instruction and research. Since several other universities offer courses in science and technology, recognition

in the form of accreditation by relevant bodies (most especially the National Universities Commission, as is mentioned) plays a major role in shaping opinions of stakeholders. This text latched on to this widely held understanding to project the legitimacy and reputation of the university and market its degrees from bachelors to doctorates. However, different strategies are used in professional identity construction in relation to the accreditation of courses. These range from being general (*different fields of science and technology*), as seen in (3), to being specific, as seen in (4) below. However, in addition to branding by professional identity, there is also branding as identification. This manifests in the presentation of Modibbo Adama University of Technology as owned by the government. Below is another excerpt featuring professional identity in the discourse:

(4) *All our programmes are accredited by the relevant regulatory and professional bodies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN), Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN), Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria (MLSCN), Council of Legal Education (CLE), Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria (NMCN), Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), Computer Professionals Registration Council of Nigeria (CPN), Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), etc.* (Igbinedion University, Okada, https://iuokada.edu.ng/vice-chancellors-message/)

For Igbinedion University, listing the relevant regulatory bodies and identifying specific professional bodies would go a long way to providing and promoting the necessary information. For many professionals, these professional bodies' recognition confers practical and ethical standards on their conduct. Providing such specific information is a strong marketing strategy for the professional subjects identified with those professional bodies (medicine, pharmacy, medical laboratory science, law, nursing and midwifery, engineering, computer science and accounting). This evidences Roper and Parker's (2006) concept of branding as an asset, as the institution is presented as having remarkable values which warrants its recognition by the numerous professional bodies.

Projecting professional values is an essential means of constructing professional identity. Such values include ethics, conduct and a professional appearance, including dress, which are an important part of conduct. For Benson Idahosa University, giving information to the public on the professional dress code is seen as part of professional identity projection.

(5) *We are Nigeria's first university with a professional dress code for staff and students.*
We are Nigeria's first university to have a work study programme that allows students to study and put in some hours of their week into working to earn some money. (Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, https://www.biu.edu.ng/about-biu/why-study-at-biu/)

The claim of being the first university to have a dress code for staff and students makes the information significant for professional identity projection and marketization of the university and its professional courses. This information being placed under "Why Study at BIU" is specifically drafted for marketing purposes, and is a way of branding the institution for differentiation. The use of the expression "first", which Fairclough (2015) accounts for

under the level of description bordering on lexis in data analysis, gives the institution the image of doing things differently. It also underscores the inculcation of professional ethics into students from the university and the support for such values among the university staff. However, the branding of the university in the text goes beyond differentiation as there is also branding for identification. This manifests in the assertion in the text that the university belongs to the wider Nigerian society through the expression "We are Nigeria's first university…"

5.2 National Identity

National values and priorities may be important enough to constitute an identity for some universities, and the texts on the websites of Nigerian universities effectively project these in line with Fairclough's (2015) claim on the centrality of identity construction to texts. Names are bearers of identities, therefore a university, such as the University of Nigeria, already projects the national identity through its very name. However, national identity has also been constructed in other texts about a university, as can be seen in one of the mandates of Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST), Port Harcourt in example (6).

(6) *RSUST was established to:* […] *relate its activities to the social, cultural and economic needs of the people of Nigeria.* (Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt, https://www.rsu.edu.ng/index.php/about/who-we-are/about-rsust)

The text above shows the deployment of branding as an asset for the construction of academic identity for RSUST. In the text, there is the essentializing of the goal of the institution by projecting it as one which aims at enhancing the social, cultural and economic conditions of Nigerians through its activities. This aligns with Roper and Parker's (2006) claim that branding as an asset involves indicating the value of a brand. The implication of the projection of the value of RSUST is that the nation is the primary beneficiary of the products of the research of the university. In whatever form they come, the research activities would positively impact the social, cultural and economic life of the people of Nigeria. The strategic placement of this information under the heading "who we are", which is a statement of identity itself, is significant for identity projection on the university's website.

Another projection of national identity is seen in the welcome message of the Vice Chancellor to the University of Abuja, which is the first major narrative on the university's website. The University of Abuja is located in the federal capital territory and also named after it. Abuja is obviously quite symbolic in Nigeria, being the capital. At the level of description in Fairclough (2000, 2015), one can see that in using lexis, the text producers give the university two appellations in the narrative: "the model university in Nigeria" and "a pride of Nigerians and humanity in the provision of higher education". Going further in the linguistic analysis as described by Fairclough (2015) under description, one can see the centrality of two nominal lexical features "model" and "pride" used in the similar syntactic structure of MHQ-type nominal groups. These two appellations at the levels of interpretation and explanation as espoused by Fairclough (2015) are projections of how the university wants to be seen in relation to other universities, the nation, humanity and the provision of higher education in general.

(7) *The University of Abuja is the model University in Nigeria, and has developed robust developmental strategies to meet and sustain that status and remain a pride of Nigerians and humanity in the provision of higher education. It is dedicated to quality teaching, learning, and research. It offers both staff and students a serene and conducive environment for living, working, teaching, learning, and research*. (University of Abuja, Abuja, https://www.uniabuja.edu.ng)

In the text above, in addition to the national identity that is constructed, the text producer also brands the University of Abuja using branding as differentiation, as it portrays the university as different through the lexical item "model", which also ascribes a status which confers on it the "standard" which others have to follow. However, it is noteworthy that even though branding as differentiation is primary to the academic identity constructed in the text, there is also a subtle deployment of branding as asset, with the university being portrayed as giving the nation the value of being a source of pride to her, Nigerians and humanity in general. The ultimate goal of teaching, research and service is to address social problems. The beneficiaries of these activities are not usually clearly spelt out for most universities, since they are meant to assert universal values. Therefore, a deliberate essentialization of a nation and its citizens as the prime beneficiaries of any university's products in its mission statement is a strong way of constructing national identity and branding the institution as an asset to the people of the nation. This can be seen in the vision statement of Nnamdi Azikiwe University in example (8).

(8) *The mission of the University is to use teaching, research, and public service to solve social problems. In the process of learning, students would be oriented to use their education in solving practical problems confronting them in the* ***Nigerian society*** *and beyond*. (Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, https://unizik.edu.ng/about/vision-and-mission/)

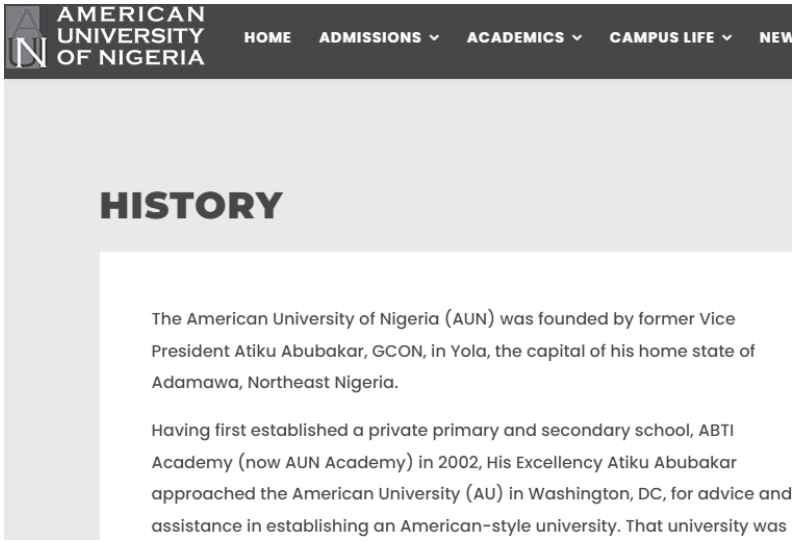
While it is more common to see universities building capacities through the advancement of national values on their campuses or affiliates abroad, the strategy of projecting national values is not a very common one on the websites of Nigerian universities. This is a way of branding such institutions as assets for the circulation of national values in conformity with Roper and Parker's (2006) idea on branding as asset. It must be pointed out that national identity projection abroad is more common at the lower levels of education – primary and secondary. In Nigeria there are some primary and secondary schools established by other nations, which project strong identities of these nations through their curricula, such as the Lebanese Community School, American International School, British International Schools, Netherlands International Schools, Italian International School, Enrico Mattei, and so forth. It is more common, especially for private universities to compete on projecting an identity that transcends their immediate locality or nation for marketing purposes rather than national identities. In the next section, this will be fully discussed.

5.3 Transnational Identity

By transnational identity, we mean an identity created to show that an entity or person is characterized by features that transcend national boundaries. For the universities, this

entails presenting themselves as not being localized, but having international appeal. In example (9) there is a text evidencing transnational identity in the profile of the American University of Nigeria.

(9)



(American University of Nigeria (AUN), Yola, https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/about/overview/history)

The projection of the identity of the founder, Atiku Abubakar in the text above is an instance of branding as identification. The strategy reveals a number of facts about him – his being the former Vice President of the country, the location of the university being the capital of his home state, and his vision of establishing an American-style university in Nigeria. Moreover, the text producers create a transnational identity for the American University of Nigeria. In the first instance, the name of the institution is indicative of the transnational identity constructed. In the name, there is reference to both America and Nigeria, because while the university is presented as American in nature and style, it is portrayed as belonging to Nigeria. This portrayal of the university as transnational is meant to show that it is a melting pot of Nigerian and American cultures, and a way of showing that students who are privileged to attend the institution will not only know about their society but also American culture and way of life. The American identity of the text further manifests in the expression "establishing an American style university", showing that the university is patterned after the American University in Washington DC. The transnational identity constructed for the institution, using the branding theory of Roper and Parker (2006), is a way of branding the institution through differentiation it from other institutions in Nigeria. To further this differentiation, the university's president has this as part of her message:

(10) *AUN is unlike any other university in this part of the world: we provide a university education based on the US model – just as if you were to go to university in the US.* (American University of Nigeria, Yola, https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/about/leadership/president)

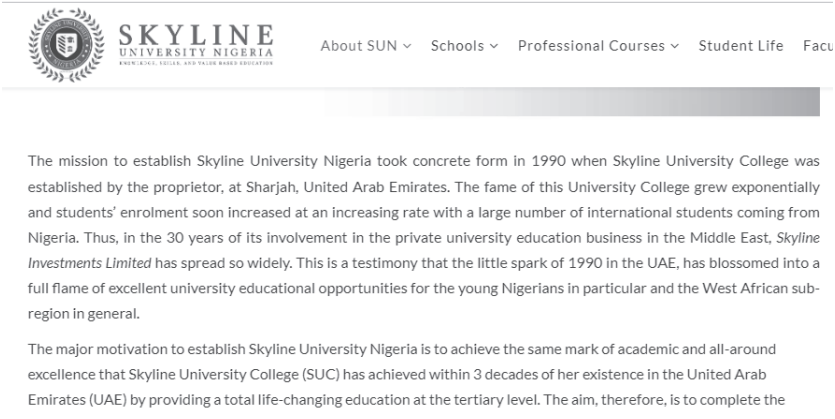
The differentiation claim that the university is "unlike any other in this part of the world" is based on the idea of bringing the American experience to Nigeria's educational setting prompted by the idea of delocalization, and thus establishment of overseas campuses or affiliates to further internationalize the university.

It also brands itself as American through the transnational identity of the institution, given the fact that the American element in the naming and curriculum will arouse curiosity. Beyond this, it is a marketization strategy in the sense that there are many who would derive satisfaction from having a sense of attending a university that has some connection with America. Through the transnational identity of the institution, the university also prides itself as one that is internationalized, thus further marketing itself favourably to the public, internationalization being seen as one of the qualities of great higher institutions of learning. In an advertisement for admission on the university's website, there is a slogan "school at home, study abroad", which further strengthens the transnational identity. This slogan co-constructs the experiences of schooling and studying within the discourse of the transnational experience, thus bringing the American Dream (the dream of many young Nigerians) into the Nigerian national experience.

It is important to state that there is an emphasis on foreignness or Americanness in the construction of transnational identity in the profile of the American University of Nigeria. Drawing insights from Fairclough (2016, 101), this emphasis shows the peculiarity of the conception of the idea of internationalization by the university as opposed to what obtains elsewhere, especially in the Western world. The belief underlying such a perception is that internationalization refers to having foreign links or contacts, especially connections with one of the most powerful nations in the world, America, even though internationalization elsewhere would mean having an international outlook, especially regarding the composition of students and lecturers.

Similar to the AUN's identity construction is that of the Skyline University of Nigeria, where a transnational identity is also expressed in the university profile:

(11)



(Skyline University Nigeria, Kano, https://oas.sun.edu.ng/Apply/About)

The transnational identity is expressed in the delocalization and internationalization of the university through the transfer of the United Arab Emirates' experience into Nigeria. The success of Skyline University College in the United Arab Emirates is being replicated in Nigeria with the establishment and transfer of the idea of the same university onto Nigerian soil and for Nigerian students, and the name is also intended to reflect this identity. The transnational identity of the institution also manifests its depiction as "the first international university… ." It is interesting that, as stated earlier, the deployment of "first" for the branding of Skyline University is characteristic of Fairclough's analytical level of textual description where the adjectival lexical item goes to convey meanings bordering on differentiation in line with Roper and Parker's (2006) postulation at the levels of interpretation and explanation. The international appeal generated through the transnational identity of the institution is no doubt a marketization strategy as it has the propensity to attract many Nigerian students to have access to "the Dubai experience" or have the opportunity to further their education at the school in the United Arab Emirates. This international appeal and connection, which highlight the transnational identity of the institution, are similarly used to brand it as an asset in the sense that Nigerian students will benefit from the knowledge of the Arab world and culture which they will get acquainted with through their lecturers or books on the Arab world and culture. To further this transnational identity, another extract from the section "Why Skyline University, Nigeria" describes the university this way

(12) *Primarily, the goal of the university is to be recognized both locally and internationally as the citadel of academic excellence. The university boasts of quality staff and faculty members drawn from different parts of the world.* (Skyline University, Kano, https://www.sun.edu.ng/sun-at-the-glance)

Universities face the potentially conflicting task of responding to both local and global demands, and are expected to balance these dual engagements, and this is what Skyline University has responded to in example (12). A transnational identity is built into the university's goal, and one of the practical ways of demonstrating this identity is the attraction of faculty members from different countries, while remaining socially responsible and relevant within the Nigerian local context. The internationality of the faculty of the university is an index of its transnational identity and further serves the purpose of branding the institution as an asset that offers the best exposure to such an identity to its students.

5.4 Humanist Identity

The humanistic approach to education is one of the most advanced in contemporary education, because the whole concept of education is about human development through knowledge transfer and societal development. The focus in the projection of humanist identity is the enhancement of self-worth, self-image and self-actualization. Covenant University has developed a system that projects this kind of identity through its curriculum.

(13) *The Total Man Concept (TMC) is Covenant University's custom-built programme that constitutes the core concept of her academic programmes. This concept centres on 'developing the man that will develop his world'. The TMC Programme focuses on the three components of the human personality: the spirit, the mind and the body.* (Covenant University, Ota, https://covenantuniversity.edu.ng/about-us/overview/about)

Total human development is a concept that is central to the concern of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for which the organization has developed the Human Development Index (HDI) to measure each of the following three dimensions – a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and having a decent standard of living. The human-centred focus of the Covenant University was developed to carve a niche for the institution and project its identity as humanistic. This aligns with Roper and Parker's (2006) idea of branding as personification as the total man concept is presented as the core of the academic operation of Covenant University. This is an uncommon marketization strategy, which is put forward in the general context of the promotion of the intellectualism and aesthetics, with little reference to the development of the total human personality.

This kind of identity is also projected by Redeemers University, Ede in its vision strategy. It emphasizes that the "total person" goes beyond intellectual success to latent aspects of the human individual, which will together with other, well-emphasized aspects produce the total person.

(14) *RUN is not only about academics. The serene atmosphere offers a conducive environment for your spiritual and secular development, making you a total person.* (Redeemers University, Ede, https://run.edu.ng/vision-mission-strategy/)

In addition to using the curriculum for achieving total human development, as done by Covenant University, Redeemer's University stresses the importance of the environment in one's total development. Here, neither universities misses out on the spiritual component of the human personality, being Christian mission institutions.

The University of Nigeria also projects the humanistic identity in its motto, which is: "To restore the dignity of man". Through the expression/motto used to construct the humanistic identity at the textual level, as given by Fairclough (2015), there is the employment of branding as personification, and the restoration of the dignity of human beings is presented as an attribute of social and symbolic meaning to Redeeemer's University. Education here is thus conceptualized as a tool for the restoration of human dignity, and making people realize their self-worth is an integral part of the humanistic-centred education. There is also the use of synonyms in the excerpt as the lexical items "serene" and "conducive" are both used to describe the environment at RUN for the purpose of marketizing it to the public. In the process of educating people, their minds are developed, as also expressed in the mission of the University of Benin:

(15) *To develop the human mind to be creative, innovative, competent in areas of specialization, knowledgeable in entrepreneurship and Dedicated Service.* (University of Benin, Benin City, https://uniben.edu.ng/about/)

Vital to human development is the development of the mind, which includes the cognitive skills and general intelligence necessary for adaptation and survival. These are spelled out in the mission of the university to create the awareness of those needs and the readiness to address them as part of its humanistic drive. Through the humanist identity created in the text, the producers also deploy branding as personification and branding as asset, based

on Roper and Parker's (2006) ideas. They promote the university as essentialized by the humanist orientation and list the values that can be obtain from the institution as innovation, professional competence, high entrepreneurial capacity and the ability to deliver exceptional service. Generally, the humanist identities created by these universities serve as a boost to promoting them as unique in their approaches to educational services.

5.5 Afrocentric Identity

Another form of identity seen in the branding of Nigerian universities is Afrocentrism, which is used to champion the African cause, values and identity. This resonates with an important idea in critical discourse analysis, which is resistance to foreign supremacist thinking and local inferiority/inequality to the foreign, which Fairclough (2016, 88) notes. What it means to be an African from an African perspective may be quite different from how the phenomenon is seen by others. With Africa's rich moral heritage of dignity, discipline, diligence, faith, honesty and integrity being eroded, these common ideals need re-emphasis in the context of the unmitigated acceptance of alien, Western doctrines. Some universities intentionally craft their profiles in such a way that they celebrate and project such Africanism and Afrocentric ideas in order to market their brand. The Afrocentric identity is foregrounded in the mission of Covenant University, thereby projecting the view of the restoration of human dignity, but focusing on the black race.

(16) *To create knowledge and restore the dignity of the black race via Human Development and Total Man Concept-driven curricula* (Covenant University, Ota, https://covenantuniversity.edu.ng/about-us/overview/about/)

Landmark University, an institution with the same owner as Covenant University, has a similar narration on the restoration of the dignity of the black race through the agrarian revolution, as noted in example in (2). It has always been said that the different forms of oppression the black race has gone through over the centuries, such as slavery and colonialism, have made it lose its dignity and real identity. But education can be deployed to restore this lost dignity. In the pursuit of this goal, Covenant University is one of the universities determined to bring Africa into the limelight through its human development programme, as expressed in the following example (17).

(17) *We run with a compelling vision of raising a new generation of leaders African continent.* (Covenant University, Ota, https://covenantuniversity.edung)

In this narrative on the activities of Covenant University, the ultimate goal of the human development programme is to "raise a new generation of leaders" specifically for Africa, the continent of the "black race". This is no doubt an instance of branding by personification as raising a new generation of leaders is presented as the major attribute of the institution, and is indeed a vital way of promoting the Afrocentric value. This value directly impacts on leadership, which is considered as a major challenge for many African countries. It is believed that with the kind of education that addresses leadership concerns, the dignity of the black race will be restored. The whole idea is articulated as a vision which is described as a "compelling" one. To further drive this leadership vision, Covenant University established the

African Leadership Development Centre (ALDC) to run innovative leadership trainings on leadership competencies. In the words of Dr David Oyedepo, the founder of the university:

(18) *The greatest challenge of Africa in the 21st century is leadership. Therefore, the African Leadership Development Centre (ALDC) is poised to address issues of Leadership Development across diverse contexts.* (Covenant University, Ota, https://covenantuniversity.edu.ng/about-us/operations/african-leadership-development-centre-aldc)

This narrative further underscores the leadership challenge of Africa and the need to address it through an Afrocentric vision.

Apart from dignity and leadership, another concern projected in the Afrocentric identity is the African cultural values, which appear to be eroding with the popularization of Western values through colonialism. Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) emphasizes this aspect of the Afrocentric identity with the resolve to add value to African culture, apparently by projecting it at every opportunity that arises.

(19) *To nurture a teaching and learning community; advance frontiers of knowledge; engender a sense of selfless public service; and add value to African culture*. (Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, https://oauife.edu.ng/about-oau/vission-mission)

Like many Nigerian universities, OAU has an institute that promotes African cultural values in order to drive its Afrocentric identity, and the African value of selflessness is enunciated in the profile of OAU excerpted above. All this has been presented in the profile for the purpose of branding OAU. In a similar manner as Covenant and Landmark Universities, in its "about us" text, AUN also addresses the issue of leadership, which is considered a very crucial challenge to the facilitation of the socio-economic development of Africa states

(20) *The goal of AUN is to train the future leaders of Africa and to serve as both a stimulus and agent of economic development throughout the region* [...] *AUN is committed to providing the skills and the leadership essential to advancing the continent's pressing social and economic challenges.* (American University, Yola, https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/about)

The reference to Africa in all the extracts is captured through the use of the lexical items "Africa", "region", "continent" and "black." It is however interesting that the foregrounding of Africa in all these narratives is positive, making the essence of the university the training of bright minds for the continent. It is generally believed that leadership is the bane of development in many African nations, and a close look at the excerpt shows that Roper and Parker's (2006) branding as personification and branding as asset are evident in the text. This is because the text shows what typifies the university and at the same time what it has to offer. As can be seen in the text, to show their passion for African development, these universities present themselves as committed to training future leaders for the related countries.

Although Afrocentrism may focus on a number of values beyond what has been addressed, such as its being a historical/political movement, three key issues have been identified as the

basis for driving the Afrocentric identity projections on the websites investigated – *the dignity of the back race*, *leadership* and *African cultural values*. These issues are considered strong enough for emphasis in the higher educational approach to advancing the Afrocentric values and promoting the African identity. It should also be noted that through the Afrocentric posturing of the institutions, they also brand themselves as different, peculiar and unique and at the same time personalize themselves.

5.6 Ethnic Identity

The university is a universal concept of a citadel for promoting the knowledge industry through the dispassionate pursuance of scholarship in diverse disciplines. Such an idea is therefore not expected to promote ethnic concerns, given the assumption of the composition of a university in terms of people from diverse backgrounds. Universities are expected to be global in outlook and orientation, and thus free from ethnic biases, but this is not always case in practice. Ethnic identity refers to certain features that associate a particular person or entity with members of an ethnic group in contrast to members of other ethnic groups. From our findings, we discovered that certain universities present strong identification with their host communities in order to foster harmonious relationships and probably to advance the town-gown relationship with the local communities. This can be seen in the "Community Relations" section of the Federal University Dutsin Ma's website.

(21) *Dutsin-ma people and its leaders, particularly the district head of Dutsin-ma, have been very hospitable and supportive to University since its establishment. The pioneer and subsequent leaderships of the University have done an excellent work of establishing and sustaining a mutually beneficial relation with our host community. Therefore, we made sure we build upon that through the recruitment of more junior staff and security personnel on casual basis from Dutsin-ma and neighbouring towns, sharing our water source with our immediate neighbours and repairs of water and electricity equipment, donation of computers, classroom furniture etc to public and community schools, making our facilities available like venues for events, sport fields and vehicles.* (Federal University, Dutsin-Ma, http://www.fudutsinma.edu.ng)

In spite of the status of a public federal university, the narrative above shows the university's strong identification with the host community, and to sustain this it is reflected in the institutions recruitment policy and some social programmes targeted at the community. This captures Roper and Parker's (2006) idea on branding as identification. Even though the university is not presented as being owned by the community, it is presented as inseparable from it. The ethnic identity manifests through references to leadership and the people, giving the impression of the university enjoying goodwill and a harmonious relationship with the community.

The role ethnicity plays in shaping university identities in Nigeria is becoming more prominent. This, of course, cannot be divorced from the conceptions of "community" and "ethnicity" in Nigeria and perhaps Africa in general. The notion of community in Nigeria and Africa is rooted in the communal essence of the people, and Abakare and Okeke (2018, 67–68) state that "it is a system of social relations in which the claims of the individual is

generally put second, next to the claim of the community". Closely tied to the idea of the community is the conceptualization of ethnicity in Nigeria, which defines many if not most Nigerians. This of course cannot be separated from the reality that most Nigerians define themselves in terms of their ethnicity first before perceiving themselves as Nigerians, since the nation is made up of many diverse and distinct ethnic groups.

Ethnic affiliations play prominent roles in the appointments of key officers in public institutions, and ordinarily this should be seen as antithetical to the spirit of intellectualism, in which competence is rated above any other considerations. But the reality in the contemporary Nigerian educational system is that the universities are gradually being "ethnicized", and this process is being legitimized. Quite significant is the motivation to stress ethnic issues on the university's website to make the wider world understand the university's concerns for its host community in order to complement the usual research and teaching duties. This kind of information may also become relevant in the light of unhealthy relationships that sometimes develop between institutions and their host communities in contemporary Nigeria, sometimes leading to attacks and even killings.

A few communities are strong, cohesive, determined and financially strong enough to establish their own universities. Such universities are few, but for them the construction of an ethnic identity would not be out of place. Such is the case of Kwararafa University in Wukari, North Eastern, Nigeria.

(22) *Kwararafa University Wukari was licensed as Wukari jubilee by the National Universities Commission in 2005. It took off in March, 2006 with 61 students as the first community promoted University in Nigeria, the first university in Taraba State and the second private university in the North East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Located at Wukari an ancient city that was for a while the headquarters of the historically famous Kwararafa Confederacy, the university changed its name from Wukari Jubilee to Kwararafa in February 2012 to reflect the historical roots of the confederacy which at the zenith of its powers extended to modern Niger, Plateau, Kogi, Nasarawa and Benue States…In the logo, the spear head "Atoshi" is the traditional weapon of the Jukun people (host community of the University).* (Kwararafa University, Wukari, https://www.kuw.edu.ng/history.php)

The text above manifests the deployment of branding as differentiation for the purpose of creating a remarkable academic identity for the university. The statement "the first community promoted university in Nigeria" bears this differentiation in the text.

Just as it was indicated earlier that even the names of the institutions are used to construct professional identities, for specialized institutions (see above) in particular there is also the construction of ethnic identity through the name of the university "Kwararafa University." "Kwararafa" is identified with a multi-ethnic confederacy around the River Benue valley of Central Nigeria. Wukari, which later became the rallying point for the Jukun people, who are a very strong part of the confederacy. Therefore, through the name, the university identifies itself with the Jukun, Wukari and the historical and defunct Kwararafa confederacy. The practice of deploying historical names for constructing ethnic identities for institutions is not peculiar to

this university, as there is also a university in Southwestern Nigeria named Oduduwa University in order to construct the Yoruba ethnic identity. Oduduwa is seen in Yoruba history as the first Yoruba person to have ever lived. Therefore, it can be said that apart from promoting harmonious existence with the people of the immediate locality, reference to historical values by institutions may have been the goal of promoting ethnicism by some universities.

It should also be noted that in order to foster ethnic identities, many public universities are named after persons considered to be prominent in the history of the ethnic groups that are based where such universities are sited after their deaths. While such persons are mostly politicians, the goal is primarily to promote an ethnic identity. Some examples include: Obafemi Awolowo University (named after the former Premier of the Western Region), Ahmadu Bello University (named after the former Premier of the Northern Region), Nnamdi Azikiwe University (named after the former President of Nigeria), Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (named after the first Prime Minister of the country in the 1st Republic), and Ambrose Ali University (named after the former Governor of the then Bendel State), among many others. Ethnic identity was the motivation for the (re)naming of these institutions and this resonates well with the different ethnic groups, since they legitimize the action.

5.7 Religious Identity

Since the liberalization of higher education and the granting of licenses to religious bodies to establish universities, many religious organizations have established universities in the country and the projection of religious identities is quite visible on the websites of these universities. In spite of the pressure on religious institutions to secularize, religious identity is becoming a prominent feature in the profiles of such institutions in Nigeria. By religious identity, we mean the use of language and visual element to show affiliations with certain religions or promote them. It may not be particularly surprising that religious identity keeps manifesting in the profiles of the higher institutions, given the fact that in the Nigerian nation, there is generally a wide reference to religion. Below are some examples that illustrate the promotion of religious identity in the narratives on the websites of some universities in Nigeria.

(23) *The mission of Veritas University is to provide its students with an integral and holistic formation that combines academic and professional training with physical, moral, spiritual, social and cultural formation together formation of Christian religious principles and the social teachings of the Catholic Church… Based on Christian inspiration and Christ's sacrificial witness, the University shall promote authentic human and cultural development modeled on the person of Christ.* (Veritas University Abuja, https://www.veritas.edu.ng/about/mission.php)

In example (23), which is extracted from the self-description of Veritas University, one can see the explicit construction of a Christian identity for the university by the text producers. This construction of Christian identity by the university resonates with Roper and Parker's (2006) principle of identification in their branding theory – the university wishes to be recognized as a Christian institution. Looking at the data through the prism of Fairclough's (2015) analytical layer of textual description, one realizes that the strategic lexical items used in the text for the creation of Christian identity for the higher institution are "spiritual", "Christian

religious principles", "Christian", "Catholic", "church" and "Christ". Once one sees the above-mentioned lexical items in the self-portrait of the institution, one immediately discerns that it is a Christian school and indeed an institution established by a specific Christian denomination: the Catholic Church.

It is interesting to note that through the religious identity constructed in the text, the university intentionally tries to appeal to a certain segment of Nigerians, Christians, in order to market their institution. Furthermore, while a broad Christian identity is constructed in the text, it is also discernible that the religious identity is further deepened by identifying the institution as a Catholic one through reference to Catholicism as a subset of the Christian religious identity. Apart from the explicit mention of the Catholic Church in the text, other parts of the profile foreground Catholicism through reference to "the Second Vatican Council" and other expressions such as "Catholic identity of the University", "Catholic principles and attitudes" and "Catholic universities". This particular Catholic identity constructed for the university above its Christian identity indexes Roper and Parker's idea of differentiation in their branding theory, which borders on how a brand differentiates itself from other brands. A similar religious identity construction is found on the webpage of Madonna University, another university owned by the Catholic Church.

(24) *Being **the first private/Catholic university in Nigeria** and a member of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU), we pride ourselves to be **upholders of the great Catholic education tradition** that birthed modern civilization.* (Madonna University, Okija, https://www.madonnauniversity.edu.ng/page/24/)

The strong Catholic identity constructed in the narrative is seen in the expression "upholders of the great Catholic education tradition". The Catholic Church has been involved in education in Nigeria since the pre-colonial days, and over the years they have been known for their educational tradition, which cuts across schools at all levels – primary and secondary and now university. There is the deployment of branding as differentiation for the purpose of creating an academic identity for the institution. Differentiation here is not limited to denominationalism, but is also reflected in the prominence of terms such as the exclusive claim of "firstness", which boosts and markets the brand. Differentiation in religious identity is also seen in the following extract from Covenant University's "about us" text.

(25) *Covenant University is a private Pentecostal Christian University, which has been operating with official status since 2002 in Ota, Nigeria. Covenant University is one of the leading universities in Africa founded on Christian Mission Ethos. It has the vision to raise a new generation of leaders and reinstate the black race's dignity. The University is committed to remaining at the cutting-edge of learning based on enlightening the Total Man.* (Covenant University, Ota, https://covenantuniversity.edu.ng/about-us/overview/about)

Pentecostalism is projected as opposed to other forms of Christian religious practices, and the university is described as being founded on "Christian Mission Ethos". This means the university has a distinguishing character, moral nature and guiding beliefs which differentiate it from others of similar Christian background. Beyond the projection of a Pentecostal

identity, this differentiation is also seen in the expression of the university's mission focus.

Religious identity as a branding technique also manifests in (26), which is part of the profile of Usmanu Danfodiyo University.

(26) *The University statute established the Centre for Islamic Studies in 1982. Its aim, among others, is to promote the study of and research in Islam, its instructions and related disciplines and its culture with special reference to the northern states of Nigeria. The Centre runs a Diploma programme in Islamic Studies, which started in 1983, to assist in the manpower development of the locality and the country at large. The Centre also runs certificate courses in Arabic and Islamic Studies.* (Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, http://www.udusok.edu.ng)

It is interesting that in this particular construction of religious identity, the university intentionally foregrounded on its website a centre of Islamic studies in cognizance of the popularity of the Islamic religion in Sokoto, where it is located. Using Roper and Parker's (2006) idea on branding, the presentation of the Centre for Islamic Studies as a very important feature of the university can be considered as asset branding. The centre is an immediately recognizable phenomenon that embodies and promotes Islam. Therefore, Usmanu Danfodiyo University brands itself as a university in the heart of Sokoto, the seat of the leadership of Islam in Nigeria. This promotion of Islamic religious identity is particularly significant because the institution is a public university owned by the federal government of Nigeria. The university authorities however deem it proper to project the popular religious faith in its locale and promote a religious identity on the related website. The religious identity further shows that even public universities can be sensitive to the religious peculiarities of their locations.

6 Conclusion

This study has examined the discursive construction of identity on Nigerian university websites and discussed how these constructions further project marketization of their brands to stakeholders. Sourcing data from selected public and private university websites in different parts of Nigeria, the study critically engaged the websites' narratives and identified the major identity types that are constructed, which are: professional, national, transnational, humanist, Afrocentric, ethnic and religious identities. The study argues that while many Nigerian universities project professional, national and transnational/international values, which could be very positive, some others promote humanist and Afrocentric identities in order to underscore pragmatic social values. Moreover, others project issues of narrow interest, which may not necessarily impact scholarship and intellectualism, such as religion and ethnicity. For such institutions, religion and ethnicity are essentialized to drive the sentiments of their organizations and locales. The significance of this study lies in its understanding of the discursive strategies that underly the projection of identities in Nigerian universities' websites. It also offers these perspectives in order to close the apparent gaps in global studies on marketization discourses, especially in the area of identity construction.

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Is It All Greek to You? An Analysis of Communication Strategies among Erasmus Students

ABSTRACT

The goal of this paper is to investigate English as a lingua franca (ELF), a phenomenon that has attracted much attention in the last twenty years. Specifically, it aims to analyse the communicative strategies non-native speakers of English employ with a view to securing understanding. To achieve this, informal ELF conversations among Erasmus students at the University of Graz are investigated. This study deploys qualitative methods, i.e., semi-structured interviews with Erasmus students were tape-recorded and transcribed. Therefore, communication strategies that contribute to mutual understanding are presented along with examples and their frequency of usage in the data. Furthermore, the numerous functions of communication strategies are mentioned along with possible explanations of their use. The findings show that Erasmus students employ various strategies with the aim of achieving mutual understanding and preventing possible communication problems.

Keywords: English as a lingua franca, Erasmus students, self-initiated communicative strategies, other-initiated communicative strategies

Ali me sploh kaj razumeš? Analiza sporazumevalnih strategij med študenti v okviru programa Erasmus

IZVLEČEK

Predmet raziskave je angleščina kot lingua franca (ALF) – pojav, ki je v zadnjih dvajsetih letih pritegnil pozornost jezikoslovcev. Cilj raziskave je analiza sporazumevalnih strategij, ki jih za potrebe razumevanja uporabljajo nematerni govorci angleščine. V ta namen smo analizirali neformalne pogovore v ALF med študenti v okviru programa Erasmus na Univerzi v Gradcu. Uporabili smo kvalitativne metode: polstrukturirane intervjuje s študenti smo posneli in transkribirali. V članku so na podlagi analize predstavljene sporazumevalne strategije, ki prispevajo k vzajemnemu razumevanju, skupaj z zgledi in pogostostjo rabe. Omenjene so številne funkcije komunikacijskih strategij z možnimi razlagami njihove uporabe. Rezultati raziskave kažejo, da študenti v okviru programa Erasmus uporabljajo različne strategije z namenom doseganja vzajemnega razumevanja in preprečevanja morebitnih težav pri sporazumevanju.

Ključne besede: angleščina kot lingua franca, študenti v okviru programa Erasmus, samoiniciativne sporazumevalne strategije, sporazumevalne strategije na pobudo drugih

1 Introduction

The fact that English has been used internationally as a lingua franca for centuries does not represent an astonishing discovery. However, its unique position today means that English is now being used globally to an extent far surpassing its earlier reach. Moreover, the situation becomes increasingly complicated as the number of speakers of English continues to rise exponentially. As a result, the last two decades have led to a rapid expansion in the field of linguistics exploring this particular state of affairs. A considerable body of research has been published on English as a lingua franca (ELF) (e.g., Jenkins 2000; Mauranen and Ranta 2009; Seidlhofer 2011). What could be inferred from these studies is that misunderstandings represent a rare occurrence due to the "effort ELF users put in so as to prevent such problems" and their collaboration (Jokić 2017, 16). This stands in contrast with the popular belief that the different levels of proficiency and wide range of accents could cause a breakdown in communication among international users of English.

While previous ELF research concentrated more on identifying phonological or morphosyntactic features, more recent literature has emerged dealing with pragmatic strategies and their functions (e.g., Björkman 2014). It should be noted that the reason for this could be because pragmatic features have long been thought of as somewhat challenging to pinpoint compared to phonological or lexico-grammatical features.

The concept of a communication strategy (CS) was formulated in Selinker's (1972) seminal article on interlanguage as one of the five fundamental processes used in L2 communication. In 1977, Tarone published a paper in which she provided a taxonomy that is still regarded as one of the most authoritative in CS research. However, it was Váradi (1980) who carried out the first CS analysis, which focused on message adjustment.

In the 1980 and 1990s, several studies were conducted with the aim of determining and categorizing CSs (Bialystok 1990; Cook 1993; Poulisse 1987). A selection of the most influential papers, edited by Faerch and Kasper (1983), had the same goal. Similarly, a group of scholars at Nijmegen University undertook a study that proposed a new set of strategies (Kellerman et al. 1990). Lastly, another project that brought together the most important papers at the time was Kasper and Kellerman (1997). This collection was significant because it widened the scope of CSs research by including papers that perceived L2 acquisition not only as a cognitive but also as a social phenomenon.

As far as the definition of CSs is concerned, a literature review reveals that most call attention to "problematicity" or "problem-orientedness" (Dörnyei and Scott 1997, 182). ELF scholars have suggested that the issue of "problematicity" needs to be tackled in the ELF field as well. In ELF conversations, there is a wide range of different accents and proficiency levels, such that the participants often seem to use "pro-active" strategies in order to avoid potential misunderstandings. The characteristic of being prepared for a potential misunderstanding and knowing how to handle it represents the quality of ELF conversations and is a recurrent theme in ELF research (Björkman 2014, 124).

Furthermore, Björkman (2014, 125) mentions that the only reference to the communicative strategies' framework related to ELF settings is Kirkpatrick's study (2007). However, she

criticizes the way CSs have been classified. Kirkpatrick divided all strategies into speaker and listener, which, according to Björkman, might be complicated when it comes to assigning the roles in a conversation since the moment a listener replies to a speaker, they become a speaker as well. Therefore, she proposes another categorization that is already known from CA: "self-initiated" and "other-initiated" strategies (Björkman 2014, 127).

To the best of our knowledge, Björkman (2014) is the only researcher that has provided a communicative strategies framework within an ELF perspective. She produced a taxonomy of strategies that occurred in ELF interactions in a higher education setting. The present study follows Björkman's thought process and uses her framework as a starting point, adapting it to different settings, i.e., investigating whether these strategies are to be found in informal conversations between Erasmus students at the Karl-Franzens University of Graz, Austria.

Apart from Kalocsai (2014), who analysed the practices of Erasmus exchange students, there is a general lack of research in communicative strategies in the Erasmus community. Most of the research on communicative strategies pertains to particular strategies analysing them in greater detail (Cogo 2009; Firth 1996; Kaur 2011; Kirkpatrick 2007; Lichtkoppler 2007; Mauranen 2006). In contrast, this paper will review the most frequently recurring strategies in an attempt to build a communicative strategies framework. At this point, it is crucial to emphasize that it is beyond the scope of this study to analyse all communicative strategies mentioned and described in the existing body of literature. What follows is thus a brief explanation of perceived communicative strategies.

As noted by Norrick (1987, 245), "[e]veryday face-to-face conversation thrives, in particular, on repetition". However, despite its ubiquity, far too little attention has been paid to repetition and its functions in conversations, and only a few scholars have tried to bridge this knowledge gap by portraying its various forms and functions (Bazzanella 1996, 2011; Johnstone 1994; Norrick 1987; Tannen, 1987; 2007).

Paraphrase can be defined as "providing the same content by modifying the previous utterance or ongoing utterance" (Björkman 2014, 131). It is considered by some linguists (Tannen 1987) as an extended repetition. When speaking about paraphrase, we should highlight that its use to pre-empt problems of understanding in ELF conversations has been already documented (Kaur 2009). What Kaur (2009) emphasizes is that a speaker often chooses to employ paraphrase when the problem is in understanding rather than hearing, which she connects to the use of repetition.

Self-repair is described as a strategy that is used "when the speaker corrects the pronunciation, the word selection, or the grammar of what they have just said" (Deterding 2013, 131). The frequency of this in conversation is reported to be high, since speakers deal with any obstacles that occur in the interaction as they go along (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). As regards their function, self-repairs have often been portrayed in the literature as proactive (Mauranen 2006), thus contributing to mutual understanding. In her study, Björkman (2014) included the type of repair referred to as "word replacement" and analysed their instances. In the same vein, Kaur (2011) identified self-repairs on four different levels, namely phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactical.

Comprehension checks have been described in the literature as those strategies that speakers use – and are therefore self-initiated – in order to verify whether the listener understood the previously mentioned utterances (Björkman 2014). It is symptomatic that they often occur in the form of a question or a stressed word. As far as the functions of comprehension checks are concerned, they are of great importance as they allow the speaker to determine the level of understanding in communication and spot any possible misunderstandings.

As regards confirmation checks, this strategy is used when the content of the previous utterance is not precise enough. Speakers usually ask questions (e.g., *Do you mean?*), or they use question repeats (i.e., repeating a word/utterance with a rising intonation) with the purpose of continuing the flow of conversation. Research into confirmation checks in ELF contexts has revealed that they tend to be used proactively in conversations to prevent misunderstandings (Mauranen 2006; Björkman 2014).

Clarification requests are similar to confirmation checks, in that they are also used when inquiring about a previously uttered segment of a conversation. Correspondingly, they are often formed as questions. However, when using clarification requests participants "ask for explanations or more information on something they have not fully understood" (Björkman 2014, 133).

The final strategy, called by Björkman (2014) "co-creating the message/anticipation", and by Kirkpatrick (2007) "lexical anticipation", implies that participants finish each other's utterances, but only in those situations where they cannot deliver their message. Through identifying any potential trouble and enhancing the utterance with the missing elements, co-creation is established. As a result, an utterance is produced that strengthens mutual understanding. In the next section, I will introduce my study and take a closer look at its objectives, research questions, methodology and data.

2 Data and Methodology

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how international students talk to each other and overcome linguistic and cultural obstacles in ELF contexts. In analysing their speech, this study sets out to report on communicative strategies that international students – and specifically Erasmus students at the Karl-Franzens University of Graz – employ in order to prevent and overcome misunderstandings in conversation. To that end, a small-range corpus which consists of only non-native speakers of English was built with a view to offering new insights into the communicative effectiveness of ELF use. As has been discussed in major publications on ELF (e.g., Seidlhofer 2011), native speakers are not excluded from ELF, and nor are they from the community of Erasmus/international students. However, this study included only non-native speakers of English since it wanted to report on the use of communicative strategies among speakers whose L1 is not English. Therefore, the focal point of this study rests on Erasmus students' communication and the suitability of an ELF framework as the best analytical approach from which insights could be gained.

This study is led by one principal research question:

> RQ1: What are the strategies Erasmus students use in order to prevent and overcome possible misunderstanding?

A further underlying research question in this study is:

> RQ2: To what extent do Erasmus students use communicative strategies?

This research understands the Erasmus community as a "community of practice" (Kalocsai 2014) since it comprises a large pool of international students who experience similar processes, some of these being the adaptation to a new environment, experiencing cultural shock or using English as the primary language of communication, i.e., a lingua franca. As a method of inquiry, group interviews were chosen to gain insights into the communicative strategies employed by ELF speakers due to its advantage of obtaining a comparatively large amount of qualitative data. During the interviews, which were semi-structured, with all the questions set in advance, the participants were asked how they felt in the new surroundings and what things they liked or did not like about Graz. The semi-structured approach is adopted as a balance between structured and unstructured interviews. While on the one hand structured interviews "follow a pre-prepared, elaborate interview schedule" and often lead to the lack of spontaneity, unstructured interviews represent the total opposite, allowing "maximum flexibility to follow the interviewee in unpredictable directions" (Dörnyei 2007, 135). Using the semi-structured type of interview enables not only the possibility to pose open-ended questions, but also offers the advantage of encouraging participants to explicate whatever seems relevant to them.

As far as my role of the interviewer is concerned, not only was I able to be an observer, but also a participant, which helped immensely in reaching valuable conclusions. Engaging in interviews also enabled me to ask about and share the participants' experiences, albeit to a limited extent. Moreover, while the interviews were held I took brief notes, which I thought could be of importance in the data analysis.

The data reported in this study include seventeen group interviews ranging approximately from 40 to 65 minutes and resulting in 15 hours and 35 minutes of conversational data. Of the 39 participants, 14 were male and 25 female. The group sizes ranged from two to three speakers, except in one case where there were five speakers. All of the participants were aged between 20 and 28. As regards the linguacultural context, it includes 18 different backgrounds: most of the participants spoke Romance languages as their L1s (Portuguese, Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian), followed by Slavic (Croatian, Slovenian, Serbian, Bosnian, Czech, Ukrainian), Germanic (Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish), Hellenic (Greek) and Finno-Ugric languages (Finnish, Hungarian).

The conversations were transcribed by using the VoiceScribe editor and adapted VOICE mark-up and spelling transcription conventions (http://www.univie.ac.at/voice/documents/VOICE_mark-up_conventions_v2-1.pdf). In this study, transcribing interviews itself represents part of the qualitative data analysis alongside identifying and categorizing

communicative strategies, which is strengthened by quantification, namely finding out about their frequencies. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that this study adopts a Conversation Analysis (CA) framework in its broadest sense to map the usage of interactional strategies (Firth 1996). The discourse was studied by taking into account the turn-taking system so that the classification of communicative strategies would be easier. Given that the participants had as a goal to reach mutual understanding, the CA approach was used to identify instances of misunderstanding and the way the interviewees dealt with it. Moreover, apart from the turn-taking system, this study includes details on overlaps and pauses when they are of importance.

3 Results

The following is a systematic account of communication strategies that the Erasmus students in this study used in their interactions. Overall, this study reveals that the bulk of communicative strategies belong to the self-initiated category with 562 instances (90%), whereas other-initiated communicative strategies were found in 65 instances and account for 10% of the total number of instances. What follows is a visual overview of my taxonomy in Figure 1 and a detailed theoretical outline of these strategies illustrated with examples from the corpus.

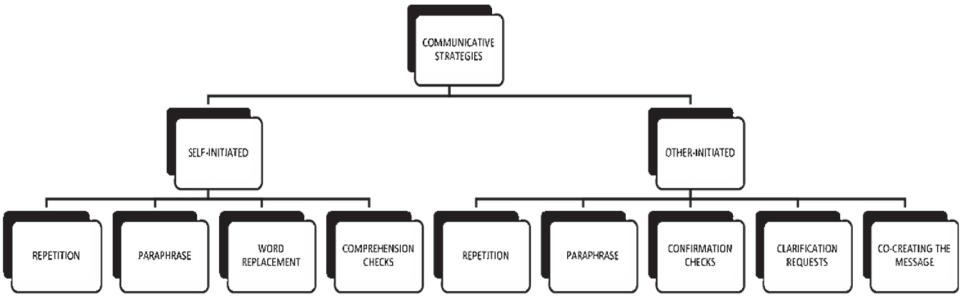

Figure 1. Taxonomy of communicative strategies observed in the study.

3.1 Self-Initiated Communicative Strategies

According to a definition proposed Björkman (2014, 129), self-initiated communicative strategies "are those where the speaker himself/herself initiates the use of a CS for a variety of communicative purposes." She proceeds to say that the reason for doing this could be explained by the speakers' decision to "enhance the explicitness of a statement they feel may be potentially risky, to check the comprehension of an utterance, or to replace a word that may not be transparent to the other speakers" (Björkman 2014, 129). The current study revealed that four different self-initiated communicative strategies were used among the Erasmus students under investigation. These were repetition, paraphrase, self-repair and comprehension checks. The frequency of these strategies is illustrated below (Figure 2).

This study found 562 tokens of self-initiated communicative strategies in the corpus. From the data in Figure 2, it is apparent that self-initiated repetition is by far the most frequent self-initiated communicative strategy employed among the Erasmus students. Thereafter, the instances of self-initiated word replacement and self-initiated paraphrase are found to

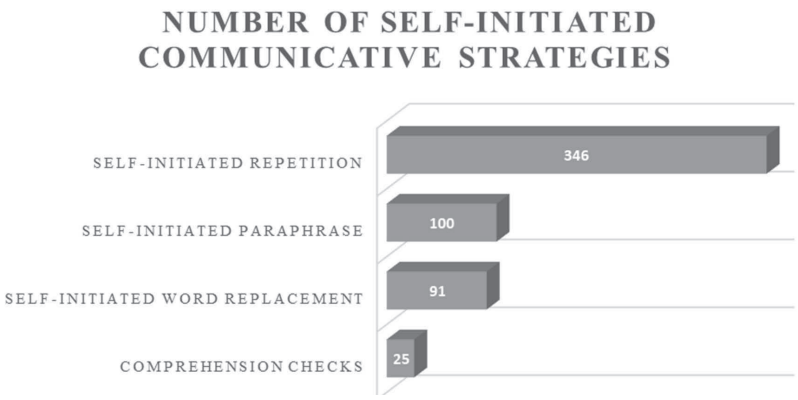

Figure 2. Number of self-initiated communicative strategies (562/627 instances).

be comparatively similar to each other in terms of their occurrence. Moreover, the results obtained demonstrate that comprehension checks constitute the minority and are the least frequent self-initiated communicative strategy.

3.1.1 Self-Initiated Repetition

Self-initiated repetition entails a speaker reiterating their words. In order to accurately identify repetition in ELF talk, certain criteria had to be applied in the analysis of the data. Firstly, the original linguistic unit of the repetition needed to be identified in the transcribed text. Secondly, a methodological decision was made prior to the analysis that neither repetition due to disfluencies (e.g., *I like…I like…I like*) nor repetition used for backchannelling purposes (e.g., *yeah yeah*) were to be of considerable significance for this study. Thirdly, it is essential to acknowledge that even though repetitions can be found on several levels, this study has as its focus only those that occur on a lexical or syntactic level since further elaboration would go beyond the scope this paper.

As regards the time of occurrence, repetition can be classified into immediate and delayed. Bearing in mind how previous researchers (Lichtkoppler 2007; Tannen 2007) dealt with this issue, it was decided that immediate self-initiated repetition should be defined as one that appears immediately after the original utterance or in the same turn (Extract 1). On the other hand, delayed self-initiated repetition was considered as such when there was at least one turn between the original and repeated element (Extract 2). Throughout the paper, the relevant parts in the extracts are given in bold.

Extract 1

1 S3: no **i have seen i have seen**
2 S1: you have okay (.) what do you think about that
3 S3: it's **it's strange** yeah **it's strange** but i like it because i like dogs @@

Extract 2

1 S3: today **the woman was very rude at the shop**
2 S2: they they (1)
3 S3: she was like <L1pt> a:h </L1pt>
4 S1: that is an interesting thing to talk about
5 S3: she **was really rude at the shop**

It is apparent from Figure 3 below that the majority of self-initiated repetition instances appeared immediately after the original or in the same turn. In contrast, slightly more than a quarter of all self-initiated repetitions were classified as delayed. A comparison of the results indicates the participants' preference to repeat themselves in the same turn, thus offering an explanation that they wished to enhance their peers' understanding.

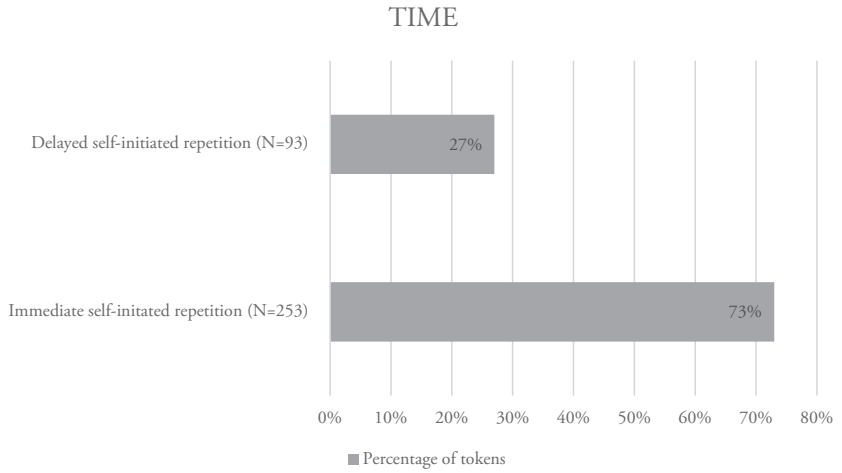

Figure 3. Self-initiated repetitions according to time of occurrence.

As far as the scale of fixity is concerned, a few of preconditions needed to be set out so that the obtained results were reliable. First, exact repetition implied precise wording, whereas repetition with variation included minor or major changes at the lexico-grammar level. The case when all the elements were changed without altering the idea constituted a paraphrase which is viewed as a distinct strategy in this study. Furthermore, an important factor in deciding between exact repetition and repetition with variation was a pause. If participants took a pause after the repetition of an original phrase or utterance, this would be classified as an exact repetition and the following elements would not constitute any variation (Extract 3). On the other hand, if the pause was taken immediately after the original phrase or utterance and the repetition ensued, then that would represent the example of repetition with variation (Extract 4).

Extract 3

1 S2: **the only the only (.)** part where when things are international are these students
2 parties or students happenings or whatever…

Extract 4

1 S2: they all seem yeah i mean but but one was from serbia @@@ i did not know that so yeah
2 but so **she was very (.) she was very relaxed** and yeah my mentor here is also very friendly

It should also be borne in mind that there is a significant difference between exact repetitions and repetitions of disfluencies. As seen in Extract 3, the speaker does not repeat the segments just because he/she is not able to produce an utterance, but rather for the purposes of emphasis and considerable relevance for the rest of the conversation.

With respect to the question of the usage of self-initiated repetitions in terms of form, this study finds that slightly more than half of all the instances are repetitions with variation (Figure 4). Taken together, these results provide valuable insights into the use of self-initiated repetition, therefore suggesting that the participants employ it so as to ensure understanding.

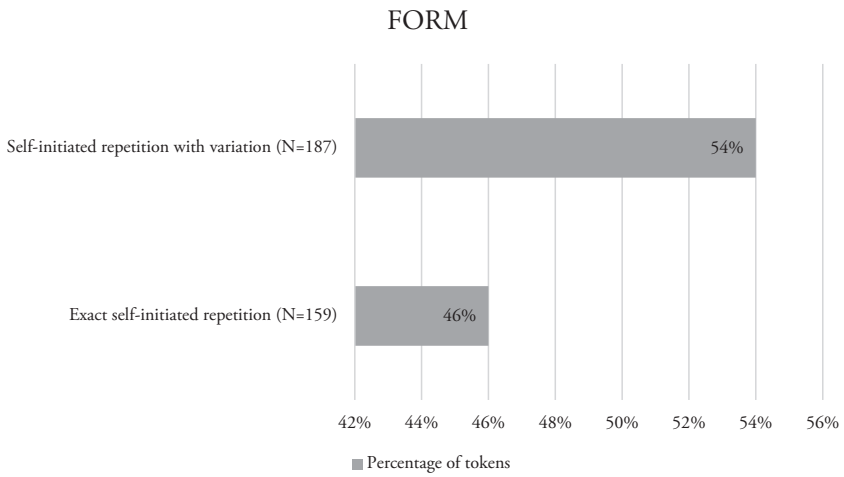

Figure 4. Self-initiated repetition according to form.

3.1.2 Self-Initiated Paraphrase

Self-initiated paraphrase is defined as a strategy employed when a speaker wants to rephrase a previous utterance without changing the content or idea. The results of this study show that self-initiated paraphrase is found in 100 instances in the corpus. With regard to the time of occurrence, self-initiated paraphrase can be classified into immediate and delayed. As with repetition, an immediate self-initiated paraphrase was defined as one that appears immediately after the original utterance or in the same turn (Extract 5). Conversely, delayed self-initiated paraphrase was considered as when there was at least one turn between the original segment and paraphrase (Extract 6).

Extract 5

1 S2: @@@ **i spend on food really really and also on travels** because i think that's worthy i i
2 don't want to care about money right now because i wanna live the erasmus ss experience so
3 **i'm going on trips and i'm buying the food** that i like

Extract 6

1 S3: probably because I I don't know why but in the next town they speak different than I do (.)
you can basically say **by the way a person speaks** where they where the person is from
2 S2: mhm
3 S3: just **by listening to a person**

Figure 5 provides a summary of self-initiated paraphrase in the data as far as time of occurrence is concerned.

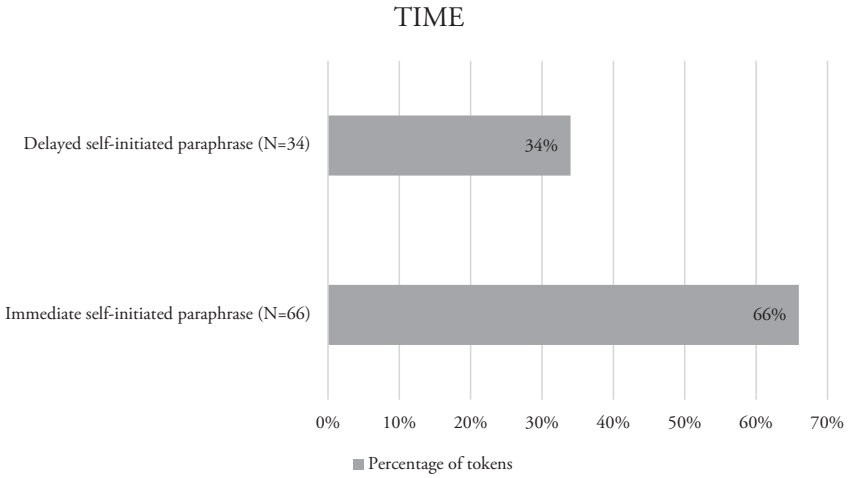

Figure 5. Self-initiated paraphrase according to time of occurrence.

As can be seen in Figure 5, the majority of instances of self-initiated paraphrase tend to appear within the same turn, whereas slightly more than one third are found later in the conversation. Overall, these results show that self-initiated paraphrase is, in this study, utilized in informal interactions among the Erasmus students as the second most frequent communicative strategy.

3.1.3 Self-Initiated Word Replacement

Self-initiated word replacement represents a type of self-repair that occurs at the lexical level. The current study finds that there are 91 instances of self-initiated word replacement in the corpus. As Figure 6 shows, the word choice category seems to be the most frequent, constituting half of all instances of self-initiated word replacement. The insertion of a lexical item takes the second place with slightly more than a third of all instances, whereas pronoun replacement represents the least frequent category of word replacement. Even though pronoun replacement might be incorporated in the word choice category, this study distinguishes it as a separate category due to its specific use.

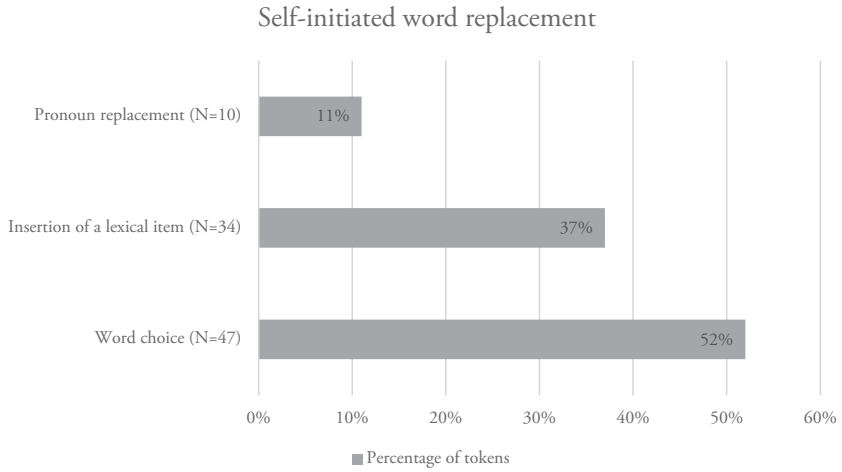

Figure 6. Categories and frequency of self-initiated word replacement.

Word choice represents a category of word replacement where a speaker self-corrects themselves and chooses another word that best describes the current situation. There are 47 such occurrences in the corpus. What the examples in this category have in common is the fact that the speakers decided to perform a word replacement in search of a better word to describe the concept in question. For example, in Extract 7, S2 describes the first impressions of living in another country and in the second line they replace the word *nature* with *parks*, which shows the intention of this speaker to enhance clarity and avoid any vagueness. Furthermore, this successful attempt at minimizing ambiguity reveals one more characteristic, namely the speaker's practice to replace a general term with a more specific one.

Extract 7

1 S2: I was actually maybe a little bit depressed at beginning because I thought that that they have
2 **no nature (.) no parks** cause I am really I am really used to going to the woods every day…

In addition, the research findings reveal that the insertion of lexical items is found in thirty-four examples in the corpus. In Extract 8, when referring to bars and cafes, S2 realises that mentioning that it is a thing would probably not be precise enough for the participants in the conversation, which prompts this speaker to insert Austrian in order to pre-empt any communication problems.

Extract 8

1 S2: mhm so maybe bars or cafes is **a thing is an austrian thing** but not nightlife

The third category of self-initiated word replacement is pronoun replacement, found in ten instances in the corpus. What these instances have in common is that speakers could be aware of the fact that the use of pronouns may lead to ambiguity. Therefore, they opt to pre-empt it by replacing them with their referents. In Extract 9, S3 immediately realises that the pronoun

us may be too ambiguous, which is why it is followed by a prepositional phrase that makes it more specific what this speaker had in mind.

Extract 9

1 S3: yes yes **for us (.) for students** it is not good but if you work here it's amazing

In view of what has been discussed with respect to self-initiated word replacement above, it can be summarized that this strategy aims to minimize and pre-empt any ambiguity in understanding that might occur by either replacing words or inserting lexical items.

3.1.4 Comprehension Checks

Comprehension checks are a type of self-initiated communicative strategy that serves the function of checking the listener's understanding. Overall, twenty-five instances of comprehension checks were observed in the informal Erasmus students' interactions examined here. As Figure 7 shows, the majority of comprehension checks employed were in the form of a stressed word with rising intonation. The second most frequent kind of comprehension check is the minimal check with a rising intonation *okay*, which accounted for 20% of these. Only a fifth of the total number of instances goes to short questions such as *you know?, do you know?, you know what I mean?* and another minimal check which is *yeah*. For the purposes of this article, only the first two, i.e., the most frequent comprehension checks, will be analysed.

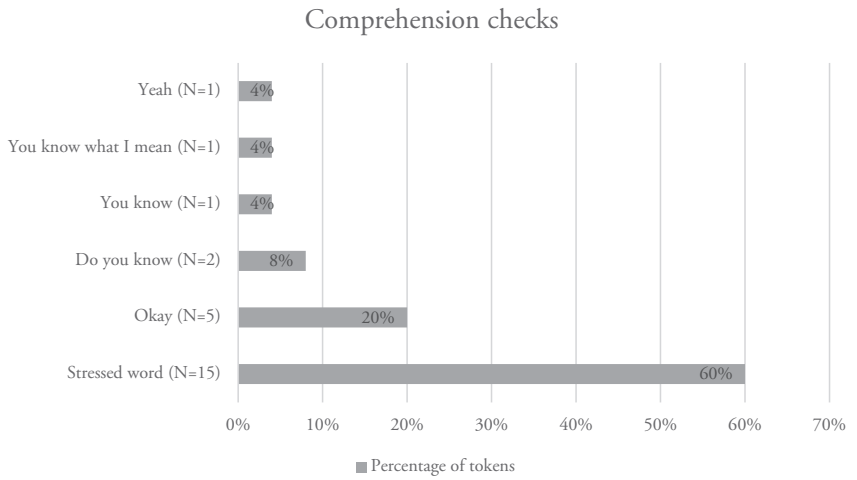

Figure 7. Forms and frequency of comprehension checks.

Regarding the use of *okay*, it occurs five times in the corpus in the function of a comprehension check, namely in a rising intonation pattern. In Extract 10, S3 offers their opinion on the power distance in the relationship between professors and students at their home university and the University of Graz. The statement about professors who are seen as gods, seemingly the main message, is further elaborated in line four. Here, it is emphasized that it is not only the professors themselves who play a crucial role in the outcome of this relationship but that it also depends on the courses. In order to verify whether participants understood the intent

fully, this speaker utilizes a minimal check at the end of their utterance. It is of significance here that the speaker waits for confirmation so that they may continue with the original topic.

Extract 10

S3: I like the relationship between the professor (1) and us so er I came from a big university and professors are (2) gods @@@ and (1) you feel alone and very far from professors
S1: mhm
S3: so I think it's (.) yeah maybe (4) it depends from the professors but from the course **okay?**
(.)
S1: mhm
S3: but here we have (.) so I speak I speak for me for mathematician we have erm <L1it> poqi </L1it> <LNde> weniger </LNde> okay so we have the possibility to speak with professor and ermmm

By far the most frequent form of a comprehension check is the use of a stressed word. In a total of fifteen instances, it occurs with rising intonation with the aim of further checking understanding. The most striking observation to emerge from these examples is that they tend to occur at the end of an utterance. In Extract 11, the speaker used tonic stress with rising intonation on the word. This is done with a view to checking whether the participants in the conversation understood the message (in this case a word) so that the line of conversation can resume.

Extract 11

S4: and it was like past six pm and everything was closed and I was completely shocked because in Croatia I could buy cigarettes at one am if I wanted to and here nothing worked and then (.) erm I found like those like **machines?**
S2: yeah
S3: mhm

In summary, these results show that Erasmus students in this study use comprehension checks in various forms. Whether they are structured as long or short questions, minimal checks or stressed words, comprehension checks are employed in order to increase the efficiency of understanding.

3.2 Other-Initiated Communicative Strategies

Other-initiated communicative strategies are those that the speaker uses "after another speaker expresses a communicative need and marks the discourse for this communicative need, such as asking about part(s) of the preceding utterance" (Björkman 2014, 132). In this study, repetition and paraphrase also represent part of the scope of communicative strategies Erasmus students use in order to overcome and prevent misunderstanding, alongside confirmation checks, clarification requests and co-creating the message. Figure 8 provides the breakdown of other-initiated communicative strategies according to their frequency.

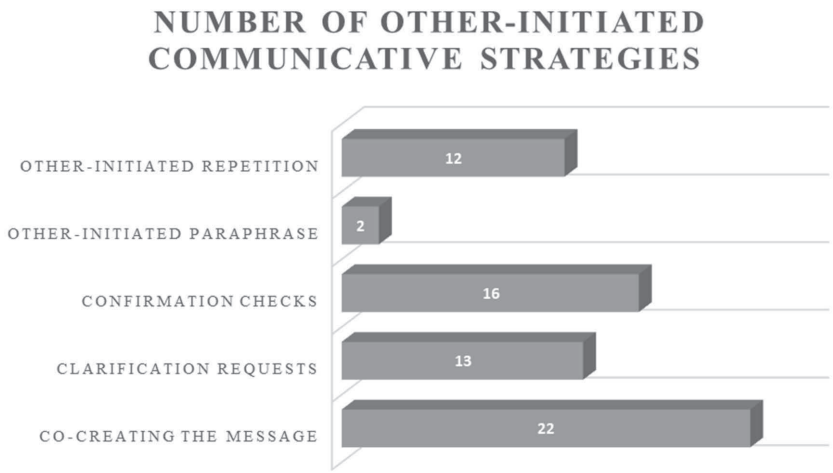

Figure 8. Number of other-initiated communicative strategies.

As shown in Figure 8, the data from this study reveal that co-creating the message is the most frequent other-initiated communicative strategy employed among the Erasmus students. The instances of confirmation checks, clarification requests and other-initiated repetition are rather similar in terms of their occurrence. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that Erasmus students utilized other-initiated paraphrase a few times. In the following section I will provide a detailed description of other-initiated communicative strategies illustrated with the examples taken from the corpus.

3.2.1 Other-Initiated Repetition

Other-initiated repetition is defined as a repetition by the same speaker that is prompted by another speaker's wish to check on comprehension. As such, it should be distinguished from other-repetition, which implies repetition by another speaker. In the results there are 12 instances of other-initiated repetition. In connection with its linguistic form, Figure 9 shows that more than half of other-initiated repetition instances belong to the exact repetition rather than the repetition with variation category. Both types can be observed in the following extracts.

Extract 12 exemplifies exact repetition as employed by the Erasmus students. S4's clarification request *what* prompts the choice of opting for exact repetition. A similar thing occurs in Extract 13, where S2 decides to change a couple of words with a view to securing mutual understanding when prompted by S3 (*hm?*). As noted above, if there is at least one part of the repetition that is changed in comparison to the original utterance, which was classified here as repetition with variation.

Extract 12

1 S4: […] german with long words and it's very sometimes complicated to have a fluid language
2 S2: yeah

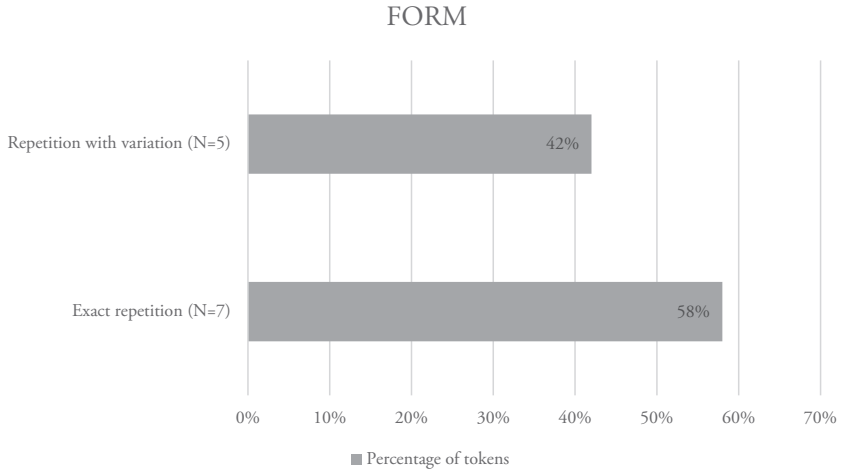

Figure 9. Other-initiated repetition according to form.

3 S4: so
4 S2: and **did you improve your german**
5 S4: what?
6 S2: **did you improve your german**
7 S4: I think I think yeah but

Extract 13

1 S2: **few dialects from your region**
2 S3: hm?
3 S2: **so there are several dialects in your region**
4 S3: yeah it basically changes every town
5 S2: okay

Another important finding is that other-initiated repetition is employed among the Erasmus students due to hearing problems. Extract 14 touches upon the topic of English knowledge among Austrians. In line two, S3 expresses their belief that this is not the case with the older generations, and they do this by repeating it twice. S1 repeats in the next line what they heard with rising intonation, which initiates S3 to employ exact repetition. By reiterating their words, S3 focuses on the achievement of shared understanding in the interest of preventing any communication issues.

Extract 14

1 S1: but do you think that they know english au<1> strains </1>
2 S3: **<1> old </1>er people don't older people don't**
3 S1: all all the people?

4 S3: **older people don't**
5 S2: yeah they don't

3.2.2 Other-Initiated Paraphrase

Even though there were only two instances of other-initiated paraphrase in the corpus, this study shows that the participants employ it when they want to reformulate their own previous utterances after a need for modifying has been expressed. In the conversation below (Extract 15), the participants were asked whether they liked people in Austria. However, S3 expresses their opinion by stating that they do not believe in stereotypes. When asked to elaborate on what they meant, S3 chooses to paraphrase the previously uttered part of a sentence. Despite the fact that there is a general acknowledgement by S2 in line four and S1 in line seven, S3 opts to employ paraphrase in the next turn one more time, only in this case self-initiated, so as to secure understanding and emphasize their message. This example indicates that other-initiated paraphrase is used to enhance clarity and resolve any potential ambiguity that might occur.

Extract 15

1 S3: **I don't think it's possible to say the austrian people are like that or they aren't**
2 S1: what what do you mean
3 S3: **you cannot generalise in that way I think**
4 S2: <1> yeah that's it </1>
5 S1: <1> yeah but </1>
6 S3: <1> global </1> isation and and everyone can choose to own lifestyle and
7 S1: that's true
8 S3: **people are individuals not stereotypes**

3.2.3 Confirmation Checks

Confirmation checks are employed to confirm the understanding of previously uttered statements, remarks, comments or opinions. Since these fall into the category of other-initiated strategies, what is common is that they too need a trigger word or phrase in order to be utilized. Evidence of this will be illustrated by the extracts that follow in this section. Figure 10 below shows the breakdown of some of the most frequent confirmation checks found used by the Erasmus students.

There were 16 instances of confirmation checks in total in the data. It can be seen from the figure above that slightly less than two-thirds of the total number of instances are question repeats, i.e., repetitions of a word with question intonation. They are followed by *you mean* and *do you mean*, at 31% and 6% respectively.

Regarding *you mean*, the corpus shows that it is found five times. In Extract 16, the speakers are comparing transport infrastructure in Austria with that in their home countries. S3 seems somewhat confused by the use of the phrase *make business*, which S2 considers very important, and they demonstrate this by repeating it twice (line seven). Consequently, in line

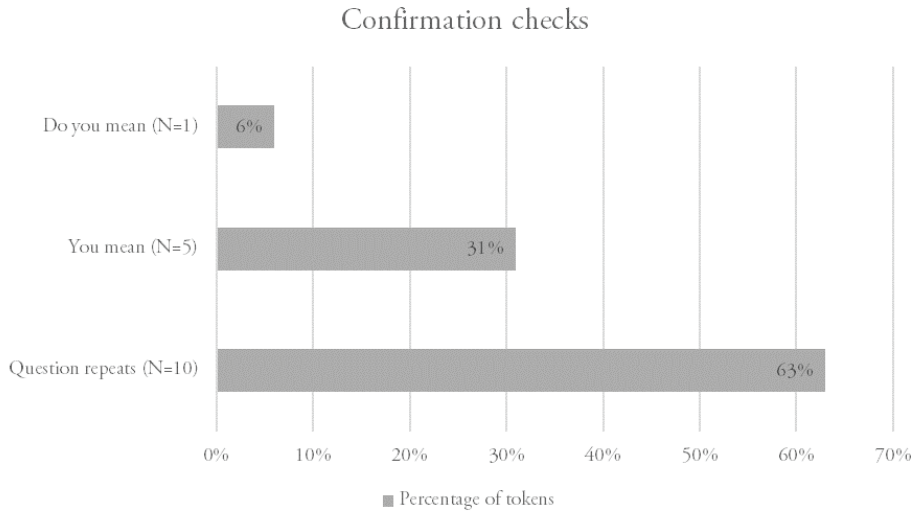

Figure 10. Forms and frequency of confirmation checks.

nine S3 paraphrases and uses a confirmation check in order to reinforce and contribute to mutual understanding, which is further enhanced by S2's confirmation in line ten.

Extract 16

1 S3: and trains here are much better than than in the balkans <3> in croatia especially </3>
2 S1: <3> that's true </3>
3 S3: because the buses and the trains there are (.) slow and also not very modern and not very
4 <4> neat inside </4>
5 S2: <4> yeah but you need </4> you need <5> to think also </5>
6 S3: <5> stuff like that </5>
7 S2: about making business with the train I mean nowadays nowadays to make business between
8 barcelona madrid the two big cities the trains are always full (.) and that is because
9 S3: if you go to work **you mean?**
10 S2: exactly they go they run every half an hour there is a train to madrid and in two hours and
11 twenty minutes you are from city to city and there are six hundred and fifty km

This research has shown that in their conversations the Erasmus students, as far as confirmation checks are concerned, tend to use question repeats as a way to confirm whether previous parts have been correctly understood. In Extract 17, S5 wants to point out the price of a kebab by repeating it twice in one turn. When S3 decides to use a confirmation check in the next turn in order to validate the previously uttered phrase, S5 repeats the number again and confirms the essential information. What is interesting in this example is that this participant repeats the information in a rising intonation. What follows in the next turn is the confirmation of the essential information in the form of repetition.

Extract 17

1 S5: like we bought a kebab and it was
2 S2: <un> xxx </un>
3 S5: what was it se seven euros per each seven
4 S3: **seven?**
5 S5: seven
6 S2: then you did the bad deal come on

Overall, the results in this section indicate that the speakers used various forms of confirmation checks in order to confirm understanding and negotiate meaning.

3.2.4 Clarification Requests

Another other-initiated communicative strategy noted among the Erasmus students is clarification request. In this study, clarification requests are defined as strategies speakers utilize in order to request clarifications that may solve a comprehension problem. Figure 11 represents the relative frequency of all the forms of clarification requests found in interactions in the data.

In total, there are 13 instances of clarification requests. As can be seen from Figure 11, the short question *what* accounts for nearly half of the instances, whereas question repeats make up only half of that number. More extended questions such as *what do you mean,* and *what does it mean*, comprise less than a fifth of the whole chart, while the least frequent clarification requests are *did you say* and *yeah* at 8% each.

Overall, clarification requests directly address potential comprehension problems by introducing questions. In Extract 18, the participants are talking about differences in educational systems. S2 mentions (line one) that universities in their country make use of

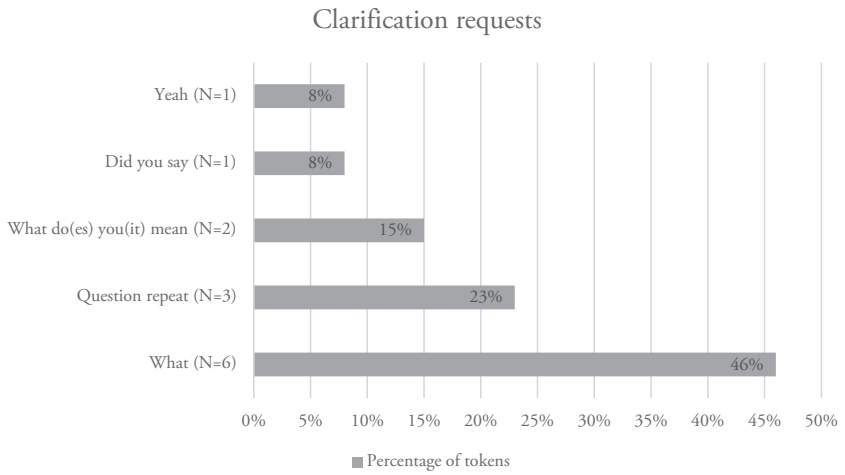

Figure 11. Forms and frequency of clarification requests.

continuous evaluation. However, S3 still finds this puzzling and needs the meaning of the term "continuous evaluation" to be refined, which is why they ask the question *what do you mean* (line nine). What makes this example interesting is that the participant provides a synonym, i.e., *assessment*, alongside their interpretation. This direct clarification request leads to a full explanation of what S2 had in mind. As a result, shared understanding is accomplished, which can be seen by the use of a minimal response in line fourteen.

Extract 18

1 S2: it's a continuous evaluation so basically if you fail you need to restart the course
2 S3: that depends <2> on <un> xxx </un> that's that's </2>
3 S1: <2> but how many times can you try </2>
4 S2: four
5 S1: four
6 S3:<3> that's in </3>
7 S1: <3> oh we can try six times </3>
8 S2: really
9 S3: we can try three times in croatia but **what do you mean** by continuous assessment like <4>
10 finishing </4>
11 S1: <4> yes </4>
12 S3: a course without a <5> without the final exam </5>
13 S2: <5> it means that the final the final exam </5> it's only forty percent of the grade
14 S3: yeah <6> it's the same for us in croatia </6>

A similar use is noticed in Extract 19, where Erasmus students used *what*, and a question repeat in order to clarify and request more information. In this example, the participants discuss the advantages and disadvantages of larger and smaller cities as far as studying is concerned. S5 makes inquiries into this, but the very formulation of the question prompts S3 to use a clarification request (line eight). This example is also interesting because in the next turn another speaker uses a question repeat in order to request more information. In line ten, we can see that S5 corrects themselves and provides further clarification through an exemplification. At this point, it should be mentioned that the reason both S2 and S3 initially use a clarification request could be due to poor hearing, or S5's rapid speaking.

Extract 19

1 S5: but do you like more the touristic people or international environment of the international
2 students city
3 S3: <1> well </1>
4 S2: <1> what </1> was the first thing
5 S3: yeah

6 S5: @@@ I don't know anymore @@@ do you like more like international environment with
7 students or whether touristic environment with
8 S3: **what**
9 S2: **artistic environment**
10 S5: touristic like vienna for example
11 S3: aaaaa noo <un> xxx </un> the first one <un> xxx </un>
12 S2: yeah
13 S3: I would not like tourists <2> <un> xxx </un> </2>
14 S2: <2> today there were </2> a lot of tourists only croatians (.) entire schlossberg was full of it

Together the results provide insights into the function of clarification requests and suggest that the Erasmus students make use of them to elicit the information necessary for successful communication.

3.2.5 Co-Creating the Message

Co-creating the message seems to be one of the strategies that the Erasmus students tend to use in their interactions in order to avoid communication problems. The principle of this strategy is that participants jointly produce an utterance in a communication event. This reveals the collaborative nature and cooperation through which shared understanding is maintained. The reason why this strategy is perceived more as a collaboration than interruption is that the participants are involved in the turn-construction process. They use the information that was mentioned before and try to guess what the previous speaker meant.

In this study, co-creating the message occurs in 22 instances. It seems that a pattern typically occurs when a participant pauses at the end of their turn, which seems to have the function of a request for help. This can be seen in the following example.

Extract 20

1 S4: I don't think so it was properly about habits but I have observed that Austrian has a strange
2 reason of life during week they wake up **very (.)**
3 S2: **early** yeah
4 S4: early and fi and and open and and close their business very soon in the night <1> for
5 example at when you are </1>
6 S2: <1> yeah the secondary school </1>
7 S4: when it is a six or seven <2> most of the business </2> are closed
8 S3: <2> yeah <un> xxx </un> </2>

In Extract 20, the speakers talk about the habits of Austrians they have observed. S4 wishes to draw attention to the fact that Austrians get up earlier in the morning than other people. However, what we can notice is the brief pause (up to a half of a second in line two), after which S2 provides a lexical suggestion based on the previously mentioned information

(line three). In the next turn, S4 accepts this suggestion by repeating it and continues the conversation.

Regarding the type of phrase that is employed, there are 14 examples that use a lexical suggestion in the corpus as opposed to eight instances that use longer phrases. The previously discussed Extract 20 shows how other participants may contribute to the conversation by providing a word. Figure 12 below presents the forms of co-creating the message and their relative frequency.

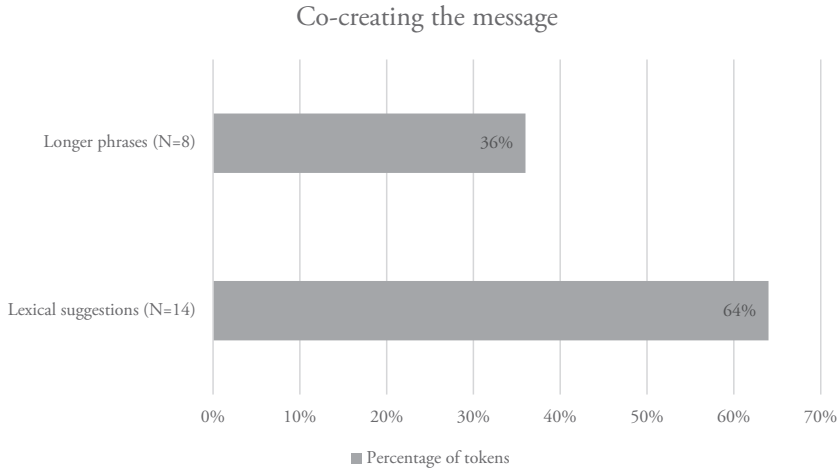

Figure 12. Forms and frequency of co-creating the message.

As can be seen in Figure 12, the use of a lexical suggestion makes up approximately two-thirds of the total number of instances, whereas the remainder goes to longer phrases. The following extract exemplifies longer phrases.

Extract 21

1 S2: mmm I cannot say because I mean the problem I see here is that you need sometimes to
2 find out or figure out yourself **what's a what hooo <1> hooo </1>**
3 S3: **<1> what </1> works better for you**
4 S2: what works better for yo for you I mean maybe the uni the interface between international
5 students and the and the (.) university err is not is not that fluent and
6 S3: mhm

In Extract 21, the speakers talk about the differences in their educational systems, particularly what they think about the practice of their host university in allowing students to choose classes as opposed to having a fixed curriculum. S2's argument is that students have to decide on their own what seems to be best for them. However, S2 appears to struggle to finish the utterance, which prompts S3 (line three) to provide a suggestion that helps to establish understanding and carry on the conversation. The proof that the completion is successful is the repetition by S2 in the next line.

The results in this section indicate that Erasmus students use the strategy of co-creating the message with the aim of preventing and also alleviating problems in communication. It is interesting to note that by completing each other's utterances the interactants enrich the communication process and contribute to enhancing mutual understanding.

4 Discussion

As regards RQ1, this study has revealed that Erasmus students take advantage of communicative strategies in order to achieve understanding. Four self-initiated communicative strategies were found in informal discourse – self-initiated repetition, paraphrase, word replacement and comprehension checks. As far as other-initiated communicative strategies are concerned, this study shows cases of other-initiated repetition, paraphrase, confirmation checks, clarification requests and co-creating the message.

With respect to the question of frequency, this study found 562 instances (90%) of self-initiated communicative strategies in the corpus. A possible explanation for the significantly larger number in comparison to other-initiated communicative strategies may be the speakers' attempt to be more explicit or pre-empt problems either by repeating, rephrasing, repairing themselves, or checking comprehension.

As far as self-initiated repetition is concerned, the findings in this study reveal that the Erasmus students prefer to employ it in the same turn (immediate self-initiated repetition) for the purposes of emphasis and considerable relevance for the rest of the conversation. The results concerning the form of repetition show that repetition with variation and exact repetition are similar in terms of frequency. Regarding the functions of repetition, the present findings accord with Björkman's (2014) account of self-initiated repetition used as an explicitness strategy to strengthen understanding of a key piece of information.

As regards paraphrase, the current study finds that the participants often employ it, and preferably in the same turn rather than a few turns after. Furthermore, the use of paraphrase as a means to obtain clarity and prevent communication problems is found at both lexical and sentence levels, which is in line with research carried out by Kaur (2009).

It has been demonstrated that self-initiated word replacement has an important role in reducing the risk of ambiguity. Three categories spring from the analysis showing how they contribute to successful communication: word choice, the insertion of a lexical item, and pronoun replacement.

Regarding comprehension checks, it is observed that the Erasmus students use them to confirm understanding. Comprehension checks are performed through the use of long or short questions (*you know what I mean?, do you know?, you know?*), minimal checks (*okay?, yeah?*) or stressed words. The literature also enumerates examples with *Are you with me?*, *Do you follow/understand?*, *Do you know what I am saying?*, and many others (Jamshidnejad 2011; Vettorel 2019). However, this study did not find any instances of the abovementioned questions.

In comparison to self-initiated communicative strategies, other-initiated communicative strategies are not as prominent, appearing in only 65 instances (10%) in informal spoken interactions among the Erasmus students.

Regarding the other-initiated repetition, the participants in this study prefer exact repetition to repetition with variation, which could be explained by the need to put an emphasis on the most critical parts of an utterance. Consequently, it is noteworthy that they may use it in situations where overlapping or hearing problems occur.

In relation to other-initiated paraphrase, it should be mentioned that it is the least frequent strategy in the corpus. Nevertheless, a few of instances that were observed suggest that the Erasmus students employ it to promote understanding. This strategy has been explored to a limited extent in the ELF field, with one such effort being made by Björkman (2014), who illustrates how other-initiated paraphrased segments lead to the promotion of understanding. In the same vein, Putry, Munir and Purwati (2019) reveal that other-initiated paraphrasing is not as frequent as other strategies.

Upon examining confirmation checks, this study reveals that they are to be found in various forms, among which question repeats are the most common. Other forms include *you mean* and *do you mean*. Moreover, the data indicate that the speakers make use of confirmation checks in their interactions so as to mitigate possible vagueness and secure understanding.

As regards clarification requests, what becomes evident from the instances in this study is that after their use, successful communication tends to be ensured. This inquiry has shown that they are found in a variety of forms such as the short question *what*, question repeats, *what do/es you/it mean*, *did you say* and *yeah*. Further research on clarification requests lists other expressions/phrases such as *What do they mean, I didn't catch that, I'm not with you, Could you explain* (Jamshidnejad 2011; Vettorel 2019).

In Björkman's (2014) study, clarification requests are reported to be the most frequent, accounting for almost a third of the other-initiated communicative strategies, and this is in agreement with Putry, Munir and Purwati's (2019) findings which show that asking for an explanation is often employed. In terms of frequency, the findings of this study do not support the previously mentioned research. However, it is important to remember that the differences in the frequency of communicative strategies that are observed could be attributed to different settings (academic vs. informal), which might yield different results.

Finally, co-creating the message is the most frequent other-initiated strategy found among the Erasmus students in this study, demonstrating that they jointly tried to enhance mutual understanding. The study reveals that the participants also preferred to provide a lexical suggestion rather than employ longer phrases. It is difficult to explain this choice, but it might be related to the fact that the speakers did not want to interrupt the other speaker with a long stretch of speech. On the subject of co-creating the message, other studies point out the collaborative nature between participants that leads to sentence completion and the achievement of a communicative goal (Cogo and Dewey 2012; Deterding 2013; Kaur 2011; Kirkpatrick 2010). The findings of the current study seem to be consistent with other research as far as the functions of co-creating the message are concerned. However, in terms of frequency, a contradictory result can be seen in Björkman's (2014) study, which reports only a few instances. The possible interpretation could be that Björkman's participants were involved in close-ended tasks requiring a final product, e.g., the solution of a problem or a report in an academic setting.

5 Conclusion

This paper set out to conduct research into the communicative strategies involved in Erasmus students' spoken and informal interactions. The main goal was to provide a taxonomy of strategies in an environment where English is used as a lingua franca, such as among Erasmus students. What needs to be pointed out is that the results may not apply to other contexts. Therefore, when comparing findings, the exact context of this study (the most important one being the nature of informal and casual conversation) need to be taken into account.

Furthermore, this study can be distinguished from others since it shines a light on conversations among Erasmus students, as there is a paucity of research as far as ELF within this community is concerned. Therefore, it could be said that the findings from this project contribute to the existing knowledge of spoken ELF interactions. Further research might investigate different communicative settings alongside the usage of other strategies attested in the literature.

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Journalistic Transcreation of News Agency Articles from English into Serbian: *Associated Press* and *Reuters* Articles in *Blic* and *N1* Online Portals

ABSTRACT

Transcreation refers to adapting translated content to suit the target audience's context, culture, and expectations. Predominantly researched in marketing, this phenomenon has recently come under scrutiny as a method of transferring foreign news to local readership. This paper explores journalistic transcreation in *Blic* and *N1*, the two most visited Serbian online news portals, considered to be on opposing ideological and political spectrums. As a point of comparison, articles in English are taken from web portals of the two leading news agencies globally – the *Associated Press* and *Reuters* – as their reporting practices are regarded as more factual and less biased compared to non-agency media. The findings reveal transcreation's much greater presence in the *Blic* portal, as illustrated in two selected examples, which might stem from the portal's pro-government reporting and reader base who predominantly have absolute trust in the government or support it in the hopes of gaining employment via political affiliation.

Keywords: transcreation, translation, media studies, journalism

Novinarska transkreacija člankov tiskovnih agencij iz angleščine v srbščino: članki agencij Associated Press in Reuters na spletnih portalih Blic in N1

IZVLEČEK

Izraz transkreacija se nanaša na prilagajanje prevedene vsebine na način, da ustreza kontekstu, kulturi in pričakovanjem ciljnega občinstva. Ta pojav, ki je raziskan predvsem v trženju, je v zadnjem času pod drobnogledom kot metoda posredovanja tujih novic lokalnemu bralstvu. Pričujoči prispevek obravnava novinarsko transkreacijo na portalih Blic in N1, dveh najbolj obiskanih srbskih spletnih novičarskih portalih, ki veljata za nasprotujoča si pola ideološko-političnega spektra. Za potrebe primerjave so članki v angleščini vzeti s spletnih portalov dveh vodilnih svetovnih tiskovnih agencij – Associated Press in Reuters; njune prakse poročanja namreč veljajo za osredotočene na dejstva in manj pristranske v primerjavi z neagencijskimi mediji. Rezultati kažejo na večjo prisotnost transkreacije na portalu Blic, kar je ponazorjeno na podlagi dveh izbranih primerov. To bi lahko bil odraz portalovega provladnega poročanja in njegove baze bralcev, ki povečini absolutno zaupajo vladi ali jo podpirajo v upanju, da jim bo politična pripadnost pomagala pri zaposlitvi.

Ključne besede: transkreacija, prevajanje, medijske študije, novinarstvo

1 Introduction[1]

Journalistic practice as we know it seldom involves writing original news without utilizing an already written article. The majority of stories are thus based on creating an article through the aggregation of different pieces of information found in other media. Frequently, the information used comes from international media sources, written in different languages. As having a journalist who is fluent in other languages is not always possible, and employing both translators and journalists unprofitable, journalists resort to translating foreign articles by themselves and re-forming them to create original texts (Filmer 2014). This means that both processes – translation and creation – are in the hands of journalists, which grants them plenty of possibilities to, intentionally or not, make significant changes to the news. The act of translation has become invisible in journalism, for both the journalists and readers, and so implicit that media do not even mark quotes made in other languages as translations, although they assuredly present them as verbatim.

Yet, despite the mass media's considerable role in mediating between different nations and cultures, opposing politicians, a country's leadership, and the general public, until recently journalistic work was exclusively the focus of Media Studies, when research shed light on the enormous presence of translation in news practice. What the research into this topic (Bielsa 2007; Caimotto 2014; Federici 2011; Van Leeuwen 2006) shows is that news reporting today largely lies in the hands of those who are not fully equipped to deal with the linguistic and cultural nuances of the community(ies) they write about. In theory, this phenomenon is not yet conclusively named. Adaptation and localization are among the terms frequently used to denote this process, but both come with limitations, as will be presented in the next section. Various theoreticians (Caimotto 2014; Mukherjee 1997; Pedersen 2014; a.o.) refer to this phenomenon as transcreation, though with varying definitions.

The paper analyses the presence of journalistic transcreation in selected articles published by two Serbian online news portals – *Blic* and *N1*, as compared with their corresponding pieces issued by the news agencies *Associated Press* (henceforth: *AP*) and *Reuters*. The paper aims to assess the presence of transcreation in selected Serbian media portals compared to English-language articles in global news agencies and provide findings into methods, motivations, and goals of transcreation in the two Serbian media.

Section 2 provides a review of relevant literature on transcreation, followed by a section on the methodology used in this work (section 3). The results section discusses two selected examples of transcreation in Serbian news portals, and compares them to the related news agencies' pieces (section 4). Section 6 then summarizes and concludes the paper.

2 Transcreation – Basic Tenets

Even though the first news translation bureau was opened in 1832 (Valdeón 2010, 156), a landmark in research on news translation did not happen until the 1980s, when Stetting

[1] The paper is based on the author's master's thesis "Journalistic Transcreation of News Agency Articles from English into Serbian: *Associated Press* and *Reuters* Articles in *Blic* online Portal", the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, under the supervision of Aleksandar Kavgić. For the purposes of the current paper, the original thesis theme has been expanded to include the *N1* news portal. The author's master's thesis is available online: http://remaster.ff.uns.ac.rs/?rad=68a1d2dcebadf594d3cd1f2e52ddc052.

(Stetting 1989, as quoted in Valdeón 2014, 52) coined the term transediting, which refers to the alternations of the source text, with the aim of transforming and better fitting it to the target culture (Valdeón 2014). Stetting (1989) argues that such a practice is present in various genres, such as religious, historical, and literary texts, and transediting inevitably found its way into news translation. However, Valdeón (2010, 53) believes that "even though journalists often translate, they reject their role as translators of news originally written in other languages. […] [they] view this process as part of an editing process, or, to put it differently, of the adaptation of the source news texts and/or events to the expectations of the target audience." Filmer (2014) investigated methods of and opinions on news reporting translation by nine British newspaper correspondents for Italy. His interviews with the journalists revealed that only one of them had some formal training in Italian, but that all of them translated texts on their own, resorting to the help of Italian colleagues only when a word was ambiguous. "Translation is implicit, readers know", concludes one of Filmer's (2014, 145) interviewees. As news articles are thus rarely regarded as translations – both either journalists, and readers – Valdeón considers transediting to be an unsuitable term, as the very process of translation includes a certain degree of editing, not taking into account "any ideological shifts aimed at infusing the target versions with new meaning" (Valdeón 2014, 53), nor "the political, economic and social implications" which processes such as adaptation and appropriation entail (Valdeón 2014, 60). Besides adaptation and appropriation, Valdeón proposes framing as the potential terminology describing varied translation processes in news production, noting that framing involves the "selection and deselection of news events and reports, as well as linguistic transfer and adaptation of other elements such as headlines and quotes" (Valdeón 2014, 56).

Van Leeuwen (2006) investigated the work of 40 translators who also proofread and sometimes wrote original articles, using a sample of more than 100 translations from *The Vietnam News*, a daily newspaper entirely in English. The author (2006, 218) observed three steps in the process of translation: (i) correcting the translated text in English, (ii) adaptation to journalistic style, and (iii) adaptation of source text culture and ideology. Van Leeuwen (2006) thus introduced the notion of 'adaptation' – though as a tool of globalization, as the Vietnamese newspaper adapts its content to the expectations of its English-speaking readers. In contrast to 'globalization' there is also 'localization', a term which van Leeuwen (2006) asserts to be closely related and in fact nearly synonymous with the term translation. Localization is also mentioned by Mangiron and O'Hagan (Mangiron and O'Hagan 2006, 20 as quoted in Pedersen, 2014, 64) and Rike (Rike 2013, 73, as quoted in Pedersen 2014, 64), the latter describing localization in the field of translation of manuals, instructions, and software, not granting it a creative aspect. However, both localization and adaptation are in professional circles understood as the final two processes, following translation, and done by companies attempting to appeal to a potential market. Although similar to the intentions of news producers, those involved in localization do not re-create, as journalists do, but simply change or adapt their product to meet customers' expectations. Therefore, localization and adaptation are inadequate terminological choices for this paper.

Mukherjee (1997) was one of the first researchers who focused on the term 'transcreation', noting how, although not included before the 5th edition of the *Oxford Advanced English*

Dictionary (OED), it has been well-known to Indian speakers of English ever since the mid-20th century. The author (1997, 158) quotes the dictionary definition of transcreation as being "creative translation seen as producing a new version of the original work." Even before being officially recognized, transcreation had existed in the translations of Purushottam Lal, frequently referred to as P. Lal, who is responsible for one of the biggest and most important translation ventures in India, as he translated several centuries' worth of fiction and poetry from a variety of Indian languages into English. Mukherjee (1997, 180) points out that what P. Lal did was not translation *per se*, as he introduced many changes into the translated texts, compared to their original versions – "Yet enough of the original remained in the new texts […] to be able to relate it to the old texts." Furthermore, Mukherjee (1997) recounts that the term translation is nowhere to be found in any of the Indian languages, suggesting its unfamiliarity to Indians. The author (1997, 180) argues that instead of translating certain texts, they would use "it as a take-off point and composed a similar text in another language." Di Giovanni (2008, 34, as quoted in Pedersen 2014, 58) quotes Lal's definition of transcreation as a "readable, not strictly faithful translation."

Notably, in the OED there is Coleridge's quote on transcreation, where the term is defined as a process of "creat[ing] by or in the way of transmission", which renders clearly both aspects of transcreation, namely "faithful transmission and creation" (Katan 2014, 17).

Caimotto (2014, 161) also identifies transcreation as a process that often occurs in the translation of poetry, which she sees as a "creative translation […] attempting to retain culture-bound elements." She compared the stories of Iginio Ugo Tarchetti, the 19th-century Italian author who introduced Gothic tale to Italy using transcreation in his works, and Daniele Lutazzi, a controversial Italian comedian who in 2010 suffered nationwide condemnation for allegedly plagiarizing various American stand-up comedians. Lutazzi's case, argues Caimotto (2014, 159–60), is a good example of how translation practice is viewed disparately by laypeople and scholarly professionals. Social media responses to the issue of Lutazzi's plagiarism reveal that acts of translation and/or adaptation are not regarded as creative tasks, and thus for the general public, translation, and copying are identical, concludes Ciamotto (2014, 168).

Zanotti (2014) studied the dubbing process of English-speaking movies for the Italian market, focusing on the instances of transcreation. The author (2014, 109) refers to Galassi (Galassi 1994, 64, as quoted in Zanotti 2014, 109), who stated that a talented dialogue adapter is able "to forget how the original line is structured and recreate it in another language as if it were not a translation, while fully grasping its meaning, the allusions it contains as well as the intentions that underlie it." For Zanotti (2014), the creative aspect of transcreation is of interest, as she quotes O'Hagan and Mangiron (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013, 106, as quoted in Zanotti 2014, 110) for whom transcreation brings about occasionally unpredictable translation choices. Additionally, she (2014, 100) reflects on transcreation as being a buzzword of the current translation business, mostly linked to the advertising industry.

For Fang and Song (2014, 74), transcreation "fundamentally involves the transfer of meaning from one language to another", a process usually carried out in the field of advertising and marketing. In their study of Chinese translations of labels for Australian health products,

Fang and Song (2014, 74) argue that the creation part is introduced only when "a product […] is believed unable to strike the chord with the intended audience." However, as there is a striking resemblance between the characteristics of free translation and transcreation, they are both criticized (Fang and Song 2014, 74) for scaling down semantic equivalence and giving precedence to cultural and social needs. Although their research revealed significant changes in the translations, Fang and Song (2014) assert that creative translation does not automatically imply unprofessionalism.

As already mentioned, transcreation is widely used in the field of marketing and advertising, with the intention of altering a marketing campaign or advertising slogan, making it more appealing to target consumers without suffering the original message (Pedersen 2014, 58). Pedersen (2014) focused on definitions and explanations of the process of transcreation as given by the professionals in the field – transcreation providers. Analysing definitions of different transcreation providers (Branded Translations, TransPerfect, Alpha CRC and TextMinded), Pedersen (2014, 59–61) discovered that they use a variety of phrases to define transcreation, such as: "creative adaptation", "creative wordplay and techniques such as assonance and alliteration", "recreat[ing]" and "transferring the essential message […] as opposed to a more traditional translation", respectively. Pedersen (2014, 62) infers that such companies regard transcreation as a sub-category of localization – as suggested by Mangrion and O'Hagan (2006) – aimed to ensure cultural applicability, and that transcreation not only has nothing to do with translation but rather is even more than translation itself. The author (2014, 62) concludes that while "translation is transferring words from one language to another […] transcreation is transferring brands and messages from one culture to another."

Gambier and Munday (2014) discussed the position of translation and transcreation, both in relation to each other and in Translation Studies. They reflect how such terminological vastness can destabilize Translation Studies, however, the emergence transcreation and similar terms could actually hold the key to the future of translation. With the exponential growth of machine translation, where translators' "already fragile habitus is being encroached on by machines" (Katan 2014, 16), transcreation is an "inherently creative process [...] [which] a machine cannot touch" (Gene Schiver, CEO of machine-driven GLOBO Language Solutions, as quoted in Katan 2014, 17).

2.1 Transcreation in Journalism

"Translation is not the job of the journalist", argues John Lloyd, a long-serving foreign correspondent to the *Financial Times*, and co-founder of the *Reuters* Institute for the Study of Journalism (Lloyd, July 15th, 2013, as quoted in Filmer 2014, 136). Although translation has been an integral part of journalism ever since, it is only in recent years that its importance became the focus of scholars (Valdeón 2010). Filmer (2014, 136) argues that, as the boundary between journalist and translator us blurry (van Doorslaer 2012, 1050, as quoted in Filmer, 2014, 136), and translation in news discourse is rather implicit (van Dijk 2009, 191–205, as quoted in Filmer 2014, 136), both lead to the invisibility of translation in the field of journalism (Schäffner 2008, 3). Similarly, Federici (2011, 1396) agrees that in analysing journalistic texts it is challenging to "distinguish translators from editors, page editors, and

every 'writer' involved in the delivery of the news." This is the case because "producing a single news item often involves the integration of various text sources" (Filmer 2014, 138), i.e., journalists turn to (inter)national coverage of the particular news, including some expert comments, and/or re-use information from earlier, related articles (van Doorslaer 2012). This 'cut and paste' approach, as Filmer (2014, 138) calls it, renders the translation process in the news invisible. Valdeón's (2010, 154) "news aggregator" is a journalist whose job consists of gathering news from different sources, and consequently producing a new piece in new, 'original', form. However, Filmer (2014, 154) argues that the term "journalator" is yet not to become a thing.

In contrast, Filmer's study (2014) of British correspondents to Italy demonstrates how journalists translate on their own, only rarely relying on their Italian colleagues, even though they almost exclusively did not go through any formal course in the language, translation, nor intercultural communication, as Lloyd suggested. "There is no great mystery", says *The Times* correspondent James Bone in an interview conducted for Filmer's study (2014, 146), proving the assumption journalists do not give much attention to a deeper understanding of foreign meanings, as "things are what they seem to be" (Hannerz 1996, 120, as quoted in Filmer 2014, 146). Bassnett (2006, 5–7) points out the fact that journalists do not have any formal training, yet regard themselves as "international journalists", whereas Hernández Guerrero (2007, 57, as quoted in Valdeón 2010, 156) observes how for journalists translation is a "marginal and secondary" process, which Paterson sees as "paradoxical when online news has caused 'demystification and deprofessionalization' of journalism."

To help in revealing and analysing the transcreation practices present in selected Serbian media, the subsequent section outlines the methodological approach used in the paper.

3 Methodology

For the purposes of the analysis, a corpus of 139 unique news articles in Serbian and English, amounting to approximately 40,000 words, was collected. The gathered data include 45 news stories and events, presented in at least two news pieces, by at least two distinct media, and in two different languages. Data collection took place from the beginning of February 2019 to the end of July 2019.

Articles in Serbian add up to 90 articles in total: 45 news articles published by *Blic* and 45 pieces published by *N1*. In contrast, the corpus includes 49 news pieces in English: 18 published by *AP* and 31 by *Reuters*.

All articles in Serbian, published by *Blic* and *N1*, have their English counterpart(s) issued by either or both *Reuters* and *AP*. It is important to note that a number of article sets lack either AP's or Reuters' pieces. This is due to several factors, of which the most common are: (i) news/events were not reported by both agencies; (ii) news/events were discussed within an article piece that included a broader context, and thus this was not truly equivalent to the Serbian version; (iii) news/events were reported in a rather short article (two or three sentences long), rendering the piece ineffective for comparative analysis (predominantly present in *AP*).

Articles for the corpus were first searched for on the Serbian online portals *Blic* and *N1*, upon which complementary articles in English were looked for on the *AP* and Reuters web portals. The choice of articles to be included in the corpus was based on selecting news distant enough from Serbia to ensure that Serbian articles relied on foreign reporting, yet close enough to Serbia in terms of interest in the topic. As such, the corpus does not include news originating from Serbia or neighbouring countries whose languages are mutually intelligible (e.g., Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia); however, it does include a number of stories regarding Russia, the USA, Germany, the EU, etc., all of which are the great importance and interest to Serbian people. To ensure maximum compatibility, pieces in both Serbian and English had to be published on the same date. After a parallel corpus was fully compiled in the form of a Microsoft Word document, all Serbian-English pairs of articles were copied into separate tables, providing a side-by-side layout for comparison.

The analysis of the corpus involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. Since the corpus data consist of text only, qualitative analysis was preferred as it allowed for describing, interpreting, and contextualizing examples of transcreation found in articles published by *Blic* and *N1*.

3.1 Factors in Media Outlets Choice

Regarding the selection of the analysed media outlets, the two Serbian news portals were selected due to their positions on different ends of the ideological and political spectrum (Đorđević 2020, 456). *Blic*, the portal owned by a German-Swiss media company, is one of the most popular and widely read newspapers in Serbia, both in print and digital. Although considered essentially pro-government, with known practices of "expressing its political affiliation to the government" (Đorđević 2020, 465), *Blic* is still moderate when compared to some other Serbian media. It is neither overtly pro-Western, nor pro-Russian, but rather adjusts its views to those of the government. It is also noteworthy that *Blic* is very much a tabloid newspaper, with frequent instances of loaded language, clickbait titles, and celebrity coverage, yet it still has elements of a broadsheet, such as an occasionally formalized journalistic approach to news coverage with in-depth news stories and analyses. *N1*, on the other hand, is *Blic*'s polar opposite in its reporting of Serbia's internal affairs, being far more leftist, pro-Western, and objective in its reporting, and prone to express open criticism of the ruling party and the government (Đorđević 2020, 456). The news portal, which also has a cable TV channel, is CNN International's local broadcast partner and an affiliate, which is why the ruling party and pro-government media often dub it a "Western satellite" in Serbia.

Besides being the most-read media portals among the Serbian general public, *Blic* and *N1* portals were chosen for this research due to their disparate reader bases (CESID 2021; IREX 2018). Namely, according to CESID's research (2021), *N1* consumers tend to hold pro-Western views, identifying the EU and the US as their preference for life, education, work, and medical treatment, as well as considering the two as the biggest economies and Serbia's allies. In contrast, "*Blic* readers tended to declare themselves neutral in geopolitical terms", and see Russia or China as Serbia's greatest allies (CESID 2021).

Analysing two entirely different media outlets and their potential transcreation practices is thus envisioned as a way to tap into the reasons for the use and effects of transcreation

with regard to two disparate groups of Serbian people – those with pro- and anti-regime sentiments.

The two news agencies, *Reuters* and *AP* are selected for their integrity and factual, least-biased reporting, as well as their global influence and positions as reliable news sources (Ad Fontes Media). Choosing these two agencies and their (more) neutral coverage enables easier identification of transcreation occurrences on the *Blic* and *N1* online portals.

The reason why this paper does not analyse perhaps more suitable counterparts to *Reuters* and *AP*, such as Serbian news agencies Tanjug and Beta, or foreign media similar to *Blic* and *N1*, is that the research was aimed at evaluating the transcreation practices in news pieces directly consumed by end-readers. *Blic* and *N1* represent the choices of the majority of Serbian people as the favoured media to stay informed, whereas local news agencies are scarcely ever read by the general public. In addition, the accessibility of a myriad of media outlets via a single click and general familiarity with the English language have had detrimental effects on the vitality of local news agencies, as nowadays, journalists from *Blic*, *N1*, and all other news portals across the globe are able to share a news story to their audience directly from foreign media.

Finally, the decision to retrieve articles from online portals of the four media lies in the fact that digital news sources have an advantage over print versions (of *Blic* at least, as *N1*, *Reuters*, and *AP* do not have print editions) for being up-to-date and more easily accessible to a wider readership.

4 The Analysis

Transcreation has been identified, at varying degrees, throughout all 45 chosen news pieces from *Blic* and 17 articles published by *N1*. It is important to note that the quantity of transcreation found in the corpus was not expressed as the number of individual instances of transcreation in each article pair, as it is challenging to determine what a single transcreation occurrence is – e.g., is a complete alteration of news title an example of one transcreation instance, or several of them simultaneously?

In terms of findings, the methods of transcreation identified in articles published by *Blic* and *N1* include lexical choices (such as occurrences of loaded language), shortening or lengthening, addition and/or omission of information, grammar alterations (including instances of focalizing, change in modality, etc.), examples of mistranslations, refocusing (changing a story's focus point), reframing (presenting a certain event, person, or idea differently on the level of the entire article, not only a segment), and so on.

Political news comprised the majority of the articles in the corpus, and this was found in diverse forms, encompassing everything from international summits and bilateral disputes, to articles that reported on the interweaving of politics and entertainment. In addition to politics, stories on religion, social issues, and sports were others that underwent transcreation, although there were significantly fewer articles concerning these issues.

Russia and the US were expected to be the leading countries in stories that had been produced through the process of transcreation, considering stance Serbia's in-between these. Although

the results proved the lasting importance of Russia and the US for Serbia, it was surprising that these two countries were matched by an unlikely competitor – France. However, upon closer observation of the political situation at the time the stories were collected, it became clear as to why France had such a strong presence in the Serbian media.

This was because of the public backlash in Germany against the admission of migrants from the Middle East and Africa, as well as Angela Merkel leaving the position of Chancellor, leading to the declining power of Germany in the EU, and Europe more generally. France's President Macron thus emerged as the new leader of the EU, and taking into consideration Serbia's efforts towards becoming an EU member state, the growing interest of the media in the France was thus not unexpected. So, even though Germany remains one of the most important countries for Serbia, politically as well as in terms of migration, its lessening influence in Europe is definitely reflected in the two Serbian media examined in this study.

The subsequent sections discuss in more detail two examples of transcreation identified in articles published by *Blic* and *N1* in comparison to their corresponding English versions issued by *AP* and *Reuters*. The first example analyses the set of articles on the suspension of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty between Russia and the USA (henceforth, the INF Treaty). The second set of news articles discusses one of the weekly rallies that took place as a part of the Yellow Vests series of protests in France.

The topic of INF Treaty suspension is selected for analysis as the event involves Russia and the USA, both of which Serbia strives to maintain strong political and economic relations with. As Serbia's foreign politics is well-known to look both East and West (Konitzer 2010; Lopandić, 2020; Rastović, 2018), analysing the portrayal of this event in *Blic* and *N1* for transcreation practices may provide insights into each media's (and their target audiences) sentiments with regard to the two countries.

Regarding the topic of Yellow Vests Protests, the event was chosen due to its equivalence to the anti-government protests, One of Five Million, that took place in Serbia during a similar period as the rallies in France. As Serbia's protests were mainly discredited, or entirely overlooked, by the pro-government media, analysing the portrayal of French protests promised to offer some compelling findings.

4.1 The Suspension of the INF Treaty between the USA and Russia

The INF Treaty regulating nuclear disarmament between the US and Soviet Union (now Russia), was revoked in February 2019, after being in force for more than 30 years. In late 2018, President Trump announced US withdrawal, which officially took effect on February 1, 2019. Russia's response came a day after when its suspension of the treaty was also announced.

The analysed articles were taken from all four analysed media outlets, and published on February 2, 2019, the day Russia made its suspension of the INF Treaty official.

To begin with, the article titles in the stories from the agencies and Serbian portals (Table 1) have sharply distinct focuses. While the titles of *AP* and *Reuters* focus on Russia – perhaps somewhat expected considering the fact that the articles were published on the day of its

treaty revocation – and seemingly put the responsibility on Russia, *Blic* and *N1*, on the other hand, foreground the US perspective. An identical tone is kept throughout each article.

Table 1. Comparison of news titles from *Blic*, *N1*, *AP*, and *Reuters* regarding the INF Treaty.

Media	Title	Translation
Blic	Pompeo: Zvanično nemamo obaveze prema INF	Pompeo: We officially do not have any obligations regarding INF
N1	SAD se povlače iz sporazuma o nuklearnom oružju s Rusijom	USA withdraws from the INF Treaty with Russia
AP	Russia to pull plug on nuclear arms pact after US does same	-
Reuters	Putin says Russia suspends INF nuclear deal with U.S.	-

Only the articles from *AP* and *Blic* can be further analysed, as the piece in *Reuters* is only a few sentences long, and the coverage in *N1* involves a nearly one-to-one translation from the *AP*. An interesting note regarding the article in *N1* is that the only difference between the text from the *AP* and its translation by *N1* is that the latter refocused the title to perhaps highlight that the USA initiated the INF Treaty's suspension, without providing any indisputable evidence of a Russian breach. The remainder of the similarity between *N1* and *AP* may be attributed to the similarities in the two media's audiences and genres, as *N1* is generally the choice of pro-Western Serbian readership (CESID 2021).

Throughout its article *Blic* exclusively presents the US view of the matter, through State Secretary Pompeo's statements, only mentioning the Russian response in the last sentence of the text. *Blic* portrays the US decision as legitimate and justified, by omitting some very important information that provides a bilateral and clearer picture of the issue. For instance, *Blic* says the US halted the treaty following a Russian breach, as the article puts it (Table 2). However, from the text by *AP* we learn that the US did not provide any evidence of a Russian breach, a piece of information that is left out in *Blic* (see Appendix). In the following excerpt from *Blic* (Table 2), State Secretary Pompeo asserts Russia's breach of the treaty.

Pompeo's accusations of a Russian breach were left unanswered by Russian officials in *Blic*, completely disregarding Russia's viewpoint. In *Blic*, the Russian perspective on the matter is mentioned only in the last sentence of the article, stating that "after the US decision, Russia announced that it is no longer bound by the INF treaty."[2] To provide a more objective perspective, it would be necessary that *Blic* include additional statements by Russian officials.

There are other significant pieces of information that are not mentioned in the Serbian text but have been referenced in *AP* (see Appendix), as shown in Table 3 and the following excerpts from the *AP* article.

[2] Posle odluke SAD, i Rusija je saopštila da je ne više ne obavezuje sporazum INF.

Table 2. Excerpt from Blic, on the topic of INF.

BLIC	Translation
Prema njegovim [Pompeo] rečima, s SAD su uradile sve što su mogle da očuvaju sporazum, ali da zvanična Moskva i dalje demantuje da je kršila sporazum svojim raketnim sistemom. Postupci Rusije, kako kaže američki državni sekretar, ugrožavaju SAD i ne mogu dopustiti da budu ograničeni sporazumom dok ga druga strana otvoreno krši.	According to [Pompeo], the US did everything to save the treaty, but official Moscow still denies violating the treaty with its rocket system. Russian actions, as the US Secretary of State says, jeopardize the US and they cannot allow being limited by the treaty while the other side is openly breaching it.

Table 3. Excerpts from the *AP*, on the topic of the INF.

AP
Moscow has strongly denied any breaches and accused Washington of making false accusations to justify its pullout. […] "We will respond quid pro quo," Putin said. "Our American partners have announced they were suspending their participation in the treaty, and we will do the same. They have announced they will conduct research and development, and we will act accordingly." […] Trump's move also reflected his administration's view that the pact was an obstacle to efforts needed to counter intermediate-range missiles deployed by China, which isn't part of the treaty. […] Russia has rejected the U.S. claims of violation, charging that the missile, which is part of the Iskander-M missile system, has a maximum range of 480 kilometers (298 miles). Russian officials claimed the U.S. assertions about the alleged breach of the pact by Moscow were intended to shift the blame for the pact's demise to Russia. […] The Russian Defense Ministry on Saturday released a satellite image of what it described as new production facilities at the U.S. missile maker Raytheon's plant in Tucson, Arizona, noting that their expansion began in 2017 as the Congress authorized spending for the development of intermediate-range missiles.

Without these pieces of information, the article in *Blic* creates a one-side image of the issue, siding with the US, and confirming its view without any questioning. In contrast, the AP's coverage of both the American and Russian sides offers a more objective and complete overview of the events.

Other reasons for the US withdrawal – for example, the nuclear advances of China, which was not a member of the INF Treaty – and Russia's denials of a breach, as well as evidence of US violation of the treaty, are all specified in the *AP* article. In *Blic*, however, there is no mention of any of these issues. The overall tone of the news piece on *Blic* is that US assertions are undeniably true, which is further supported by the lack of a Russian answer to the American accusations. This creates an impression that the Russians did not defend themselves – which could be interpreted as a sign they really are at fault.

By focusing the piece only on the US point of view, omitting Russia's responses to US claims, and using Pompeo's statement filled with loaded language, *Blic* creates a significant reframing of the issue, in which Russia is the guilty party, while the US does only what is necessary.

4.2 Yellow Vests Protests in France

On March 20, 2019, the French government announced its decision to deploy special military troops to maintain peace during the protest announced for the following weekend – one of many that took place within the series of weekly Yellow Vests protests.

Reuters did not report on this particular story, so Table 4 only includes article titles from *Blic*, *N1* and *AP*. In addition, *N1*'s article is nearly identical to the one published in *AP*. Therefore, the remainder of the analysis will focus on comparing articles from *Blic* and *AP* alone.

Table 4. Comparison of article titles from the *Blic*, *N1*, and *AP* on the topic of the Yellow Vests protests.

Media	Title	Translation
Blic	GRAĐANSKI RAT U NAJAVI Francuska vojska za vikend izlazi na ulice zbog najavljenog protesta "Žutih prsluka"	CIVIL WAR AHEAD French army goes to the streets on the weekend because of the announced yellow vests protest
N1	Pojačanje za naredni protest Žutih prsluka - vojna antiteroristička jedinica	Back up for the following yellow vests protest - a military counter-terrorism unit
AP	France to deploy troops to maintain security during protests	-

Choosing to use the phrase *civil war* in the title is certainly aiming to sensationalize the news piece, and attract the readers' attention. However, taking into consideration the target audience of *Blic*, it becomes clearer why the journalists opted for this particular phrase. For Serbian people, *civil war* is a phrase that carries a strong connotative meaning, reminding them of the decade-long conflicts between ex-Yugoslav countries, fuelled by genocide, ethnic cleansing, and fights for independence. The death toll was around 150,000 people, almost half a million were displaced, and Yugoslavia as a whole ceased to exist.

Therefore, claiming that a civil war will break out certainly sparks memories in the general public in Serbia, whose memory of the horrors of war is deeply instilled. So, using such strong

examples of loaded language aims at readers' emotions, particularly those of fear, panic, hate, pain, loss, powerlessness, and so on. However, the question remains as to why journalists working for *Blic* would want to arouse these negative and painful emotions in their readers, and in relation to the violent conduct of French protesters. The answer lies in the events in Serbia, and the anti-government protests One of Five Million, which were held around the same time as the Yellow Vests protests in France. Here, in fact, reporting on French protests in the Serbian media served as a commentary on those at home. The excerpts in Table 5 show how *Blic* transcreated the article to fit this purpose.[3]

Table 5. Comparison of excerpts from the *AP* and *Blic* on the topic of the Yellow Vests protests.

Media	Excerpt	Translation
Blic	Francuski vojnici biće raspoređeni u subotu, 23. marta tokom protesta "žutih prsluka" i čuvaće javne objekte u slučaju da se ponovi nasilje u Parizu i drugim gradovima, saopštila je danas francuska Vlada.	French troops will be deployed on Saturday, March 23 during the yellow vest protest and will guard public sites in case the violence in Paris and other cities repeats, the French government announced today.
AP	French president Emmanuel Macron has announced that soldiers will be deployed across the country to help maintain security during yellow vest protests planned this weekend.	-
Blic	Prošlog vikenda, više od 5.000 policajaca nije uspelo da zaustavi stotine nasilnih demonstranata koji su divljali Šanzelizeom, i koji su opljačkali i zapalili više od 100 firmi. Nasilje je trajalo više od sedam sati, navodi AFP.	Last weekend, more than 5000 police officers did not manage to stop hundreds of violent protesters who were rampaging along the Champs-Elysees, and robbed and set on fire more than 1000 firms. The violence lasted for more than seven hours, AFP reports.
AP	The French government announced on Monday new security measures and a ban on yellow vest protests along the Champs-Elysees Avenue in Paris and in two other cities following riots on Saturday that left luxury stores ransacked and charred from arson fires.	-

[3] *Blic* referred to AFP (Agence France-Presse; a French international news agency) as their source, as the second excerpt states; however, the author was not able to retrieve the AFP's original article at the time of the corpus collection, nor at a later date from AFP's archives.

In comparison to the article from the *AP*, the one in *Blic* is quite openly against the participants of the protests, dubbing them *violent* and their activities a *rampage*. Furthermore, the *AP* article clearly states that the protesters set out to attack upscale stores, highlighting the anti-capitalistic aspect of the protests. *Blic*, on the other hand, suggests the protesters attacked any random firm they came across, belittling the protesters' cause. The entire article is filled with examples of loaded language, i.e., words and/or phrases which are used to "elicit strong emotional response from the reader or listener",[4] such as *violent* and *rampage*. Extensive use of loaded language in this news piece by *Blic* presents the French protesters in a very bad light, as senseless, violent, destructive people, who will wake the spirits of the past and revive confusion, bloodshed, cruelty, suffering, and death in a "civil war". *Blic*'s portrayal of French protesters as such can be understood as a reference to the Serbian ones, suggesting that both the motives and consequences of anti-government protests in France and Serbia are not much different.

The time references in the above-shown excerpts of the two articles differ considerably. The English text concentrates on the future, and the idea of the army preserving peace and order at the protest. *Blic*, on the other hand, focuses on past events, promoting the idea of brutality and chaos related to protests. Thus, the concept of the past is once again woven into the story of the protests, serving as another echo of the events of the 1990s in Yugoslavia.

By condemning the French protests, *Blic* implicitly suggests to its readers that disapproving of the government equals brutality and leads to war, and that protesters are there to disturb the peace, halt progress, and restore enmity. As such the Serbian protests are criticized, although not even mentioned *per se*.

5 Conclusion

The analysis of the data presented in this study yields two significant findings: (i) *Blic* resorts to employing transcreation methods almost as a regular practice when adapting foreign news on topics relevant to Serbia; (ii) *N1* employs transcreation practices moderately in comparison to *Blic* and these are generally focused on alterations of grammatical constructions and article titles, whereas the remainder of the stories are identical to those published by *AP*.

The latter finding, regarding *N1*, may be explained by the fact that *N1* is a Western-owned media, with an audience identified as pro-EU/pro-Western, pro-opposition/anti-government (Rendulić 2023; Cesid 2021), as discussed in section 3. The media's genre is such that it almost exclusively deals with formal topics, including politics, business news, social commentary, culture, sports, health, and so on, without tabloid-like stories and sensationalism. Together, all these factors may significantly influence why the majority of articles in *N1* are rather faithful translations of texts from *AP* – after all, both *N1* and *AP* state they are focused on providing factual and unbiased news (Đorđević 2020, 456, Ad Fontes Media). It is thus expected that near identical news stories will fit the purposes and expectations of readers of both *AP* and *N1*.

The minimal employment of transcreation methods in articles published by *N1* might be argued to be the result of an already present political bias in the news pieces by *AP*. While *AP*

[4] https://www.languagehumanities.org/what-is-a-loaded-language.htm

is regarded as one of the least biased media globally (Ad Fontes Media), it is hardly possible that any media in the world is completely devoid of (at least partial) inclination toward a political figure, regime, country, system, etc. It might thus be possible that *N1* by and large copy-pastes the texts from *AP* because within them the desired sentiments and ideas are already interwoven, thus diminishing the need for additional interventions by *N1* journalists.

Blic, on the other hand, resorts to transcreation frequently, at least when it comes to reporting on foreign events of importance to Serbia. The findings align with this media outlet's politics, which is neither pro-East nor pro-West, but rather pro-regime (Đorđević 2020, 456; Vučić et al. 2022). The articles in *Blic* and the effects of transcreation employed in them correspond to Serbia's in-between political and economic position and aspirations towards both East (Russia and China) and the West (the EU and USA). As with Serbia's foreign politics, *Blic* balances the two in ways to support the regime's needs and decisions, and it affects the audience's opinions and sentiments on certain issues, as the example of the French protests confirms.

The discussion regarding the desired aims behind the use of transcreation in Serbian news portals, especially *Blic*, yields somewhat incomplete answers, as it is impossible to know what the driving force for such alterations was, and primarily, who the decision-maker was in the creation of the news pieces, be they journalists, editors, editor-in-chief, and so on.

One clear reason for such changes, even without inside knowledge of the article-writing process, is modifying the way of presenting certain topics, individuals, and countries for the Serbian audience. All the issues presented are, to a greater or lesser degree, relevant for Serbia (or, perhaps better to say, its official politics), in terms of existing or planned business cooperation and economic investments, political relations and aspirations, analogous political and/or social events. The underlying motive for transcreation in *Blic* could unequivocally be to influence the general opinion, beliefs, and attitudes of the Serbian people towards those matters.

However, as was previously mentioned, all the issues which were found to be transcreated in *Blic* are affiliated or have some parallel with events in Serbia. Therefore, transcreation in *Blic* was not intended to affect only the Serbian perception of foreign affairs, but the understanding of and feelings on matters in Serbia as well. In terms of the limitations of this research and recommendations for future work, it should be pointed out that a wider range of Serbian media should be analysed in order to yield a more comprehensive overview of the media scene and its politics in this country. Comparing the potential presence, methods, and aims of transcreation in a variety of different types of portals in Serbia, such as news agencies, media entirely discussing politics, unashamed tabloids, and others, will certainly yield more exhaustive conclusions as to how, to whom, and why the media in Serbia resort to transcreating their articles. In addition, future research could focus on analysing the transcreation of a single topic/country/individual across media to perhaps provide a clearer image of differing sentiments on the issue, or focus on the comparison of identical media genres in both English and Serbian (e.g., only tabloids or only news agencies). Finally, this paper presents the results of a small scale research, and a larger scale study into transcreation practices in Serbian media would certainly yield conclusions that would confirm or reject this paper's results. The media have been used for decades as a political tool, but the primary role of mass media, which

was to inform and educate the general public, has been further redefined in recent years. Understanding the scope of transcreation in journalism is a question that undoubtedly calls for further research, considering the omnipresence and profound influence the media has in today's world.

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Appendix

***AP*: Russia to pull plug on nuclear arms pact after US does same**

MOSCOW (*AP*) — Following in the footsteps of the U.S., Russia will abandon a centerpiece nuclear arms treaty but will only deploy intermediate-range nuclear missiles if Washington does so, President Vladimir Putin said Saturday.

President Donald Trump accused Moscow on Friday of violating the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty with "impunity" by deploying banned missiles. Trump said in a statement that the U.S. will "move forward" with developing its own military response options to Russia's new land-based cruise missiles that could target Western Europe.

Moscow has strongly denied any breaches and accused Washington of making false accusations in order to justify its pullout.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, in explaining that Washington on Saturday formally suspended its treaty obligations, said in a statement that Russia's "continued noncompliance has jeopardized the United States' supreme interests." He said the treaty will terminate in six months unless Moscow returns to "full and verifiable compliance."

The collapse of the INF Treaty has raised fears of a repeat of a Cold War showdown in the 1980s, when the U.S. and the Soviet Union both deployed intermediate-range missiles on the continent. Such weapons were seen as particularly destabilizing as they only take a few minutes to reach their targets, leaving no time for decision-makers and raising the likelihood of a global nuclear conflict over a false launch warning.

After the U.S. gave notice of its intention to withdraw, Putin said Russia would do the same. He ordered the development of new land-based intermediate-range weapons, but emphasized that Russia won't deploy them in the European part of the country or elsewhere unless the U.S. does so.

"We will respond quid pro quo," Putin said. "Our American partners have announced they were suspending their participation in the treaty, and we will do the same. They have announced they will conduct research and development, and we will act accordingly."

The U.S. has accused Russia of developing and deploying a cruise missile that violates provisions of the pact that ban production, testing and deployment of land-based cruise and ballistic missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers (310 to 3,410 miles). Trump's move also reflected his administration's view that the pact was an obstacle to efforts needed to counter intermediate-range missiles deployed by China, which isn't part of the treaty.

NATO allies have strongly backed Washington and urged Moscow to save the treaty by returning to compliance.

Russia has rejected the U.S. claims of violation, charging that the missile, which is part of the Iskander-M missile system, has a maximum range of 480 kilometers (298 miles). Russian officials claimed the U.S. assertions about the alleged breach of the pact by Moscow were intended to shift the blame for the pact's demise to Russia.

The Russian Defense Ministry on Saturday released a satellite image of what it described as new production facilities at the U.S. missile maker Raytheon's plant in Tucson, Arizona,

noting that their expansion began in 2017 as the Congress authorized spending for the development of intermediate-range missiles.

"The character and the timing of the works provide an irrefutable proof that the U.S. administration had decided to pull out of the INF treaty years before making unfounded claims of Russian violations," it said.

Putin has argued it makes no sense for Russia to deploy a ground-based cruise missile violating the treaty because it has such weapons on ships and aircraft, which aren't banned by the pact.

Speaking Saturday in a televised meeting with his foreign and defense ministers, Putin instructed the military to work on developing new land-based weapons that were previously forbidden by the INF treaty. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reported to Putin that they would include a land-based version of the Kalibr ship-based cruise missile and a new hypersonic intermediate-range ballistic missile.

Putin emphasized that such new weapons won't be deployed unless the U.S. does so.

"Russia will not station intermediate-range weapons in Europe or other regions until similar U.S. weapons appear in those regions," he said.

The Russian leader said Moscow remains open to talks with Washington, but added it would be up to the U.S. to take the first step.

"Let's wait until our partners are mature enough to conduct an equal and substantive dialogue on those issues," he said.

At the same time, Putin told his ministers that he would like to review the progress on building other prospective weapons that don't fall under the INF treaty, including the intercontinental Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle and the Poseidon underwater nuclear-powered drone.

He noted Shoigu's report that a key stage in testing of the Poseidon was completed several days ago. The drone is designed to carry a heavy nuclear weapon that could cause a devastating tsunami wave.

The Russian leader last year unveiled an array of new nuclear weapons, including the Avangard and the Poseidon, saying that they can't be intercepted. Putin also noted during Saturday's meeting that he would like the military to prepare a response to the possible deployment of weapons in space.

The Pentagon's new strategy unveiled last month calls for a new array of space-based sensors and other high-tech systems to more quickly detect and shoot down incoming missiles.

Putin instructed the military to make sure the research and development works on new weapons don't swell military spending. He said the military must reconfigure the existing defense budget to find money for the new weapons.

"We must not and will not be drawn into a costly arms race," he said.

(https://apnews.com/article/moscow-north-america-donald-trump-ap-top-news-international-news-15881e8900db4c4eaae3d84bb2500041)

***Reuters*: Putin says Russia suspends INF nuclear deal with U.S.**

MOSCOW, Feb 2 (*Reuters*) - Russian President Vladimir Putin told a meeting with foreign and defence ministers on Saturday that Russia has suspended the Cold War-era Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty following a similar decision by the United States, the Kremlin said.

Putin also said that Russia will start working on creating new missiles, including supersonic ones, and told ministers not to initiate disarmament talks with Washington.

(https://www.reuters.com/article/russia-usa-nuclear-idUKL5N1ZX06P)

***Blic*: Pompeo: Zvanično nemamo obaveze prema INF**

Američki državni sekretar Majk Pompeo izjavio je večeras da su SAD i zvanično obustavile izvršavanje svih obaveze prema Sporazumu o likvidaciji raketa srednjeg i kratkog dometa (INF) koji su 1987. potpisali s tadašnjim Sovjetskim Savezom, a čiji je naslednik Rusija. Pompeo je dodao da su SAD uputile Rusiji zvaničnu notu u kojoj najavljuju potpuno povlačenje u roku od šest meseci, što je u skladu sa sporazumom, navodi *AP*. Prema njegovim rečima,s SAD su uradile sve što su mogle da očuvaju sporazum, ali da zvanična Moskva i dalje demantuje da je kršila sporazum svojim raketnim sistemom. Postupci Rusije, kako kaže američki državni sekretar, ugrožavaju SAD i ne mogu dopustiti da budu ograničeni sporazumom dok ga druga strana otvoreno krši. Posle odluke SAD, i Rusija je saopštila da je ne više ne obavezuje sporazum INF.

(https://www.blic.rs/vesti/svet/pompeo-zvanicno-nemamo-obaveze-prema-inf/w63cdq6)

***N1*: SAD se povlače iz sporazuma o nuklearnom oružju s Rusijom**

Državni sekretar SAD Majk Pompeo objavio je da se SAD povlače iz Sporazuma o nuklearnim snagama srednjeg dometa (INF) sa Rusijom, kojim se kontroliše nuklearno naoružanje od vremena hladnog rata.

Sporazum su 1987. potpisali SAD i Sovjetski Savez, a SAD optužuju Rusiju za njegovo kršenje, što Rusija negira.

„SAD će sutra suspendovati svoje obaveze u okviru INF sporazuma i pokrenuti proces povlačenja iz tog sporazuma, koji će biti završen u roku od šest meseci u skladu sa članom 60“, rekao je Pompeo.

On je rekao da će sporazum, ukoliko Rusija ne počne da se pridržava, biti ukinut.

To će se desiti ukoliko Rusija ne bude počela da poštuje svoje obaveze i uništi sve rakete, i opremu kojim se ovaj tekst sporazuma krši, napisao je predsednik Donald Tramp u saopštenju.

Pompeo je rekao da su SAD dale Rusiji dovoljno vremena da ispravi svoje postupke i da poštuje svoje obaveze preuzete tim sporazumom, i dodao da to vreme sutra ističe.

„Rusija je ugrozila bezbednosne interese SAD i mi više ne možemo biti ograničeni sporazumom dok ga Rusija bestidno krši,“ rekao je Pompeo i dodao da će SAD zvanično obavestiti Rusiju i druge strane u sporazumu da se povlače iz sporazuma SAD.

Povlačenje SAD iz sporazuma je bilo očekivano mesecima. Usledilo je posle više godina nerešenog spora oko ruskog poštovanja tog sporazuma i odnosi se na određene ruske krstareće rakete. Prema sporazumu o nuklearnim snagama srednjeg dometa (INF) iz 1987. godine između SAD i Sovjetskog Saveza, zabranjena je proizvodnja, testiranje i raspoređivanje krstarećih i balističkih raketa dometa od 500 do 5.500 kilometara.

Pentagon smatra da novi ruski raketni sistem 9M729 potpada pod taj sporazum, a Moskva tvrdi da ta raketa ima domet manji od 500 kilometara.

(https://n1info.rs/svet/a456939-sad-se-povlace-iz-sporazuma-o-nuklearnom-oruzju-s-rusijom/)

***AP*: France to deploy troops to maintain security during protests**

PARIS (*AP*) — French President Emmanuel Macron has announced that soldiers will be deployed across the country to help maintain security during yellow vest protests planned this weekend.

Macron said the military will secure government buildings and other sites to allow police forces to focus on maintaining public order, in comments reported Wednesday by government spokesman Benjamin Griveaux Wednesday.

About 7,000 soldiers, most armed with automatic weapons, are already deployed across the country in what the military calls Operation Sentinel, which was created to protect sensitive sites following deadly attacks in 2015.

The French government announced on Monday new security measures and a ban on yellow vest protests along the Champs-Elysees Avenue in Paris and in two other cities following riots on Saturday that left luxury stores ransacked and charred from arson fires.

(https://apnews.com/article/9f79a3d301d64729b9a4be503cc994d1)

Reuters: –

***Blic*: GRAĐANSKI RAT U NAJAVI Francuska vojska za vikend izlazi na ulice zbog najavljenog protesta "Žutih prsluka"**

Francuski vojnici biće raspoređeni u subotu, 23. marta tokom protesta "žutih prsluka" i čuvaće javne objekte u slučaju da se ponovi nasilje u Parizu i drugim gradovima, saopštila je danas francuska Vlada.

Portparol francuske Vlade Benžamin Grivo rekao je novinarima da će vojska biti preraspoređena iz antiterorističke operacije "Sentinel", u okviru koje vojnici patroliraju ulicama i štite aerodrome, železničke stanice, bogomolje i druge lokacije.

On je dodao da će to omogućiti policiji da se koncentriše na kontrolu gomile i održanje reda i mira.

Prošlog vikenda, više od 5.000 policajaca nije uspelo da zaustavi stotine nasilnih demonstranata koji su divljali Šanzelizeom, i koji su opljačkali i zapalili više od 100 firmi. Nasilje je trajalo više od sedam sati, navodi AFP.

Nakon tih nereda, Vlada je otpustila šefa pariske policije Mišela Delpuša.

Vladini izvori rekli su da će još neki visoki policijski zvaničnici biti smenjeni.

Neki policijski sindikati upozorili su da održavanje reda i mira na ulicama nije zadatak za vojnike.

(https://www.blic.rs/vesti/svet/gradjanski-rat-u-najavi-francuska-vojska-za-vikend-izlazi-na-ulice-zbog-najavljenog/blme2w2)

***N1*: Pojačanje za naredni protest Žutih prsluka - vojna antiteroristička jedinica**

Pripadnici francuske vojne antiterorističke misije "Stražar" (Sentinelle) biće dodatno raspoređeni u subotu za vreme protesta gradjanskog pokreta "Žuti prsluci" gde će izmedju ostalog obezbeđivati zgrade zvaničnih institucija, saopštila je francuska vlada.

Ta incijativa će omogućiti policiji i drugim pripadnicima snaga bezbednosti da se usredsrede na kretanje demonstransta, a cilj je održavanje javnog reda i mira, izjavio je portparol vlade Benžamen Grivo, nekoliko dana posle nasilja i nereda koji su izbili u pariskoj aveniji Jelisejskih polja za vreme protesta „žutih prsluka".

Vlasti su posle toga zabranile okupljanja na toj čuvenoj aveniji kao i u nekoliko četvrti gradova u Francuskoj gde su izbijali neredi.

Premijer Eduar Filip je najavio da će vlasti odgovoriti na nasilje na protestima gradjanskog pokreta koji organizuje demonstracije od 17. novembra zbog nezadovoljstva opštom državnom politikom.

Neke opozicione stranke su kritikovale danas najavljeno rasporedjivanje vojske.

Desničarska stranka Republikanci smatra da vojnici nisu obučeni za obezbedjivanje javnog reda i mira, već za borbe i da ubijaju u slučaju rata. Radikalna levica ocenila je da vojska ne može da zameni policiju jer to nije njen posao.

Vojna antiteroristička misija „Stražar" angažovana je od terorističkih napada u januaru 2015. u Parizu. Vojnici su rasporedjeni ispred nekih verskih objekata, kao što su sinagoge i džamije. Nalaze se i na mestima koja mogu da budu mete napada, kao što su turističke lokacije ili železničke stanice.

(https://n1info.rs/svet/a469767-pojacanje-za-naredni-protest-zutih-prsluka-vojna-antiteroristicka-jedinica/)

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An ELF-Oriented Corpus-Based Analysis into the EMI Lecturers' Use of Spatial Deixis across Two Different Teaching Media

ABSTRACT

In the last two decades, English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has fast increased in non-Anglophone universities, with the result that non-native English speaker (NNES) lecturers are increasingly using English as a lingua franca (ELF) to interact with their NNES students in the classroom. As such, EMI represents "a prototypical ELF scenario" (Smit 2017, 387). This paper identifies and describes language variations that occurred in EMI lecturers' talk in a comparable corpus of six EMI engineering lectures taught in two different teaching modalities: in-person and virtual synchronous classrooms. By means of a corpus-based methodology, this study particularly focuses on lexical spatial deixis as it allows the lecturer to direct students' attention towards a common referent so as to ensure students' comprehension and participation (Hyland 2005). The findings indicate that the use of proximal deictics differs according to the context, with interactional and pedagogical implications beyond EMI.

Keywords: English-medium instruction, English as a lingua franca, teachers, oral speech, EMI corpus, corpus-based methods, spatial deixis, online teaching

Korpusna analiza rabe prostorske deikse pri izvedbi predavanj v angleščini kot lingui franci preko dveh različnih učnih medijev

POVZETEK

V zadnjih dveh desetletjih se je na neanglofonskih univerzah hitro razširila raba angleščine kot medija poučevanja (AMP), zaradi česar predavatelji, ki niso materni govorci angleščine, za interakcijo s študenti, ki prav tako niso materni govorci angleščine, v razredu vse pogosteje uporabljajo angleščino kot linguo franco (ALF). Angleščina kot medij poučevanja tako predstavlja »prototipični scenarij ALF« (Smit 2017, 387). V članku predstavimo jezikovne variacije, ki se pojavljajo v govoru predavateljev v primerljivem korpusu šestih predavanj za inženirje, ki se izvajajo v angleškem jeziku in preko dveh različnih učnih medijev: v klasični predavalnici in v sinhroni virtualni učilnici. S pomočjo korpusne metodologije se raziskava osredinja na leksikalno prostorsko deikso, ki predavatelju omogoča, da usmeri pozornost študentov na isti skupni referent in tako zagotovi njihovo razumevanje in sodelovanje (Hyland 2005). Rezultati raziskave kažejo, da se raba proksimalnih deiktičnih izrazov razlikuje glede na kontekst, kar ima interakcijske in pedagoške implikacije izven AMP.

Ključne besede: angleščina kot medij poučevanja, angleščina kot lingua franca, učitelji, ustni govor, korpus AMP, korpusne metode, prostorska deiksa, spletno poučevanje

1 Introduction

In the last two decades, English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has fast increased in non-Anglophone – and particularly European – universities, with the result that non-native English speaker (NNES) lecturers are increasingly using English as a lingua franca (ELF) to interact with their NNES students in the classroom. As such, EMI represents "a prototypical ELF scenario" (Smit 2017, 387). However, studies into EMI from an ELF perspective are still quite rare, as evidenced by the fact that much research into EMI lecturers' talk still takes English native language as its "lubber line" (Doiz and Lasagabaster 2022).

Parallel to the international rise of EMI is the increasing rate of EMI courses delivered through online platforms during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Although computer technology "has become ecological and normalized" (Zhou and Wei 2018, 471) in the language classroom, the use of newer technology in the EMI classroom is a relatively new phenomenon with little investigation.

To address this gap, this exploratory study illustrates language variations occurring in EMI lecturers' discourse when teaching in different teaching modalities – i.e., face-to-face (FTF) and online synchronous video lectures (SVL). It adopts corpus-based methods in combination with qualitative analysis to identify contextual language variations occurring in the speech of three Italian first-language lecturers teaching in EMI courses at the department of engineering at an Italian university. Since one of the major changes brought about by the shift to online teaching is related to the physical setting, this study aimed at examining variations in lecturers' use of spatial deictic markers whose meanings rely greatly on the situational context of utterance. This paper begins with a review of the theoretical background and previous research relevant to EMI lectures in both classroom-based and online settings. It provides a foundation for the present study, which adopts a case study framework and considers the relationship between contextual factors – i.e., the affordances and constraints of each teaching/learning environment – and lecturers' discursive practices. Data collection and methodology are then presented, followed by a summary of findings, which leads to a discussion highlighting the potential of integrating innovative technology into teaching methods to improve EMI lecturers' communicative effectiveness and, possibly, to facilitate students' comprehension in the EMI classroom.

2 Background

A well-known definition by Dearden (2015, 4) describes English-Medium Instruction (EMI) as "[t]he use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English." As such, the EMI classroom falls in the realm of English as a lingua franca (ELF).

However, despite the increasing "importance and amount of English as a lingua franca (ELF) usage and EMI lectures" (Siegel 2020, 73) in the last two decades, Murata (2018) underlines the "relatively unknown territory" (Siegel 2020, 1) related to ELF and EMI in educational contexts. Furthermore, Björkman (2018, 227) emphasizes that despite "the myriad of domains where English has become an important lingua franca, we are far from

having explored academic usage of English as a lingua franca fully. […] especially with respect to the importance of contextual factors, methodological approaches and data."

The study described in this paper involves EMI content courses at a university in northern Italy where such courses have existed for more than 10 years, although they have seen a recent dramatic increase in numbers. In the academic year 2021/22, 96 international courses were offered by the University of Bologna (UNIBO) – 56 taught entirely in English, and 23 including at least one English taught study programme – out of a total of 234 degree programs, resulting in a 50% increase compared to the academic year 2016/17.[1] This trend is expected to be consolidated in the coming years more broadly at the international level, "which makes this a topic of importance for tertiary education at a global level" (Siegel 2020, 74).

While previous research on EMI has often paid much attention to the proficiency levels of both EMI lecturers and students, more recent ELF-oriented EMI studies (e.g., Björkman 2010; Dang 2018, 2020; Deroey and Johnson 2021; Morell 2018; Siegel 2020; Trent 2017) have increasingly emphasized the role contextual factors play in affecting speakers' communicative practices. These studies have focused on lexis, metadiscourse markers, classroom interaction, and pragmatics.

2.1 Lexis

As Jablonkai (2021, 95) points out, "[t]o inform EMI programme developers about the linguistic difficulties students might face, corpus studies that focused on disciplinary vocabulary load and lexical complexity are of specific relevance." In academic lectures, the presence of unfamiliar words and expressions might be a serious obstacle to students' comprehension, especially for L2 students. Therefore, previous studies examining academic discourse from an ELF perspective also focused on lexical features – such as lexical bundles (Biber 2004; Biber and Barbieri 2007), their cohesive role (Nesi and Basturkmen 2006), and the frequency of formulaic expressions (Simpson 2004; Simpson-Vlach and Ellis 2010), investigating lexical variations of both oral and written academic discourse – as described in detail by Biber (2006) and Biber et al. (2002). Martinez, Adolph, and Carter (2013) investigated lexical bundles used by lecturers to introduce key terms. They revealed that the function of defining was often realized through words such as *or*, *essentially* or *basically* which carry a pragmatic meaning of which L2 students might not be aware, hence potentially hindering their comprehension. These findings are in line with Mazak and Herbas-Donoso's (2015) study of translanguaging in a Spanish EMI context, which showed that the professor mostly translanguaged key terminology as a way to apprentice students into English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Research has also investigated lexical variations across different disciplines (e.g., Dang 2018, 2020; Gardner and Xu 2019; Hyland and Tse 2007; Mudraya 2006), particularly in terms of frequency, collocation, range, meanings and functions of lexical patterns. Among these latter, Dang (2018, 2020) showed that the discourse of Hard Sciences, both spoken and written, is characterized by a higher lexical coverage than that of

[1] UNIBO Quality Assurance Committee, 2022 Annual Report. Available at: https://www.unibo.it/nucleodivalutazione/Documenti/RELAZIONE%20ANNUALE%20NDV%202022_con%20Allegati.pdf?Source=/nucleodivalutazione/default.aspx

the Soft Sciences, recommending that ESP course material should include wordlists based on a particular subject.

2.2 Metadiscourse Markers

In the last two years, there has been an increasing research interest into the use of metadiscourse markers in the EMI classroom. Metadiscourse refers to "aspects of a text", whether spoken or written, "which explicitly organize a discourse or the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader" (Hyland 2015, 14). Questions and second-person pronouns (engagement markers), and conjunctions and adverbial phrases (transition framers) are good examples of this. As such, "[m]etadiscourse reveals the writer's awareness of the reader and his or her need for elaboration, clarification, guidance and interaction" (Hyland 2015, 17). Metadiscourse markers are of paramount importance in lecture comprehension, and this especially applies to EMI lectures, which are generally monologic and highly informative (Broggini and Murphy 2017; Molino 2018). These studies have shown that, although the lecture genre, cultural issues and disciplinary culture may play a role in lecturers' use of interactive metadiscourse when teaching in EMI, as seen with the use of reminders and frame markers (Doiz and Lasagabaster 2022), certain metadiscursive features are more likely to be related to EMI, especially personal metatext forms – such as reformulations and metalinguistic comments (Molino 2018), and self-mentions (Broggini and Murphy 2017) thus revealing that EMI lectures tend to be more conversational, spontaneous and informal. Furthermore, impersonal metadiscourse expressions, such as connectives, were found to be less frequent in EMI lecturers' spoken language, and they also demonstrated a limited variety of connectors (Broggini and Murphy 2017). In this regard, Mauranen (2012) compared word frequencies in the ELFA and the MICASE corpora showing that although NNS lecturers tend to use a smaller range of vocabulary, their more limited lexical and syntactic repertoire rarely obstruct comprehension. Finally, in their corpus-based contrastive study of lecturers' use of importance markers, Deroey and Johnson (2021) found that there is little difference in the way that L1 and EMI lecturers use importance markers, but some intracorpus differences were identified, meaning that it was the lecturers' teaching experience and the educational culture, rather than their language proficiency, which also played a role in lecturers' use of metadiscursive markers.

2.3 Classroom Interaction

Interactional practices in the EMI classroom have been the focus of increasing research interest. Studies on this topic have used surveys and interviews to explore lecturers' and students' attitudes and perceptions towards classroom practices involved in EMI (Morell 2007; Picciuolo and Johnson 2020; Revell and Wainwright 2009). In the Italian context, for example, Picciuolo and Johnson (2020) show that both EMI Italian lecturers and domestic students still have a non-native accent bias, such that they mainly attribute comprehension problems in the EMI classrooms to accent and pronunciation-related issues, despite the "interlanguage benefit" (Bent and Bradlow 2003), whereas international students do not see the lecturers' accent as an important issue. Similarly, in the lecturers' view, local students' low English competence would hinder interaction in their classes, although some lecturers also indicated their own linguistic insecurity, besides lecture time constraints, as a major issue

in preventing them from engaging in longer verbal exchanges. In this regard, other corpus-based investigations in this field have focused on lecturers' use of personal pronouns as a means for engaging students with lecture content and enhancing students' comprehension, comparing pronoun frequency and function across disciplines (e.g., Johnson and Picciuolo 2022a; Yeo and Ting 2014). These studies have shown that lecturers tend to favour the use of the personal pronoun *you* but with an impersonal and generalized function, i.e., when it does not refer to the audience. Similarly, a preference for the exclusive-oriented personal pronoun *we* also appeared in EMI lecturer discourse, with little variation occurring across disciplines. Once again, these results suggest that EMI lecturers are unwilling to promote bidirectional verbal exchanges with their students (Johnson and Picciuolo 2020). However, by triangulating classroom discourse analysis with findings from lecturers' surveys, previous studies (e.g., Picciuolo and Johnson 2020) have also emphasized that the disciplinary culture and lecturers' personal attitudes and beliefs – which are nonetheless culture-dependent – are likely to affect EMI lecturers' interactional practices.

Further studies on classroom interactions in EMI settings have adopted a corpus-based approach to examining how lecturers engage students through questioning. These works have shown that EMI lecturers mainly use closed and cognitively undemanding questions (Sánchez-García 2018) such as confirmation checks, display or even referential questions, which are less likely to engender a verbal response from the students. Furthermore, although EMI lecturers' preference for confirmation checks might also be due to their greater need to monitor and ensure students' comprehension when teaching through an L2 (Sánchez-García 2018), it was more generally found to be typical of the lecture genre, with little variations occurring across different L1 and disciplinary contents (Chang 2011; Crawford Camiciottoli 2004, 2008; Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García 2013), such that differences in lecturers' questioning practices seem to be determined to a greater extent by their instructional style (Morell 2004; Northcott 2001). In this regard, Morell (2018) showed that EMI lecturers, when specifically trained, make greater use of elicitations, more cognitive demanding questions, and negotiation strategies than L1 lecturers, but they also show that these questioning practices emerge when setting up pair/group work activities, thus confirming an interdependence between contextual factors – e.g., type of learning activity being carried out, number of students involved – and discursive practices.

2.4 Pragmatics

In this regard, studies have investigated ELF speakers' use of pragmatic strategies for effective spoken academic interaction as well as to what extent contextual factors affect EMI lecturers' discourse (e.g., Alsop and Nesi 2013; Bellés-Fortuño and Fortanet-Gómez 2009; Björkman 2010, 2011). Alsop and Nesi (2013) investigated cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variations in engineering lecturers' use of summary, showing that EMI NNS lecturers used summary for previewing and reviewing current talk more often than NS lecturers, thus paying more attention to reinforcing content than NS lecturers.

Moving away from the native/non-native dichotomy, Björkman (2010) examined lecturers' and students' use of selected pragmatic strategies in two different ELF speech events (lectures

and students' work groups). She found that such strategies are employed more frequently and with a wider variety by students in group-work sessions than by lecturers in lectures. However, she also points out that variations in the type and frequency of pragmatic strategies used "cannot solely be attributed to the speakers" (Björkman 2010, 960), but rather to certain communicative goals the speakers pursue. In fact, while students might feel a greater need to get a message across in order to accomplish a shared task in the group-work session, the lecturers' "job is primarily to *deliver* the content" (Björkman 2010, 961, our emphasis). She then illustrates several strategies and examples of a lecturer's skilful use of pragmatic strategies, including "commenting on discourse contents […] labelling the speech act since the speakers verbalize what it is they do" (Björkman 2010, 956). She calls for shifting EMI lecturers' attention from achieving high L2 proficiency levels to developing a set of functional strategies, which might be viewed as more encouraging by EMI lecturers, as being faster to learn and more closely related to their academic field. In this regard, Lau, Cousineau, and Lin's (2016) study particularly focused on EMI lecturers' use of pragmatic force modifiers (e.g., *actually*, *just*, *kind of*) and found that students generally misunderstood the intended pragmatic-functional meaning of these lexical items. As such, Lau, Cousineau, and Lin (2016) call for more pragmatic approaches to be taken in providing training to EMI lecturers. In this regard, other studies have identified further pragmatic strategies EMI lecturers may use to facilitate students' comprehension, including:

> making the individual lecturer's style clear to students, making transitional signals clear, giving students focusing questions at the beginning of a lecture, pausing regularly to avoid cognitive overload, and allowing for notetaking and collaboration (e.g., Flowerdew and Miller 2000; Rodgers and Webb 2016). Repetition of key points is an additional step EMI teachers can take (e.g., Flowerdew and Miller 1996). (Siegel 2020, 80)

Overall, it is clear from this brief and by no mean exhaustive overview that much EMI research attention has been paid to lecturers' discourse, as being the "front-line instructors who are responsible for the delivery of content subjects" (Trent 2017, 220) in the EMI classroom. Furthermore, while the lecturer's English competence is not the only determining element affecting students' comprehension, previous research has long focused on EMI lecturers' English use as "it remains one of the most tangible [factor] and one that students may identify most frequently when they elaborate on their ability to understand (or not) EMI lectures" (Siegel 2020, 88). Nevertheless, in contrast to "a deficit view raising doubts about the capacity of instructors whose mother tongue is not English to deliver content subjects […] in English and to adequately support student learning in EMI environments" (Trent 2017, 220) ELF approaches to EMI have looked at EMI lecturers' classroom discourse assuming a difference rather than a deficit orientation. These studies have shown to what extent contextual and situational factors in the EMI classroom contribute to lecturers' teaching and discursive practices, emphasizing that (monologic) lecture genre, (directing) instructional style, and disciplinary culture all affect interactional patterns and classroom discourse more than lecturers' and students' linguistic difficulties. For example, Siegel's (2020) study shows that the factors affecting students' listening comprehension in EMI lectures also include students' background knowledge of the topic, students' familiarity with a lecturer's accent, and effective visual aids (e.g., PowerPoint slides) used by the lecturer.

2.5 Digital Tools and Language Learning

In this last regard, Siegel (2020) questions the use of technology (e.g., PowerPoint slides and their availability online) as a way of making lectures less demanding. As he puts it:

> Visual aids, and software such as PowerPoint in particular, have become ubiquitous in higher education. Utilizing PowerPoint during lectures is largely viewed as advantageous for both lecturers and students, as the tool supports the organization of information, notetaking and holding student attention (e.g., Roehling and Trent-Brown 2011). However […] while lecturers have technological tools to help support student learning in and from lectures, these tools need to be used with care to maximize their effectiveness. Siegel (2020, 80)

The affordances and constraints of digital resources to language teaching and learning have been widely discussed within EFL contexts. In Zhou and Wei's (2018) systematic review of research on technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) they particularly emphasize the benefits provided by the use of digital resources to teach and learn language learning strategies, particularly in terms of self-regulation and autonomous learning. The authors also stress that "[t]he pervasive use of mobile technologies and easy access to online resources require that digital language learners understand and employ appropriate learning strategies for learning effectiveness and that their teachers are able and willing to teach these strategies as needed" (Zhou and Wei 2018, 471).

Although these findings have important implications for EMI, studies investigating the use of educational technology specifically in the EMI classroom are still rare. Cicillini and Giacosa (2020), for example, investigated EMI lecturers' and students' perceptions about the shift to online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study revealed that "issues such as language proficiency and poor interaction" (Cicillini and Giacosa 2020, 59) still seemed to affect EMI in online settings in a very similar way as in EMI FTF classes. However, they also showed that the majority of both lecturers and students "succeeded in reaching their goals and improved their skills" (Cicillini and Giacosa 2020, 59) and that online learning was considered by both stakeholders as a potential force to speed up the internationalization process and make academic instruction more flexible for both local and international students' needs. Similarly, Hammond and Radjai's (2022) study shows that Japanese lecturers expressed satisfaction towards the growth of online international programs for virtual student mobility during the pandemic, as lecturers feel freer "to personally internationalize their curriculum […] without excessive external interference" (Hammond and Radjai 2022, 87). Taking a more applied linguistics perspective, Gay's (2022) study shows the effectiveness of certain digital tools (e.g., websites/apps and Moodle platforms) to help mixed-ability EMI students learn vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) so as to increase the scope of their vocabulary as well as to promote higher levels of self-regulation. Querol-Julián (2021) identified and described EMI lecturers' communicative functions when interacting in a large EMI online lecture from a multimodal perspective. She outlined some of the major challenges facing EMI lecturers when delivering classes online for large groups, including a lack of experience in online synchronous teaching, and the separation of teachers from students, which inevitably affects interaction, as students can "hide behind technology"

and the lecturer "cannot feel the pulse of the class for understanding" (Querol-Julián 2021, 311). However, she also noticed that in online settings, "teacher discourse functions were built up by chains of non-linguistic modes that interact with linguistic mode", and that "some embodied modes were crucial in the construction of interaction, structuring, focusing and intensifying discourse, playing interpersonal functions and showing epistemic stance" (Querol-Julián 2021, 311). Nevertheless, students may find it difficult to understand "the relationship between verbal and nonverbal cues that combine to co-construct meaning within a range of academic listening situations (e.g., lectures, webinars and massive online open courses; Campoy-Cubillo and Querol-Julián 2015)" (Siegel 2020, 70).

More recently, Chien et al. (2022) examined both the verbal and non-verbal teaching materials EMI lecturers use in online courses. Verbal teaching materials include the lecturers' speech, textbooks, slides and whiteboard text. Non-verbal teaching materials include images projected on the screen or drawn on the whiteboard as well as teachers' body movements, including the way they interact with the teaching objects (e.g., the whiteboard) in the classroom. Despite being primarily aimed at presenting a new method to automate the evaluation of EMI lecturers attending training courses online, the findings from this study also support the pivotal role played by multimodal competence in achieving "educational effectiveness" (Siegel 2020, 76). Furthermore, it also acknowledges that, in the online classroom, the components which make up lecturers' multimodal competence include their ability to effectively interact with computer systems and objects in the physical world. Except from these few examples, however, EMI in online settings is still an "unexplored academic instructional digital genre" (Querol-Julián, 2021).

To address this gap, this exploratory study aims to identify and describe language variations occurred in EMI lecturers' talk as a consequence of the shift to online teaching following the COVID-19 lockdown. Since one of the major changes brought about by the shift to online teaching is related to the physical setting, this study aimed at examining variations in the use of spatial deixis.

2.6 Spatial Deixis

Spatial conceptualization and its realization in language-use has provided a vast field of research for scholars from different research areas. Starting from the pioneering works by Bühler (1934) and Fillmore (1997 [1971]), spatial deixis (henceforth SD) has come to refer to a specific set of linguistic items – e.g., speech patterns such as "*this* one" or "over *there*" – which are recruited by the speaker to refer to entities present in the perceptual spatial surroundings of the participants. As such, spatial deictic markers "function as signposts within the deictic field" (Stukenbrock 2014, 72), so as "to coordinate the interlocutors' joint focus of attention, which is one of the most basic functions of human communication" (Diessel 2006, 463).

Earlier theorizations of SD (Lyons 1977) identified three prototypical features – i.e., the interactants, a dialogic process, and a shared physical context – which constitute a "coordinate system of perceptions at whose zero-point lies what is called the ***origo***, i.e., the **I-now-here-centre** of the speaker's subjective orientation" (Stukenbrock 2014, 72, emphasis in original).

However, more recent studies have criticized the egocentricity of the deictic centre (e.g., Fricke 2002; Hanks 1990; Laczkó 2010), revealing that in dialogic interactions the spatial *origo* may also shift from the speaker's to somebody else's point of view, thus showing the participants' mutual cooperation in the co-construction of meaning. Examples of such instances include when the deictic locative adverb *here* symbolically refers to either: a) a geographical place, such as a city or a nation; b) "an imaginary *locus*" (Bazzanella 2019, 7) such as the speaker's body – what Bühler (1934) referred to as *deixis am phantasma* as in *John broke his leg here*, uttered while pointing to her/his own leg – or the speaker's visual imagination, as in Levinson's (2004, 103) example: "Imagine this room were my office. The book would be right here [pointing to the edge of my desk]"; c) another person's location, as happens in reported speech. In all these three cases, the interpretation of the referent requires that participants share "physical context, appropriate context and common ground" (Bazzanella 2019, 7) in order to be understood.

2.6.1 SD in Remote Interactions

As Bazzanella (2019, 9) points out, in written, partially synchronic interactions such as chat and text messages "[t]he lack of common physical context […] sometimes makes understanding a laborious or even unsuccessful process". For example, "*I'm* ***here*** − uttered on a train while using a mobile phone − is completely inadequate pragmatically, given that the interlocutor cannot guess the speaker's (unshared) position" (Bazzanella 2019, 9−10). Therefore, such an utterance requires either the speaker or the interlocutor to use conversational strategies (e.g., auto-correction, repair) in order to achieve mutual understanding.

In this last regard, the technological developments of the last two decades have produced dramatic changes in communication practices. Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) environments – e.g., instant messaging and video-conferencing platforms – have facilitated communication among people across space and time by offering a wide range of visual, symbolic, spatial, and deictic channels of communication. However, "remote communication is still limited compared to face-to-face interaction (Eisert 2003), in particular concerning deictic expressions" (Medrano, Pfeiffer, and Kray 2020, 1867). Therefore, much research in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) dealing with deictic communication in distributed interactions has paid increasing attention to the use of remote pointing gestures as an effective resource to structure and direct participants' visual attention (see, e.g., Kirk, Rodden, and Fraser 2007). However, to the best of our knowledge few studies have analysed participants' use of spatial deictic expressions in virtual interactions. Among the few studies that do exist, Fussell et al. (2004) investigated the effects of remote pointing gestures on language in collaborative physical tasks showing that the use of pointing gesture tools led to less verbose referential expressions amongst the instructors, being replaced by higher rates of proximal deixis use – e.g., *this*, *here* – which in turn was correlated with faster task performance.

2.6.2 SD in English

In English, SD is primarily expressed through devices such as demonstrative determiners and pronouns *this*/*these* and *that*/*those* and locative adverbs *here*/*there*.

Furthermore, English speakers divide space in binary ways, with *here*, *this*, and *these* marking something proximal (or close) while *there*, *that*, and *those* indicate entities distal (or distant) in relation to the speaker's point of reference, whether the referent is physically or psychologically close or distant (Cairns 1991). In fact, as Cairns (1991) points out, speakers' use of SD not only reflects the concrete physical distance from the speaker or addressee, but it also creates a psychological distance from a proposition in order to express an attitude. In this regard, of particular interest are examples (1) and (2). In example (1) from Friginal et al. (2017) the teacher points to a typing mistake that a student identified. Notice that when the teacher points out the mistake, she uses *that*, but uses *this* when indicating what is correct.

(1) T: yeah, oh **that is** wrong, yeah it's wrong you were right it is wrong. yeah, I have to, now **this is** correct actually that's a good thing you pointed that out Diep now see Diep, was a, a teacher. (L2CD-T-13) (Friginal et al. 2017, 124)

Example (2) is an excerpt from our sub-corpus of online synchronous video lectures (SVL) EMI lectures.

(2) T: one solution which I don't have time to go to get into now, but I think. It is worthwhile, you know, looking it because it's a nice example of adversarial networks. </s><s> Is **this** one. So if you're curious, look at **that**. (Lect 2_SVL)

Here, the lecturer first uses *this* when referring to an object (i.e., the image of an adversarial network) which is obviously closer to the lecturer, since it is visible to him on his screen and then shared through a video-platform. But in the following utterance he does a straightforward reformulation and uses *that*. It might be argued that the demonstrative *that* is used to refer to the previous sentence instead, thus working as anaphoric reference or discourse deixis[2] rather than SD. However, the co-occurrence with the verb *to look* suggests that the demonstrative *that* is rather used to point to an object. Furthermore, with this reformulation the lecturer discursively replaces "distance" with "proximity" transferring the object from the speaker's position (i.e., his own) to the addressee's perspective (i.e., his students). This, in turn, seems to highlight "the common spatial context" of the lecturer and students (Bamford 2004, 135) as a demonstration of social proximity.

2.6.3 SD in Lecture Discourse

SD is of critical importance in lecture discourse (Fillmore 1997; Levinson 1983). Example (3) below shows a lecturer from our SVL sub-corpus showing a picture (Figure 1) to his students.

(3) T: look at the blue line or the black line. **these** are moving averages of concentration of isotopes in the atmosphere (Lect 1_SVL)

SD allows the lecturer to anchor students in the physical space of the classroom (Friginal et al. 2017) and "to establish a joint focus of attention on a referent" (Peeters, Hagoort,

[2] Exploring the differences between anaphoric reference and discourse deixis goes beyond the purpose of this study, so we will henceforth generically refer to anaphora. For further reading on this see, for example, Cornish (2007).

and Özyürek 2015, 64) so as to ensure students' comprehension and participation (Hyland 2005). However, despite their importance in FTF interactions, few studies have specifically examined SD in classroom discourse.

Bamford (2004) observed that university lecturers made greater use of gestural *here* to make reference to visuals and to highlight "the common spatial context" of the lecturer and students (Bamford 2004, 135) as a demonstration of social proximity. In addition, she observes that the use of deixis is one way lecturers tailor their talk to students' linguistic needs. Biber (2004) also found that referential bundles (i.e., lexical bundles including SD as in *that's one of the*, and *this is a*) occur only in classroom teaching as a means to identify an entity. Furthermore, Yang (2014) showed that *that* and *this* are among the top 20 most frequent words in Chinese college EFL teachers' discourse as in the MICASE corpus.

Friginal et al. (2017) particularly focused on SD in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classroom. They found that teachers shift from proximal to distal SD equally, thus directing learners' attention to entities proximally and distally from their own speaker territory, which is also reflective of higher contextualized and interactive classrooms. They also found that *that* occurs more frequently than *this*, which is typical of casual conversations. Finally, they showed that the frequency of *here* is higher in EAP classrooms than in university lectures, which may be attributed to the greater need to physically contextualize lesson content and activities in EAP classrooms than university lectures.

Example (4) from our FTF sub-corpus shows a lecturer alternating between proximal and distal SD as a kind of negotiation between his students and his own point of reference.

(4) T: but then this counts together with the description that says **this** is a critical section, **that**'s a critical section (Lect 3_FTF)

Since we found no systematic studies in the literature on the use of SD in EMI lecturers' speech, this exploratory study reports on a corpus-based comparative discourse analysis of lexical spatial deixis used by EMI lecturers at university in two different teaching modalities, FTF and SVL. As this study only involved three lecturers, the findings and discussion cannot be generalized but instead are intended to raise awareness among lecturers and students, as well as researchers and educational policy makers, of the potential of applying a technology-enhanced approach to onsite EMI teaching.

3 Methodology

To examine and compare EMI lecturers' discourse across the two teaching modalities, we extracted six lectures from the EmiBo corpus (Johnson and Picciuolo 2022b) to build up two comparable sub-corpora of the same lecturers giving their EMI classes in two different teaching modalities (FTF and SVL). The following sections describe the study setting and the participants, as well as the data collection tools and methods. Finally, it is important to note that lecturers' demographic data were collected in 2018 as part of the initial stage of a wider

project carried out at the targeted university.[3] Demographic details were collected by means of surveys and interviews of EMI lecturers (Picciuolo and Johnson 2020). As such, these data will henceforth be referred to as secondary data.

3.1 Participants

Three EMI lecturers at a university in northern Italy volunteered to participate in the project. All three taught in EMI master's degree courses at the department of engineering. When this research was carried out, all three lecturers had been teaching in EMI classes for more than five years. From our secondary data, we observe that all three lecturers are L1 Italian users and speak English as an L2, with a self-declared English language level of C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe 2022). Furthermore, two lecturers (Lect 2 and Lect 3) ranged in age between 41 to 50, while one lecturer (Lect 1) was over the age of 65.

Table 1. Lecturers' demographics.

Lecturers	Lect 1	Lect 2	Lect 3
Age	> 65	41-50	41-50
L1	Italian	Italian	Italian
Self-declared English language level	C1	C1	C1
EMI teaching experience	> 5 years	> 5 years	> 5 years
EMI classroom attendance rate on average	<25	75-100	25-100

As shown in greater detail in Table 1, attendance at these master's degree lectures ranged widely, from fewer than 25 to 100 students, with little difference between the two teaching modalities. The L2 English proficiency levels of the students who attended the selected lectures were not measured directly for this study. Nonetheless, according to the enrolment policies of the university where this study took place, to be eligible for an EMI course, students must provide proof of English language qualification at a level of B2 of CEFR (2022). Lect 1 and Lect 3 stated that international students attending their classes accounted for 50-75% of the total, while in Lect 2's classes less than 10% of the total were non-domestic students. Finally, secondary survey data collected in 2018 show that the most frequent nationalities of origin of students attending EMI courses at the selected department were Indian, Norwegian, Azerbaijani, Iranian, German, Syrian, Brazilian, Kazakhstan, Portuguese, and Italian.

3.2 Data Collection

The targeted participants' demographics and average attendance rates at the selected lecturers were collected through surveys conducted between 2018 and 2020 with both lecturers and students attending EMI classes at the department of engineering of the university where this study took place (Picciuolo and Johnson 2020). For the purposes of the same project, lecture audio-recordings of FTF classes were collected between 2018 and 2019, whereas lecture

[3] The "Insegnare in lingua inglese all'UNIBO" project started in 2018 and was assisted by funding from UNIBO Research Grant number ID-51465.

video-recordings of SVL were voluntarily shared by the same targeted lecturers through the online platform Microsoft Stream between 2020 and 2022. The transcripts of these lecture recordings are now part of a monitor corpus, the "EmiBo Corpus" (Johnson and Picciuolo 2022b). The study presented in this paper reports in particular on six EMI lectures extracted from the EmiBo corpus.

More specifically, this analysis focuses on six EMI engineering lectures delivered by three Italian lecturers in two different teaching modalities (FTF and SVL) over a time span of three academic years. Data referring to duration and word counts of each lecture are shown in greater detail in Table 2.

Table 2. Duration and word count of each lecture in the two sub-corpora.

	Lecturers (Lect)	Year	Duration (min.)	Total duration/ modality (min.)	Words	Total words/ modality
FTF	1	2018	90	**258**	11,266	**22,434**
	2	2018	66		6,526	
	3	2019	102		4,642	
SVL	1	2020	144	**302**	17,567	**32,562**
	2	2020	111		10,362	
	3	2020	47		4,633	
Total	**3***		**560**		**54,996**	

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

To examine and compare EMI lecturers' use of spatial deixis across different teaching modalities, we first extracted six lectures from the EmiBo corpus to build two sub-corpora (FTF and SVL). We limited our analysis to demonstrative determiners and pronouns (*this*/*these*, *that*/*those*), and adverbs of location (*here*/*there*). Using the corpus tool SketchEngine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014) we searched electronically for each instance of these deictic markers. Upon identifying all examples in the two sub-corpora, each potential item was examined manually in its context in order to determine whether it was functioning as a spatial deictic, or not. Annotation was done manually using the tool SKEMA (which stands for SketchEngine manual annotation). Therefore, demonstratives and locatives that did not function as spatial deixis were excluded from the analysis. After identifying those demonstratives and locatives that only functioned as spatial deictics, the tokens were normalized to occurrences per 1,000 words (ptw). Additionally, using the SketchEngine N-grams function, the two sub-corpora were analysed for the most common recurring two- to five-word lexicogrammatical phrases, and the concordances were examined to determine whether these clusters were used in a spatial deictic sense. Finally, we looked for lexical collocations of the SD and compare these across the two teaching modalities.

4 Results

As not all the instances of demonstratives and locatives acted as spatial deixis, manual analysis was necessary. Table 3 shows that out of nearly 3,000 items, only about 600 were found to function as SD markers.

Table 3. Total number of occurrences of demonstratives and locatives identified in the corpus (raw), and the number of occurrences of these demonstratives and locatives when serving as SD markers.

WORD frequency	FTF		SVL		TOT.	
	Raw	**SD**	**Raw**	**SD**	**Raw**	**SD**
that	544	15	784	24	1,328	39
this	260	68	468	197	728	265
there	172	17	250	3	422	20
here	78	65	166	143	244	208
these	58	12	111	29	169	41
those	7	1	11	4	18	5
Total	**1,119**	**178**	1,790	400	2,909	578
% of tot. items		**20%**		**22%**		**20%**

The following examples show when the demonstrative *this* functions as SD (5), and when it is not SD (6), but rather as anaphoric referent (A).

(5) **SD**: if you look at the graph which is here hopefully yeah **this** is a nice graph and I try to make it, ok **this** nice graph. I try to make it larger, shows you the fuel consumption (Lect 1_FTF)

(6) **A**: how can we estimate these implications? I told you that **this** is another big question mark. because actually the effect of global warming on flood frequency on flood. magnitude on (Lect 1_SVL)

Table 4 shows the distribution and normalized frequency of proximal, distal and total SD used in the 2 sub-corpora.

Table 4. Comparison of proximal and distal SD in FTF and SVL.

	FTF	ptw	SVL	ptw
Proximal deixis	145	6.46	369	11.33
Distal deixis	33	1.47	31	0.95
Total	**178**	**7.93**	**400**	**12.28**

As can be seen, in both FTF and SVL the lecturers overwhelmingly preferred proximal to distal deictics, signalling that they tend to perceive space within the speaker's territory (i.e., their own). This may be partially explained by the fact that the two sub-corpora consist primarily of whole class talk where the teachers do most of the talking.

However, Table 4 also shows that while lecturers in FTF use about eight SD in 1,000 words, in SVL they use 12 SD in 1,000 words. This may be partially explained by the fact that in online classrooms all elements – not only maps and graphs, but even words and sentences – are more visually salient. This is exemplified by the following three instances (examples 7, 8 and 9) all extracted from our online SVL sub-corpus.

(7) Sorry, there's a question. *How was BERT trained to be able to do all these tasks?* OK, so the question. So **this** is a question **here**. I will repeat the question *how was BERT trained to be able to do all these tasks?* (Lect 2_SVL)

(8) the tasks in GLUE are single sentence task, similarity task, paraphrase task, inference task, and **these** are some examples of **these** tasks (Lect 2_SVL)

(9) two things we have to get from **this** sentence. first we are still in a glaciation. but within this glaciation there is, I'm selecting an alternating series of […] (Lect 1_SVL)

Example (7) shows that in the online classroom even a question from a student gains visual salience, as it is posted in the chat (indicated in the transcription as being inserted between asterisks **) and spoken out loud by the lecturer. In example (8), anaphoric references (i.e., *these tasks*) gain visual salience as they referred to learning objects which materialize while being shown on the screen. Finally, sentences (example 9) are written and highlighted by the lecturers and therefore become visual objects.

This result is in line with Fussell et al.'s (2004) study where higher rates of proximal deixis use were found in computer-supported remote collaborative tasks, which were also correlated with faster task performance.

In this respect, a recent study by Wu et al. (2021) showed that "visual salience shortened the reading times of key concept terms" and that, in particular, "visual salience accelerates the lexical processing of visually salient information and helps readers build faster and more elaborate connections between visually salient information and associated content" (Wu et al. 2021, 146).

4.1 Demonstrative SD

As with our findings of overall proximal and distal deixis use, Table 5 shows that the lecturers preferred the proximal SD *this*, which diverges from previous findings which showed that university lecturers rather prefer *that*, thus showing that EMI lecturers tend to position classroom participants and objects proximally within their own territory.

Table 5. Comparison of the frequency of SD demonstratives in FTF and SVL.

	FTF	ptw	SVL	ptw
that	15	0.67	24	0.74
this	68	3.03	197	6.05
these	12	0.53	29	0.89
those	1	0.04	4	0.12
Total	**96**	**4.28**	**254**	**7.80**

Furthermore, Table 5 also shows that the singular forms of demonstratives are much more common than the plural forms in both sub-corpora, which supports Biber et al.'s (1999) analysis of conversations and the of Friginal et al. (2017) on EAP lecturers' talk. However, our findings contradict Biber et al.'s (1999) with regard to the singular SD demonstrative *this*, which was found to be more common in academic writing than conversation, whereas EAP

lecturers preferred *that*. In contrast, in our study the lecturers preferred to use the proximal SD *this* more in online settings. We discuss the implications of this further in the discussion section.

4.1.1 Demonstrative SD: N-grams

Turning to the most frequent lexical phrases, we only found one two-word cluster that occurred at a minimum of 0.5 ptw (which is the criterion we established to minimize the impact of individual speaking styles). This could be because of the small size of our corpus.

Table 6. Comparison of the frequency of the n-gram *this is* in FTF and SVL.

this is	**tokens**	**ptw**
FTF	20	0.89
SVL	38	1.17
Total	**68**	**1.24**

As shown in Table 6, the proximal SD *this is* occurs 0.89 ptw in FTF and 1.17 in SVL. This result ties in with Friginal et al.'s (2017) study, where the most frequent lexical phrase in EAP lecturers' discourse was found to be *this is* (2.34 ptw), and this might indicate the lecturers' attempt to draw students' attention to their proximal space and that, as Biber (2004) showed, might also serve as referential bundles used to identify an entity, as in the following examples (10, 11):

(10) T: so let me see if you. can see. my screen yes so **this is** what you see. here it's our calendar and actually it's. it doesn't include the lecture that I. did on March 23rd […] (Lect 1_SVL)

(11) T: you'll do that think of of a share integer variable that we: can: call: ur:m number of waiting threads or N urm NW so: nw so: **this is** the: the number number of threads (0.2) waiting […] (Lect 2_FTF)

4.2 Locative Deictic Adverbs

Table 7 below shows that lecturers favour *here* over *there*. In FTF, nearly 80% of the adverbs are *here*, while in SVL approximately 98% are *here*. Compared to the findings from Bamford (2004) and Friginal et al. (2017) we note that the frequency of *here* in EMI lecturers' talk online is much closer to that of EAP lectures.

Table 7. Comparison of frequency of SD locative adverbs in FTF and SVL.

	FTF	**ptw**	**SVL**	**ptw**
there	17	0.52	3	0.09
here	65	2	143	4.39
Total	**82**	**2.52**	**146**	**4.48**

Finally, upon examining potential clusters, no lexical phrases with *here* were found, and therefore we do not discuss this any further.

4.3 Lexical Collocations

We also looked at the collocational behaviour of SD words, i.e., left, right and total collocates of SD words in our corpus. As the demonstrative *this* and the locative *here* are the most frequent words serving as SD in our small corpus, we only focused on the collocational behaviour of these two SD words.

The Word Sketch in Figure 1 shows that in FTF *this* often co-occurs with state verbs (*be*, *become*). Conversely, in SVL lectures, although *this* often co-occurs with the verb *to be* (which is consistent with previous findings on lexical clusters – i.e., *this is*), it is also often accompanied by the verb *to look*. This may be explained by the fact that in SVL, lecturers' discourse focused on a greater extent on visuals.

Figure 1. Lexical collocations of the SD demonstrative *this* in FTF and SVL.

The greater reliance of lecturers' discourse on visuals in the online classroom is more prominent when looking at the collocates of *here*: Figure 2 shows that in SVL *here* often co-occurs with verbs of seeing (e.g., *see*, *read*, *show*, *depict*) and verbs related to the digital classroom space (e.g., *to click*).

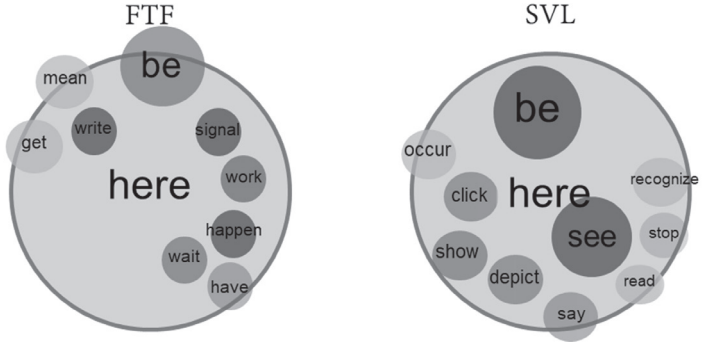

Figure 2. Lexical collocations of the SD locative adverb *here* in FTF and SVL.

5 Discussion

This study compared the speech of three Italian L1 EMI lecturers when teaching at EMI courses delivered at the UNIBO in different teaching modalities (FTF and SVL). All lecturers

in our study were experienced lecturers who had taught in EMI courses at the faculty of Engineering for more than 5 years. All of them self-declared a C1 level of English competence according to the CEFR (2022). Furthermore, while Lect 2' and Lect 3's age ranged between 41–50 (i.e., "Generation X") Lect 1 was more than 65 (i.e., "Baby Boomer" generation), which suggests that the lecturers in this study had different attitudes towards the use of internet and modern digital technologies (Pirhonen et al. 2020).

As this study was intended to provide a first glimpse on the variations occurring in lecturers' discourse when shifting to the online teaching modality, this analysis focused on their use of spatial deictic markers whose pragmatic use is heavily dependent upon the physical context of utterance.

We first selected six lectures from the EmiBo corpus (Johnson and Picciuolo 2022b) and then built two sub-corpora – FTF and SVL – each made up of three lectures delivered by the same lecturers in the two modalities. We particularly focused on the demonstrative adjectives and pronouns *this*/*these* and *that*/*those* and the locative adverbs *here*/*there*. We used corpus analysis tools to electronically search for all the instances in which these items occurred in our corpus. However, given that the targeted demonstratives and locatives not only function as spatial deictic markers, but also as anaphoric reference, for example, we manually annotated each instance in order to assess whether they were functioning as SD or not. We found that in SVL 22% of the total number of demonstratives and locatives function as SD, while in FTF this figure slightly decreases to 20%. Although there is no significant difference between the two settings, this ratio seems to suggest that in both contexts lecturers tend to refer more often to something mentioned in the current discourse (e.g., through anaphora) while they tend to refer less to the physical objects in the spatial context of utterance. As Cornish (2007) points out, English demonstratives, when functioning as discourse deixis or anaphora – i.e., which "involve reference via the discourse context upstream" (Cornish 2007, 137) – "operate at the level of memory organization" (Cornish 2007, 138). As such, a higher reliance on anaphora and discourse deictic expression in EMI lecturers' discourse might put a heavier cognitive demand on the student.

The findings from this study have also shown that in both FTF and SVL the lecturers overwhelmingly preferred proximal to distal deictics, signalling that they tend to perceive space within the speaker's territory (i.e., their own). This "highly egocentric positioning" (Friginal et al. 2017, 121) is also indicative of their monologic and directing instructional style, which previous research (Broggini and Murphy 2017; Molino 2018) found to be common in tertiary education.

However, our corpus-based analysis also showed that in SVL lecturers used SD significantly more frequently than in FTF, and that in the online classroom EMI lecturers also showed a higher preference for the singular SD demonstrative *this*, which was found to often occur in the lexical expression *this is* used to identify an entity (Biber 2004) in the spatial surroundings. In our view, this may be partially explained by the fact that in SVL lecturers more often refer to learning objects which are pointed to on the screen, thus gaining more visual salience. The greater reliance of lecturers' discourse on visuals in the online classroom is more prominent when looking at the collocates of *here*. In FTF, nearly 80% of the adverbs are *here*, while in SVL approximately 98% are *here*. Given that the deictic use of *here* was found to be typical

of the discourse surrounding visuals in lectures (Bamford 2004), the higher occurrence of the locative SD *here* in SVL would thus confirm our hypothesis. Furthermore, by looking at the collocational behaviour of *this* and *here* we found that they often co-occur with verbs of seeing (e.g., *see*, *read*, *show*, *depict*) and verbs related to the digital classroom space (e.g., *to click*). Finally, compared to the findings from Bamford (2004) and Friginal et al. (2017) we note that the frequency of *here* in EMI lecturers' talk online is much closer to that of EAP lectures. This, in turn, would suggest that in the online classroom EMI lectures feel a greater need to physically contextualize lesson content and activities.

6 Conclusions

Previous ELF-oriented studies investigating EMI lecturers' discourse both in FTF and online settings have shown that contextual factors – such as the lecture genre, cultural issues and disciplinary culture – play a pivotal role in lecturers' speech production when teaching in EMI, though too much research attention is still paid to their level of English competence, taking a deficit (rather than a difference) perspective.

This exploratory study aimed to identify and describe language variations that occurred in the use of lexical SD in three engineering EMI lecturers' talk as a consequence of the shift to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is underpinned by an ELF theoretical orientation as it aimed at identifying linguistic cues that might substantiate the implementation of strategies to enhance EMI lecturers' communicative competence as well as students' comprehension in the EMI classroom. Building on the strengths of corpus methods, it also aimed to contribute to the still scarce corpus-based literature on EMI (Jablonkai 2021).

The findings from this study seem to suggest that the shift to online teaching involved a reconceptualization of space in EMI lecturers' discourse, which might have some important pedagogical implications.

Considering that the three lecturers kept the same – monologic – teaching style for online classes, proximal SD deixis would be most frequent in SVL because lecturers and students shared the same visual space. To put it simply, as shown by Fussell et al. (2004), in remote computer-mediated collaborative tasks, when the instructor is aware that the participants share his/her view of the scene, he/she can manipulate the visual field such that he/she "can refer quickly and efficiently to task objects, tools, and the like by using short-hand expressions and pronouns" (Fussell et al. 2004, 32) such as the SD terms *this* and *here*. Therefore, the findings from this study support the benefits of increasingly integrating digital tools in EMI teaching. In ELFA (English as an Academic Lingua Franca) settings – such as the EMI classroom – the lecture comprehension of L2 students might particularly benefit from more reliance on the lecturers' part on visuals, as was found to happen in SVL, because the referent – regardless of being mispronounced, for example, or weakly stressed by the lecturer, or unknown to the students – is pointed to verbally by the lecturer, while being displayed visually on the screen.

Furthermore, this research also supports including EMI lecturers' digital competence as part of that multimodal competence EMI lecturers needs to achieve to improve their "educational effectiveness" (Siegel 2020, 76).

This study could certainly be further improved as far as the measure, scale and scope of the analysis are concerned. Further studies should also compare individual lecturers' use of SD in the different teaching modalities, also considering that the way lecturers interact with technology and, therefore, with visuals, might also differ according to their age, and/or their acquaintance with new technology. Furthermore, future research might also implement the present study by taking a multimodal discourse analytical perspective and investigating the way lecturers use both verbal and non-verbal resources with a spatial deictic reference, also including the way they interact with the learning objects through technology. Finally, students should be involved at a later stage to test these preliminary observations. In this regard, the potential of technologies such as eye-tracking should be exploited to detect how students' visual and cognitive attention changes across different teaching modalities.

Nonetheless, the findings from this study might contribute to increasing EMI lecturers' as well as researchers' awareness of the affordances of digital tools, something that is likely to improve EMI lecturers' effectiveness and foster students' comprehension, even beyond the EMI classroom.

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Bilingual Phenomena Occurring in the Speech of Albanian Native Speakers

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine whether bilingual phenomena occur in the speech of Albanian bilingual students with high exposure to English, in an attempt to detect the influence of English on the Albanian language. Special attention is paid to bilingual aspects like code-switching, lexical borrowings, calques, and hybrid compounds. Data have been gathered through participant systematic observation: Albanian bilingual students have been observed within informal settings of Pristina international schools. Their conversations have been recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The study shows that code-switching is the most common linguistic behaviour among the students under investigation. However, in addition to code-switching, lexical borrowings and calques also play a roughly equivalent role in their speech. This research provides evidence of bilingual phenomena resulting from direct, everyday language contact between English and Albanian in Pristina international schools, which aids in understanding the sociolinguistic changes brought about by such contact.

Keywords: language contact, bilingualism, code-switching, lexical borrowing, calques

Dvojezični pojavi v govoru maternih govorcev albanščine

IZVLEČEK

Cilj raziskave je ugotoviti, ali govor albanskih dvojezičnih učencev z visoko izpostavljenostjo angleščini zaznamujejo dvojezični pojavi, s čimer bi opredelili vpliv angleščine na albanski jezik. Posebna pozornost je namenjena dvojezičnim vidikom, kot so kodno preklapljanje, leksikalne izposojenke, kalki in hibridne zloženke. Podatki so zbrani na podlagi sistematičnega opazovanja albanskih dvojezičnih učencev v neformalnem okolju mednarodnih šol v Prištini, pri čemer so njihovi pogovori posneti in transkribirani za potrebe analize. Rezultati analize pokažejo, da je med preučevanimi učenci najpogostejši dvojezični jezikovni pojav kodno preklapljanje. Vendar imajo v njihovem govoru dokaj enakovredno vlogo leksikalne izposojenke in kalki. Raziskava potrjuje prisotnost dvojezičnih pojavov kot posledice vsakodnevnega neposrednega jezikovnega stika med angleščino in albanščino v mednarodnih šolah v Prištini, kar doprinese k razumevanju sociolingvistično pogojenih sprememb, ki so posledica takšnega stika.

Ključne besede: jezikovni stik, dvojezičnost, kodno preklapljanje, leksikalne izposojenke, kalki

1 Introduction

Contacts between English and Albanian varied across periods. Until lately, there were no direct contacts between English and Albanian. From a diachronic perspective, Gërmizaj (2009) examines the contacts between English and Albanian through the analysis of bilingual English-Albanian dictionaries compiled throughout history. The first English-Albanian dictionary was published in 1915. However, it is emphasized that the first contact between Albanian and English dates back even earlier, to the beginning of the 19th century, documented through a Greek-Albanian-English dictionary of 2,100 words, and as such is considered the first Albanian-English dictionary (Gërmizaj 2009, 19). These dictionaries were compiled to serve the needs of Albanian immigrants living in the English-speaking parts of the world, and with each new edition they became more sophisticated by providing more details about words.

The English and Albanian language did not have any direct contacts until 1999, when English became more present through the mechanisms of international organizations that were deployed or established in the post-war Kosovo (Nuhiu 2013; Shabani, Munishi, and Sadiku 2022). This situation is also related to the current period of globalization, during which English has become a bridge language and an official language in meetings held in Europe and beyond.

Kosovo has two official languages (Albanian and Serbian), but it is the sociolinguistic context which is more diverse (Munishi 2020). In practice, English occupies an important place in almost every sphere, although it is an unofficial language. It enjoys the status of the second most learned language in Kosovo, as knowledge of English is associated with professional achievement as well as with higher social status. People are thus motivated to learn English and have a typically positive attitude toward doing so because they are aware of how important it is to be able to communicate in this language (Gërmizaj 2013, 241). Moreover, the younger a person is, the more they are likely to learn English along with their native language.

In this newly created reality, Albanian parents encourage and support their children to start learning English at an early age either through attending language courses, or directly by enrolling them in international schools with English as the language of instruction, within and outside of the country.

Their exposure to English leads to the manifestation of code-switching[1] (henceforth: CS), borrowing,[2] and other contact-induced phenomena as typical features of bilingual speech. As a result of their frequent use of the two languages, the speech of Albanian students can be linguistically examined to ascertain whether and to what extent the second language affects their mother tongue.

Specifically, the main aim of this paper is to analyse the speech of Albanian bilingual students that have been highly exposed to English to determine the extent to which bilingual phenomena occur in their speech. Since the results of the analysis on CS have already been

[1] The alternate use of two or more languages among bilingual interlocutors (MacSwan 2014, 1).

[2] The phonological and morphological integration of a word from one language into another (MacSwan 2014, 1).

discussed (Shabani, Munishi, and Sadiku 2022), the present study focuses primarily on lexical borrowings and calques. More specifically, the degree of their adaptation is examined to determine whether the expressions from the donor language[3] replace the existing expressions in the receiving language[4] (Albanian) or whether their use is considered essential due to new connotations.

Among the most frequently occurring phenomena encountered in the speech of Albanian bilingual students in addition to code-switching is the use of established lexical borrowings and new lexical borrowings, also known as nonce borrowings. Calques or calquing – translations of borrowings, or semantic transference as defined by Clyne (2003, 90) – constitute another frequently occurring category, as well as hybrid compounds. In the remainder of the paper, the analysis and discussion focus on these categories, i.e., established/new lexical borrowings, calques/calquing and hybrid compounds.

2 Literature Review

The distinction between CS occurring as a single word within a sentence and lexical borrowing is not generally agreed upon by scholars. There are a number of researchers who distinguish lexical borrowings from CS in that the former are syntactically, morphologically, and phonologically adapted to the receiving language, whereas the latter are not (Poplack 1981; Poplack and Sankoff 1988; Poplack, Wheeler, and Westwood 1989; Poplack 2004; Milroy and Muysken 1995; Gumperz 1982, MacSwan 2000, 2005a, 2005b, 2013; MacSwan and Van Gelderen 2008). On the other hand, a number of researchers do not find such a distinction necessary (Myers-Scotton 1993, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2006, 2008; Myers-Scotton and Jake 2001, 2017; Bentahila and Davies 1991; Treffers-Daller 1991; Johanson 1999, 2002a, 2002b, among others).

In an attempt to distinguish between CS and lexical borrowing, Poplack (2018) uses the term nonce borrowing to refer to other single linguistic elements that show either morphological, syntactic, or phonological similarities with the target language. The opposite is true for established borrowings, which exhibit total linguistic integration, behave precisely the same as any other native word, and are included in monolinguals' repertoire. In a similar vein, MacSwan (2005a) in his proposed PF (phonetic form) Disjunction Theorem makes a distinction between CS and lexical borrowing depending on whether the other language stem is phonologically integrated with the affix. In the latter case, it is regarded as a *novel borrowing*, which is what Poplack (2018) refers to as *nonce borrowing*.

On the other hand, another group of researchers (cf. Myers-Scotton 1993; also, Bentahila and Davies 1991; Jake, Myers-Scotton, and Gross 2002) challenged Poplack's (1980) position by asserting that CS and lexical borrowing are undifferentiated by the bilingual user; therefore, such a distinction is deemed unnecessary. In this regard, Myers-Scotton (1993) developed the MLF (Matrix Language Frame) model according to which ML (matrix language) is the

[3] Donor language – the language which is borrowed from (Campbell 2013).

[4] Receiving language – the language which borrows (Campbell 2013). There is another term employed such as *Host language* which is defined as the most widely used language variety within the region of settlement within the host country of interest (Hirsch and Kayam 2021).

dominant language or the language of more morphemes. On the other hand, according to the author, it is the embedded language EL (embedded language) which follows the rules of ML (Myers-Scotton 1993, 1996, 2001, 2017). Therefore, both CS and lexical borrowing indicate the morphosyntax of the matrix language.

According to Myers-Scotton (1993, 243), nonce borrowing is essentially the same as CS, so there is "no motivation for introducing such a term". As such, it is suggested that they should not be seen as two distinct phenomena, but rather as a diachronic continuum: at first new expressions enter the recipient language as CS and then eventually become integrated as loanwords (Gardner-Chloros, 1995, 2009; Haust 1995). In the Albanian language, since letters often correspond to sounds, it is important to consider phonological criteria to distinguish between lexical borrowings and code-switching.

Gumperz (1982, 68) also focuses on the distinction between CS and lexical borrowing by stating that CS is primarily a matter of conversational interpretation, thus taking into account pertinent inferential tools that affect contextual and social presuppositions, whereas lexical borrowing is regarded as a single-word and clause-level phenomenon.

2.1 Lexical Borrowings

There are a number of perspectives on how to distinguish between lexical borrowing and single-word code switching, so there are no precise distinctions (for discussion, see above). In this paper, we consider them as two distinct phenomena. The degree of adaptation the foreign word has undergone in the receiving language determines this difference. This means that, if a word is adapted according to the morphological, phonological and semantic level of the receiving language, then that word can be considered a fully assimilated lexical borrowing, also known as an established borrowing. On the other hand, if the word, phrase, or sentence is used as in the original language, it is known as CS. However, there are cases where CS occurring as single words have already taken the inflected forms of the host language, in those cases the stem of the word has also undergone phonological modifications; therefore, they are considered as nonce borrowings. They have started the journey of adaptation in the receiving language, although they may not be present or widespread in the community. Poplack (2001) asserts that nonce borrowings differ from established borrowings in that they are not necessarily recurring, nor are they widespread, or familiar to monolinguals.

To illustrate the difference, some examples that have been categorized as nonce borrowings are given below, in which mainly nouns taken over from English are inflected for case by the appropriate Albanian suffixes. In the same way, verbs from English seem to have been adapted and canalized according to the relevant conjugation in Albanian. Since the noun *sunset* in (1) made its way into Albanian through spoken English, one can notice the influence of the pronounced form of the word. Thus, the phoneme /ʌ/ is replaced with the closest Albanian phoneme /a/. However, it is treated as a nonce borrowing since the accent has changed position from the first syllable in the original word to the second syllable when adapted in the Albanian language.

(1) *Sa bukur u duke sunset-i!*[san'seti]
'How beautiful the sunset looked!'

(2) *Amelia: Pse bre 'recess-i* [ri'sesi] *është shumë pak kohë? Është one hour.*
'Why is recess time in school so short? It's only one hour.'

(3) *… merrne krejt recess-in.* [ri'sesin]
'…you can have the whole recess.'

(4) *Where's miss?* [mɪs] *Miss-i* ['mi:sɪ] u hi mrena.
'Miss went inside.'

However, in most of the cases, English nouns used in Albanian syntactic structures lack case marking. Likewise, verbs are neither conjugated according to the morphology of the Albanian language nor do they receive the English ending. Therefore, they are unassimilated in an Albanian sentence, and as such together with many other words are categorized as cases of code-switching.

(5) *A u kry recess? Edhe pak.*
'Is recess over? Not yet.'

(6) *E çfarë kompani janë këto që i paguni e nuk iu rimburse kur keni ma së shumti nevojë për ta?*
'What companies are these you give money to but do not reimburse when you most need them?'

It is well-known that when languages are in direct contact, they influence each other, and the most affected linguistic area is the lexicon (Nevalainen 1999; Ajeti 2005, 394; Blaku 2010, 213; Curtis 2012). The present synchronic study aims to analyse spoken data extracted from the everyday conversations of bilingual speakers in informal settings. For this reason, code-switching is their most prevalent linguistic behaviour. However, it is known that insertions from the second language, i.e., code-switching eventually leads to borrowings (Gardner-Chloros 2009, 12). Oftentimes they are embraced by the receiving language if they bring new terms and expressions. These new expressions, otherwise known as lexical borrowings, are finally adapted to the receiving language according to the morphological, phonological and semantic levels of the receiving language. Otherwise, if foreign words are unassimilated, they are identified as instances of CS. Since this is a diachronic process, only the surviving and mostly used items remain in the vocabulary of the receiving language, including their presence in the repertoire of monolinguals (Poplack 2018). With regard to the distinction between lexical borrowing and how we set the latter apart from CS or calques, CS is characterized by the speakers' simultaneous usage of elements from two different languages (example 8 below). However, when using borrowings, speakers only employ elements from a single language, meaning that any concept from the second language has already been fully incorporated into the vocabulary of the first language and adapted phonologically (see (7)):

(7) *Jam shumë selektive* [selek'ti:ve] *me njerëz.*
'*I am a very selective person*.'

In contrast to the previous example, example (8) is a clear case of CS because it involves three people speaking two languages simultaneously. CS takes place between turns, and Jefferson's (2004) glossary of transcript symbols was used to transcribe the conversation into written form.

(8)

01 A: *Kom shanca ma t'mdhaja m'u bo me të*.
'I have better chances to be with him.'

02 B: *Are you complaining about it? Are you complaining?*

03 C: *Këqyre si s'të do ai, edhe 3.9 milion djem tjerë janë*.
'Look! If he doesn't love you, there are 3.9 million other guys out there.'

04 A: *but they're not like him=*

05 B: *=yeah, but they're better*.

06 C: *eh moj motra jem, me sa djalin kom fol, këqyre tash*
'Oh, my sister, you know how many guys I have talked to and am still talking.'

07 ┌ A: *mos rrej bre, mos rrej*
'Don't lie, please, don't lie.'

08 │ B: *you're such a love sick!*

09 └ C: I *know, she's such a hopeless one.*

10 C: *A e din qysh thojshe?*
'You know what you used to say?'

11 A: [*I KNOW ↑ but it's not that …*

12 B: *she said "I don't wanna be with him at all*".

Myers-Scotton (2006, 212–15) distinguishes between two semantic types of loanwords: cultural and core loans. The first type of borrowings is related to concepts that are new to the receiving language, whereas the second type of borrowings refers to borrowings that have equivalents in the receiving language but have a new semantic connotation. According to the distinction made by Weinreich (1953, 56), cultural loans are close to prestige borrowings while core loans correspond to necessary borrowings. It can be assumed that the first type of borrowings is used by monolingual speakers due to the need to name new notions, while the second type may be related to bilingualism and CS, hence used by bilingual speakers (Matras 2009, 111). According to Van Coetsem (1988/2000) (cited in Curtis 2012, 52–53), depending on the situations of language contact, a distinction is made between borrowing and imposition. Borrowing refers to the intentional incorporation of a foreign word into the vocabulary of the native language and implies that the speaker is more proficient and dominant in his native language. While imposition is about situations when the speakers are in the process of learning the second language, and as a result of insufficient knowledge in the second language they incorporate syntactic structures from the first language into the second target language. The intensity and type of contact between communities, as well as the dominance and sociocultural pressure of one community on another, are among the variables that Thomason and Kaufman (1988, 72) highlight as being important in determining what can be borrowed. These variables are taken into account when determining the extent of

borrowing from one language to another. However, there is a common conclusion based on research findings (Muyesken 1981; Matras 2009) that content words tend to be borrowed to a greater extent even in less intense contact situations, while functional words are borrowed in those cases when contacts are more intense (cited in Curtis 2012, 56). Viewed from a diachronic context, one can understand the pragmatic context by referring to Friedman and Joseph's (2013) typology according to which loanwords are first presented by speakers of languages within conversations indicating social context. ERIC (essentially rooted in conversation) loans constitute the loans encountered in direct contact situations such as *Balkan Sprachbund* (cited in Curtis 2012, 58). Some examples of such borrowings are kinship terms, numerals, and words with grammatical value such as adjectives, prepositions, negation, complementizers, discourse particles, and so on.

The speakers in this study are native speakers of Albanian. Nonetheless, they still communicate with other Albanian native teachers in English, and at the same time are surrounded by other international teachers and students with whom the only language of communication is English. In contrast to long-term coexistence and widespread daily bilingualism between two languages, this paper analyses a situation in which there is direct contact in a particular setting. Therefore, the elements that can be borrowed are content words related to the education of students, such as lessons, names of courses, and classes, and less can be said about borrowing grammatical elements.

Over time, various authors have discussed how lexical borrowings are changed in the receiving language, with an early example being Haugen (1950, 214), who examined how the foreign word is morphologically adapted. Borrowings are classified according to the degree of morphemic substitution. Filipović (1960a, 1960b, 1968, 1980, 1981, 2002, 2018) specifically addressed the adaptation of loanwords in the receiving language when he dealt with English lexical borrowings in the Croatian language. In addition to the morphological level, Filipović also concentrated on the phonological and semantic levels of foreign word adaption. Campbell (2013) speaks of loanword adaptation in terms of morphology and phonology. By referring to a number of languages, he demonstrates how foreign words are remodelled, accommodated and adapted according to the structure of the borrowing language.

Foreign words undergo thus various stages of adaptation in terms of phonology where substitution, deletion or replacement of particular sounds take place. Additionally, loanwords are also altered to suit the morphological patterns of the borrowing language. For instance, gender is given to nouns from English that are inserted into Albanian because the latter has grammatical gender.

2.2 Calques Or Direct Translations from the Original Language

The term calque refers to cases where an expression is literally translated from the source language into the target language while preserving its meaning and structure. Thomason (2001, 260) defines calques as borrowed elements which do not appear in their integral form in the receiving language but are replaced by a corresponding term of the latter. Haugen (1950) recognizes them as loanshifts. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, 32) define calques as "a special type of borrowing when one language borrows an expression from another, but then

literally translates each of its elements." Calques are essentially morpheme-for-morpheme or root-for-root translations. In their study Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, 32) place particular emphasis on two categories of calques: lexical and structural. The first category of calques concerns those that follow the syntactic structure of the receiving language while presenting a new way of expression, while in the second instance, calques are used to introduce new structures into the receiving language. There are also other types of calques, such as semantic calques, phraseological calques, orthographic calques, and so on.

3 Methodology

This study is qualitative in character. Data were collected through fieldwork. Participant systematic observation was used as a means of gathering as much authentic utterances as possible to determine whether and to what degree bilingual phenomena are present in the speech of Albanian bilingual students.

3.1 Participants

The investigation was conducted on 30 students aged nine to 18 years old, all of whom have been studying in English since enrolling in Pristina international schools. The time from the students' first enrolment in these institutions to the time of the current research varies depending on the age group under investigation. The 30 students have been further divided into three groups. The first group is made up of fifth graders in elementary school, who are between the ages of nine and 11. The second group is made up of middle-schoolers, who are between the ages of 12 and 14. The third group is made up of high school students, who are between the ages of 15 and 18.

Even though the subjects are exposed to English on a daily basis for about seven hours, they live in an Albanian-speaking community, use Albanian extensively outside the school environment, and interact with other Albanian speakers in an otherwise monolingual environment where the majority of the population speaks Albanian.

Table 1. Participant self-reports on language use at home/school.

Domains	Home	School	Language Proficiency
Participants	Albanian	English	English as a second language

The social environment of these children is homogeneous as they all have a similar biographical background. So they live in a monolingual society with Albanian as the dominant language in all spheres of life. However, their English language repertoire differs depending on the age of exposure to English. Overall, 21 students enrolled in Pristina international schools after pre-school or the first grade (from the ages of five to six), while the other nine students joined these schools later on. Another study on the same subjects revealed that age was a significant factor in language choice. This was demonstrated using the *chi-square test* to determine the extent to which extra-linguistic factors influence language choice, with the statistical value for language choice in the alpha table being less than .05. The earlier the children began learning English, the more often they utilize it in conversation (cf. Shabani, Munishi, and Sadiku 2022).

3.2 Data Collection

The corpus used in this study is made up of conversations between Albanian bilingual students that were recorded in Pristina international schools. The corpus, which is comprised of 16 hours and eight minutes of audiotaped conversations, forms the basis for this research. Additionally, the students' attitudes and interpretations of language use were obtained through focus groups and interviews. When observing the students, the fieldworker (the author of the paper) was a bystander and thus not involved in their conversations when recording. Over time the students saw the fieldworker as one of the teachers supervising them during recess, despite the fact that at the outset of the research consent was obtained from the school representatives, parents and the subjects, and her role as an outsider had been explained to them.

4 Results

The initial focus of the study is to establish how often Albanian bilingual students with regular exposure to English switch back and forth between languages. Nevertheless, during the course of our research we realized that the use of foreign words of English origin did not only appear in a form of CS, but some foreign words had already undergone some degree of adaptation in the target language. Examples of these bilingual aspects include lexical borrowings and calques, and the extent of their use among participants is shown in the chart below.

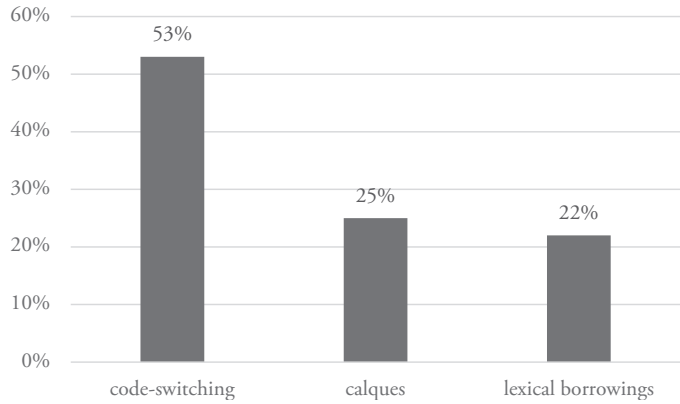

Figure 1. The occurrence of bilingual phenomena identified in the speech of Albanian students.

As the chart above shows, CS is more present in the speech of the Albanian students highly exposed to English in comparison with calques or lexical borrowings. Out of the 1,405 utterances that were transcribed from the speech of Albanian students, 931 instances (or 53%) were classified as CS, while the remaining 47% were made up of 222 (or 22%) lexical borrowings and 252 (or 25%) calques.

Therefore, through participant systematic observation it was found that Albanian students inserted single words and phrases from English into Albanian utterances, or even switched between two languages for longer stretches of talk. On the other hand, the monolingual speech that makes up the remaining 47% of the sample should not be disregarded because it

contains established lexical borrowings from English and calques (structural and lexical) that are replicated from English.

For the purposes of this paper, lexical borrowings and calques have been further analysed. Examples are provided to illustrate how they have undergone adaptation into the receiving language. Additionally, they have been analysed from the perspective of whether they are used to fill lexical gaps or replace the existing Albanian equivalents. This comparative and contrastive analysis is done by using reference dictionaries: *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (henceforth: OALD) for English and *Dictionary of Contemporary Albanian Language* (henceforth: DCAL) for Albanian.

5 Discussion

5.1 Lexical Borrowings

As the findings indicate, lexical borrowings are less present in the speech of bilinguals compared to CS. This occurs because the Albanian speakers in our study have chosen to keep the languages apart – they keep a monolingual mode, i.e., they switch between sentences, or for longer stretches of talk. Specifically, this is true for elementary school students. They frequently switch between the two languages intersententially (between sentences) rather than at the level of words or phrases within a single sentence. Below are some examples of lexical borrowings from English that have made their way into Albanian. They are adapted in terms of morphology, syntax, phonology, and semantics either fully or partially. High school students, for whom it has been observed that they use their mother tongue more frequently than the other two observed groups, when conversing informally with one another, also use lexical borrowings more frequently in comparison to the other groups (i.e., elementary or middle-school students), and thus these borrowings are encountered in monolingual discourse. Lexical borrowings are especially noticeable in the focus groups where the conversation was purposely begun in Albanian to encourage the participants to speak the language. However, there are instances of both CS and fully adapted borrowings when students attempted to explain how a typical class works or how they spend the break time, for example.

Despite the fact that many of the lexical borrowings identified in this research are frequently associated with the field of education, they also come from other fields. The forms that have been translated into Albanian are written using Albanian orthography, and the original forms in English are enclosed in brackets. English suffixes are sometimes replaced by the corresponding Albanian ones, as in the cases of (10), (17), and (24), while English words are sometimes associated with Albanian inflection in the cases of (11), (18), (22), (27), (28), and (29). Additionally, there are the derivations given in (16), (17), and (26), where the English prefix has been transferred into Albanian along with the stem, but the suffix is still in Albanian.

(9) *Kam provu me e dhanë edhe tek ato bagazhet që i vendosin gjërat fragjile* (fragile) *por fatkeqësisht nuk ishte e sigurt.*
'Unfortunately, it was unsafe even though I tried to pack it in the luggage designed for fragile items.'

(10) *Jena tu prit ma shumë participues* (participants) *edhe ma ja nisë*.
'We are waiting for more participants to start.'

(11) *Edhe një diçka që vlen mu cek, mesa e di për Ballkan*, *best library*, *librarinë që kemi pasë qasje na, ka qenë njona prej librarive* (libraries) *ma të mira n'Ballkan*.
'One more thing that is worth noting, as far as I know about the Balkans, the best library, the library we had access to, was one of the best libraries in the Balkans.'

(12) Jam shumë *selektive* me njerëz.
'I am a very selective person.'

(13) *Qoftë edhe përshembull të internshipeve* (internships) *ose mundësive tjera akademike që t'i ka ofru universiteti*.
'For instance, either internships or other academic opportunities provided by the university.'

(14) *Kjo e determinon* (determines) *punën e tyne*.
'This determines their work.'

(15) *Ja, ky vendim është determinant* (determinant) *për të ardhmen tonë*.
'This decision will determine our future.'

(16) *Në mënyrë që ta destigmatizojmë* (destigmatize) *çështjen e periodave dhe ciklit menstrual* …
'In order to destigmatize the issue of periods and the menstrual cycle ...'

(17) *Një kampanjë që synon destigmatizimin* (destigmatization) *e çështjeve* …
'A campaign aimed at the destigmatization of issues.'

(18) *Hand luggage i ka dimensionet strikte* (strict).
'Hand luggage has strict dimensions.'

(19) *Mund të aplikohet* (applied) *për prodhuesit e nje programi televiziv*.
'It can be applied to the producers of a television programme.'

(20) *Filloi me u implementu* (implement) *kur unë jom kon n'vitin e tretë.*
'It started to be implemented when I was in my third year.'

(21) *Prit veç ta shoh stokun* (stock) *a kanë mbet a jo*.
'Wait until I check the stock, to see if there are any left.'

(22) *Shikoja asetet* (assets) *e buta qysh i tregon*.
'Look how she exposes her soft assets.'

(23) *Bordi* (board) *i shkollës është institucion që përfaqëson interesat tona*.
'The school board is an institution that represents our interests.'

(24) *Na ju sigurojmë kontinuitetin* (continuity) *e sukseseve tona*.
'We assure you the continuity of our success.'

(25) *Në fakt, në mu drita ka impakt* (impact) *në mësim*.
'In fact, light has an impact on me when learning.'

(26) *Kjo tani përkthehet në atë disbalancin* (disbalance) *edhe padrejtësinë që iu bohet atyne nxansave.*
'If interpreted differently, this could mean that such people are victims of unequal treatment and injustice.'

(27) *Përnime është shumë e vlefshme edhe ta jep qat' sensin* (sense) *që studenti nuk është aty dud me u ndal edhe me aprovu çdo sen që ti i thu.*
'As a matter of fact, it is very helpful because it gives you the sense that the student is not an idiot and does not agree with everything you say to him.'

(28) *Meqenëse vet nuk um konvenojke ashtu jo pse i influencojsha* (influence) *edhe tjerët po krejt ishin njëzëri që ky sistem nuk është i mirë.*
'The others all agreed that this system is not good as it was not convenient for me and not because I had any influence over them.'

(29) *Me pasë atë suportin* (support) *e duhur prej prindve* …
'To have the right support from parents.'

(30) *Intervistat e fundit që i kish pasë ishin kon qaq banale, qaq me disrespekt (Albanian spelling)* (disrespect) *saqë prej mllefit tha ma mirë po shkoj në Gjermani*.
'The last interviews she had were so banal, so disrespectful [...] she said with bitterness, "I'd better go to Germany."'

Example (11) is known as *a false cognate* in the literature (Lipski 2008), when in fact the word that replaces *library* in the Albanian language is *bibliotekë*. On the other hand, *librari* (bookshop) is a store where you can buy books and all other relevant school supplies.

5.2 Calques

Based on the relevant literature on the definition of calques, below there are details of the various different types that have been identified when analysing the language behaviour of the students in this study. The results show that there is a tendency from the side of the speakers to transfer the syntactic structure of English to Albanian, so we are dealing with structural or syntactic calques. However, calques that transmit the meaning from the source language are another aspect of the repertoire of bilinguals. To compare the meanings and semantic approximations, we used the dictionaries of the two respective languages, namely the OALD and DCAL. Some examples follow:

(32) *Brainwash*[5] – *tru shpërlarje*

This compound was transferred from English as a structural calque, but as such it is not yet present in the dictionary of Albanian. Its structure indicates that it is of foreign origin since the phrase *shpërlarje e trurit* 'washing of the brain', albeit still considered a calque, would be a more appropriate expression in Albanian.

(33) *Share a room – ndaj një dhomë*

In this case we are dealing with a structural calque, a structure transferred from English. Similar cases are provided in (34–35).

(34) *Change my mind – ndërroj mendje*

(35) *Merit-based – në baza meritore*

(36) *I made the decisions – i kom bo vendimet* instead of *I kam marrë vendimet* 'I have taken the decisions.' Given that this form is rare in Albanian, it can be concluded that there it is a direct translation from English. In Albanian, a much more idiomatic expression for English *make a decision* is *take a decision.* Therefore, in Albanian the noun *decision* collocates with the verb *take.*

(37) *Open-minded*[6] – *mendje hapur*; also: *mendje-hapun*

There is a near equivalent in Albanian for *open*-minded: *mendjegjerë*[7] *(broad-minded)*. The antonym for the words *broad-minded* and *open-minded* in the English language is *narrow-minded.*[8] The latter is similar to its Albanian equivalent *mendjengushtë*[9] in meaning. It can be said that *mendje hapur* is synonymous with the existing word *mendjegjerë*, given that both compounds have similar meanings in the original language as well.

(37) *Stereotype*[10] – *stereotip* instead of *paragjykim*[11]

The English word *prejudice*[12] is more closely related to the Albanian *paragjykim* than other words with comparable meanings. Additionally, the English word *bias*[13] conveys meanings akin to *prejudice* or *stereotype*. In the Albanian language, there is just one word that is used to convey this meaning: *paragjykim*. Therefore, it can

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5 OALD: to force somebody to accept your ideas or beliefs, for example by repeating the same thing many times or by preventing the person from thinking clearly.

6 OALD: willing to listen to, think about or accept different ideas.

7 DCAL: who has the capacity to absorb and evaluate things in breadth, who judges things broadly and profoundly, and who is knowledgeable.

8 OALD: not willing to listen to new ideas or to the opinions of others.

9 DCAL: who perceives and judges things superficially and narrowly, who is unable to comprehend and evaluate them in depth; having little understanding, uneducated; opposite: broad-minded.

10 OALD: a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality.

11 DCAL: unfair impression that you have about someone or something before knowing one fully and that prevents you from evaluating it objectively.

12 OALD: an unreasonable dislike of or preference for a person, group, custom, etc., especially when it is based on their race, religion, sex, etc.

13 OALD: a strong feeling in favour of or against one group of people, or one side in an argument, often not based on fair judgement.

be said that we are dealing with new expressions that are being introduced into the Albanian language (such as *stereotip*) as a result of the Albanian students being highly exposed to English.

(38) *I remind myself* has been directly translated as *Po e rikujtoj veten*
However, the expression *Po ia rikujtoj vetes* is much more common in Albanian than the calque *po e rikujtoj veten.* In this instance of a structural calque, the speaker uses the cases incorrectly – the accusative is used instead of the dative.

(39) *Library*[14] – *librari*[15] for *bibliotekë*[16]
Due to the fact that the bilingual speakers are confusing the terms, there is a structural calque in this situation. The word *librari* has a different meaning in Albanian. Although they do not have the same meaning, there is a tendency to use the Albanian counterpart interchangeably because they are similar in structure and orthography.

(40) *Education*[17] – *edukim*[18] instead of *arsimim*[19]
The word *arsimim* seems to be semantically more related to the English word *education*. Due to the similarities in the orthography, and under the influence of English, this example is treated as a calque.

(41) *Eventually*[20] – *eventualisht*[21] for *përfundimisht*[22]
Although this adverb can be linked to the adjective *eventual* in this sense in the most recent version of the Albanian dictionary, it was previously used in Albanian with an entirely different meaning, such as *ndoshta* 'maybe' and *mund të jetë* 'it could be'. However, the dictionary already contains the word 'eventualisht' in the meaning of 'përfundimisht'.

(42) *General*[23] – *gjeneral*[24] for *i përgjithshëm*[25] as in *S'po besoj që ka terapist të specializum veç për gjumë, po nji terapist gjeneral mundet me e trajtu këtë problem* (A general therapist would be better able to handle this issue because I don't think there is a special type of therapist who only deals with sleep issues).

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14 OALD: a building in which collections of books, newspapers, etc. and sometimes films and recorded music are kept for people to read, study or borrow.

15 DCAL: the shop where books are sold. Popular bookstore. City bookstores. Textbook library.

16 DCAL: a building or hall of an institution, which works with the collection, storage, and processing of books, magazines, and other publications, making them known to the general public and lending them out to readers temporarily for use. National Library. Scientific Library.

17 OALD: a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools, colleges or universities, to improve knowledge and develop skills.

18 DCAL: contribution made via conscious, methodical, ongoing work toward the general and special development of a person or group of people regarding their way of thinking, their feelings, etc.

19 DCAL: I give him education, equip him with knowledge by sending him to school.

20 OALD: at the end of a period of time or a series of events.

21 DCAL: finally, eventually.

22 DCAL: finally; forever, once and for all: *the problem was eventually resolved; eventually gave up; eventually the decision was made.*

23 OALD: not limited to a particular subject, use or activity.

24 DCAL: senior officer rank in the armed forces of the land and air forces, which is lower than marshal and includes several ranks.

25 DCAL: that is common or characteristic of a set of people, things or phenomena, that belongs to all or a large number of people, things, etc.; opposite: specific; special.

Depending on the context, this word can have a variety of meanings in English, including the only existing meaning in Albanian. So it seems that this word can expand its meaning in Albanian under the influence of English. However, the adjectives *general* and *i përgjithshëm* are synonyms when compared to one another. Therefore, its use is deemed unnecessary because it does not fill a lexical gap.

(43) *Contributor – kontributor* for *kontribues*

Instead of the word *kontribues*, *contributor* is translated into Albanian as *kontributor*. There are no entries for *kontributor* or *kontribues* in the Albanian dictionary. However, their related forms such as *kontribuoj*, *kontribuim*, and *kontribut*, are already included in the dictionary.

(44) *Remain on hold* has been translated partially as *mbet hold* for *mbetesh në pritje.*

In this case we have a hybrid composition, where words from both languages co-exist, but again the collocational preference follows the English pattern.

(45) *Respective*[26] *ways – mënyrat respektive* for *mënyrat përkatëse*[27]

Due to the semantic similarity between the English adjective *respective* and its Albanian counterpart *përkatëse* we conclude that the transferred and adapted adjective from English, *respective* is not necessary.

(46) *We have nothing to do today – Na kena asgjë me bo sot* for *Na s'kena me bë asgje sot.*

In Albanian, double negation is a common feature of sentences, for example *we don't have nothing to do* for standard English *we don't have anything to do*. While the sentence given here speaks of structural transfer of English found in the repertoire of a nine-year-old Albanian bilingual.

(47) *Training is supposed to be*[28] *held online – Trajnimi është i supozuar me u mbajt online*

In this case we are dealing with a direct translation of the idiom from English. A similar case is given in example (48).

(48) *You are not supposed to suit the clothes. Clothes are supposed to suit you – Ti nuk supozohet të përshtatesh me rrobat. Rrobat supozohet të përshtaten me ty*.

(49) *Class – Klasë* as in *we start the Art class in February*

The word *klasë* in this context has a distinct meaning in Albanian; instead of it, the expressions *orë/mësim/lëndë* are used more frequently.

(50) *Take finals – I kom marrë finals*[29]

Despite the fact that this composition is hybrid, we deal with a collocation, or a structural calque from English.

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[26] OALD: belonging or relating separately to each of the people or things already mentioned

[27] DCAL: that belongs to me or to someone; related to someone or something; that complies with or corresponds to something

[28] OALD: to be expected or required to do/be something according to a rule, a custom, an arrangement, etc.

[29] OALD: the last exams taken by university students at the end of their final year.

(51) *Ma s'pari hina n'klasë, e marrin 'attendance', e kqyrmi një 'video'* 'First we go to class, they take attendance, we watch a video /ˈvɪdiəʊ/.'
This is an illustration of yet another collocation with 'take', like in the aforementioned instance.

(52) *Gain experience – fitu eksperiencë*
In Albanian, *bëj përvojë* 'make experience' is more common than *fitu eksperiencë* (gain experience). This collocation has an English-language effect.

6 Conclusion

The paper has first addressed the distinction between CS as a single word and lexical borrowing. We have treated an expression as CS if it is used precisely as it would be in the original language, i.e., without any modifications. Expressions that have undergone any kind of adaptation, for example phonological or morphological changes, have been categorized as nonce borrowings. Nonce borrowings are first used by bilinguals and may not be familiar to the general public. Some of them eventually find their way into the speech of monolinguals and are used just like any other native word. In this case, they are known as established borrowings in the literature.

Alongside CS which is a frequent linguistic behaviour among the students with high exposure to English, it can be argued that a significant number of borrowings have been found in the repertoire of the bilinguals in question. The borrowings identified in the research mostly belong to the semantic domain of education. They are expressions from the school which is their immediate environment. However, borrowings from other domains have been encountered as well. They behave like any other Albanian word in terms of structure. These words have already undergone adaptation at all levels.

Calques, or literal translations from L2 to L1, exhibit a strong English influence on Albanian. Albanian students who speak both languages frequently use calques in their speech. In fact, structural calques, in which the English syntactic order has been directly transferred into Albanian, are evident. However, there are also cases when additional meanings of the words in English are transferred in the Albanian language. The influence of English on Albanian is felt, among other things, in the case of collocations. For example, verbs are directly translated from English into Albanian and still combined with English nouns.

Additionally, bilingual speakers use direct translations of English idioms into Albanian, which, for example, would not seem natural to Albanian monolingual speakers. Due to the influence of English, it has been noted that the meaning of existing Albanian words has expanded. This necessitates the addition of new expressions borrowed from English with new meanings in order to fill lexical gaps. Nevertheless, as a result of English influence, expressions were also borrowed due to a lack of awareness about the existence of adequate Albanian equivalents.

This is a diachronic process where foreign expressions first arrive as CS and later some of them are adapted and established as lexical borrowings. Only the most commonly used words survive and are distributed among monolingual speakers in the community. In terms of

character, the study in question is regarded as a synchronic research endeavour. Accordingly, it has also been noted that CS is present and is used most frequently among Albanian bilingual students. But they also use lexical borrowings and calques, which were observed in their speech and investigated for the purposes of this paper.

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'Experience Norfolk! Experience Fun!' vs. 'Doživi više od očekivanog' – A Corpus-Based Contrastive Study of Reader Engagement Markers on the Web

ABSTRACT

The paper investigates how reader engagement markers (Hyland 2005; Zou and Hyland 2020) are used in tourism promotion to establish interaction with potential customers on the web. The markers are extracted using AntConc software from two comparable corpora in English and Serbian compiled from the web texts of regional tourism organizations. Normalized frequencies per 1,000 words are calculated, followed by a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the most frequent markers. The results are interpreted in view of the differences and similarities in the two corpora considering the distribution and communicative functions of the markers, and the cultural aspects of this kind of interaction with the reader. The findings shed light on the implied concepts underlying reader-oriented engagement and written e-communication practices in the context of tourism discourse. The results can be used for the data-driven teaching of writing and translation studies.

Keywords: comparable corpora, reader engagement markers, promotional tourism discourse, written e-communication

"Experience Norfolk! Experience Fun!" vs. "Doživi više od očekivanog" – korpusno zasnovana kontrastivna analiza označevalcev vključenosti bralca na spletu

IZVLEČEK

Članek raziskuje, kako se označevalci vključenosti bralca (Hyland 2005; Zou in Hyland 2020) uporabljajo v turistični promociji za potrebe interakcije s potencialnimi strankami preko spleta. Označevalce smo s pomočjo programske opreme AntConc pridobili iz dveh primerljivih korpusov v angleščini in srbščini, ki sta sestavljena iz spletnih besedil regionalnih turističnih organizacij. Izračunane so normalizirane frekvence na 1.000, sledi kvantitativna in kvalitativna analiza najpogostejših označevalcev. Rezultate smo interpretirali z vidika razlik in podobnosti v obeh korpusih ob upoštevanju porazdelitve in sporazumevalnih funkcij označevalcev ter kulturnih vidikov tovrstne interakcije z bralcem. Rezultati raziskave osvetlijo implicitne koncepte, na katerih so osnovane osredotočenost na bralca in prakse pisnega e-sporazumevanja v kontekstu turističnega diskurza. Rezultati so uporabni tudi pri podatkovno podprtem poučevanju pisanja in prevajalskih študijih.

Ključne besede: primerljivi korpusi, označevalci vključenosti bralca, promocijski turistični diskurz, pisno e-sporazumevanje

1 Introduction

Effective communication strategies are crucial for success in tourism business. According to Bruner (2005), communicative situations in the context of tourism can be divided into three phases: pre-tour marketing or the imagined journey, followed by the actual trip, and post-tour narrative as the final phase. Pre-tour marketing is in the focus of attention of the institutionalized tourism promotion on the web, when a potential tourist explores options for travelling, usually browsing websites and social networks, consulting blogs and forums, etc. Such online spaces aim at attracting customers' attention while they are still undecided about their travel destination, and try to persuade tourists to choose the travel package on offer. Thus, both transactional and interactional functions (Brown and Yule 1983, 1–3) are present in this type of communication. On the one hand, promotional texts provide information and factual details about a destination, but they also establish a specific relationship with their target readers by using diverse verbal, visual and audial means in order to create an emotional response of the reader/tourist/customer. Frequently, a strong desire to influence the customer is present (Vuković-Vojnović and Nićin 2011, 356).

Attracting tourists and visitors (i.e., customers) along with presenting a tourist destination in the best possible way are top priorities of tourism promotion. Based on the definition and categories of interactional metadiscourse in Hyland (2005) and Zou and Hyland (2020), further explained in the chapter on reader engagement, this paper investigates how reader engagement markers are used in tourism promotion on the web in order to establish interaction with the reader/customer and persuade them to visit a proposed region. The study uses a corpus-based approach by analysing two custom-made comparable corpora in English and Serbian compiled from the web texts of tourism organizations of two regions – Norfolk in Great Britain and Vojvodina in Serbia (https://www.visitnorfolk.co.uk/ and https://vojvodina.travel/ respectively). The two regions were chosen due to similar geographical features, in particular rural areas, fertile flatland, a network of canals and lakes, quaint villages and forested areas, which all have an impact on the potential tourist activities and attractions that are offered on the related websites. In addition, the administrative centres of the two regions, the cities of Norwich and Novi Sad, are culturally connected as twin towns.

In this paper, we first give critical overviews of the theory underlying tourism discourse, interactional metadiscourse and reader engagement, followed by the empirical part of the study. The research methodology comprises the extraction of reader engagement markers, using AntConc software (Anthony 2017) and normalization of frequencies per 1,000 words for a more objective quantitative analysis and comparison. Furthermore, the most frequent markers found in the two corpora are analysed qualitatively, considering their distribution and communicative function. Finally, the differences and similarities in the two corpora are considered along with the cultural aspects of this kind of interaction with the reader. In conclusion, we show how the findings can shed light on the implied concepts underlying reader engagement and examine if there are some universal features in the two languages. There are also implications for the study of the written communication practices in the context of specialized discourse, gaining a cross-cultural understanding of tourism language and data-driven teaching of writing in the context of tourism discourse.

2 Tourism Discourse

Studying the language of tourism, as the language of one of the most developed and successful industries in the world, has attracted the attention of numerous linguists, anthropologists, sociologists and marketing experts in recent decades. In the past 30 years, the interdisciplinary approach to tourism discourse has uncovered its manifold characteristics which show how the language of tourism can be used as a powerful communication tool (Urry 1995; Dann 1996; Jaworski and Pritchard 2005; Gotti 2008; Thurlow and Jaworski 2010; Maci 2010; Heller, Jaworski, and Thurlow 2014; Suau Jiménez 2012; 2019).

The language of tourism promotion is closely connected to the language of advertising, whose main goal is to draw consumers' attention to a product/service for the purpose of selling it (Crystal 1987, 390). Crystal (1987, 390–91) explains that the language of advertising is positive, unreserved, figurative, and underlines the uniqueness of the offer, while it can sometimes be vague and controversial. Today the language of advertising is more common than ever with the development of social networks and emergence of new professions, such as bloggers, online copywriters, and even professional influencers, and tourism discourse can be viewed as part of this.

Tourism discourse is a specialized type of general discourse (Gotti 2008, 22–24), which very often represents situations where there is communication between professionals and non-professionals, i.e., between tourism providers and tourists/customers, realized by means of power, influence and control (Jaworski and Pritchard 2005, 5). It has a huge impact in our shaping of the world either through real life experiences or exploring abundant resources about travel destinations. Francesconi (2014, 3) states that "travel and tourism texts have the ideological potential to influence and orient perception, ideas, values, and actions".

Tourism discourse shapes our vision of reality, creates social identities – juxtaposing *self* and *the other* (Jaworski and Pritchard 2005, 6–7). This specific aspect is of great importance when analysing writer-reader pronouns in the context of promotional tourism discourse. The language of tourism promotion also shapes the actual physical environment into the object of desire by giving it a symbolic value, which is often described as the tourist gaze (Jaworski and Pritchard 2005; Urry 1995).

Today, the sociolinguistic approach to tourism discourse focuses on the ways the language is used for "identity construction, social boundary marking, and power formation" and "as a dynamic repository of flexible, mobile resources – codes, genres and styles" (Heller, Jaworski, and Thurlow 2014, 426). It covers topics such as how the interactions between tourists and hosts are staged, how cultural aspects are presented as tourist products and how linguistic and semiotic aspects influence the management of space and time (Jaworski and Thurlow 2015).

The language of tourism is often characterized as the language of social control, since it purposefully creates a certain image and values regarding a destination and lures potential tourists to become actual customers by creating the sense of otherness, novelty, authenticity, adventure (Dann 1996). However, it needs to be emphasized that it is crucial to maintain responsible and ethical communication with the customer (Maci 2010). The contemporary

approach to tourists has moved away from offering package deals to them. Today tourism professionals try to help tourists make their own decisions by aligning the values presented on the related websites or social media accounts with those that tourists seek, as well as by creating a desire to travel as the first step in a potential business deal in the travel industry. In this way, even though communication in the context of tourism involves both professionals and non-professionals as participants, the desirable values regarding travel and tourism destinations are co-created, especially with the increasing influence of e-communication.

3 An Overview of Reader Engagement

Reader engagement (Hyland 2001, 2002, 2005; Zou and Hyland 2020) can be broadly defined as rhetorical ways of how writers acknowledge the presence of readers and include them as discourse participants. The study of reader engagement discourse markers falls under the umbrella of metadiscourse studies that were the first to pinpoint the interactive aspect of language in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Mauranen 2010, 14). It was observed that written discourse, apart from its informative and objective element, also contains language used for establishing writer-reader interaction, which later expanded the view of writing as highly interactional (Mauranen 2010, 14–15). It was Vande Kopple (1985, 83) who was among the first to note that written discourse has a dual function – to inform the reader but also to help them better understand the text and form their opinion about it.

There are two main approaches to the study of metadiscourse: interactive (interactional/ interpersonal/ textual) model (Markkanen, Steffensen, and Crismore 1993; Vande Kopple 2002; Hyland 2005) and reflexive model (Mauranen 1993, 2010). In their work on written and spoken metadiscourse, Mauranen (1993, 2010) and Ädel (2006) break out of the more established view of terminology regarding the study of metadiscourse markers, opting for the term *reflexivity* as a way of leading the audience through discourse.

Studies have shown that dialogic form and audience involvement in academic writing are strongly rooted in the Anglo-Saxon writing tradition, whereas other linguistic and cultural contexts do not use reader-oriented engagement markers so abundantly and the writer's voice is subdued with various stance features (Peršurić Antonić 2016; Suau Jiménez 2019). Although it has been observed that, for example, the Czech academic tradition has been impacted by several influences throughout the decades – the German, Russian, and more recently Anglo-American tradition of academic writing style (Kozubíková Šandová 2019, 104) – Czech academic authors are not so direct in communicating their ideas as Anglo-Saxon writers, and they tend to reformulate their ideas, which is different from a more concise and dialogic style of academic writing in English (Kozubíková Šandová 2019, 105).

Hyland's interpersonal approach also relies on the understanding that "all language use is related to specific social, cultural and institutional contexts" (Hyland 2005, 174). On the one hand, the writers see themselves as part of a field-specific academic community, so they evaluate their propositions and the readers within that context, but they also strive to connect with their readers and associate with their values. As such, Hyland (2005) recognizes two interpersonal dimensions, *stance* and *engagement*, as shown in the figure below.

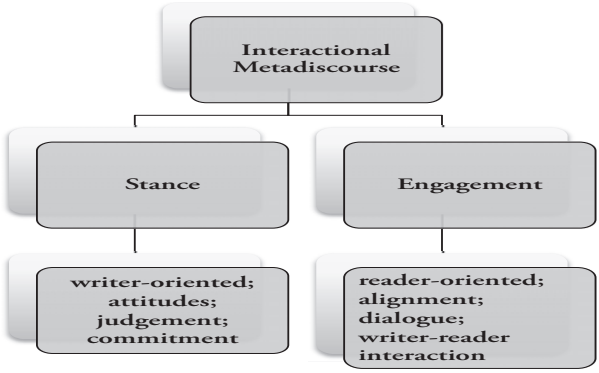

Figure 1. Hyland's interactional metadiscourse.

Stance mostly refers to the writer's own voice and their attempt to position their opinions and attitudes as credible and supported by arguments, or to express certain reservations without openly exposing themselves to criticism. As Hyland (2005, 176) puts it, it includes "...the ways that writers intrude to stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement."

On the other hand, the *engagement* feature more openly establishes the relationship with the reader in the form of a dialogue to acknowledge the presence of the reader, and, as Hyland (2005) suggests, it establishes an alignment with them, guiding them through the interpretation of the text. Engagement markers can be grouped into five major categories with different subgroups (Hyland 2005; Zou and Hyland 2020), which will be explained in more detail in the following part of this section.

3.1 Reader Mentions

Reader mentions (Zou and Hyland 2020, 6, 9–11) are usually marked by reader pronouns (mainly personal pronouns, possessives and reflexives) in the form of the second person to explicitly bring the reader into the discourse and establish a dialogic form and closeness with them. However, first person plural forms are also used as an inclusive form to align the writer and the reader and create a sense of solidarity, as well as to communicate with the readers as colleagues. In the context of tourism, first person plural forms of pronouns are also used to establish the difference between the host (i.e., the writer) and the customer (i.e., the reader) in order to create the sense of otherness as a persuasive strategy that attracts tourists/customers to experience something different and new. The pronouns and possessives we looked for in the English corpus in this paper are the following: *you, your, yourself, yourselves, we, our, us, ourselves* and their counterparts in Serbian, which are explained further in the discussion of results section. It has been observed in this study that they are often combined with other engagement markers, such as directives and modals as we can see in the examples from the corpus of English tourism texts:

(1) *Immerse **yourself** in 19th century Cromer life in this cosy Victorian fisherman's cottage.*

(2) *Be at RSPB Snettisham for daybreak and **you'll see** the amazing sight of thousands of waders taking flight.*

3.2 Directives

Directives are typically represented by imperative forms of verbs that instruct the readers to act within the text or outside of it, also including obligation modals and predicative adjectives that express necessity or importance (Zou and Hyland 2020, 11). In the academic style of texts analysed by Zou and Hyland (2020), writers try to draw readers' attention to certain important elements in their arguments presented in research articles (Hyland 2002) or to get involved in a dialogue with the reader by directly addressing them in scientific blogs (Zou and Hyland 2020). In addition, directives can be subdivided into textual, cognitive and physical. Textual directives ask the reader to act within the text (e.g., *see, refer to table*), whereas cognitive directives require the reader to position themselves regarding the presented arguments or think about them further (e.g., *think, consider, note*). Finally, physical directives would require the reader to do something outside the text or give some instructions to the reader (e.g., *write, open, mix*).

For the purpose of this study, a greater variety of verbs are detected in the corpus when compared to verbs found in academic style texts (cf. Hyland 2001) because of the specific stylistic and rhetorical features of promotional tourism texts, as will be further explored in the discussion section of the paper.

3.3 Questions

Zou and Hyland (2020, 14) found that questions could be the main strategy to engage readers in a discussion, but most of them are rhetorical and thus do not require an answer. Such questions can be content-oriented or reader-oriented, with the latter being more interactive. The markers in this category could be subdivided into those which check understanding, expect response or seek agreement on behalf of the reader (Zou and Hyland 2020, 14–15). The markers include full or reduced questions, question tags, as well as rhetorical questions, which were also found in tourism texts, especially in the English corpus.

3.4 Shared Knowledge

In academic writing, authors often want to make sure the readers agree with the expressed views by trying to persuade them that such views are in accordance with the shared knowledge that has already been established within a specific discipline (Zou and Hyland 2020, 17). The markers usually comprise adverbs and comments that appeal to logical reasoning (e.g., *obviously, of course*), usual circumstances (e.g., *normally, regularly*) and usual community practices and beliefs (e.g., *common, traditionally*) (Zou and Hyland 2020, 17–19).

In tourism discourse, we will see that some of the markers under this category, in particular the adjectives *traditional, typical,* and *usual*, have a somewhat different motivation for their use due to the communication strategies in tourism discourse. Namely, by using such adjectives the writers intend to express the specific features of a destination and portray it as being genuine, which will be more appealing to tourists who are attracted to places that are "authentic".

3.5 Personal Asides

Personal asides are short phrases or clauses used to make a comment on what has been said, usually given in parentheses or separated by commas. Although they clearly represent the voice of the writer (Hyland 2001, 561), their main aim is to directly engage with the reader (Hyland 2005; Zou and Hyland 2020, 19–20) and offer an "interpretative framework" (Hyland 2001, 561). The examples given by Zou and Hyland (2020, 20) include expressions such as *but so far, to my knowledge, in fact*, etc.

In this study, markers of personal asides were not expected to be found in abundance because institutionalized web promotions do not have explicit authors but are written in such a way that they represent the whole community and not a personal view, as in blogs. However, a few instances were found in the two corpora.

4 Tourism Promotion and Reader Engagement

Institutionalized tourism promotion on the web usually starts with a website as a way to establish communication with tourists, consisting of an array of verbal, visual and audial elements which are persuasive but also need to be truthful. The so-called direct e-communication is realized by combining different discursive strategies with rhetorical functions and interpersonal elements (Suau Jiménez 2019, 2). The reader is viewed as the customer or the consumer, so the main aim is to convince the reader that the presented offer is attractive, to get the reader involved, with the ultimate goal being the creation of an economic value (Suau Jiménez 2019, 2). The interaction of the writer and reader in the promotional tourism texts on the web is highly subjective and guided by the preconceived values of the reader, i.e., the customer, about the promoted destination or service. In this way, the very nature of reader engagement in tourism promotion texts will differ from the academic texts which have been in the focus of interactional discourse studies for decades.

Modern communication with the customers via websites is in a dialogic form, establishing the bonds with the reader (Suau Jiménez 2019, 6), especially in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of promotional writing. Unlike in research articles, reader engagement in promotional tourism discourse is more direct, subjective and highly persuasive. Furthermore, linguistic and cultural aspects play a huge role in such communication, so we can expect a variety of practices across different languages and cultural contexts. For example, the investigation of stance and engagement in promotional e-tourism genres compiled in the COMETVAL corpus (Suau Jiménez 2012 cited in Suau Jiménez 2019, 14–20) showed that reader engagement was represented to a much higher extent in English than in Spanish. A variety of reader engagement markers were used, with reader pronouns and directives as the most dominant ones. Conversely, Spanish texts almost neglected readers as potential co-creators of the values that were promoted, with reader engagement markers poorly used. Stance as a way of establishing credibility and the writer's authority was used much more in Spanish, often using boosters such as positive adjectives and attitudinals in combination with the self-mentions (first person pronouns).

Another study of the interactional metadiscourse in English travel blogs, which are a genre somewhat different from the promotional websites, included the investigation of both stance

and engagement features in the corpus of 16,149 tokens retrieved online (Huang, Wang and Tang 2020, 789). Engagement was less present than stance in the corpus, with reader pronouns being the most frequent markers in total, followed by boosters, which corresponds to the study of Suau Jiménez (2019). Directives were not used so frequently in blogs, which can be attributed to the very nature of the genre in which the author is trying to give a personal, subjective account of their travel experience.

Unlike contrastive metadiscourse studies of academic texts (Blagojević 2004, 2007), previous research on engagement in tourism discourse based on contrastive studies of English and Slavic languages is not at all common, but it has proven what has been found in other languages (e.g., Spanish as found by Suau Jiménez 2019). In terms of metadiscourse and more specifically engagement markers, cultural differences among different language backgrounds are expected. For example, a previous study shows that Croatian tourist brochures are less direct than the English ones, and that they do not explicitly address the readers (Peršurić Antonić 2016).

In our study the engagement markers have been classified according to Hyland's categories, but they have also been considered as open categories (as previously done by Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001, 1296) to include the examples relevant to the language of tourism, which could differ from the instances found by Hyland (2001, 2005), who based his views on investigating the language of research articles and academia.

5 Research Design and Procedure

In this paper, the main research objectives are the following:

(i) find evidence of reader engagement in the custom-made comparable corpora in English and Serbian;

(ii) identify the frequency and purpose of the reader engagement markers in each corpus;

(iii) compare and contrast similarities and differences in the two corpora;

(iv) establish potential implications and areas for further study.

A corpus-driven contrastive approach was applied including quantitative and qualitative analysis of the extracted engagement markers. Two comparable corpora were compiled by selecting promotional tourism texts from two websites, which will be referred to as English Tourism Corpus (ETC) and Serbian Tourism Corpus (STC). ETC comprises texts written in English as a native language (www.visitnorfolk.co.uk) and STC includes texts written in Serbian as a native language (https://vojvodina.travel). The texts are unauthored, i.e., the author is not given and cannot be identified as in blogs, for example. As has already been mentioned in the introduction, the two regions were chosen because they share certain geographical similarities that would have an impact on the potential activities, amenities and attractions promoted to tourists. Both websites deal with so-called inbound tourism, so the main purpose is to present their own region to potential domestic and international tourists, which also has implications for the content and discursive features of the promotional texts.

For the purpose of the quantitative analysis, the absolute number of occurrences were given as normalized or actual frequencies per 1,000 words since the two corpora were not the same in size. As we can see from Table 1 below, the total number of words in ETC was 32,180 and for the STC 25,965. Such a procedure provides a more objective comparison of the actual frequency and distribution of the engagement markers in the corpora.

Table 1. The number of word types and word tokens in the two corpora.[1]

Corpus	Types	Tokens
English Tourism Corpus	5,120	32,180
Serbian Tourism Corpus	7,858	25,965
Total	12,978	58,145

The examples were extracted by using AntConc software, version 4.0.4, developed by Anthony (2017), then the headword list was explored manually, and the chosen markers were further checked in context (KWIC – key words in context). The qualitative analysis focused on the communicative purpose of the extracted engagement markers and corpora comparison.

6 Results and Discussion

6.1 Overview of Results

As can be observed from Table 2 and Table 3, the normalized frequencies (nf) per thousand words (ptw) show that tourism promotional texts in English (ETC) use engagement markers to a much greater extent, with an overall normalized frequency of 25 when compared to the corpus in Serbian (STC), with overall normalized frequency of 16.52. On the other hand, the order of subcategories in terms of preference overlaps in the two corpora with *reader pronouns* being the most frequent (ETC – nf 13.8; STC – nf 7.32) and *personal asides* being the least favourable category in both corpora (ETC – nf 0.53; STC – nf 0.26). Furthermore, normalized frequencies (Table 2 and Table 3) show that the actual representation of markers and their normalized frequencies are much higher in ETC in all the categories except for *shared knowledge* with nf 4.04 in STC compared to nf 2.8 in ETC.

Table 2. An overview of the engagement markers in English Tourism Corpus (ETC).

Category	N	nf (ptw)
Reader mentions	444	13.8
Directives	226	7
Shared knowledge	90	2.8
Questions	27	0.83
Personal asides	17	0.53
Total	804	25

[1] In AntConc software, word tokens refer to a total number of words in the corpus, and word types refer to a total number of unique words in the corpus.https://cataloguelegacies.github.io/antconc.github.io/05-wordlists/index.html

Table 3. An overview of the engagement markers in Serbian Tourism Corpus (STC).

Category	N	nf (ptw)
Reader mentions	190	7.32
Directives	111	4.27
Shared knowledge	105	4.04
Questions	16	0.62
Personal asides	7	0.26
Total	429	16.52

In the next part, we will present some specifics regarding engagement markers in tourism discourse and compare the two corpora in more detail based on the findings.

6.2 Reader Pronouns

In ETC, reader pronouns (N=444) are by far the preferred way of addressing the reader, with the pronouns *you* (N=255) and *we* (N=58) being the most frequent ones. The other forms included *your, yourself, yourselves, us, our, ourselves.* The purpose of using first person plural forms of pronouns in tourism promotional texts is twofold. On the one hand, they can be inclusive, showing the unity of the writer (or in this corpus the host) and the reader (i.e., the tourist) as if they are sharing the same desires and experiencing the place together – if something is viewed as favourable by the writer, it is assumed that the reader will share the same preference, as in the following examples from ETC:

(3) *Seals can hunt at night,* [...] *That's when* ***we*** *get to see them!*

(4) [...] ***our*** *location is dropped down from the road, giving* ***us*** *some protection from sea breezes, giving* ***us*** *privacy and a sense of being far from the hustle and bustle of local life.*

(5) *Finally on this northern stretch of the coast,* ***we*** *come to Cromer, dramatically poised on a high bluff.*

On the other hand, and to a much greater extent, the first person plural forms of pronouns underline the difference between the writer and reader creating the dichotomy of *self* and *the other*, which is a popular strategy used in tourism promotion. However, this is done to the benefit of the readers who are referred to as *our guests* to be reassured that the writer or the host will do everything possible to make their stay pleasant and stress-free, so the tourists can just relax and enjoy their holiday:

(6) ***We*** *offer a generous buffet-style breakfast for all* ***our*** *guests in* ***our*** *country-style breakfast room.*

(7) *Let* ***us*** *help you find accommodation in Norfolk where you can relax and enjoy your stay.*

This dichotomy is also used to promote some cultural values of the host, creating the sense of authenticity or uniqueness that would be appealing to tourists and attract them to the area:

(8) ***We*** *once had strong trading links with Yorkshire, became American pioneers, sent many to distant parts of the Empire* [...]

(9) *The bricks of the Victorian farmhouse, the boundaries of the fields and the curve of the River Wensum define what **we** are all about and what **we** have to offer.*

Second person pronouns are often combined with other markers in a broader context, most frequently with modals, then directives and questions. They are often used in the context of describing amenities, services or activities on offer, thus giving the sense of control to the reader, as if they are the ones who made that choice. Here are some examples:

(10) ***You can get** refreshments at the cafe too*.

(11) *Head eastward and **you'll see** Norfolk's very own Treasure Island… Scolt Head*.

(12) ***Immerse yourself** in 19th century Cromer life in this cosy Victorian fisherman's cottage*.

In STC, pronouns take on different morphological forms than their English counterparts due to a highly inflected nature of the Serbian language – so there are different morphological forms according to number, case and gender. For example, for the English pronoun *we/us* in Serbian there are *mi* (nominative), *nas* (genitive, accusative), *nama, nam* (dative), *nama* (instrumental, locative), whereas for the English *our*, in Serbian there are *naš, naša, naše, našeg, našem, našom, naši, naših, našim, našoj, našu* which were all found in the corpus. This is relevant for the purpose of understanding the obtained results in AntConc software, where these distinctive forms are listed separately but were summed up into the total. That is to say that the variations of the same pronoun were summed up and were not analysed as separate pronouns. A similar situation is found in the Serbian counterparts for the English *you* and *your*. Additionally, Serbian includes different forms for the second person singular *ti/tebe/tebi/tobom*, second person plural forms *vi/vas/vama/vam,* and the capitalized second person plural forms *Vi/Vas/Vama/Vam* which are used for polite address and were the most frequent pronouns found in STC. In contrast, second person singular forms were not present in the STC at all, which indicates that the analysed text in Serbian is less direct and more formal. The Serbian reflexive pronoun *se* has not been found as pertinent to the reader mentions subgroup in this corpus, but appeared as the impersonal pronoun *se* in passive structures (e.g., *Vinarija se nalazi na salašu* [...], *"The winery is situated near the farmstead*"). Furthermore, in Serbian the writer can address the reader using particular verb endings without using the pronoun, which would be less formal. Contrary to what might be expected, no instances were found in this corpus that would be categorized within the reader mentions subgroup, so they are not included in the analysis. This contributes to the overall nature of the STC which is more formal and less interactive than the ETC. However, there were a few examples under the personal asides subgroup. Furthermore, as seen in examples 13 and 14, it is evident that the writer strives to maintain respectful and reassuring communication with the reader by using capitalized pronouns *Vi, Vaš, Vam* which are morphological plurals but with singular references used as honorific forms:

(13) [...] *smeštaj i ishranu po pristupačnim cenama i upravo onako kako **Vi** to budete želeli*
'[...] accommodation and food at reasonable prices and just the way **you** would like'

(14) *Po **Vašoj** želji organizovaćemo **Vam** posete* [...]
'According to **your** wishes we will organize **you** a visit to [...]'

For a more dialogic mode, reader pronouns are combined with questions and directives, for the purpose of addressing the reader more directly and making a proposal more tempting:

(15) *Lagana vožnja turističkim brodićem po Paliću* ***Vam*** *zvuči primamljivo? Samo uskočite, zapolovite i uživajte*.
'Leisurely tour boat ride across Palić sounds tempting to ***you***? Just hop in, set sail and enjoy.'

First person plural pronouns are used in a similar way as in the English corpus, either as inclusive to emphasize the unity of the writer and reader who are sharing the same experiences (example 16) or as a way to present the host to the reader as credible and trustworthy (example 17):

(16) [...] – *čekaju vas zanimljivi predeli. A* ***mi*** *ćemo u ovoj turi obići i jedno i drugo!*
'[...] – interesting landscapes are waiting for you. And ***we*** will see in this tour both!'

(17) *Uložite svoje poverenje u* ***nas*** *i dođite gde su vaše potrebe vrednovane*.
'Put your trust in ***us*** and come where your needs are valued.'

6.3 Directives

In ETC, directives in the imperative form of the verbs are the second most frequent category with 226 instances and normalized frequency of 7. Contrary to what was expected (cf. Hyland 2001, 553–54), modal verbs were not used to guide the reader or instruct them to pursue certain actions inside or outside the text, apart from three instances of *have to*. Textual directives are also rare in ETC because further references are always hyperlinked and take you to a different space on the website or outside the website. The majority of verbs used as directives in ETC call for some physical or mental action outside the text and on behalf of the tourists (i.e., the readers) through affirmative presentation of the amenities and attractions that would provide unique experiences for them:

(18) ***Paddle*** *on the shore and* ***explore*** *the rockpools left behind the tide*.

(19) ***Imagine*** *vast expanses of clear blue sky and sparkling water.*

(20) ***Learn about*** *shopping and trading,* ***take a look*** *at the recreated early 20th century chemists shop and* ***explore*** *The Undercroft!*

Negatives are also used to kindly warn the tourists of some potential danger, to establish greater interaction with the reader, or to emphasize the attractiveness of the destination:

(21) ***Don't forget*** *sun cream and sun hats, too.*

(22) *...the castle was actually reconstructed by the Victorians, but sssh,* ***don't tell*** *anyone!*

(23) ***Don't miss*** *our Norman cathedral, one of the finest examples of Romanesque architecture in Europe.*

It has also been observed that directives are rich in phrasal expressions, namely with the verbs *take* and *look*:

(24) ***Take a brisk walk*** *past crisp hedgerow* [...]

(25) ***Take a spin*** *on the Big Wheel on Great Yarmouth's Golden Mile of seafront* [...]

(26) ***Look out for*** *massive flocks of geese in winter,* [...]

Directives are also the second most frequent category in STC, with 111 instances and nf 4.27, but what is significantly different from the ETC is the fact that out of the total number of directives, 47 instances include modal verbs. There are only a few negatives, and some are combined with modal verbs. In Serbian, imperative forms have second person singular (e.g., *zamisli* – "imagine"), first person plural forms (e.g., *zamislimo* – "let us imagine"), and second person plural forms (e.g., *zamislite* – "imagine"). As is the case with the reader pronouns, imperative forms are used in the second person plural as a form of polite, more formal and less direct way of addressing the reader:

(27) ***Probajte*** *naše salašarske đakonije* [...]
'***Taste*** our farm specialities [...]'

(28) ***Rezervišite*** *turu odmah!*
'***Book*** the tour now!'

Most of the directives in STC invite the reader to some physical or mental action outside the text, to take some practical steps in order to secure the best possible holiday. However, there are several examples of the textual directives, calling for some action within the text on the website:

(29) Više o turama i vodičima duž Dunava u Srbiji, ***pogledajte na linku ovde***.
'More about the tours and guides along the Danube in Serbia, ***look up the link here***.'

Regarding the modals, they are also given in the second person plural form and show even more distance and a more polite, less direct way of addressing the reader:

(30) *Za ribolovačke dozvole* ***možete se*** *obratiti ...*
'For fishing permits you ***can*** ask ...'

(31) ***Morate*** *probati Mirkovu tortu.*
'You ***must*** try Mirko's cake.'

(32) *10 atrakcija u Bačkoj koje* ***ne smete*** *propustiti ...*
'10 attractions in Bačka which you ***must not*** miss ...'

6.4 Shared Knowledge

In ETC, the category of shared knowledge is less frequent than reader pronouns and directives, with 90 instances and nf 2.8, and it is highly context-dependent. This category includes a range of rather heterogenous expressions (for example, *of course, yes, considered, said, traditional, known*, etc.) used to confirm common knowledge about some aspect of the promoted destination or to provoke curiosity by confirming some lesser-known facts:

(33) [...] *with comfy beds for you and your pet and they* ***of course*** *include a fantastic buffet continental country style breakfast*

(34) *You can have a* ***traditional*** *English Afternoon Tea there today.*

(35) ***Yes****, the pristine façade you see today was created by the Victorians!*

(36) [...] ***Yes****, Nosey Parker was a Norfolk guy!*

In STC, this is the only category that has a higher normalized frequency than the same category in ETC, with 104 instances and nf 4.04. The examples include adjectives or adverbs that emphasize some expected or well-known aspects of the promoted destination:

(37) ***Poznato je*** *da se na ovoj deonici kanala DTD* [...]
'**It is well-known** that on this section of the DTD canal [...]'

(38) *Uloga kuće je da prikaže* ***tradicionalnu*** *arhitekturu ovdašnjih ljudi* [...]
'The role of the house is to represent the **traditional** architecture of the local people [...]'

(39) *... više liči na šumovito-planinski predeo nego na* ***uobičajenu*** *vojvođansku ravnicu* [...]
'... more resembles a forest-mountain area than the ***typical*** Vojvodina flatland [...]'

This could be attributed to the fact that the text in STC is more formal in presenting the destination, so it includes longer descriptive passages which include additional details including shared knowledge features to ensure a more credible presentation.

6.5 Questions

In ETC, questions are not very common with nf 0.83, which is far less than other categories. They appear mostly in their full form, reduced form or as tags. The full forms are content-oriented, and they are used as titles to introduce a new section on the website where you can immediately find the answer in the text that follows it:

(40) *What part of Norfolk is best?*

Reduced forms and tags are reader-oriented and used to establish an informal, intimate dialogic form with the reader and to provoke a reaction or response, or seek agreement:

(41) *a second there you thought Millennium Falcon,* ***didn't you?***

(42) *... like in Norwich, but then every place has got those,* ***right?***

(43) ***On a diet?*** *Don't worry, there are loads of other fabulous food outlets.*

A few completely informal, conversational expressions were also found, such as:

(44) *Ipswich Town, it is called the Old Farm Derby.* ***Geddit?***

In STC, questions are even less common, there are only 16 instances with nf 0.62. They are mostly reduced questions and were found in one smaller section of the website that was less formal:

(45) ***Hrana ili piće? Ili oba?***
'Food or drinks? Or both?'

(46) ***Kroz istoriju ili kroz kulturu?***
'Through history or through culture?'

Questions in full forms are used as titles:

(47) ***Šta sve možete u adrenalin parku?***
'What can you do in Adrenalin Park?'

6.6 Personal Asides

The category of personal asides is not common in the two corpora, which is expected because the texts are not written as personal accounts and the authors are not given. In ETC, there are only 17 instances that are used as comments to provoke certain reactions in the reader, so they contribute to the less formal, dialogic form of the English corpus:

(48) *Okay, there's more to it than just the chips* (***fried in beef fat – not for veggies!***)

(49) [...] *and much more* (***death masks of convicted killers anyone?)***

In STC, there are only 7 examples, used as comments to the content or what was previously said:

(50) ***Mada neki još pamte****, da je nekoliko godina pre ovog datuma*, ...
'Although some still remember that a few years before this date ...'

(51) *Mnoštvo u jednome,* ***kažemo i ne dodajemo ništa****.*
'Multiplicity in unity, ***we say and add nothing***.'

7 Conclusion

As was mentioned in the introduction, promotional tourism discourse is based on rhetorical strategies that aim at persuading potential tourists to travel and engage in tourism activities. Therefore, it has been expected that the written e-communication of tourism organizations would be interactional and would engage the reader in a dialogue in terms of aligning the values presented on the websites with the values of the readers/tourists.

The main objective of this study was to analyse two comparable corpora in English and Serbian compiled from official websites of two regional tourism organizations from Great Britain and Serbia in terms of the use of reader-oriented engagement markers. Prior to the empirical part, the theoretical framework was explored in order to establish underlying principles of their use. After the extraction, engagement markers were grouped into five sub-categories as proposed by Hyland (2005). It was immediately noticed that the actual instances of the markers found in tourism corpora would differ to some extent to those proposed by Hyland (2005) and Zou and Hyland (2020), as their studies were based on the investigation of research articles and academic blogs, which represent different genres than promotional tourism websites, so the writer-reader interaction is somewhat different. Quantitative and qualitative comparison of the two corpora uncovered some similarities and differences. Based on this study, some features could be considered as universal when it comes to reader engagement since *reader mentions* and *directives* are the most frequent categories both in the analysed corpora and

in the reviewed literature. Furthermore, certain cross-cultural differences were observed in the analysed corpora regarding the interactivity and formality of written e-communication, which is also congruent with previous studies (Kozubíková Šandová 2019; Peršurić Antonić 2016; Suau Jiménez 2019).

One of the major differences between the two analysed corpora is that English uses reader engagement features to a much greater extent (ETC N= 804, nf 25 ptw, STC N= 429, nf 16.52 ptw). Communication with the reader in ETC follows a dialogic form, and is more direct and less formal in the attempts to engage the readers and motivate them to choose their travel destination. One similarity is that the preferred categories in both corpora are *reader pronouns* and *directives*, followed by *shared knowledge*. However, we observed certain differences in the type of marker representatives within the categories. Firstly, regarding reader pronouns in the STC, it was found that second person plural forms were used as honorific forms of addressing a single person in a formal way. STC is not so direct as ETC, which is additionally proven by the greater number of second plural forms of modals in the category of directives which increases the distance from the reader. On the other hand, ETC is more dynamic, addresses the reader more directly by engaging them in a less formal way through directives and informal questions and question tags.

The analysis presented here shows that the cultural elements are omnipresent in both corpora influencing the aspect of reader engagement. When compared to academic corpora, tourism corpora provide a longer and more diverse list of actual markers within categories, especially when it comes to directives and reader mentions (cf. Hyland and Jiang 2019). The directives found in academic texts guide the readers through the text or ask for some interpretative action on behalf of the reader (Hyland 2001, 564). Conversely, our findings show that directives that would require an action within the text are not characteristic of institutional tourism texts, but they rather refer to the activities to be performed in the actual destination that is promoted, whereas text references are always hyperlinked. This brings us back to the insight that interactional metadiscourse, including reader engagement, is highly dependent on the context in terms of genre, target audience and specialist field of the analysed texts. It is intricately connected to cultural and linguistic aspects and writing practices within special professional communities. In addition, in tourism texts, and based on the results of this study, the difference between *self* (the writer) and *the other* (the reader) is emphasized to the benefit of the reader, with the ultimate goal of immersing the reader in the local culture and shared experience with the writer.

Regarding further analysis of reader engagement in tourism discourse, studies should focus on aspects regarding reader mentions other than reader pronouns, which were observed in the corpora (e.g., *everyone, all, visitors, guests, adventurers, connoisseurs* and so on). A more detailed study of semantic classes of verbs used as directives could also provide fruitful insights into the cultural and intercultural aspects of institutionalized tourism discourse on the web.

Finally, the findings of the study provide real-life examples of language use in the context of written e-communication in institutionalized tourism discourse and can be used for the data-driven teaching of English for Tourism and Hospitality, and also help Serbian content writers when preparing the content for the e-promotion of tourist destinations.

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Part III

Varia

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Ongoing Objectification, Marginalization and Sexualization of Women in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* and *Divisadero*: Old Patterns, New Disguises

ABSTRACT

The year 2023 marks Michael Ondaatje's 80th birthday, a landmark in the author's life and an occasion for literary critics to look back and revisit what are perhaps some of the more troubling aspects of his literary production. Ondaatje's poetry and fiction have received little attention from feminist literary critics, which is due to the author's conservative take on the figuration of female characters and representation of women. While some critics have proposed that *The English Patient* (1992), and therefore also by extension his novel *Divisadero* (2007), might signify a turning point in Ondaatje's otherwise problematic gender politics, this article demonstrates that earlier patterns of women's objectification, sexualization and marginalization found in Ondaatje's poetry and fiction persist in both of these seemingly more progressive works, albeit in new forms and disguises. This article also introduces a new concept to the field of (feminist) literary theory, the so-called blazon in prose.

Keywords: Michael Ondaatje, feminism, *Coming Through Slaughter*, *The Cinnamon Peeler*, *The English Patient*, *Divisadero*

Nadaljevanje popredmetovanja, marginalizacije in seksualizacije žensk v romanih *Angleški pacient* in *Divisadero* Michaela Ondaatjeja: stari vzorci, nove preobleke

IZVLEČEK

Leta 2023 obeležujemo osemdeseto obletnico rojstva kanadskega pisatelja in pesnika Michaela Ondaatjeja, kar je pomemben mejnik v avtorjevem življenju in hkrati priložnost za literarno kritično srenjo, da ponovno preuči vidike avtorjevega literarnega ustvarjanja, ki ostajajo problematični. Ondaatjejev pesniški in literarni opus je požel zelo malo zanimanja med feministično literarno kritično srenjo zaradi izrazito konservativne naravnanosti njegovih del pri upodabljanju ženskih likov in podajanja predstavnosti o ženskah. Medtem ko so nekateri kritiki roman *Angleški pacient* (1992), in kasneje v navezavi z njim tudi roman *Divisadero* (2007), označili za prebojnega, saj naj bi predstavljal odmik od konservativne spolne politike, prispevek pokaže, da oblike popredmetovanja, seksualizacije in marginalizacije žensk tudi v teh dveh domnevno bolj progresivnih delih, ki temeljita na Ondaatjejevi tipični konstelaciji moških in ženskih osrednjih likov, niso odpravljene, pač pa se ohranjajo v posodobljeni, manj vpadno agresivni preobleki. Prispevek vpelje nov strukturalni koncept v polje literarne (feministične) teorije, t. i. blason v prozi.

Ključne besede: Michael Ondaatje, feminizem, *Coming Through Slaughter*, *The Cinnamon Peeler*, *Angleški pacient*, *Divisadero*

1 Introduction

The year 2023 marks the 80th birthday of Michael Ondaatje, one of Canada's most prolific and prominent living writers. Despite his enduring success, Ondaatje's novels and books of poetry have drawn very little feminist attention. Writing in 1994, Lorraine York brought up the question of the missing feminist critique or "the-not-yet-written feminist criticism" of Ondaatje's fiction and poetry (1994, 71). This question was to be raised again almost thirty years later by literary critics such as Robert Lecker, who asked why the representation of women in Ondaatje has "not actually been approached in any depth" (R. Lecker, email message to author, January 8, 2022). A still valid answer to this overwhelming question was offered by York herself in what to this day remains one of the rare critical feminist essays on Ondaatje, titled "Whirling Blindfolded in the House of Woman: Gender Politics in the Poetry and Fiction of Michael Ondaatje". York hypothesizes that

> feminist critics shied away from Ondaatje because they assumed there was nothing to write about, or that, if they did write, they would end up compiling a survey of 'images of women' in Ondaatje – in essence, a catalogue of Atwoodian victim positions." (1994, 71)

In other words, from a feminist perspective, Ondaatje's fiction and poetry are deeply problematic and in their essence conservative. His fictional and poetic worlds, as argued by critics, are based upon the re-inscription of the patriarchal symbolic order and the reproduction of "cultural male bias" (Ellis 1996, 24), which in his earlier works preceding the publication of *The English Patient* is most clearly reflected in "the romanticization" of masculine violence along with its sexual codification directed at women (Bök 1992, 109).

In this respect, some critics consider Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992), and by extension his novel *Divisadero* (2007), which is also based on a constellation of male and female central characters, as signifying a turning point in his conservative gender politics.[1] These two

[1] The intervening novel between these two is *Anil's Ghost*, published in 2000. Unlike the rest of Ondaatje's novels that carry a constellation of male and female central characters, with the latter marginalized and the narrative points of view tipped in favour of male characters as central observers, *Anil's Ghost* is, exceptionally, told from the point of view of a female focalizer. This has led many mainstream critics to view *Anil's Ghost*, including one of our own reviewers, as automatically emancipatory and unproblematic in terms of gender binaries. When trying to dispute feminist criticism of Ondaatje in particular, mainstream critics and reviewers of scholarly articles alike make a point of referring to Ondaatje's novel *Anil's Ghost* (2000). They claim that the novel represents a major departure from the author's conservative gender politics for the simple reason that it "us[es] a woman as the focalizing figure" (Reviewer B, Accompanying comments, April 5, 2023). But as is very well known in feminist literary theory, having a woman character as a central focalizer does not in any way guarantee that such a literary text will be automatically emancipatory and free of patriarchal paradigm, its hierarchically arranged masculine-feminine binaries and harmful gender constraints. Thinking in these terms is in fact biologically deterministic and deeply flawed. A closer analytical look at Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* proves this point.

The main protagonist and central focalizing figure is a Sri Lankan woman, educated in the UK and working in the USA as a forensic anthropologist. This, according to Ondaatje, is supposedly a male-dominated profession. She is sent to Sri Lanka during the civil war as an employee of the United Nations' Centre for Human Rights in Geneva. She not only excels in her profession but also loves being "one of the boys" (Ondaatje 2011, 143), who constitute the *crème de la crème* of forensic doctors dispatched to different corners of the world by international human rights agencies. Ondaatje makes his female focalizing figure in *Anil's Ghost* truly one of the boys not only in spirit but also in her name. With her mind set on being a successful woman, she barters away her childhood female name for a male one. Anil, as this woman explains and who mainstream critics ironically take as a rare example of female empowerment in Ondaatje's fiction, is "her brother's unused second name" (Ondaatje 2011, 63). It is her brother's masculine name that

works are believed to usher in a less problematic model of masculinity that departs from earlier explicit violence directed at women, while also offering an improved representation of women (Bök 1992; York 1994; Ellis 1996). Yet a closer comparative look at *The English Patient* and *Divisadero*, as we demonstrate in this article, reveals that the pattern of women's objectification, sexualization and marginalization characteristic of Ondaatje's early poetry and fiction continues to inform these two seemingly progressive novels, albeit in new forms and disguises. An in-depth analysis of *The English Patient* and *Divisadero* reveals a shift from an earlier explicit pattern of gendering to a more refined, toned-down version. We show that this seemingly more benign pattern of gendering, which admittedly is no longer based upon

gives her orientation, stability and security, a feeling of belonging and self-worth. Her adopted masculine name is a ticket that in combination with her hard work opens the door to the homosocial world of well-paid male professionals. Ondaatje exceptionally allows a career woman to enter this homosocial circle of high-ranking professionals, providing she sheds her original feminine name and identity, which works towards the symbolic preservation of masculine homogeneity. Here, instead of building upon the problematization of masculine-centred public and work-related spaces, Ondaatje perpetuates the old, gendered divide and stereotype by having the woman adapt to masculinity as the *modus operandi* of professional worlds. To count as equal and to fit in, it is women that must adapt and not vice versa, for this might spell reaching out and meeting halfway by both parties, thus disturbing the patriarchal paradigm. Instead, the central position of a woman in this novel, which according to mainstream critics represents a significant digression from the rest of Ondaatje's novels, in which women feature as peripheral and marginal to men, seems to derive from symbolically embracing masculinity.

Equally problematic is the way in which Ondaatje's central female character secures her masculine name. Out of an array of options, Ondaatje opts for the sex trade. This points to the ongoing sexual objectification of women in Ondaatje's texts, which is never a fate meted out to his male characters:

> Her name had not always been Anil. […] She had tried to buy it from [her brother] when she was twelve years old, … She gave her brother one hundred saved rupees, a pen set he had been eyeing for some time, a tin of fifty Gold Leaf cigarettes she had found, and a sexual favour he had demanded in the last hours of the impasse. (Ondaatje 2011, 63–64)

The central female protagonist and focalizer of the novel acquires her new masculine name and a more empowering masculine identity through a trade exchange with her brother, which involves a trade with her own body. This stands in stark contrast to Ondaatje's male characters, most typically exemplified in *The English Patient,* for whom change of identity or loss of national identities derives from their agency and acts of heroism and never depends upon their reduction to objects of sexual commodification and somebody else's sexual pleasure. The latter holds true for the female central focalizer in Ondaatje's only novel that delivers the narrative through the lens of a female character. Her admission to the masculine world and her seeming empowerment leads through the backdoor of making herself sexually available. This is, as implied rather than problematized in the novel, a price a woman must pay or even willingly pays to eventually make it in a men's world.

But once in, women in this supposedly emancipatory fictional world are themselves given to perpetuating harmful binaries of femininity and masculinity. We learn that this career woman's success in the forensic labs where she works itself depends on "mak[ing] it a point to distinguish *female* and *male* traits as clearly as possible" (Ondaatje 2011, 133, *our italics*) as though masculinity and femininity were biological givens and not in reality socially assigned characteristics and roles. According to the central female focalizer, women forensics can supposedly handle cadavers of all ages better than men because they are "geared to giving birth, protecting children, [and] steering them through crisis" (Ondaatje 2011, 133). It is the assumed universal and natural ability to give birth and to be a mother that supposedly makes women "better at dealing with calamity in professional work than men" while "men need[] to pause and dress themselves in coldness in order to deal with a savaged body" (Ondaatje 2011, 133). Ironically, the central character is not a mother. The fact that women have the biological ability to give birth supposedly makes them by default better equipped for examining decomposing bodies, which is a textbook example of biological essentialism and biological determinism par excellence. When it comes down to gender politics, Ondaatje's focalizing character does not voice views that would enable this central female character to break out of the confines of gendered binaries. Her thinking is mired in biological determinism and based on the essentialization of assigned traits of masculinity and femininity as indisputable biological givens. Having a female focalizer is not a game-changing narrative technique in its own right. What matters is the content. Therefore, such thinking is itself part and parcel of biological determinism, to which mainstream literary critics not versed in feminist literary theory are more than prone to succumbing.

explicit masculine aggression and sexual violence against women, still revolves around the re-inscription of women's secondary status as the objectified and marginalized other and as the commodified sexualized and bodily other, orbiting around a tight-knit male homosocial centre. To prove this, the contribution sheds light on the premises of the overt patriarchal paradigm that informs Ondaatje's first novel, *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976)[2], and his most popular collection of poetry, titled *The Cinnamon Peeler* (1989), which includes poems that Ondaatje wrote between 1963 and 1990. These two works are pivotal reference points as they literally frame the first three decades of Ondaatje's writing career. For this reason, they are brought in and read against *The English Patient* and *Divisadero* to show that instead of there being a remarkable paradigm shift, there is instead still a stunning consistency in women's objectification and their ongoing sexual commodification, with homosocial patriarchal bonding between men and hegemonic masculinity remaining the central axes of these two seemingly more progressive fictional worlds.

In this way, this article also attempts to redress the gaping hole in the feminist critique of Ondaatje's fiction and poetry, which peaked in the 1990s but never picked up after that, as feminist critics, justifiably, turned their attention elsewhere.[3] Admittedly, this text is in its own way an exploration of what York has termed women's "victim positions", which still remains an open chapter of feminist critique on Ondaatje and which this article attempts to close. Our approach, however, does not function on the level of mere descriptive renditions and listings of "images of women" at the receiving end of male violence, which was predominantly the case with feminist close readings of literary texts in the 1980s and the early 1990s. As York implies in her seminal feminist essay on Ondaatje, it was this factor, along with Ondaatje's conservative gender politics, which presented itself as a deterrent and the reason that feminist critics in the late 1990s and from that point onwards avoided engaging critically with Ondaatje. They came to fear that a textual approach based on a mere description and enumeration of women's positions as victims, which Ondaatje's works seem to invite by default, would help to reenforce harmful binaries of femininity and masculinity. They feared it would help to perpetuate an essentialist view of women, whose identity in the patriarchal symbolic order remains dependent on the assigned status of marginalized and objectified other and on being a perpetual victim at the receiving end of masculine violence (Brown 1995). Our contribution departs from the pattern of mere descriptive textual investigations

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[2] *Coming Through Slaughter* was Ondaatje's first novel. Prior to that, in 1967, Ondaatje published his first collection of poems, titled *The Dainty Monsters* (1967), which was followed in 1970 by *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid: Left-Handed Poems*. The latter is not a novel proper but a pastiche of "poems, prose, photographs, interviews, and even comic books, which combined create a meditation on the nature of heroism and violence" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2023).

[3] By the early 1990s, Anglo-American feminist literary criticism tended to criticize male-authored patriarchal texts by merely describing the presence or absence of women and the restricted, traditional roles assigned to them in such works. At the same time, feminist literary critics had more important and urgent tasks to see to than simply dwelling on male-authored texts, as these began to increasingly constitute just one segment of the entire literary production and by extension also of college syllabi for literature courses. Feminist scholars and literary critics increasingly turned their attention to the recuperation of a lost female literary canon and to an ever more expanding field of contemporary feminist literary production, which required its own critical assessment. This new, blossoming literary field turned out to be more alluring and engaging, as feminist literary writings aimed to address and problematize patriarchal social organization and its constraining effects on men and women alike. For this reason, they offered, and still do, alternative modes of being and acting in the world, far removed from the pattern of women's passivization, desubjectivization and commodification found, for example, in the works of then established male authors such as Ondaatje.

and relies on an analytical, deconstructive method. In doing so, it brings together a wide and complex variety of interdisciplinary insights, produced by feminist scholars over the course of the last four decades, both into women's body objectification and commodified sexualization, and into the processes of women's objectification and marginalization in general. These interdisciplinary feminist investigations, which first emerged in the field of cultural and sociological studies, remain united under one common banner. Their aim is to make the ongoing processes of women's othering, body objectification and sexualization "strange"; that is, no longer tenable and therefore no longer acceptable.

2 Women's Body Objectification and Marginalization

The Cinnamon Peeler is a collection of poems spanning the period between 1963 to 1990 when Ondaatje wrote his first major works *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, *Coming Through Slaughter*, *Running in the Family,* and *In the Skin of a Lion.* The collection establishes the template for multi-layered forms of homosocial bonding. These include representations of the poet and his male friends (to whom some of the poems are dedicated) and other mostly deceased fellow artists, primarily literati and poets (such as Christopher Dewdney, Wallace Stevens, Robert Creeley, Peter Handke, Henry Rousseau, Rainer Maria Rilke, Pablo Neruda, Marcel Proust, Miguel de Cervantes, and Federico Garcia Lorca), scientists (Charles Darwin), politicians (John F. Kennedy), philosophers, and other male figures that command authority in their respective fields. It is exclusively with them that the poet speaker engages in a direct communication, referring to them most often as a source of inspiration or even envious admiration. In this homosocial poetic landscape two female artists are mentioned in passing (Bessie Smith, Emily Dickinson). Meanwhile, men appear as each other's mental companions and spiritual mentors, immersed into "thinking chaos" (Ondaatje 1992, 39) and the production of poetic lines as "tracks of thought" (Ondaatje 1992, 41). Women, on the other hand, pop up sporadically as voiceless bodies, mirroring flora and fauna at best but most often as anonymous sexualized bodies to be laid claim to. In both cases, women function as "passive objects of the male explosive creativity" (Bök 1992, 116). Women walk in and out of this collection of poems primarily as "naked" bodies (Ondaatje 1992, 84), and as bodies already shared with other men. A woman's stomach, for example, is kissed by the poet speaker to bless those men who kissed this part of the same woman's body before him, as in "Rock Bottom" (Ondaatje 1992, 151). This form of homosocial bonding, which is cemented through the exchange of women between the poet and his male friends, further rests on the reduction of women to anonymous bodies also shared between the poet speaker and his contemporary or long-deceased fellow artists in their own lines of poetry. In this way, if the poet speaker is at one point "aroused by Wyatt's talk of women who step / naked into his bed chamber" (Ondaatje 1992, 55), at another point he is also full of admiration for Rousseau and his visage of "a naked lady / who has been animal and tree / her breast a suckled orange" (Ondaatje 1992, 46).

In Ondaatje's homosocial poetic landscape, a woman most often appears as a particular kind of a "naked body". This is an assemblage of fragmented and sexualized body parts, held in the gaze of a single male or in a mirrored gaze of multiple male observers who share in their spiritual companionship and acts of poetic creativity. The collection features a thinking and

creative male subject versus women who feature as a collection of sexualized and fetishized body parts. While the poet speaker and his male companions appear wholesome, representing mind and spirit, sporadic women reduced to sexualized body fragments represent the outer margin of their homosocially reconstructed human centre. Painted in this manner as the ultimate other and something closer to nature than culture, women are always on the outside. That is, they are always on the other side of the homosocial world inhabited exclusively by the poet speaker and his fellow artists. This is best exemplified in "Tin Roof" as follows:

> Oh, Rilke, I want to sit down calm like you
> or pace the castle, avoiding the path of the cook, Carlo,
> /…/
> I have circled your books for years
> /…
> I can see you sitting down
> the suspicious cook asleep
> /… /
> Us and the coffee,
> all the small charms we invade it with.
>
> As at midnight we remember the colour
> of the dogwood flower growing
> like a woman's sex outside the window. (Bök 1992, 122–23)

While men are engrossed in each other's spiritual worlds and their "weaving [of] language into artistic creation" (Miller 2016, 31), women are desubjectivized and marginalized as a faceless and voiceless collection of eclectic and sexualized body parts, scattered on the outer rim of men's homosocial world. Defined and controlled by the masculine gaze of the male observer and reduced to an assortment of sexualized body parts to be "repeatedly put together and taken apart" according to the male poets' whims and erotic desires (Montrose in Miller 2016, 29), women further assume the status of absent presence. They pass from "a potentially speaking subject to a sexualized physical object" to be eventually claimed and triumphantly possessed by the poet speaker ((Miller 2016, 32). This is most clearly encapsulated in the title poem of the collection, "The Cinnamon Peeler", in which the opening lines read as follows:

> If I were a cinnamon peeler
> I would ride your bed
> and leave the yellow bark dust/on your pillow
>
> Your breasts and shoulders would reek
> you could never walk through markets
> without the profession of my fingers

floating over you.
//…//
Here on the upper thigh
at this smooth pasture
neighbour to your hair
or the crease
that cuts your back. This ankle.
You will be known among strangers
as the cinnamon peeler's wife. (Ondaatje 1992, 156)

The woman's identity and subjectivity are non-existent and instead are derivative of that of the poet speaker. Reduced to a truncated and fetishized body, the woman disappears only to reappear as an assortment of sexualized and commodified body parts, which are mapped and claimed by the male speaker's hands. Reconfigured as an eclectic collection of body parts, the woman has no voice, no self, and consequently no power. As an assemblage of fragmented body parts, she can be unproblematically made to "serve men's ends" (Jones 2000, 91) or, more specifically, sexual desires other than her own.

Ondaatje's elision of women as subjects and their remoulding as fragmented and sexualized bodies is of course not his own invention. It is a faithful reinvocation of the Renaissance genre of blazon, especially its Petrarchan convention, whose problematic patriarchal principles Ondaatje follows to the letter. Blazons are conceits or poems that in their entirety "dwelt upon and detailed the various parts of a woman's body" held in the dissecting and defining masculine gaze of the male poet (Cuddon 1991, 97). As noted by C. John Stout, in this poetic genre, "the female body is taken apart and fetishized so that the male poet can demonstrate his verbal prowess, his wit, and his technical expertise. In this process, the man speaks and the woman is silent" (2003, 54). Just as importantly, in this poetic genre and by extension in Ondaatje's poetry, "men make possession of the female body, dismembering it, caressing it with words or insulting it, while [the woman], to whom their poems are ostensibly dedicated remains absent" (Stout 2003, 57). Worse, with Petrarch the woman becomes an absent presence and, to rephrase Charles Sorel's then contemporary critique, "a beautiful monster" (Mandell 1996, 569). Petrarchan convention, which dominates the genre of blazon, is based on "the listing of body parts" usually "from the hair down" and on "the use of hyperbole and simile in describing lips like coral, teeth like pearls [hair like fine-spun gold, breasts like ivory] and so on" (Baldick 2001, 28). A Petrarchan blazon is therefore a head-to-toe inventory or a catalogue of women's body parts which are aligned with minerals, metals, and other precious, and, most importantly, tradeable objects in nature. It emphasizes and links the commodified riches that the woman's body parts are equated with and subsumed under the worldly possessions the poet speaker as the woman's lover and owner of her body finds or symbolically places himself in charge of. With each body part compared to a treasure in nature or to a valuable object, the woman is again fixed as a possession and as an interchangeable commodity to be bartered among men in their competitive pursuit of symbolic wealth. Within the Petrarchan convention of blazon, however, this does not

necessarily translate into explicit sexual fetishization of the woman. However, the woman is again commodified and effaced as a subject, her body parts come to stand for tradeable commodities in nature manned by those constituting the homosocial centre of humanity. As a result, she is made to disappear as a human by being realigned with nature rather than culture once her body parts come to stand for precious objects found in nature or when they come to stand for its flora and fauna. This is exactly the form of women's body fragmentation, othering, and marginalization also at work in Ondaatje's *The English Patient* and *Divisidaro*.

Divisadero, first published in 2007, is set both in the United States and France. Each of the two settings, as is typical of Ondaatje's intercontinental novels, features women not as independent entities, as is the case with the men populating the same literary world, but as an obligatory part of male-female pairings. The narrative is framed and focalized primarily through the eyes of central male protagonists. These include Coop, a professional gambler, then the pre–First World War obscure writer Lucien Segura, and Rafael, a post-war child attached to Segura's refurbished estate at the end of the twentieth century. Even when the two token female characters, Claire and Anna, occasionally take the central podium, their perspective is muted and abstracted. Their energy is channelled toward maintaining the love for their men or toward the investigation and advancement of the lives of other men but never women. Anna's career thus revolves around "exhuming mostly unknown corners of European cultures" with her "best-known study […] of Auguste Maquet, one of Alexandre Dumas' collaborators and plot researches" and another one being that of "George Wague, the professional mime who gave Collette lessons in 1906 to prepare her for music-hall melodramas" (Ondaatje 2008, 148). It is also in this capacity that Anna, an American researcher now dedicated to the recovery and canonization of Segura's forgotten writings, encounters Rafael, with whom she almost immediately enters into a love liaison. And it is this amorous liaison rather than the nature of her work that defines her role in the novel. Here, women appear primarily as erotized or brutally sexually commodified bodies and as sexual bait, like Bridget. They hover on the perimeters of the men's world and are held in the gaze of male focalizers, while men in this homosocially centred literary world function as independently standing and, most importantly, fully rounded persons with a clear presence of mind and spirit. The poetic conventions of the blazon are translated into and made to fit what we might refer to as a blazon in prose. In the short vignette titled "Two Photographs", Segura the writer and his biographer Anna are typically juxtaposed in this manner, which serves to entrench a classical and hierarchically arranged gendered binary. The opening lines read as follows:

> There are two photographs pinned up the wall of the kitchen in Dému. One is the picture taken of Lucien Segura in his last phase of his life, sitting on a garden bench with a dark branch fanning over him. […] what is most informal is the openness of his face, as if it has just been blessed. His laugh, for instance – there is no attempt to hide the shaggy randomness, or even the unsightly gap of a missing tooth. This was a discreet man who used to laugh internally, in a hidden way. (Ondaatje 2008, 194)

The vignette offers an image of a man pictured as a persona. It provides an intricate insight into his own inner psyche and personal characteristics one can read from his face and his manner of laughing. This is a person the reader can identify with.

Not the same goes for Anna, the woman in this dyad. It is not only that she pops up as a woman without a name, but she is also instantly reduced to a body. She is a mere body silhouette that belongs to a nameless woman, and with which one of course cannot identify but can only observe and assess through the lenses offered by the narrator:

> We are much closer to the subject in this picture.… The woman's figure is naked from the waist up, just about to break free of focus. The tanned body wilful, laughing, because she has woven the roots of two small muddy plants into her blond hair, so it appears as if mullein and rosemary are growing out the plastered earth on her head. There's a wet muck across her smiling mouth, and on her lean shoulders and arms. It is as if her energy and sensuality have been drawn from the air surrounding her. (Ondaatje 2008, 195)

Unlike the man's face, which is defined by his laughing and which in turn is a sign of his lively interior world and exuberant mental presence, the woman, in this gendered binary typical of Ondaatje's works, is doubly reiterated as a body. First, she is cast as a body figure, and then as just a body that laughs. There is no psychological profile to this woman who is only a body without a face, and a specific kind of "beautiful monstrous body" at that. Her body is an evocation of the Renaissance blazon, with the roots of muddy plants woven into her blonde hair instead of precious gold and with earth plastered over her shoulders and arms, thus forming a new earth-like assemblage of body parts. Instead of radiating with the sun-like rays, symbolized by gold-spun threads woven into the golden locks of Renaissance ladies, her head is the head of mother earth itself. It sports plants that seem to grow from the crown of her head, which is itself redefined as the crust of the earth.

The woman, reconstituted as an assemblage of body parts that imitate or melt with the flora and fertile earth, is realigned with nature and ultimately reconstructed as a sensual rather than a rational, thinking body. Turned into a sensual body, the woman ends up as an eroticized body closer to nature rather than culture. Reconstructed as a body that by default cannot be rational but only sensual, it inevitably invites its own sexualization under the objectifying gaze of the narrator and the reader alike. Typically for Ondaatje, this sensualized or eroticized body assemblage that is a woman appears ensconced between two men, with whom the vignette opens and closes. The first one looks at us from the photograph and is the man of discreet laughter. The other one is Anna's lover turned photographer, who observes and captures her image through the lenses of a camera, fixing her as a body: "We look at this picture [of the woman as a body] and imagine also the person with the camera, we can see the relationship between the unseen photographer and this laughing muddy woman" (Ondaatje 2008, 195). It is this homosocial structuration, with the woman remoulded as an assemblage of monstrously beautiful and eroticized body parts sandwiched between two men, two persons, that also underlies the rest of the novel.

Similarly, *The English Patient* may depart from Ondaatje's earlier pattern of overt and taken-for-granted masculine violence and systemic sexual abuse targeted at women (Ellis 1996, 22), but it continues to reinscribe and perpetuate the gender binary of transcendent and universal masculine bodies/subjects on the one hand, and dismembered and commodified, fragmented and sexualized female bodies on the other. This gendered binarism is the underlying axis of

the central narrative, framed by the English patient, or Count Almásy, a desert explorer and map-maker. As a desert map-maker who charts geographical phenomena, he inevitably puts himself at the service of imperial powers but is himself not to be domesticated and owned by imperial cartography and its signifying system. He and his fellow map-makers start out as "German, English, Hungarian, African" only to, as Almásy emphasizes, become gradually "nationless" (Ondaatje 1993, 138). Almásy appears as a transcendent and universal human body, as a prototypical universal masculine body, operating on par with the sand desert, which itself cannot be "claimed or owned", and where nations by default are made sooner or later "historical with sand across their grasp" (Ondaatje 1993, 22, 18). As Almásy walks out of a burning plane in the desert, his charred body comes to signify the dissolution of national borders and ideological inscriptions. By the time he ends up in a villa in Florence and retells his story on his death bed, with "all identification consumed in a fire" (Ondaatje 2008, 48), it is no longer the side he worked for that matters but the bonding with other males who have directly participated in the war as sappers (Kip) or as spies and intelligence agents (Carravaggio), working for the other side. Their coming together, their bonding and immersion into each other's stories, and eventually their mutual appreciation, depends on the exchange of the ideas and knowledge, on the mutual admiration they come to share for each other's craftiness and expertise, out of which Hana as their nursing body is excluded.

While the male protagonists in the novel are defined by their expertise and as transcendent and omnipotent masculine bodies, not weighed down by particulars, the two women, Hana and Katharine, are divested of their own agency and body fluidity typical of the men in this novel. The two women, and consequently the forms of embodiment they are allowed to enact, are "tied to the institution of femininity" (Burcar 2007, 107). While Hana is reduced to a nursing body appended to the homosocial national centre, Katharine, the focal woman in the story, is reduced to a fragmented sexualized body, whose parts are to be laid claim to by her lover, a desert explorer and map-maker. Ondaatje thus perpetuates the problematic gender binary of masculinity and femininity and, with the Almásy–Katharine story occupying central place, the naturalization of the woman as an assemblage of sexualized body parts rather than a subject. Katharine's personal name is revealed only when we are already well into one third of the novel. Before and after she is referred to either as Clifton's wife or as Almásy's lover and a nameless female body defined by her nakedness and sexual availability. As an assemblage of body parts, she is not a woman who can speak or stare back, let alone explore and map.

This gender paradigm of passive women, who are reduced to objectified and sexualized naked bodies, and of agential men, who are defined by their profession and expertise, is best captured in the section describing Almásy's thoughts during one of his expeditions into the desert. Here he thinks of Katharine in their love nest, left behind in a room in Cairo: "In the desert the most loved waters, like a lover's name, are carried blue in your hands, enter your throat. One swallows absence. A woman in Cairo curves the white length of her body up from the bed and leans out of the window into a rainstorm to allow her nakedness to receive it" (Ondaatje 2008, 141). Katharine as the central woman of the story enters and exits the novel as a passive, sexualized naked body to be owned or as an assemblage of fragmented, eclectic body parts to be laid claim to, but never as a person. As captured and dismembered

through the masculine and cartographic gaze of her lover, which is also the reader's gaze, she is from the start a mere cluster of "awkward limbs climbing out of a plane" (Ondaatje 2008, 144). She is a pointed "elbow" next to a campfire (Ondaatje 2008, 107), a "sweating knee beside the gearbox" inciting Almásy, a sensuous mouth drinking "the chlorinated water [with] some coming down her chin, [and] falling to her stomach" (Ondaatje 2008, 149), and a sweating "shoulder" that Almásy makes possession of: "This is my shoulder, he thinks, not her husband's. This is my shoulder" (Ondaatje 2008, 156).

In this process of body reduction and fragmentation, parts of Katharine's body are claimed and appropriated on the part of the male observer in a specific way, through the cartographic masculine gaze. As Almásy maps the desert, so he also maps Katharine's body or rather its parts, referring to them and realigning them with geographical features of a desert landscape. This is another technique of objectifying a woman as part of nature, that is, as an assemblage of geographical phenomena through which a male explorer passes or claims on his or others' behalf. Katharine's body parts come to resemble such geographical phenomena. During a dance when their affair is already over, Almásy deliberately pushes against her so that his throat lands "at her left shoulder on that *naked plateau*, above the sequins" (Ondaatje 2008, 244, italics added). And, most importantly, he becomes obsessed with mapping and claiming Katharine by giving a name to what he considers the most erotic part of her body, the *"hollow indentation* at her neck*"* (Ondaatje 2008, 162, italics added). It is this part of her body, already described in semi-geographical terms as if one were describing land depressions on the terrain, that he and the rest of his companion cartographers come to nickname the Bosphorus: "There was that small indentation at her throat we called the Bosphorus. I would dive from her shoulder into the Bosphorus!" (Ondaatje 2008, 236). Contoured and pinned down as the Boshporus strait, this part of the woman's body allows for the imprint, the agency, and the expansion of the masculine lover, the map-maker. For Almásy and the reader the woman does not exist as a person with her own thoughts and desires but as an assemblage of erotized body parts that resemble or duplicate geographical phenomena, inscribed and by analogy claimed by the male explorer.

Under Almásy's cartographic masculine gaze, this assemblage of eroticized body parts that is Katharine is also to be eventually "translated into the text of the desert" (Ondaatje 2008, 236), so that both can be finally contained and claimed. When wondering how to describe Katharine to his listeners in the villa in the north of Italy, Almásy proposes he can do this "the way I can arc out in the air the shape of a mesa or rock" (Ondaatje 2008, 235). This also echoes an earlier mention of how desert landscape is inscribed and claimed by other fellow mappers, captured in the following scene:

> Someone seen bathing in a desert caravan, holding up muslin with one arm in front of her. Some old Arab poet's woman, whose white-dove shoulders made him describe an oasis with her name … the old scribe turns from her to describe Zerzura. (Ondaatje 2008, 140–41)

Feminization and erotization of the land, which proceeds on the backs of women's body fragmentation and objectification, serves as a double strategy of patriarchal and imperial containment, with women "serving as mediating and threshold figures by means of which

men orient themselves in space, as agents of power and agents of knowledge" (McClintock 1995, 24). Similarly, when Almásy writes his book on the Libyan desert in order to record his discoveries and present the mappings of the terrain not yet charted by Westerners for the London Geographic Society, he is unable "to remove [Katharine's] body from the page" (*EP*, 235). Along with the desert that he charts into existence, he is also preoccupied with Katharine's "nearby presence … or if truth be known with her possible mouth, the tautness behind her knee, the white plain of stomach" (Ondaatje 2008, 235). What Ondaatje perpetuates and reinforces here is the classical masculine cartographer's gaze, starting with the feminization and erotization of the Libyan desert as a whole: "The desert of Libya. A sexual, drawn-out word, a coaxed well. The *b* and the *y*" (Ondaatje 2008, 257). As observed by McClintock in a different context, within the patriarchal gendered paradigm, the claiming and inscribing of lands, which proceeds by the latter's feminization and erotization, is pictured and encoded "as a relation of power between two gendered spaces" (1995, 24). The feminization and sexualization of the land, which proceeds on par with the sexualization and fragmentation of women into parts of bodies to be translated and inscribed into landscape, serves as a strategy of containing the unknown, symbolized by women who are constructed as the marginal other in homosocial patriarchal world. Once feminized and eroticized as the passive and yielding other like the woman whose body parts it mirrors, the land can be "spatially spread" and rendered "safe for male exploration" and expropriation (McClintock 1995, 23). At the same time, women reduced to body parts are contained and circumscribed as manageable, instrumentalized objects. Symbolically merged with and built into the landscape as its body parts, they are again "the earth that is to be discovered, entered, named, [given purpose to] and, above all, owned" (McClintock 1995, 31). Katharine also features as a beautiful monster, an assemblage of body parts, with which Almásy inscribes and acts upon the landscape while he refuses to be inscribed and acted upon himself.

3 Women's Sexual Objectification and Subordination

In Ondaatje's oeuvre, body objectification and sexualization of women feeds into and is structurally supportive of women's sexual subordination. Ondaatje's homosocial, masculine-centred literary worlds rest upon men's sexual dominance over women, with women featuring as sexual instruments to be brutally violated and appropriated or at least placed in the service of men's sexual desires and demands. While Ondaatje's *The English Patient* and *Divisadero* may abandon the earlier romanticization of explicit sexual violence against women and their brutal sexual degradation as a central element of male bonding and hegemonic masculinity, they still rest on the entrenchment of the phallocentric view of sexuality and the inscription of women as mere physical objects of men's sexual gratification. In this sense, violent scenes of women's sexual dehumanization that constitute the essence of being a woman in his first novel *Coming Through Slaughter* find their almost identical, albeit toned down renditions in both *The English Patient* and *Divisadero.*

Coming Through Slaughter runs amok with sexual violence and is rife with sexual victimization and humiliation of women who feature as sexual pawns in the hands of men. Mocked, brutalized, and slashed for real or in the voyeuristic eyes of their male observers, the women ranging from "mattress whores" (Ondaatje 1976, 118) in the streets of New Orleans to

the protagonist's different wives feature as sexualized punchbags. They are to be used and systematically abused in what is defined as the normal sexual pleasure of men. These actions are consequently not condoned by the narrator nor does the main protagonist sympathize with the plight of the women. On the contrary, as pointed out by Thomson, "the narration negates their subjectivity and assigns an absolute knowledge of them as objects" (1993, 37). Moreover, reduced to sexualized bodies to be violated, the women serve as mute "sites of coercive compliance" (Visano 2002, 57) with their own sexual degradation and brutalization or they feature as those who desperately want to be sexually violated and degraded, which is especially the case in Ondaatje's later works. While the latter applies to Katharine's portrayal in *The English Patient*, the former applies to *Coming Through Slaughter.* Here, in various sexually violent and by default phallocentric scenes, women are brutally objectified and violated by men, a pattern which resurfaces intact in *Divisadero*, supposedly Ondaatje's most lyrical novel to date. In *Coming Through Slaughter,* we read:

> I press myself into her belly.… I lift her arms and leave them empty above us and bend and pull the brown dress up to her stomach and then up into her arms. Step back and watch her against the corner of my room […]. Cool brown back. Till I attack her into the wall my cock cushioned my hand sat the front of the thigh pulling her at me we are hardly breathing her crazy flesh twisted into corners" of the room [of the room]. (Ondaatje 1976, 61).

This hardly differs from a similar scene of sexual violence in *Divisadero*, which depends upon Ondaatje's subscription to the patriarchal codification of the masculine pleasure principle as animalistically raw and penis-centred. Men feature as sexual agents and possessors and the women as the passive, inert body to be acted upon, and to be violently possessed and consumed:

> What had been innocent – a celebration! – abruptly made him a voyeur. His daughter's forearms and open palms were flat against the mildewed wall as Pierre tugged her white hips and shoulders toward him, his body digging into her again and again, and again […]. Lucien thought of her small hand brushing away the erasure rubbings from his pages [when she was a child]. (Ondaatje 2008, 239)

Here Ondaatje unproblematically adopts what in a different context has been recognized as the patriarchally driven pornographic construct of "consensual rape" (Pease 2019, Smith 1995). Scenes of rape as the ultimate form of sexual violence against women and violation of their bodily and mental integrity are disguised as objectively neutral, taken-for-granted scenes of male eroticized pleasure and reinscribed and naturalized as integral to male-female heterosexual relationships.

In *Divisadero*, the reader's encounter with the sexual degradation and brutalization of women is no longer direct but is made seemingly distant and removed. Sexual violence and the woman's objectification are artificially diffused by being transmuted and sublimated under the voyeuristic gaze of the third party, the father who observers his daughter from a distance and, with the narrator's focus being diverted elsewhere, to his daughter as a little girl, while her adult status as an object of sexual violation and brutalization is thus not only taken for granted but *implicitly* endorsed. *The English Patient* employs a similar

decoy tactic of introducing and naturalizing sexual violation of women in the process of inscribing patriarchal heteronormative and masculine-centred sexual paradigm. Here it is Katharine who demands of Almásy that she be "ravished" by him, placing herself not only in the position of a sexual object but one to be brutally acted upon. In her only sexual dream in the novel she imagines the two of them being "bent over like animals", with Almásy "yoking her neck back so she has been unable to breathe within his arms" (Ondaatje 1993, 236, 149). Ondaatje again subscribes to the patriarchal and phallus-centred pornographic discourse, in which women are imaginarily depicted "as enjoying how they are being used and violated by men" (Papadaki 2021, n.p.) and presented as those who "desperately want to be bound, battered, tortured, humiliated, and killed, or merely taken and used" (MacKinnon 1984, 326). This is a form of displacement whereby women, who are positioned as "sexual objects available for men's consumption" (Papadaki 2021, n.p.) supposedly invite and desire their own sexual subjugation and dehumanization.

While *The English Patient* and *Divisadero* may depart from explicit sexual violence, brutalization, and degradation of women with women no longer uniformly appearing "as passive victims of male volatility" (Bök 1992, 116), in these two novels female characters continue to feature as sexual objects who are there to serve the needs of men. Women are by default treated as silently compliant and readily available physical objects, facilitating the sexual desire and gratification of men. In line with the patriarchal phallic organization of sexuality that Ondaatje upholds, male sexual desire and eroticism are in turn themselves narrowly and mechanistically construed with "the penis as the focus and male ejaculation" as the apex and "the end of the sexual event" for both parties involved (Stick and Fetner 2020, 784). In these constellations, where women are reduced to a body or its silent parts and treated as readily available instruments for the sexual gratification of men, women's feelings are not only disregarded but annulled and obliterated. Precisely with the woman being instrumentalized, her feelings as a human being "need not be taken into account" at all (Papadaki 2021, n.p.). Women are thus totally desubjectivized and dehumanized.

In this vein, Ondaatje's fiction consistently demonstrates a preoccupation if not obsession with one particular type of sexual posture already encountered in the bestial sex imagery dreamed by Katherine in *The English Patient*. In *Divisadero*, too, there is virtually no other sexual position but the one where women are compliantly bent over and men do whatever they please. In *Divisidero*, whose Bloomsbury edition features a book cover with a woman's torso but no head, we read Cooper thinks of Bridget as "his willing and diligent lover" (Ondaatje 2008, 124). When they first make love or, rather, have sex, it is on the hood of a car:

> They stopped, left the car open so music filled yards of the desert night, and she bent over the hood of the Chrysler, the heat from its engine against her t-shirt. He could hardly grip her because of the sweat on her shoulders. (Ondaatje 2008, 122)

The women in *Divisadero* at this point only start to diligently bend over or are being bent over. In another scene involving Roman and Marie-Neige, who again comes across as a silent and compliant body there to facilitate her man's sexual pleasure, the entire affair is described from a masculine point of view in a totally mechanical manner, as is prototypical of Ondaatje's style of writing. We read:

> He touched the soft and small delight of her face, […] she turned and put her arms out along the thick rim of the barrel where in the water was the moon and the ghost of her face. Roman moved against her, and in the next while, whatever surprise there was, whatever pain, there was also the frantic moon in front of her shifting and breaking into pieces in the water. (Ondaatje 2008, 221)

In another instance we are privy to exactly the same kind of sexual objectification, with the woman represented as a silent instrument of man's sexual gratification:

> On his knees, behind her, he pulled her thighs back to him in a slow rocking, as if he wanted her now to search for him, the heat of her cave onto his coldness, […] and he moved into her, her softness and the unknown warmth. (Ondaatje 2008, 262)

In these representative scenes, with women reduced to objects for man's gratification, Ondaatje's men appear as "powerful, active and dominant" and women as silent, submissive and pliable bodies that "complement men's sexuality", supporting and mirroring their phallocentric subjectivity (Stephen 1994, 225).

Only in rare instances, when the focalizer is not the male protagonist and/or the narrator and the sexual encounter is exceptionally described from the point of view of the woman, is this sexual position abandoned. But the same does not go for the phallocentric organization of sexuality and the hierarchical binary of active and agential men versus passive and inert women who lack sexual autonomy. This paradigm continues to be firmly entrenched. This is the case with Hanna in *The English Patient*. Here we encounter a typical patriarchally defined female complementary dyad, with one woman, Katharine, being sexually commodified and violated as though this is an extension of her own sexual desire, and the other woman in the novel, Hana, whose sexual desire is positioned as secondary and dependent. It is presented as being derivative of male masculine pleasure, which in turn takes centre stage:

> She holds an Indian goddess in her arms, she holds wheat and ribbons. As he bends over her it pours. As [Kip] moves [inside her], she keeps her eyes open to witness the gnats of electricity in his hair. (Ondaatje 1993, 218)

Hana is presented as a passive body whose sexual pleasure remains obscure. In this patriarchal phallocentric organization of sexuality – within whose framework man's pleasure is prioritized but also reductively concentrated on the penis while the clitoris is removed from view, so that women's multiple erogenous zones are whittled down to and erroneously equated "only with the vagina" in order to "comply with the coital imperative" (Plessis 2015, 4) – female pleasure comes to be "seen as unimportant and/or mysterious" with women turned "into passive receptacles" (Stephen 1994, 225).

In line with the patriarchal phallocentric organization of sexuality, Ondaatje does not acknowledge multiple erogenous zones of women's bodies and their own sexual pleasures and sexual agency. In this way, he shies away from "a wider range of sexually pleasurable activities [in heterosexual relationships] that are less reflective of a male-centred model of sexuality" (Plessis 2015, 3). Ondaatje's *The English Patient* and *Divisidaro* thus, too, subscribe

to phallocentrism, with women serving as mere physical objects of male gratification. By not acknowledging multiple and reciprocally mutual pleasures, Ondaatje inadvertently reinscribes damaging feminine and masculine roles that in a sense constrain his own male protagonists too, while also reinscribing masculine (sexual) domination. Feminists have long claimed that "the possibility of an alternative and empowered female [and male] sexuality in heterosexual relationships requires male sexuality to depart from patriarchal and phallocentric identities" and that "empowered female sexuality" cannot emerge without the promotion of "alternative models of male sexuality" (Plessis 2015, 3). Ondaatje's *The English Patient* and *Divisadero*, considered his breakthrough novels in terms of supposedly reformed gender politics, sadly do not live up to this task, either.

4 Conclusion

Representations of women in Ondaatje's supposedly more progressive novels T*he English Patient* and *Divisadero* remain locked in a problematic homosocial model of patriarchal male bonding and modified hegemonic masculinity, which rests on the inscription of women as an objectified and sexualized body or an assemblage of body parts orbiting on the outer limit of masculine-centred worlds. Token women are allowed in, seemingly on an equal basis, only to be again perfidiously reinscribed as the objectified and sexualized other (like Katharine in *The English Patient* and Bridget and Marie-Neige in *Divisadero*), or simply as the feminine other conscripted into the service of grooming and catering for the male homosocial centre (Anna in *Divisadero* and Hana in *The English Patient*). This feminine other that languishes in the shadow of masculine-bonded groupings of male characters too poses and is again defined as a sexually inert body to be acted upon. Its erogenous zones and hence its sexual autonomy and agency need yet to be recovered if not discovered. It is alas no wonder that feminist critics to this day continue to avert their critical gaze from Ondaatje's oeuvre, seeking their pleasures in greener pastures.

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Representing M(other): A Cixousian Reading of Memoirs Written by Jeanette Winterson and Elif Shafak

ABSTRACT

Writing about themselves, women return to their mothers and secure their self-identification by writing about the newly founded mother-daughter relationship. Nonetheless, depicting the concept of the mother is remarkably onerous because her image is either idealized by the patriarchal society or overlooked as a passive character under the masculine power of the father. Therefore, in order to depict a fair image of the mother, woman writers are compelled to stand against this overly simplistic depiction to portray her as complex and different. In doing so, women's self-writings will successfully remember the mother's voice and refer to her unique qualities. In this article, I would argue that Elif Shafak's and Jeanette Winterson's memoirs are tightly bonded with the concept of the mother, which is compatible with the way Hélène Cixous defines and writes about not only her mother, but motherhood in general.

Keywords: concept of the mother, woman-mother, self-writing, mother vs. father, mother-daughter dyad, Elif Shafak, Jeanette Winterson, Hélène Cixous

Reprezentacije matere kot/in drugega: cixousijsko branje memoarov Jeanette Winterson in Elif Shafak

IZVLEČEK

Ko ženske pišejo o sebi, se pogosto vračajo k svojim materam in si samoidentifikacijo zagotavljajo s pisanjem o novonastalih odnosih med materami in hčerami. Kljub temu pa je tematizacija koncepta matere izjemno težavna, saj je njena podoba v patriarhalnih družbah ali idealizirana ali pa povsem pasivizirana v odnosu do maskuline moči očeta. Če želijo pisateljice predstaviti kolikor toliko ustrezno podobo matere, se morajo zoperstaviti temu skrajno popreproščenemu prikazu. Na ta način žensko avtobiografsko pisanje vzpostavlja materin glas in poudarja materin edinstven doprinos k oblikovanju posameznic in posameznikov. V tem članku pokažem, da so spomini Elif Shafak in Jeanette Winterson tesno povezani s konceptom matere, ki je skladen z načinom, na katerega materinstvo opredeljuje Hélène Cixous.

Ključne besede: koncept matere, ženska-mati, avtobiografskost, mati vs. oče, diada mati-hči, Elif Shafak, Jeanette Winterson, Hélène Cixous

1 Introduction

One of the critical notions in women's self-writings is how they remember their mothers and represent them in the process of gaining self-knowledge. Interestingly, this process is different for men since their journey starts with independence from their family, especially their mothers, while women's growth happens within the realm of their families. In other words, they learn the ways of life from their mothers and by the way(s) they identify with them (Ferguson 1983, 229). As a result, women tend to include their mothers in the texts they write about themselves. However, the mother's image in a patriarchal society is disturbed by a one-sided, simplistic depiction as motherhood is traditionally "idealized as a feminine embodiment of moral purity" (Park 2019, 63), which is liable to omit queer mothers and even male caregivers. Consequently, traditional motherhood suppresses the voice of a wide variety of mothers. Hence, my argument is that there seems to be an urgent need for an alternative image of the mother, which I propose Shafak and Winterson have the potential to delineate in their memoirs, *Black Milk* and *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?*

Hélène Cixous holds the view that mothers are exceptional since they can have a significant impact on their children: "[W]hat makes the difference, his or her difference, is the mother" (1998, 45). Furthermore, the multitude of studies published in The Journal of the Motherhood Initiative attest to the importance of the mother, since they show how motherhood is related to different concepts like sexuality, literature, feminism, and the queer (O'Reilly 2019, 19). For this reason, this quality can conceivably introduce an alternative way of treating 'the other' through acceptance, which stems from the unique relationship between mother and her child as the mother allows 'the other' to exist without practicing appropriation (Cixous 1990, 112).

Accordingly, remembering and writing about motherhood is a way of displaying loyalty toward the childbearing aspect of femininity, which is a controversial idea in feminism. This is because there are numerous preconceptions associated with the role of the mother, and not all women can or want to be mothers. Notably, writing a 'mommy memoir' like *Black Milk* by Shafak or a memoir in which mother is remembered, like Winterson's *Why Be Happy?*, is utterly different from the traditions of autobiographical writings. Traditional autobiographies reflect power relations because only "wealthy white men viewed as holding public significance wrote and published autobiographies, while people disadvantaged by dominant structures of power generally did not" (Hewett 2019, 192). As a result, writing memoirs with mothers as the main characters obviously ignores the mainstream power relations in the genre.

My main objective in this article is to argue that *Why Be Happy?* And *Black Milk* are both quests for mother/mothering, during which Winterson and Shafak talk about their own mothers but at the same time make an attempt to picture a new image of the mother as a concept that influences people's lives. Winterson views the mother as "our first love affair". If we hate her, we are likely to carry the hatred into our other love affairs (Winterson 2011, 311). Likewise, Shafak's memoir is a text about the process of becoming a mother, along with the life stories of many literary women, some of whom were mothers while others decided not to be. One could say that both memoirs ponder the mother-daughter relationship, and as I shall argue, similar to Cixous' interpretation of the mother, her image in these memoirs could be radically different from the one imposed on women by patriarchal society.

2 M(other) and Positive Receptivity

Writing about mothers and mothering could be regarded as a key concept in women's self-writings, since "we think back through our mothers if we are women" (Woolf 1979, 75). However, it is not easy to write about motherhood because the fertile aspect of womanhood is used to encourage women to have children and to reduce them to mere baby-making machines within a society that will despise them for avoiding procreation (Cixous 2008, 7). Moreover, the patriarchal world represents mothers as either absent or overly idealized (Kristeva 2011, 47), and in the common view mothers are always passive, second-rate, and helpless (Söderbäck 2019, 63). Therefore, it is challenging to represent the mother because there are not enough representations of her real being in literature. To differentiate the mother's real being from its patriarchal image, looking at the differences between the concepts of 'mothering' and 'motherhood' is helpful. In order to introduce a new image of the mother, critics have exchanged the male-defined 'motherhood', a patriarchal and controlled institution, for the word 'mothering', which is a more female-defined concept concerning women's experiences (O'Reilly 2019, 20). Therefore, mothering is no longer linked to biology and can be done "by anyone who commits themselves to the demands of maternal practice" (O'Reilly 2019, 22). For that reason, we can also have mothers in "single, blended, step, matrifocal, and same-sex" (O'Reilly 2019, 31) families.

Another challenge of writing about mothering lies in the assumed love and/or hate relationship between mothers and daughters with roots in Freud's idea of mother hatred. Working with his patient Dora, Freud concluded that she hated her mother because she was simply after her father's love. In contrast, Cixous makes a hero out of Dora, believing that Dora broke the social structure and language, which basically functioned as the major causes of her mother's defeat (Goodman 2019, 12). Thus, in Cixous' interpretation, Dora was actually on her mother's side, which means regardless of the state of this relationship, at least some daughters are one way or another on the side of their mothers.

According to Cixous, the mother's role is important both symbolically and in real life. The symbolic impact of the mother belongs to her life-giving nature, while her present reality stems from the fact that she is constantly engaged in life's daily routines, turning her into a sheer "commonplace". By this means, the Cixousian mother cannot be idealized because her presence can be felt in every aspect of life compared to the father, who is Godlike and always floats in the imaginary (Fisher 2003, 68). Furthermore, in attempting to approach a fair image, the mother is represented on three different levels by Cixous: first in the mother-daughter dyad, second by looking at the way she changes our lives compared to the role of the father, and third by talking about the quality of the mother and her universal voice that can be found in every human.

Looking at Cixous' representation of the mother in the context of recent studies on mothering, it seems that her image of the mother is that of an empowered one. On the one hand, Smith Silva reminds us that Cixous does not overlook the subjective nature of the mother-daughter relationship (2019, 304). On the other hand, focusing on the mother's influence on her daughter's life instead of the father, Cixous manages to replace the mother-son relationship with the mother-daughter dyad and disturb the patriarchal attempts to trivialize this (Rich

1976, 226). Finally, by introducing the quality of the mother as a characteristic everyone can achieve, she pays special attention to "othermothers", whom Smith Silva defines as everyone who accepts the caretaking responsibility (2019, 298). This fact can be regarded as one of the essential aspects of recent studies concerning the notion of mothering.

In addition, Cixous defines the symbolic role of the mother by breaking the binary opposition of man/woman in the family institution that unavoidably priories the father and gives him more power than the mother. She postulates that the mother is always alive in us and fights against death, while the father is afraid and fails to do so (1991a, 19–20). In Cixous' view, the mother is the life drive, the one who encourages the daughter to pursue freedom (Andermatt Conley 1991, 69), while the father is the actual death drive, always in suspense and absent (Cixous 1990, 129). It is worth noting that the mother's relationship with the Other is metaphorically evident since the maternal body keeps 'the other' inside. That being said, the mother does the difficult job of "letting people to be born", as Derrida puts it, and Cixous defines it as going beyond the anatomic maternal body since you "let yourself to be taken by the other" (1991b, 84) by accepting otherness inside you.

Furthermore, the importance of the mother comes from her ability to define people through the mark she leaves on them. The mother is both a metaphor and not a metaphor simultaneously; those with a mother inside face 'the other' with watchfulness; therefore, "the mother is a quality" (Cixous 1998, 45). This quality first comes from the maternal body and then is transferred to the child. Hence, any living human has a little of their mother inside of them and can successfully achieve the mother's quality. Nevertheless, it is important to notice that Cixous' close attention to this quality and her constant reference to woman's ability to get pregnant is not simply biological. In fact, her major arguments about the feminine body are thoroughly morphological:

> It is not anatomical sex or essence that determines us in anything; it is, on the contrary, the fable from which we never escape, individual and collective history, the cultural schema, and the way the individual negotiates with these structures, adapts to them and reproduces them, or else gets around them, overcomes them, goes beyond them, gets through them. (Cixous 1991a, 155)

In contrast, Freud is an essentialist, believing that everything depends on anatomy:

> The excremental is all too intimately and inseparably bound up with the sexual; the position of the genitals – *inter urinas et faeces* – remains the decisive and unchangeable factor. One might say here, varying a well-known saying of the great Napoleon: 'Anatomy is destiny'. (Freud 1912)

Following these lines, Bray concludes that "the body understood as morphology is not reducible to either nature or culture but is, rather, the scene of a dynamic writing which exceeds the limits of either category" (2003, 39). As a result, one may say that Cixous is not an essentialist as Freud is since, in Stigmata, she argues that everyone can reach the mother inside of them both as a metaphor and a quality (1998, 45).

Here I argue that this unique definition of 'the quality of the mother' is evident in the selected memoirs in terms of how they describe mothers and depict themselves as entities possessing this quality. The fact that both Shafak and Winterson accept difference takes them to the state of 'positive receptivity' in which a woman keeps 'the other' inside. Through this process, women experience the inside, filled with an 'other' that changes them in a non-negative way. More interestingly, they even take pleasure in having the 'other' inside (Cixous 1991a, 155), which is likely to happen in texts as well. That is, in telling the story of the mother along with the self, the maternal voice (the symbolic) and her milk (the real) are heard (Andermatt Conley 1991, 56), and in writing, once one starts remembering, the cycle of forgetting would be broken (Borofka 2010, 10). In other words, Shafak and Winterson successfully create a textual space in the form of a memoir in which the mother's presence is remarkably redefined.

The alternative image of the mother depicted in Elif Shafak's and Jeanette Winterson's memoirs *Black Milk* and *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* Can be proved on two levels. Firstly, on a personal level, when Shafak and Winterson represent a different relationship with their mothers: they tend to picture the mother as similar to any other human with a complex web of varied characteristics. Moreover, they move from personal to the public sphere by representing the Cixousian 'quality of the mother' and associating the acceptance of otherness with the motherly state of being, enabling everybody to act motherly through positive receptivity. As a result, a sisterhood among women is born and depicted through some vivid images in the memoirs.

3 The Real Mother

In a curious quest to find the mother, Shafak and Winterson encounter a variety of contradictions between what they believe and what the patriarchal world wants them to believe. However, it seems they both end up on good terms with the concept of the mother despite the differences they discover. This discovery helps both see the real mother as she is present in her daughter's everyday life, and that mothering is utterly different from person to person.

Cixous writes about her mother "without being consumed"; that is, she recreates her mother and then allows her voice to talk through her (Cixous 2008, 128–29). Through my interpretation of this concept, this not being consumed could imply that the predefined idea of the passive and devoted or overly idealized mother does not have a place in Cixous' text, as her recreation of the mother is tangible enough due to being commonplace in the life of her daughter. On the other side, the same tangible yet diverse presence is noticeable in the way that Shafak and Winterson write about their mothers. In fact, the type of mother they intend to introduce is neither traditional nor modern, neither moral nor immoral, neither an angel nor a monster. Instead, the mother in their memoirs resembles everyone else, with typical human flaws as well as strengths. As I mentioned earlier, motherly feelings generally vary tentatively person to person. That is precisely why I argue that Shafak's and Winterson's depiction of the mother, fairly similar to that of Cixous, can resist the assumptions forced by the outside world. In line with the previous points, analysing the memoirs in question can hopefully demonstrate my point more clearly.

Black Milk is Shafak's memoir about pregnancy and mothering. The book starts with a scene where Shafak is traveling on a boat and sees a mother of two boys who is pregnant again and starts bragging about how she prefers single life over the life this particular woman is experiencing. Later on, in an interview with a famous Turkish writer, Adelet Agaoglu, who does not have children and has dedicated her life to writing, Shafak is asked to choose between having children or becoming a professional writer. That is when she excuses herself to the bathroom and introduces her fantastic multiple selves called "finger women"[1]. Little Miss Practical, Dame Dervish, Miss Highbrowed Cynic, Milady Ambitious Chekhovian, Mama Rice Pudding, Blue Belle Bovary, and also a man called Lord Poton (the postpartum Djinn). Other than that, to deal with her serious dilemma about marriage and children, Elif starts reading about other famous literary women's ideas on the matter. In each part of Elif's journey, one or two of her finger women take control of her life and try to push her toward certain choices, but eventually, after falling in love, getting married, having a child, and dealing with her postpartum depression, Elif decides to embrace all her selves as different parts of her existence.

Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal? Is Winterson's autobiographical book about finding her biological mother. While writing about the hows and whys of the decision to start this difficult journey, Winterson recalls her life with her adoptive parents, and mostly her mother, Mrs. Winterson. The book does not have a chronological timeline, and while Shafak uses fantasy, Winterson's time-plays are her way of talking about her mothers and how she identifies with them. Apart from her life story, Winterson also talks about different writers and poets who played an essential role in the way she gained self-identification. Eventually, Jeanette visits and gets to know her biological mother (Ann). Winterson, a British writer and childless lesbian, dedicated her book to her "three mothers: Constance Winterson, Ruth Rendell, Ann S": one is a friend who helped her in this process of becoming (Ruth Rendell), another is her adoptive mother who abandoned her at the age of sixteen upon learning of Jeanette's homosexuality (Constance Winterson), and the third is her biological mother, who abandoned her after giving birth because she did not know what else she could do (Ann S).

Shafak's view of motherly feelings could be pursued in her description of her motherly side, Mama Rice Pudding. Unlike the other more Westernized finger women living inside Elif, Mama Rice Pudding seems to be her traditional self (Boşoiu 2014, 116), but surprisingly nothing appears exotic or strange about her. She is instead described as a kind of femininity everybody can achieve by being simple, caring, and at ease with themselves:

> She is wearing an aquamarine dress that reaches her knees, red shoes without heels, a belt of the same color, beige nylon stockings. Her wavy hair is held back in a ponytail by a modest hair band. The chubbiness of her cheeks is due to her extra pounds, but she seems to be at peace with her body. (Shafak 2011, 72)

Additionally, Shafak confirms that Mama Rice Pudding is motherly and loving, and has been repressed all these years (2011, 73) by Elif and her other finger women. However, Mama

[1] Finger women are fantastic characters Shafak has created to impersonate different aspects of her personality as a woman. These characters are tiny women who live inside her and control her actions and reactions to the outside world.

Rice Pudding's motherly feelings are more prominent when she is the only finger woman who strives to save Shafak from ignoring her body and femininity (2011, 91). Despite that, at the beginning of pregnancy, her dark side emerges as she turns into a tyrant and bans reading books by literary figures who are against pregnancy, and even bans talking to other finger women (2011, 115), although she does her best to help Elif experience a smooth pregnancy. Mama Rice Pudding could thus be viewed as a helpful yet tyrannical mother, and her real presence is depicted without either victimization or turning her into a heroine. In other words, Shafak has accepted and portrayed the complexity and plurality within the mother figure by writing only about her own motherly side, devoid of any generalizations about mothers.

Similarly, Winterson renders both of her mothers realistically yet really different from each other because her adoptive mother Mrs. Winterson had a strong presence in Jeanette's life, with her strange ways of living, whereas her birth mother was absent for a long while (van der Wiel 2014, 176). It is important to note that Winterson does not favour one over another as she avoids introducing one as a better mother and depicts them as neither passive nor simple angels. She describes her birth mother as straightforward and kind, while Mrs. Winterson is portrayed as a labyrinth (2011, 412). Her birth mother is a woman who likes men and has been married four times but never depended on them, as she did everything by herself, even putting up the shelves (2011, 417). On the other hand, Mrs. Winterson is the one in charge of language (2011, 61): a confident, dramatic reader (2011, 63) who teaches Jeanette how to read (2011, 60). Mrs. Winterson is thus the mother on the side of the mind, while Jeanette's birth mother is on the side of the body. In other words, the author has a little bit of both in her by writing about sexuality and the ways of the body. As such, we can see that Jeanette's mothers are not passive because Winterson has pictured them as decisive and responsible women with entirely different personalities. Jeanette's mothers are both good and bad, since they tried to do what was best for their daughter but eventually abandoned her. Therefore, unlike the patriarchy's definition of mothers, Jeanette's are neither passive nor angels.

Shafak and Winterson thus do not let a rigid image of the mother created by the masculine world affect their own view regarding who a mother is or what she should be. The mother in both memoirs is both good and evil, understanding and annoying, a saviour yet someone who might abandon you. More importantly, not all mothers are the same, just like any other human being. Notwithstanding the above argument, Shafak and Winterson go beyond representing a personal idea of mothering by writing about the symbolic mother, as I shall argue below.

4 The Symbolic Mother

The mother and the qualities associated with her role and presence have a similarly substantial influence on the symbolic level, since they are essential for self-recognition and therefore play a critical role in memoir writing. For instance, Shafak and Winterson create an alternative symbol of the mother, depicting their mother's strong and active presence. They even manage to illustrate a mother-daughter dyad that depicts 'the quality of the mother' as a feminine characteristic, rejecting Freud's doctrines in this area.

The mother's presence can be studied by looking at the man/woman binary opposition and defining the mother's role in the institution of the family compared to that of the father. Cixous describes the father as an absent mystery compared to the mother's life drive, constantly resisting death. The mother's life force derives from her commonplace existence in her daughter's life, her association with the body and giving birth, and also the fact that she accepts 'the other' inside herself both in the English language – m(other) (Bray 2003, 74) – as well as in reality (pregnancy) (Cixous 1991b, 84). On the other hand, the father's archetypal association with logic turns him into an unknown mystery, always absent from his daughter's life. Shafak's and Winterson's portrayal of their mothers and fathers neatly resembles Cixous' definition of them and, at the same time, could potentially reverse the existing binary opposition that has always prioritized the father.

Shafak's mother takes care of her daughter after getting divorced, and the reader cannot see a trace of her father in the text: she talks about herself as "the only child of a single mother", and even when she stays with her paternal grandmother so that she can spend more time with her father ends up seeing his mother more than him (Shafak 2011, 16, 134). As a result, her grandmother has a more substantial presence than her father. Moreover, since her father is never present, Elif decides she does not want to carry his name any longer (2011, 67) and, instead, defines herself by her father's absence (Benenhaley 2014, 10). She thus changes her last name to her mother's first name, Shafak, which means 'dawn' (2011, 71), 'the emergence of light', and a 'life drive'. Consequently, the father, who is always absent, loses his position, and her mother's name replaces him. That is how the mother gives life, even through the meaning of her name. Interestingly, Elif's first story was published under the name of Elif Shafak – Elif and her mother, as the mother takes a positive place in her daughter's writing career.

Moving on from Elif's father to the father of her child, one could still feel the noticeable absence of the father. Elif is almost always alone after pregnancy and childbirth. For one reason or another, her husband (the father-to-be) is not there. For instance, during her postpartum depression, Eyup (the father) is doing his military service for six months, although he calls when he can (Shafak 2011, 129–30). However, even when he is back and is asked to take care of the baby, while Elif writes, he panics and suggests looking for a nanny (2011, 159). Overall, the father is absent in Elif's and her child's lives, but the reason for this differs.

Similarly, present mothers and absent fathers are also shown in Winterson's memoir. Her biological mother breastfed her but did not try to keep her because of poverty (Winterson 2011, 436). Elaborating on her mother's reason for putting her child up for adoption, Winterson writes, "Better for Janet to have a mother and a father" (2011, 388). Ann gives Jeannette up because she does not want her to grow up without a father. Moreover, she believes that by letting go of her, Jeanette can have a better life, and thus fights back against the death of hope for her child. Little did she know that the father in her daughter's new family would also be passive and invisible.

Moreover, the portrait of the Winterson family also breaks the binary opposition of active father and passive mother since Mrs. Winterson liked to wrestle (with problems) while her husband only liked watching wrestling (Winterson 2011, 15). In addition, he was usually

either at work in the factory or in the church (2011, 109–10), so he was absent from the household. Nevertheless, what clearly shows Jeanette's idea of her father's passivity (absence) is when she describes his role in her exorcism and the fact that he did not do anything to help her (164), although he was against it, and later on he did nothing (2011, 104) to keep her from leaving home. Winterson thus shows the symbolic absence of the father, stating that he never tried to save her. On the other hand, despite Jeanette's problems with Mrs. Winterson, she writes about the effective presence of her adoptive mother, which might remind one of the ways Shafak portrays her mother.

The mother-daughter relationship solidified in *Black Milk* and *Why Be Happy?* Is mainly similar to Cixous' idea rather than that of Freud. Treating Dora, Freud suggested that daughters hate their mothers, while Cixous had a positive interpretation of Dora's feelings toward her mother (Goodman 2019, 12), since the mother is the voice that is always alive in a woman's writing, and it seems that sentences, expressions, and anecdotes are "her sphere" (Sellers 2006, 117). Besides, the mother is always within the daughter (Cixous 1976, 881), affecting the formation of her daughter's identity. In other words, Shafak and Winterson seem to have written "matrifocal" narratives, which O'Reilly and Caporale Bizzini define as "one in which a mother plays a role of cultural and social significance and in which motherhood is thematically elaborated, valued, and structurally central to the plot" (O'Reilly and Caporale Bizzini 2009, 11). If so, the mother's strong presence in her daughter's life can be observed in both memoirs.

Although Jeanette criticizes Mrs. Winterson and challenges her by "setting her (Jeanette) story against hers (Mrs. Winterson)" (Winterson 2011, 20), in the end, she even feels lucky for having her (2011, 439). In the same manner, similar to Shafak, Winterson carries her mother's last name since she always calls her father merely 'Father' while her mother is always 'Mrs. Winterson', with such a sense of strong presence: "She filled the phone box. She was out of scale, larger than life. She was like a fairy story where size is approximate and unstable" (2011, 17). Winterson even alludes to Mrs. Winterson's influence on her career by hinting at her mother's, which forced Jeanette to memorize the Bible. Later on, Jeanette was not even allowed to read and keep her favourite books, and so she had to memorize them (Trussler 2013, 27).

All the same, Winterson does not express any hatred toward Mrs. Winterson because she believes this dark gift has been helpful, as it seems to be all Mrs. Winterson could do for her (2011, 412). That is how Winterson values the positive presence of her adoptive mother despite their disagreements. On the other hand, Winterson mentions that she had been writing stories so that her birth mother could one day find her (2011, 311).She thus appears to have depicted both her mothers as the people who shaped her existence. In fact, she has decided to continue living her life by looking back at these two women while simultaneously stepping forward and going beyond them.

The symbolic, present, and "life-affirming mother" (Bray 2003, 54), who encourages her daughter to choose freedom and has a give-and-take relationship with writing and language, can also be seen in both memoirs. Winterson linked the bitter days when she could not talk (when she lost her language) to when her birth mother abandoned her before she could even have a language (2011, 316). Therefore, she is concerned about maternal loss (van der Wiel 2014, 4) as well as the loss of language. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, she learned reading

from Mrs. Winterson, who was in charge of language at home. On the other hand, Shafak's mother encourages her to write by giving her a turquoise notebook to use as a journal, but Elif, who is bored with her life, starts writing stories instead of recording her daily life (Shafak 2011, 144). Thus, both memoirs link the mother to words, writing, and reading. In addition, both writers refer to how their mothers are involved in or impact their writing process or language. In other words, the mothers give their daughters a language to write with, and the daughters remember their mothers in the texts they write, so the mother is always remembered in a give-and-take relationship instead of a love-hate one: I am the mother, and I give you what you need to write; I am the daughter, and I remember you in my texts. To the 'matrifocal' narrative, the role of the mother is as significant as the words and language used.

Moving on from personal memories of their mothers to a more general image of the concept, to celebrate mothering and different ideas about it, Shafak and Winterson tell stories of mothers who are not similar to each other, and they even include those women who cannot be mothers or have decided not to be. Including different kinds of women, a break in the forgetting cycle is created that reminds us of the variety in the feminine world, that 'woman' and, as a result, 'mother' is plural. Furthermore, insisting on the notion of mother is not to turn the woman into an 'other'. Instead, it functions as a tactical move that deconstructs the phallocentric thought (Bray 2003, 29), considering the mother as the central piece of the plot. More importantly, this can encourage women to play the role of the mother for themselves and others (Sellers 1992, 141). The movement from a personal account of the mother to a more general discussion showing different aspects of her to the world can happen in the attempt to depict 'the quality of the mother'.

The mother's relationship with 'the other' can be defined by the Cixousian term of 'positive receptivity.' The m(other) is the only person who allows an 'other' to grow in her, and then she sets that other free (giving birth) without attempting to change it/him/her to herself. The way the mother accepts an 'other' is called 'positive receptivity' (Cixous 1991a, 155), and Cixous calls this 'the quality of the mother', It is also worth mentioning that both Shafak and Winterson write about the existence or absence of this quality in their memoirs. Although Winterson constantly writes about Mrs. Winterson, she seems to be aware of the fact that her adoptive mother's flaw is the lack of this motherly quality, since she describes her fixed routines and ideas to imply that she mother does not accept things that are defined in any other way than what she regards as typical norms. Here I argue that the most eye-catching moment depicting the lack of Cixousian motherly quality occurs in the scene that features the title of the memoir. In this particular scene Jeanette wants to leave because she is happily in love with Janey, while Mrs. Winterson asks, "Why be happy when you can be normal?" (Winterson 2011, 226). For Mrs. Winterson, normal means living under the authority of the Bible's instructions and the evangelical church (patriarchal institutions), according to which homosexuality is unacceptable and considered a sin. Mrs. Winterson is always concerned about being normal and bans any 'otherness' even in books, since she believes fiction causes trouble (2011, 81): "The trouble with a book is that you never know what's in it until it's too late" (2011, 73), while Winterson uses books to write about Mrs. Winterson and her unusual ways of life. Books can thus possess 'the quality of the mother' by having the other inside, accepting the one who is against them.

However, and as noted earlier, the 'quality of the mother' is not a feature exclusively for mothers, and so the lack of this quality in Mrs. Winterson is not due to the fact that she did not have a child of her own and has adopted one. Even Jeanette, who has never had a child of her own, possesses this quality in the way she treats her biological mother and adoptive parents. In Winterson's memoir, one can notice two different incidents in which Jeanette takes the role of a caregiver and treats her father like an accepting mother would. In the first incident, her father decides to get married after Mrs. Winterson's death but still fears his dead wife and worries that she will never forgive him. Jeanette then helps and calms him down by saying that Mrs. Winterson would be happy to see him happy, although she is sure this is untrue (Winterson 2011, 102). Even after her father's death, there is a problem with the cheque she had written for the undertakers, so they refuse to bury her father. Then Winterson introduces herself as the writer of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, an auto-fictional book about her family and her problems with them with regard to her homosexuality. This book is quite famous in England because the BBC had made a TV series based on it, and the people who were in charge of the funeral had seen and were impressed by it, so they agreed to bury her father (2011, 379) since they were sure a famous writer would eventually pay them. Interestingly, Jeanette's auto-fictional book about her life with the Wintersons helps her father's funeral to run smoothly. On the other hand, as I mentioned before, her father could have helped her grow up effortlessly, but his absence and passive nature prevented him from doing so, whereas 'the quality of the mother' in Jeannette urges her to help her father.

In addition to the above, Jeanette also shows her motherly quality in her relationship with Mrs. Winterson. She disapproves of Mrs. Winterson's lifestyle, yet she defends her presence as her mother when she admits, "She was a monster, but she was my monster" (2011, 441). The same is true about her biological mother, as Jeanette declares, "I certainly don't blame her. I think she did the only thing she could do" (2011, 412). Overall, even though both women abandoned her at a certain point in her life, Winterson acts motherly toward them by trying to understand their reasons and accepting them as they are. Eventually, she is happy with the person she turns out to be (2011, 439) and comes to terms with her own 'otherness'. Although Jeannette criticizes both of her mothers at some point, her own 'quality of the mother' is reflected by giving them a certain position in her created world and by just calling them mothers instead of good/bad mothers, as the masculine world tends to. Winterson thus remembers her mothers and records their lives in her auto-fictional texts.

In contrast, one could discern Shafak's lack of motherly quality in her attitude toward the pregnant woman on the boat, but later she learns this quality of accepting 'the other' by reading and narrating life stories and the ideas that various literary women have about having children. In fact, these ideas were so diverse that Shafak could not find a fixed rule. All the biographies aside, Shafak practiced and learned about mothering by accepting her independent, modern mother and her superstitious, conservative maternal grandmother's different ways of life. While doing so, she did her best to avoid prioritizing one over another, believing that each had her advantages and disadvantages (Shafak 2011, 83). That is how she stands against the patriarchal notion of motherhood, which disregards stay-at-home mothers as being passive and inexperienced in the ways of the world, although it simultaneously values them. The male

world applies the same kind of double standards to a modern mother who is applauded for her independence, but blamed for not spending enough time with her children.

Writing *Black Milk,* Shafak is looking for "inner democracy" (Shafak 2011, 14), which can be taken as another term for 'the quality of the mother'. Shafak explained her inner democracy as recognizing all her finger women and treating them equally (Shafak 2011, 161), disregarding their differences, and admitting the fact that she is all of them and needs all of them, too. In my present argument, this definition is similar to having 'the quality of the mother' through which one accepts others and will not try to change them into a restricted self. Therefore, I cannot entirely agree with Boşoiu, who believes Elif's finger women coexist peacefully from the beginning (2014, 114), because in her attempt to gain inner democracy or 'the quality of the mother', Elif went through different stages, named after different political terms, that rule over spaces outside the text. Initially, she had an inner monarchy in which she did not give voice to her motherly (Mama Rice Pudding) and feminine (Blue Belle Bovary) sides because she was trying to be cynical and creative. Then, a coup d'état took place led by Miss Ambitious Chekhovian and Highbrowed Cynic to keep Elif focused on writing, and after that, there was a strict military regime to stop Shafak from even considering marriage and pregnancy. Later on, after pregnancy, the monarchy of the queen Mama Rice Pudding resulted in the imprisonment of all finger women by Lord Poton (the postpartum Djinn). Finally, she accepts all the voices inside her and realizes that she "loves them equally without discrimination" (Boşoiu 2014, 113), which enables her to achieve inner democracy or 'the quality of the mother'.

This inner democracy is the first step in creating a sisterhood among women, which Shafak pictures in at least two different ways in her memoir. Firstly, by illustrating a feminine unitary decision to support pregnant women:

> No matter how many times I say "no, thank you," they insist until I give in. So I walk around munching on other people's sandwiches and cakes. It doesn't matter that I've never met these women or that I'll never see them again. Where there is pregnancy there is no formality. Where there is no formality there is no privacy. (Shafak 2011, 124)

Even if Shafak presents a negative notion in the last sentence, this unique decision to support the mother and mothering can still be celebrated.

Another scene that perfectly exemplifies the sisterhood I mentioned earlier is the second time Shafak meets Adelet Agaoglu. Even though Agaoglu had decided not to have children when she was young, she still is the person who tells Shafak that having children was perhaps a good decision. Describing the situation, Shafak writes, "I gently squeezed her hand, and offered humbly in return, 'And I respect your decision not to become a mother so as to fully dedicate yourself to your writing'" (Shafak 2011, 159). Despite having different life stories and choosing different lifestyles, they hold each other's hands and share a moment of unity. And despite a multitude of existing ideas and mindsets, the fact that they accept different ways they have chosen to live could be regarded as a sign of positive receptivity. This plurality of feminine characters has the potential to stand against Clanchy's idea that Shafak has overlooked the real barriers a new mother will face in the outside world (2013, par. 9).

These barriers include "loss of status, economic inequality, and so on", but Shafak writes about the "inner fears" and precarious motherhood created by the same inequalities Clanchy names in her review. In the end, the democracy Shafak has gained "in herself" by accepting the inner diversity she has learned from her depression (Shafak 2014) might be said to be the first stage of defeating the "bigger and more important political problems of motherhood and selfhood" that Clanchy points towards. One could argue that the politics of Shafak's memoir is in the illustration of 'the quality of the mother' that can be achieved in different ways, yet women can still hold hands and form a sisterhood.

By the same token, Winterson's decision to write about herself as a lesbian with no children, Mrs. Winterson, a religious woman who has adopted a child instead of having one herself, and Ann, who has been married four times and has several children but gave her first child up for adoption, shows Winterson's ability to gather different kinds of women, mothers and caregivers and create a bond among them.

Therefore, in my interpretation of Cixous' theory, 'the quality of the mother' is not just for those women who can and want to have children, but it is simply about the concept of sisterhood among women and the way they break the circle of very rigid definitions in order to create alternative ways of defining the mother-woman in their stories. The way Winterson writes about Mrs. Winterson and her biological mother, in line with the way Shafak writes about her mother, maternal grandmother, the pregnant woman on the boat, and all other literary women, could be regarded as certain representations of this quality. By writing about different kinds of caregivers, a recreation of identity has happened through writing about various feminine selves, which other feminine selves can read. In doing so, one plays the role of the present mother, not only to herself but to other women. As demonstrated in this article, the writers not only remember and write about mothers but also act like mothers in caring for themselves and their created worlds, while protecting language, literature, literary figures, and their readers.

5 Conclusion

Black Milk is Shafak's quest to find the personal meaning of womanhood while representing a plural picture of mothering. In this book, two different views that try to define motherhood as a dormant state in a woman's life are criticized: the traditional and sanctified view of motherhood, which calls it "Holy and Honorable" (Shafak 2011,115) and the belief that women should leave all other aspects of their lives to fulfil this sacred duty, and also the modern view of women's magazines in which all women are considered "superwomen", able to handle a career, children, and husband at the same time (Shafak 2011, 154). Besides, Shafak shows that as a woman she can change her mind about apparently fundamental concepts such as marriage and motherhood and, instead, introduces change and alteration in discussing notions that have always been defined non-flexibly.

Why be Happy When You Can Be Normal? also functions as Winterson's curious quest to find her biological mother (Ann), since she believes finding her lost mother will most fill in the empty part of her character as an adopted child. To put it differently, Winterson wants to make amends with her inner unhappy child. Interestingly, Winterson questions all the fixed

predefinitions of motherhood by writing about the differences between her adoptive and biological mothers. Even though Jeannette seems to have confused feelings toward these two women, she also dares to write about their cruelty of abandoning her and their innocence of not knowing what else to do.

In conclusion, I argue that being the mother's voice and telling her story could be a way of resisting the condescending look of patriarchy on mothers. To elaborate more, the concept of mother and motherly feelings in *Black Milk* and *Why Be Happy?* seems to be able to resist the simplistic notion of the patriarchal society that omits 'other mothers' and regards women with childbearing ability as the only ones who can become caregivers. On top of that, women suffer from double standards of judgment as mothers depending on the kind of mother they are. In contrast, the mother can be seen as a quality everyone can achieve and is much needed in every aspect of everyday life, since it encourages the acceptance of difference and otherness. And I believe the latter is what Shafak and Winterson have done in their auto-fictional books.

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The Demographic Factors Affecting the Writing Skills of Slovenian Year 6 EFL Students

ABSTRACT

EFL writing is a complex and difficult productive skill for young learners. National assessment of EFL at the end of Year 6 in Slovenia shows that additional research into the various variables affecting EFL writing is needed. The aim of this study is to predict the relationship between gender, place of living, home possessions, years of schooling and parents' education, and EFL writing performance for Year 6 students. A representative sample of 790 pupils completed a demographic e-questionnaire and two writing e-tasks. According to ANOVA, statistically significant factors are home possessions, number of Slovenian and English books, years of learning English and mother's education. Statistically insignificant factors are gender, place of living and father's education. Demographic factors predict EFL writing performance by 9.9%.

Keywords: EFL writing, young learners, prediction, demographic factors, quantitative research

Demografski dejavniki, ki vplivajo na pisno zmožnost slovenskih šestošolcev v angleščini kot tujem jeziku

IZVLEČEK

Pisanje v angleščini kot tujem jeziku je kompleksna in zahtevna produktivna zmožnost za mlajše učence. Analiza več nacionalnih preizkusov znanja iz angleščine ob koncu šestega razreda kaže, da so potrebne dodatne raziskave vplivnih dejavnikov na pisno zmožnost, tudi demografskih. Cilj raziskave je napovedati povezanost spola, kraja bivanja, imetja, let učenja angleščine in izobrazbe staršev na uspešnost pisanja v angleščini. Vzorec je reprezentativen in obsega 790 šestošolcev. Učenci so izpolnili demografski e-vprašalnik in dve pisni e-nalogi. Glede na ANOVA so statistično pomembni dejavniki imetje, število slovenskih in angleških knjig doma, leta učenja angleščine in izobrazba mame, statistično nepomembni pa so spol, kraj bivanja in izobrazba očeta. Skupno demografski dejavniki pojasnijo 9,9 % variance.

Ključne besede: pisna zmožnost v angleščini kot tujem jeziku, mlajši učenci, napoved, demografski dejavniki, kvantitativna raziskava

1 Introduction

Writing in a first language has been researched deeply over the last 40 years and presented in various models as a complex skill (Weigle 2011, 23). Writing in a second language was first presented in the monitor model (Krashen 1982). For young learners, aged five to 12, writing in a first and additional language is a complex skill regarded as particularly difficult, especially in contrast with adults, due to their age-related characteristics such as growth, literacy and vulnerability (McKay 2011).

Early recognition of poor writing skills may be crucial information in predicting students' future career opportunities (Pretorius and Naudé 2002). The 2018 results of Year 6 students at national assessment show wide variation in Slovenia. As stated in several previous reports, EFL writing should be understood as a process that needs a lot of practice and, accordingly, should be developed more systematically and earlier, while appropriate feedback should also be given (RIC 2018, 189). Some students do not even attempt to write or they write in another language (RIC 2019, 189). In general, EFL writing goals stated in the national plan are not achieved, which was also reported in 2017, with poor results observed in the case of all three criteria – content, grammar, and vocabulary and spelling (RIC 2022, 6–7).

Demographic factors, among others, are known to influence academic performance (Tinto 1975). Some, such as the relationship between age, gender, and academic achievement are under-researched (Slaughter 2007, 52). Based on these findings, we conducted quantitative research to find out the relationship between the selected demographic factors such as gender, socio-economic status, region, years of schooling and parents' education, and EFL writing performance. The factors are discussed in depth in the next section.

2 Theoretical Background

It is encouraging that scores on the EFL national assessment at the end of Year 6 and participation have been rising in recent years in Slovenia (RIC 2021). However, new research is required to determine why this is so. In contrast, there are still about a half of the students who do not master EFL writing skills, or do so only partially. Early detection of poor EFL writing skills may be a crucial warning that points to the students' future career possibilities. Therefore, EFL writing skill must be developed more effectively, as noted in the 2009 report. New research could also explain why the ranking of regions has been the same for several years now.

Gender, as one of the key demographic factors, is one of the essential components in evolving the agency and identity of writers, but remains under-researched in both second language writing and second language acquisition as a larger field (Kubota 2003). Competence development of EFL writing skills from the point of view of gender has been studied, but mostly with students in upper secondary education (Keller et al. 2020). Female-male differences with primary school learners are usually studied from the perspective of CLIL and writing genres (Graham et al. 2021). Steinlen (2018) examined the development of English writing skills of primary school pupils in Years 3 and 4 attending a bilingual German-English school as opposed to mainstream programmes, and the results also acknowledged the gender dimension.

Minimal differences in EFL writing proficiency, according to gender, are reported in the national assessment of EFL in Slovenia, which is composed of listening, reading and writing tests at the end of Year 6 (RIC 2019, 177–78; RIC 2021, 185). This finding is seen as extremely positive and taken as evidence that the topics selected are general enough and relevant to both male and female students. It is further assumed that neither male nor female students are discriminated against by EFL teachers.

As reading is a skill strongly related to writing (Krashen 1993), it is informative for us to find out the effects of demographic factors such as gender in reading, too. The PISA 2018 results for Slovenia (OECD data, as reported by Šterman Ivančič, Štigl and Čuček 2019, 22) indicate that motivation for reading, as measured by the reading satisfaction index, is below average compared to other OECD countries, which is –0.4 for boys and 0.3 for girls, while in Slovenia it is –0.55 and 0.11, respectively, on a scale ranging from –1 to 1.5. According to Duarete, Raposo and Alves (2012), a satisfaction index, often referring to customers and a specific moment, can traditionally be measured by a combination of statistical procedures such as regression analysis, descriptive statistics, comparison of means tests, structural equation modelling, analysis of deviations, performance analysis, correlation statistics, importance performance, path analysis and factor analysis.

Socio-economic status (SES) is known to have an effect on students' academic performance. In many studies, learners coming from low-SES households develop academic skills more slowly as compared to learners coming from high-SES environments (Morgan et al. 2009). Serquina and Batang (2018) find that learners coming from families with a low SES may have the ability to accomplish a task, but then may get interrupted by some social factors. One of the conclusions is that focused attention is impossible for learners whose families struggle financially. Socio-economic and cultural status was also measured in *SurveyLang* (European Commission and ESLC 2012), the first broad international study of language competences. Students in the last year of lower secondary education or the second year of upper secondary education were invited to participate (European Commission and ESLC 2012, 243). The study considered students' home possessions and parents' educational status. However, in the study's final report no specific demographic factors are discussed, as they are seen to be largely beyond the control of policy makers.

With regard to parents' education, a large correlation was also found in relation to children's academic achievement in Idris, Hussain and Ahmad (2020). Tam (2009) compares the influence of mothers' and fathers' educational level on academic achievement with a sample of Hong Kong families children, with boys and girls treated as separate groups, based on the claim that the issue in question had not yet been studied systematically. The results show that mothers care about and promote academic achievement more intensively than fathers, which is said to be in accordance with Chinese culture. Boys benefitted more from maternal efficacy than girls, but were more hampered with regard to psychological governance. In contrast, the girls' academic performance was more enhanced by paternal academic efficacy than that of the boys.

Parents' education, as part of SES, is known to influence the academic achievement and cognitive development of a child. This is achieved through a series of family environment

variables such as parents' educational expectations, parenting ideas and behaviours, and the parent-child relationship (Bradley and Corwyn 2001; Yeung, Linver, and Brooks-Gunn 2002).

The importance of maternal education for children's academic achievements is widely recognized; however, the multiple potential mechanisms that explain this relationship are underexplored (Harding, Morris and Hughes 2015). The same authors explain that theories of human, cultural and social capital are integrated with two developmental psychology theories – bioecological theory and developmental niche theory. Magnuson (2007) discusses the role of maternal education from the point of view of its improvement in relation to young mothers with a low level of education, and older mothers with a high level of education, in terms of academic achievement and the quality of their home environments in middle childhood (age six to 12). Children of young mothers with low education who improve their education perform better in reading, but less improvement is observed in maths. No impact of education improvement was found with children of older mothers with previous high education.

In view of region as another demographic factor, statistical analyses derived from the results of Slovenian national assessment of EFL in 2020/21 (RIC 2021, 185–86) indicate that the ranking of five most successful regions have remained the same for some years, with central region – containing the capital – being the best. As pointed out several times by the national assessment committee, a mixed-methods approach is needed to explain what factors lead to lower versus higher results, and thus what causes differences in the results of EFL assessment in Year 6 according to the various regions. The research could also explain the differences in results according to the students' place of living.

According to *SurveyLang* (European Commission and ESLC 2012), school time in relation to (formal) early language learning was a major issue in the EU in 2012, by which time the various countries had gradually increased the overall years spent teaching languages, which was mainly achieved by starting FLL earlier. The topic of early language learning is reviewed by Nagode and Pižorn (2016) in relation to some widespread myths and misconceptions. The myth that "earlier means better" seems to be true, but with certain limitations. The question of the proper age to start learning a foreign/second language is a complex one. When deciding on the starting age, the final aim of a language programme plays a crucial role. Learning conditions, e.g., enough exposure to the language, and possibilities for students to use the language in various contexts, have to be taken into account as well.

EU citizens are strongly encouraged and even expected to learn more than one additional language, as stated on the official website of the European Union (cited on August 17, 2022) under the theme of the importance of multilingualism. Language competences are stated to be at the heart of building the European Education Area. In other words, they are indispensable for mobility, cooperation and mutual understanding across borders.

3 Method

This is a non-experimental quantitative study. Descriptive and causal-nonexperimental methods of pedagogic research have been used. The research has been conducted according to ethical rules.

3.1 Participants

Prior to the study, primary school pupils in general had been found to experience considerable difficulties in EFL writing (Jashari and Dagarin 2019). The Year 6 students were selected as the central primary school population and the upper year of the second triad of Slovenian primary education. We believed that the results of this study could help us better understand what demographic factors affect students' outcomes in writing in the Year 6 National Assessment of Knowledge (NAK) in EFL. In addition, the students participating in this study might have benefited from taking part in it because it would be great practice for them with regard to actually taking the NAK in EFL at the end of Year 6, as they were also asked to complete two standardized writing tasks. In selecting students, no limitations were applied in terms of gender, ethnicity, special needs or any other background relevant to the context of EFL. We refer to Year 6 students as younger learners, with the age cut-off of being (approximately) 12 (McKay 2011, 1).

A systematic random sample of 5% was planned from the statistical population of all Year 6 primary school pupils taking the regular curriculum in the school year 2017/18 (N = 18.932). In order to select only students with English as their first foreign language, and not German, we have removed the latter group.

The required 5% corresponded to 22.7 primary schools. We concluded that the research should be conducted at 24 schools, 12 of them from larger cities, i.e., capitals of regions, and 12 from smaller towns and villages (Abu-Bader 2021). The actual participation was as follows: 310 students from villages (40.5%), 350 students from smaller cities (45.7%) and 105 students from larger cities (13.7%). From the point of view of statistical regions valid in the time of the research, we planned an equable, systematic geographical distribution. The final number of participants amounted to 825 individuals.

3.2 Instruments, Materials and Apparatus

The demographic questionnaire is based on a broader contextual questionnaire used before in *SurveyLang* (European Commission in ESLC 2012), and the related description of the results for Slovenia (Rutar Leban 2013). The questionnaire is composed of 11 factors: school, region, student, gender, place of living, home possessions in terms of "what" and "how many", number of books in the official language of the country of research, number of books in English, years of previous learning EFL, and parental educational level. Theoretically, the range of variables could be extended to include, for example, items signifying wealth specific to the research country. However, this would necessitate additional research to identify these items and an even longer contextual questionnaire. In *SurveyLang* (European Commission and ESLC 2012), parental educational level was measured on an eight-level scale. Several students found it difficult to answer all the questions. For Year 6 students, the existing questionnaire might already be too long considering their concentration span as well as some cognitively demanding items, such as parental educational level. Moreover, it is difficult for schools to allocate (more) time for research. The questionnaire was converted into an electronic form. Some motivational symbols were added. To achieve a satisfactory level of anonymization, students had to enter their code first. As for reliability, it is not calculated for demographic data.

A pilot study was conducted with 29 Year 5 students from two classes at a primary school in May and June 2017. Students participated anonymously after receiving written permission from their parents or guardians. In general, students liked the electronic tasks more than the traditional paper version. Some technical problems were encountered, such as entering the task more than once. This led to a time-consuming extra effort verifying all entries and selecting the best version for statistical analysis. Additionally, 1ka – the system used to collect the data – did not save the results if the students interrupted the task. The availability of the school's computer science teacher and the EFL teacher proved to be most beneficial in getting the students to complete the task. Content-wise, the students expressed difficulties in comprehending some questions, and they were offered oral support. Prior to the main research, technical difficulties were addressed. Some instructions were corrected as well. The order (sampling) and timing of tasks was pre-determined.

We also used two writing tasks, which had been used before as standardized tasks for the national assessment of EFL at the end of Year 6. The paper version was converted into an e-version. Students typed the text into a special field on the screens as part of the selected 1ka programme. Both the written instructions and criteria were preserved unaltered. Accurate oral instructions were given. The programme allowed unlimited text length. A child-friendly visual background for the e-tasks was selected, and all the tasks were peer-reviewed.

During the course of our pilot study the students were asked to complete three writing tasks. The task *My Favourite School Friend* was eliminated from the main study as being less suitable compared to the *Monster* and *Winter* tasks. In the task *Monster*, students were asked to describe the appearance, place of living and preferred activities of the monster in the picture. In the task *Winter*, they had to write to a pen-friend from an African country to explain what the weather in winter looks like in Slovenia, what you wear when going out and what you can do. The task *Winter* is more authentic than Monster, as it is set in a real situation and environment.

Both tasks are picture-based. However, from the point of view of predicting writing performance based on task characteristics, it would be more informative if we included two different tasks, such as a *listen-and-write* or *read-and-write* tasks. New tasks could also be created, but this was not a priority of this research.

3.3 Procedure

Contacts with schools were established by emailing the missive to headteachers. After their consent, the schools received another email with all the details regarding data collection as well as all e-tasks. Parents and guardians received a letter with key information about the research and a written consent form. Participation was announced as anonymous and voluntary, meaning that students could exit the study at any phase, which is a research ethics stipulation *par excellence*.

Students were asked to write as much as they could. If they could not recall an English expression, they were allowed to use a word in their first language, although this strategy was employed only exceptionally in order to keep the flow of writing. We emphasized that students should write in English. During the pilot phase some students wrote in Slovenian.

Nevertheless, the pilot-study-instructions did not explicitly state that the text should be written in English. Students were encouraged to use their imagination in the *Monster* writing task. As for grammatical accuracy, if they were unsure and hesitating they were told that it was better to misspell the word than not to write it at all. Students were told to read the instructions carefully, to copy the codes accurately, to adhere to the timing and order of tasks (the A/B system was used and each student received the corresponding A or B paper list and was asked to tick off the task after finishing it), the way of asking questions, the need/possibility of writing paper tasks instead of e-tasks, the position of letters q, w, x and y on the keyboard, and the prohibitions with regard to using dictionaries and talking to schoolmates.

All data were collected in an electronic format. Data collection lasted from the beginning of February to the end of April 2018. Schools allowed two class periods for this study. ICT classrooms were used, although of varying quality. Data were collected by the researcher at all schools with EFL and ICT teachers assisting this process.

The researcher used about 10 minutes for an introduction as research procedures are a rather unusual situation for both students and teachers. An additional lesson, i.e., three instead of two, would be helpful in this context. Students could ask questions but were asked to do so at the beginning, if possible. EFL teachers handed students' written consent forms to the researcher beforehand.

The students were asked if anyone wanted to do the tasks in paper form, providing they could justify their preference. Some students with various special needs were assisted by their teachers. All students preferred e-tasks, probably because these minimize the required input and correspond with greater levels of personal relevance.

3.4 Data Analysis

To determine the relationship between demographic factors (each factor taken separately), frequencies, mode, skewness, kurtosis, minimum and maximum are calculated. To find out statistical significance, one-way ANOVA is used. Homoscedasticity of residuals is checked by the Breusch-Pagan test of heteroskedasticity. Graphically, the relationship between each demographic variable and EFL writing performance is presented by histograms. One has been selected to be presented in this paper whereas others are explained in the text. To test the heteroskedasticity of the number of books in the country's official language, and the number of English books together, a two-way ANOVA is used.

To detect missing data, we could use *Analyse* > *Missing Value Analysis* as a standard function in SPSS. However, as we wanted not only to detect missing data but also eliminate all units with at least one missing value, we used a filtering procedure NMISS (V0, V93, V3 TO W14) < 1. After filtering, 765 units remain. The final number is still higher than planned. In all further statistical analyses, only units without missing values are used. These are units with answers to all demographic questions and both writing tasks.

No attrition occurred, that is, no participant dropped out. There were also no cases of students' non-response.

3.5 Variables in the Study

School is a simple nominal independent variable with 21 values, according to 21 participating schools. Region is a simple nominal independent variable with 11 values, according to the fact that 11 regions participated. Student, as a code, is a simple nominal independent variable with 765 values, standing for all students whose data were included in the statistical analysis. Gender is a simple nominal independent variable with two values. Place of living is a simple nominal independent variable with three values, 1 representing village, 2 town and 3 city. Home possessions, in terms of "what", is a compound independent ordinal variable with values from 1 to 16. More than one response is possible. Each answer is assigned 1 point. Mean value is calculated. According to *SurveyLang* (European Commission and ESLC 2012), the first eight home possession items are equal across countries, whereas those from nine to 16 are country-specific. Home possessions in terms of "how many" is a compound ordinal independent variable with values from 1 to 4. Students had to select one answer for every home possession from the list. The answers are transformed into points (values) according to the following key: one point for the answer 0, two for 1, three for 2, and four for 3 or more. For all items together the mean value is calculated. Number of books in Slovenian, as well as number of English books, is a simple ordinal independent variable with six values corresponding 0–10, 11–25, 26–100, 101–200, 201–500, more than 500 books. Years of learning EFL is a simple ordinal independent variable with 10 values, 1 standing for zero years, 1 for two years, 3 for three years and so on, up to 10 for 10 years. Maternal and paternal education are two simple ordinal independent variables with the same seven values, according to the given seven levels of education, 0 for no schooling at all and 7 for the highest level of education. EFL writing performance as the dependent variable is a compound with values from 0 to 10. As for the criteria, content (0–4 points), grammar (0–3) and vocabulary/spelling (0–3) are taken into account. Each criterion is an independent ordinal variable. EFL writing performance is calculated as follows:

> ((rating 1 of writing task *Monster* + rating 2 of writing task *Monster*) / 2 + rating 1 of writing task *Winter*) / 2

Overall, 2,304 writing tasks were assessed (768 x 3). The number does not take into account the tasks that we excluded from statistical analysis due to missing data. Rating 1 was completed by the researcher for both writing tasks, *Monster* and *Winter*. Finding English teachers for the compulsory rating 2 turned out to be difficult. Seven highly qualified raters – members of the national EFL assessment team – helped with rating 2. The researcher also completed rating 2 of 118 *Monster* writing tasks, but only six months after rating 1. In cases of assessment discrepancy greater than two points, rating 3 was introduced. Rating 2 for the writing task *Winter* was not carried out. In rating 1 the 2017 NAK scale was applied whereas in rating 2 the 2018 NAK scale was used. A comparison of the scales showed very few discrepancies. Intra-rater reliability (0.907) was calculated as 0.846 (the researcher as rater 1 vs. other raters). The logic of the formula leads to the average number of points achieved for both writing tasks.

4 Results and Discussion

The research question in this study was to identify the relationships between gender, place of living, home possessions in terms of "what" and "how many", number of books in the

official language of the research country, number of books in English, and maternal and paternal educational level as demographic variables, and EFL writing performance with Year 6 students. The statistically significant variables are home possessions, in terms of both, "what" (the most influential variable) and "how many", the number of books in the language of the research country, the number of books in English and maternal educational level. Gender, place of living and paternal educational level are statistically insignificant.

Gender is statistically insignificant as a predictor of EFL writing performance ($p = 0.051$). Girls achieved a slightly lower result than 5 points (out of 10) and boys somewhat more than 4.5 points. However, the p value exceeds 0.005 by only 0.1%, so we are adding information on effect size, which is also frequently given in social science studies.

Effect size and consequently the proportion of variance explained in EFL writing performance by gender can be calculated using partial $\eta^2 = 0.005$. Accordingly, gender explains 0.5% of total variance in EFL writing performance. Based on the partial η^2 coefficient, the effect size for gender as a predictor of EFL writing performance can be calculated according to Cohen's criteria. It equals 0.07 and is regarded as small.

The result is in accordance with our expectations as the two writing tasks are standardized and, as such, were used for one of the national EFL assessments for Year 6 students. In the recent corresponding reports of the national assessment committee on the EFL assessment at the end of Year 6, very little difference in EFL writing performance according to gender is mentioned, indicating that the tasks seem to be liked by both girls and boys, and pointing to non-discriminatory EFL teaching in relation to gender. However, this finding has not yet been supported by research connected to the national EFL assessment for Year 6 students. We hypothesize that EFL writing performance would be more varied if different types of writing tasks were used, such as a listening and writing task or reading and writing task, which we suggest for further research, taking into account also the findings of Kormos and Wilby (2019) on task development. In practice, we would propose all existing ongoing support for (early) reading in the first language and EFL to continue. The transition from EFL reading to EFL writing should be explored and, where possible, strengthened at the national level.

Place of living as a predictor of EFL writing performance with Year 6 students is statistically insignificant ($p = 0.280$). Under its influence, the average EFL writing performance differs by approximately half a point (4.6 to 5, out of 10). A slightly positive trend in the direction village-town-city can be observed.

Years of learning English is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), as expected. The Breusch-Pagan test confirms homoscedasticity with $p = 0.391$. A steadily increasing trend in the direction village-small town-large town can be observed. The vast majority of Year 6 students (230) have been learning English for three years. The difference in EFL writing performance ranges from about 4 to 7 points, which we estimate as large, as compared to the range of difference caused by other variables.

Home possession ("what") is a statistically significant variable with $p = 0.001$, as expected according to the known importance of socioeconomic status, to which the variable in

question belongs. The Breusch-Pagan test of heteroskedasticity confirms heteroskedasticity with p = 0.036 (lower than 0.05). Nevertheless, this is most probably merely a consequence of the illogical and disproportionately high first (left) bar of the histogram (Figure 1), which is represented by only one student. The other bars show a clear upward trend, and EFL writing performance ranges from 2 to almost 6. Frequencies show that most students fall into the following bars: bar 6 with 25 students, bar 7 with 37 students, bar 8 with 60 students, bar 9 with 67 students, bar 10 with 99 students, 11 with 119 students, 12 with 105 students, 13 with 81 students, 14 with 64 students, 15 with 46 students, and 30 with 16 students. As for the list of 16 wealth indicator items, these should be verified in any further research endeavour for their country-specific appropriateness. The list is based on *SurveyLang* (European Commission and ESLC 2012).

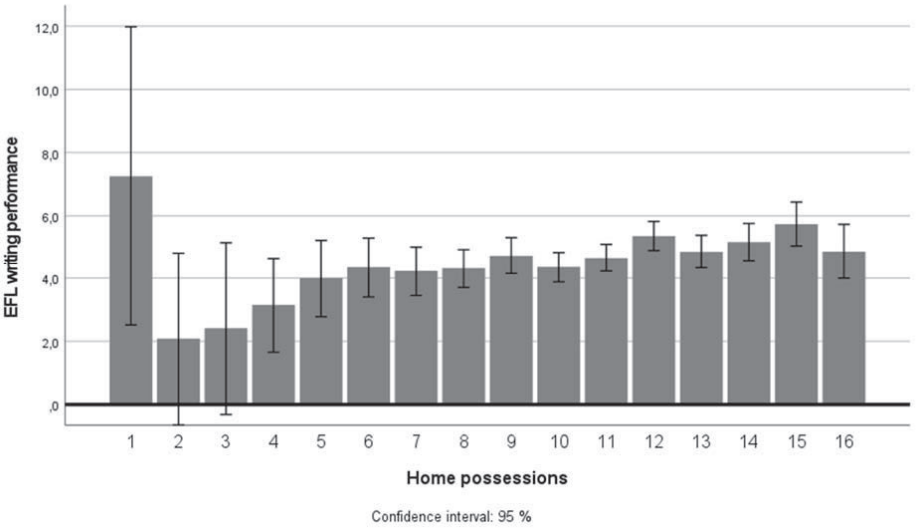

Figure 1. The relationship between EFL writing performance and home possessions, in terms of "what", with Year 6 students.

Home possession in terms of "how many" turns out to be a statistically significant variable (p = 0.011). The Breusch-Pagan test confirms homoscedasticity (p = 0.448). The majority of students (553) possess two (same), 90 students claim to possess one item, and 122 claim to have three or more items of the same type. The difference in EFL writing performance is about one point. It arises mainly among students who generally own one item of the same type, as opposed to those who possess two, such as two smartphones. There is almost no difference in EFL writing performance if we compare students with two, and those with three or more items of the same type, according to the list. We can observe a slightly rising trend, that is, more home possessions results in higher EFL writing performance.

In *SurveyLang*, the item "bathrooms", in terms of how many, suffered from severe misfit in the case of Slovenia so it was excluded from further statistical analysis (European Commission and ESLC 2012, 245). This raises the question of whether the selection is appropriate for a specific country, as there might be some (new) country-specific wealth items. However, the main aim of this research was not to develop a new demographic questionnaire.

The number of books in the official language of the research country is a statistically significant variable (p = 0.015) in predicting EFL writing performance. The difference between its minimum and maximum value is about one point. However, the dispersion, i.e., the results of 95% of the sample, is about two points. A rising trend can be observed, that is, more books in Slovenian leads to higher EFL writing performance. Frequency statistics show that 92 students opted for answer one (lowest number of books), 183 stated two, 287 pupils reported three, 110 four, 67 five, and 26 six. The majority of students possess between 26 and 100 books in the country's official language, Slovenian.

Number of books in English is a statistically significant predictor of EFL writing performance (p = 0.041). A slightly rising trend can be observed. More books in English result in higher EFL writing performance. The dispersion, however, rises intensively, ergo, from about one point to as much as five, as the number of English books rises. The difference between the minimum and maximum value of EFL writing performance is about 1.5 points, that is from about 4.5 to slightly more than 6. A total of 421 students selected the answer one, 221 selected two, 88 three, 23 four, 9 five, and 3 six (as the largest number of English books). Frequency statistics show that most students possess 0 to 10 books in English.

If we compare the impact of books in Slovenian to the impact of English books, we can see that the difference in EFL writing performance is approximately the same. However, the dispersion of data differs considerably (much larger in the case of English books). Heteroskedasticity is tested for both variables (by a two-way ANOVA) and rejected (p = 0.517).

The number of books in the household, as a traditional socioeconomic measure, as well as the number of children's books as its extension, may be a robust predictor of academic achievement. Nevertheless, the statement refers to parents' questionnaires on the number of books at home (Heppt, Olczyk and Volodina 2022).

Maternal educational level as a predictor of EFL writing performance is statistically significant (p = 0.001). It causes a difference of approximately 1.5 points in EFL writing performance. A downward trend can be observed, that is, higher maternal education leads to higher EFL writing performance of Year 6 students. Most mothers (253) attained higher education certificates, 165 mothers (upper) middle school, 139 higher vocational, 111 middle or lower vocational education, 73 students a vocational course or "*matura*" course, 16 primary school in terms of Year 7 to Year 9, and eight have an education of Year 1 to Year 6. There are no cases of mothers without any education.

The growing trend of EFL writing performance due to maternal education is in accordance with our expectations, as the importance of maternal education for children's academic achievements is widely recognized (Harding, Morris and Hughes 2015). We surmise that the extent of 1.5 out of 10 points is considerable. In *SurveyLang*, the relationship of maternal education and EFL writing performance is not discussed, but it could be constructive for comparative analyses. However, the result of this higher maternal education is not necessarily and straightforwardly a steady linear rise of the EFL writing performance of their children. Factors like mother's age and previous educational level when starting additional education play an influential role. Paternal educational level turns out to be statistically insignificant (p = 0.474). It causes a difference in

EFL writing performance of about one point. A fluctuating course can be detected. Most fathers (253) have the highest education possible, that is, university degree or higher, 169 (upper) middle school, 253 general middle school including grammar school, 163 higher vocational education, 133 middle or lower vocational education, 85 a vocational course or a course for graduation before leaving secondary school, 20 are reported to have Year 7 to Year 9 of primary school, three with Year 1 to Year 6 of primary school, and two with unfinished primary school or no education. Heteroskedasticity was tested for maternal and paternal educational levels together and rejected ($p = 0.231$). The results regarding the relationship between paternal education and EFL writing achievement are as anticipated vital for its established charge. That being said and contrary to the sum of our expectations, paternal education had no palpable effects. According to Tam (2009), the influence of mothers' and fathers' educational level on children's (boys and girls studied separately) academic achievement should be studied more systematically.

The question about parents' education is relatively difficult for children (Year 6), as it might be cognitively too demanding, in other words, too abstract. Moreover, it is difficult to ensure a high degree of anonymity which would be ethically suitable as the question is highly personal. These circumstances reveal that our results regarding paternal education may be less reliable. However, students answered the question on maternal education under the same conditions. Moreover, the question on parents' education is only one component variable of SES.

Overall, statistically significant demographic variables explain 9.9% of the whole variation in EFL writing performance ($R^2 = 0.099$).

Data were also collected for school and region, as another two demographic variables, but not analysed as we are mostly interested in the role of the selected demographic factors as a whole. For the sake of statistical analysis, the student/code is also considered as a demographic variable. Student profiles could be identified.

5 Conclusion

Demographic variables have an impact of 9.9% on EFL writing performance among the Year 6 students examined in this study. The variables represented in this percentage are home possessions in terms of "what", home possessions in terms of "how many", number of books in the language of the research country, number of books in English, years of learning English, and maternal educational level. Gender, place of living and paternal educational level were found to be statistically insignificant.

The research concentrates on the role of demographics as a whole. However, a student profile by region would most likely at least partially answer the question raised more than once by the National Committee for EFL Assessment at the end of Year 6 as to why the ranking of regions has been identical for a number of years. Additional research is required in such and similar cases where insufficient answers prevail. Nonetheless, based on the existing data and according to the criteria used, five student profiles could be established relating to EFL writing performance, which would be highly informative. Student profiles are researched to solve practical educational/language problems systematically in, for example, the United States.

Considering the study's limitations, educational attainment could be measured at three levels exclusively, according to the 2011 International Standard Classification of Education, since the eight-level scale used might be too difficult and abstract for Year 6 students. The variables related to books could feature supplementary questions on children's books, as has been found in some other studies. The list of home possessions should be revised, and new country-specific wealth items could be added, whilst certain others deleted. We interpret the insignificance of paternal education as idiosyncratic, but in order to resolve this conundrum an interdisciplinary approach would be needed to transcend the limitations of what we as linguists can provide.

Concerning pedagogical recommendations, both EFL teachers and policymakers should continue all activities to promote EFL reading, commencing with an emphasis on reading in the first language.

Similarly, the continuity of EFL learning in connection with the education system should be further supported in the hopes of maintaining the positive effect on EFL writing achievement. Proper beliefs must be thus preserved. The transition from EFL reading to EFL writing should be explored and, where possible, strengthened at the national level.

Amongst other things, writing in a foreign language is indeed a crucial skill enabling students to have better career opportunities, and thus it is important to observe and explore this at an early stage. This study fills the void in the research for this issue in Slovenia. Internationally, there is also less research on EFL writing focused on young learners than on adults. We hope that this study offers an interesting and valuable new insight into the nature and importance of various demographic variables as EFL writing predictors of Year 6 students, both in Slovenia and beyond.

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Becoming the Rhizomatic Outsider: A Study of the Narrative Deconstruction of Being in Ali Smith's *The Accidental*

ABSTRACT

Ali Smith's novels and short stories are violently realistic in terms of depicting the hollow and disconnected lives of the postmodern individual. However, they also, albeit obliquely, aspire for hope and change. The loss of a sense of location, direction, and, as a result, a meaningful presence is interwoven in *The Accidental*'s persistent concern with time. Accordingly, in this essay, drawing upon Michael Kane's analysis of postmodern time and space, *The Accidental* is studied with regard to capitalist time and simulacra, the culture of pastiche and spectacle, and spatiotemporal fragmentation. Within this backdrop and informed by Derridean deconstruction complemented with the study's Deleuzian framework, the novel's subversive deconstructions of a metaphysics of *being* and the substitution of fictional *becoming* are explored. It is argued that *The Accidental* corporealizes supplementarity and employs rhizomatic disruptions in the lives of the characters and the structure of the narrative to open up *deterritorized* spaces for *monoritarian* authenticity, agency, and creativity.

Keywords: time, postmodernism, deconstruction, *différance*, supplement, rhizome, subversion, becoming, Deleuze, Ali Smith

Postajati rizomatski autsajder: študija pripovedne dekonstrukcije obstoja v romanu *The Accidental* Ali Smith

IZVLEČEK

Romani in kratke zgodbe Ali Smith so brutalno realistične v prikazovanju praznih in izključenih življenj postmodernih posameznikov in posameznic. Kljub temu je v njih moč zaznati upanje in teženje k spremembam. Izguba občutka za prostor, smer in, posledično, smiselno prisotnost je v romanu *The Accidental* vtkana v nenehno obremenjenost s časom. Zato na podlagi Kaneove analize postmodernega časa in prostora v tem članku roman obravnavam s stališča kapitalističnega časa in simulakrov, kulture pastiša in spektakla ter fragmentacije prostora in časa. V tem kontekstu s pomočjo derridajevske dekonstrukcije in Deleuzove misli raziščem subverzivne dekonstrukcije *obstoja* in zamenjavo fikcijskega *postajanja* v romanu. Članek pokaže, da *The Accidental* utelesi suplementarnost in z rizomatskimi disrupcijami življenj likov in strukture pripovedi odpira deteritorializirane prostore za monoritarno avtentičnost, tvornost in ustvarjalnost.

Ključne besede: čas, postmodernost, dekonstrukcija, *différance*, suplementarnost, rizom, subverzija, postajanje, Deleuze, Ali Smith

1 Introduction

Ali Smith's novel, *The Accidental* (2005), is comprised of three chapters: "The Beginning"; "The Middle"; and "The End". The ironic juxtaposition of the title of the book and the chapters, which purport to adhere to conventional narrative spatiotemporal linearity, foreshadows the complexities that are put forth in Smith's novel. The first chapter, "The Beginning", is not the beginning, and the final chapter, "The End", does not really end the story, as the first-person voice tells us "we're back at the beginning" (2005, 320). In explaining narrative linearity Kermode claims people are born *in medias res*, but because of their very human need to *belong*, they create "fictive concords" with beginnings and ends (2000, 7), and thus contrive meaningful *middles*. The postmodern era, however, marks not only the end of unified narratives of linear progression, but a foundational change in the spatiotemporal experiences of human beings in a digital world.

Kane observes: "Maybe it was Einstein, or maybe it was the earth-shattering explosions of the First World War, but something seems to have happened [to] the sense of time in Western culture in the early twentieth century" (2020, 70). According to Kane, in literature and art of the early twentieth century clock time seems to function as the controller of an inherent and potential chaos of the mind (2020, 75).[1] The hidden turmoil was the sign of an imminent collapse; Jean-Francois Lyotard calls it the fall of *metanarratives* – the linear and unified stories of progression and completion presuming a past assuredly flowing towards a significant future. In contrast, in the postmodern world the present is "cut…off at both ends" (Bauman 1995, quoted in Kane 2020, 92) leading to the *dislocation* of the subject: "'we do not know for sure' […] where is 'forward' and where 'backward' […] the past […] has all but fallen apart" (Bauman 1995, 95, quoted in Kane 2020, 125). This sense of dislocation in the postmodern era is only intensified by the *instantaneity* and *simultaneity* of perception, a "tele-presence" of everything (Virilio 2007, quoted in Kane 2020, 119) correlative with an addiction to two-dimensional pictures, digital cameras, and the virtual spectacles of capitalist time.

The impact of these changes on the postmodern subject has been fundamental. The omnipresence of two-dimensional appearances has eroded experiential reality. Moreover, the loss of the sense of spatiotemporal location has led to desolation of a *unified self* (Kane 2020, 5), and, since identity requires persistence through time, *personal identity* (Punday 2003, 119), making the master theme of postmodernism "fragmentation" and its most prominent stylistic features pastiche and simulacra.

Although from a pessimistic view this is the end for authentic artistic creation, more optimistic scholars believe we can venture new narrative concords to assign meaningfulness to our human experiences; after all, "[f]ragments can be all we have" (Barthelme, quoted in Punday 2003, 167). Bauman contends: "The work of a postmodern artist is a heroic effort to give voice to the ineffable, and a tangible shape to the invisible… a standing invitation

[1] Kane (2020) points out that in Kafka's *Metamorphosis* we see that when Gregor wakes up in the morning he is worried that the alarm clock on his night table did not ring, which meant he would miss his morning bus, and only later he realizes he has transformed into a beetle. Other examples of the dominance of clock time over mind time in modernist literature are *Mrs. Dalloway*, *Ulysses*, and *The Dubliners*.

to join in the unending process of interpretation which is also the process of meaning-making" (1995, 105, quoted in Kane 2020, 127). Considering the significant role that narrative plays in giving voice to the postmodern experience, it is important to understand how it has adapted to the requirements of the time. In *Narrative After Deconstruction,* Punday studies the contestations addressed to narrative form by post-structuralism and deconstruction, most importantly "seamlessness" and "objectivity", claiming that the task of postmodern narrative is to find a way of "textual construction after deconstruction" (2003, 4). The post-deconstruction narrative has to embrace a new form that correlates with the "arrhythmic temporality" of this new world (Bogue 1990, 408). Hence, metanarratives give way to *local narratives* that foreground subjectivity, contextuality, and multiplicity. In Derridean terms, in order to dismiss the Platonic "one", postmodern narrative has to make room for *différance*.

Gilles Deleuze is another philosopher who, especially in his fruitful collaborations with Felix Guattari, has contributed significantly to delineating ways of outgrowing the exclusions and hierarchizations of dominant articulations, to the extent that his notion of *rhizome* has become one of the key terms of postmodernism. According to Punday, what Derrida's *différance*, Lyotard's *local narratives*, and Deleuze and Guttari's *rhizomatic* have in common is a concern with "the creation of temporary spaces of conflict and exchange" (2003, 129) in which the Platonic unified being is deconstructed to make room for the becoming of the other. Accordingly, the subversive postmodern art welcomes difference and sidesteps predefined controlling interpretations by becoming rhizomatic.

As a significant, postmodern novel, *The Accidental* has received considerable critical attention and studied from the perspective of different approaches. Tew (2015) and Horton (2012), for instance, have studied the novel as an example of traumatic fiction and against the backdrop of terrorist attacks of 9/11. From a different perspective, Orr (2019) argues that Smith recognizes the dominance of the culture of spectatorship of her time and encourages active and critical scrutiny of the detachment and passivity enforced from the outside. Lea (2016) acknowledges Smith as one of the outstanding British writers of the twenty-first century and believes in her works she illustrates the hollowness and sense of disconnection of the postmodern individual in a world of oppressive capitalism in a diverse manner, yet always with a hope of transformation. In Lea's words, the works of Ali Smith are "balanced between pessimism and optimism: pessimistic that the price of being in the world will be too high, but optimistic that the moments of transcendent connection and empathy will compensate for the erosive action of subjectivity" (2016, 28). Tancke (2013) in a very different approach refers to the destructive and violent consequences of the "virtual intrusions" of the fantastic in the real and describes *The Accidental* as a critique of this postmodern condition. O'Donnell (2013), however, uses Kristeva's notion of "the stranger" to argue that this intrusion is both destructive and constructive in terms of the identities of the characters. As these studies testify, Smith's stories do not merely take a reflexive and hopeless standpoint towards the enforced inauthenticity of our age, and instead attempt to criticize constructively and aspire for change.

In this study, it is argued that Smith's *The Accidental,* as a brilliant example of subversive postmodern narrative, and in search of new ways of assigning meaning to human experience,

casts off metanarrative linearity and deconstructs the logocentric assumptions of *being* in order to substitute them with subversive rhizomatic *becoming*. In the course of this article, first, postmodern narrative and the incorporation of *différance* is discussed drawing upon related theoretical scholarship. Then, informed by Kane's comprehensive analysis of postmodern time and space, the spinal role of spatiotemporal being in *The Accidental* is studied in relation to its contemporary context. In applying Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic structure to *The Accidental,* significant features of Smith's work are revealed extending from the level of her story to the overall structure of the narrative. It is concluded that Smith's novel employs supplementarity and rhizomatic narrative possibilities in order to find a way out of the dominant molar lines of capitalism via *minoritarian becoming* and embodying *différance*.

2 Postmodern Narrative and Deconstruction of Being

Punday notes that today narrative acts are becoming increasingly important as local narratives are being used to assign meaning to minor experiences that were formerly rendered silent (2003, 1). He believes this "narrative turn" is not a turn against Derridean deconstruction and its denouncement of narrative linearity, but an outcome of deconstruction's "linguistic turn" and the emphasis on subjective contextuality (2003, 4). Thus, by welcoming *différance*, narrative form is not only able to dismiss two of its foundational suppositions that are renounced by postmodernism – "the supposition of a pure, undivided origin and the supposition that the ensuing fall into difference was a process of linear consecution whose events could be excluded from the origin itself" (Currie 1998, 83) – but also become the perfect medium for deconstructing the metaphysics of being and incorporating the excluded other.

Central to Derrida's *différance* is the deconstruction of the metaphysics of present (time) correlative with presence (place). In his critique of the Platonic being, Derrida is very much indebted to Husserl's changing the classic definition of time as a procession of *nows* to a vanishing present that is perpetually constituted in being divided between the retentions (memories) and the protentions (anticipations). Derrida takes a step further and deconstructs the "metaphysical baggage" (Currie 2007, 95) of phenomenology and displaces it with *Grammatology*, declaring *"il n'ya pas de hors-text"* (Derrida 1974). He adopts Husserl's notion of the vanishing present, and declares the word *present* does not refer to but is constituted in *différance*. Derrida claims that since the present moment, or "what is", is constituted by the absences of the past and the future, "what is not", the "undivided presence" and its purity are illusions (Currie 1998, 82), and the present is always "complicated by non-presence" (Lawlor 2022). Consequently, the *origin* that marks the pure moment of undivided self-presence is discarded and substituted by the primacy of the *supplementary*: "a possibility" that "produces that to which it is said to be added on" (Derrida 1973, 89). At the heart of Derrida's *différance* is an emphasis on the future as the supplement. As Currie explains:

> It is possible to view Derrida's treatment of Husserl's notion of protention, or the concept of *différance* as a claim that all language exists in a condition of waiting to find out if its prophecies are fulfilled or not. (2007, 44).

Therefore, the word present does not refer to a *present* inner object of consciousness expressed in the sign, but is constituted in being deferred to a possible future. In other words, the

present is produced by the possibility of a future, for the supplement "does not follow the origin", but it is the possibility that becomes "the origin of the origin" (Currie 1998, 84).

Evinced by Derrida's increasing interest in the form throughout his career, narrative fiction plays a very significant role in deconstructing the myth of pure origin and foregrounding the supplementary (see Punday 2003). In clarification, Derrida refers to the shared root of the word "fantasy" and "phantasm" – a ghostlike appearance, something that is neither present nor completely absent (Derrida 1986, quoted in Hobson 2009, 140). By overturning Plato's condemnation of false appearances, Derrida demonstrates literature is the manifestation of the logic of supplement: "what we call a likeness, though not really existing, really does exist" (Plato 24ob, quoted in Derrida 1986, 209–10). In Derrida's critique of Platonic mimesis, the dividing line between the ontological real – the origin – and the "phantasmatic" copy is broken and the superiority of the former questioned. Miller maintains: "Literature is for Derrida the possibility for any utterance, writing, or mark to be iterated in innumerable contexts and to function in the absence of identifiable speaker, context, reference, or hearer" (2001, 59). According to Derrida fiction, with its detachment from an ontologically present origin, is the demonstration of the illusion of division between the presence and the representation (see Hobson 2009). By foregrounding the supplement instead of the origin, narrative fiction is able to deconstruct being, and become the medium "in which a structure of exclusion can be opened up to difference" (Currie 1998, 84). In other words, in narrative deconstruction of presence the excluded other can be restored and incorporated.

Another important Derridean term associated with narrative fiction's detachment from ontological presence is the *secret.* As Derrida asserts: "The secret is nothing–and this is the secret that has to be kept well, nothing either present or presentable, but this nothing must be well kept" (Derrida 1992a, 205). Miller continues: "Literature is the place specially to look for the secret because it is by convention detached in special ways from its 'transcendence' or referential gesture" (2001, 73). Ironically, Miller maintains, the secret in the spectre of fiction makes it an act of "survival" and "living on" after death (2001, 72). Thus, by embodying the secret, a narrative act becomes a defiance of nothingness, exclusion, and death.

Consequently, contrary to the assumptions that saw narrative form at odds with postmodern subversion, by making the absence of self-presence and origin corpuscular in narrative form and storytelling, narrative deconstruction becomes an act of subversion and survival:

> It is that the possibility established in the fictional domain, the possibility of surface without depth, is a possibility that the other model, of surface as the externality of depth, cannot get away from 'the possibility of non-truth in which every possibility of truth is held or is made'. (Currie 2007, 135; Derrida 1992b, 153).

In Currie's words: "In order to tell the truth about a lie, one must tell a lie about the truth" (2007, 63). Having discussed the narrative deconstruction of being, its subversive responses to the postmodern condition and the capitalist time and space will be examined in what follows.

3 Postmodern Time, Simulacra of Capitalism, and Subversive Art

Jameson associates the postmodern period with a "waning" of the sense of time (1993, 72). Kane defines "waning" as an inability "to see and interpret the present (and the future) as part of a wider historical context" (2020, 69). In contrast to Jameson, Virilio believes that the technological advances of our age in media, communication, and mobility of information have abolished "the reality of distance" by eroding spatial intervals: "Here no longer exists; everything is now" (2005, 116, quoted in Kane 2020, 93). This "now", however, in its perpetual presence loses its distinctiveness, "no sense of time passing" (Kane 2020, 5). The postmodern "now", in other words, is time flattened in a "continuous present" (Bauman 1995, 89, quoted in Kane 2020, 92). Both critics, therefore, in their seeming difference are referring to a fragmentation of spatiotemporal perception in the postmodern world. Jameson believes that postmodern capitalism "has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world" (quoted in Kane 2020, 9). With the subject not being able to locate herself in a cognitive map of here and now, her presence as the *a priori* unified perspectival locus is undermined as well resulting in becoming decentred. Kane refers to the *Communist Manifesto*'s observation of the consequences of capitalism in the previous century: "All that is solid melts into air" and asserts "One could perhaps pointedly rephrase Virilio's line thus: 'Here no longer exists; everything is air!'" (2020, 9). Whereas the modern metanarratives strived to embody meaningfulness in their promise of *the* significant future, the postmodern flattened present attaches itself to a fleeting poster like advertisement of *a* future, making time a spatial simulacrum.

The defining feature of a simulacrum is its hollowness and two-dimensionality. Baudrillard borrowed the term from a story by Borges in which the cartographers create a map that is so detailed that it covers the real territory. Baudrillard claims in the postmodern world the two-dimensional picture has substituted the reality, and we are living in a world of "simulacra and simulations" (1983; quoted in Kane 2020, 101). Kane adds the modernist master theme of "alienation" of the individual that implies an inner being thus becomes obsolete in the capitalist society and is displaced by the theme of "fragmentation" (2020, 71) which is two-dimensional and superficial.

Furthermore, Kane, drawing upon Jameson, associates the postmodern world's simulacra and flashing advertisements with "an addiction to the photographic image" (2020, 114), or in Currie's words, an archive fever (2007, 88). Jameson labels this intensification of immersion the "society of the spectacle", in which, quoting from Debord, "the image has become the final form of commodity reification" (quoted in Kane 2020, 114–15)[2]; in capitalist time, the present is archived in order to be sold in the future (Kane 2020, 89). Detached from the reality of things, the virtual world of pictorial spectacles with its fast-paced propagation is the perfect medium for the deceptive theatricality of capitalism and its myopic fixation with future profit – a system in which nothing has value "in itself" but only in being exchanged.

[2] Kane believes the pervasiveness of the dominance of photographic representation in television, the internet, and digital cameras is so deep that instead of being immersed into culture, we are now "gazing at it" (2020, 116).

In a brilliant analogy, Bauman assimilates the sense of direction in metanarratives of modernity to a pilgrimage towards a meaningful purpose and significant destination and the modern individual to a pilgrim. In the postmodern era, however, and in a world "inhospitable to pilgrims" (Bauman 1995, 83, quoted in Kane 2020, 138) new archetypes emerged. Among these postmodern archetypes, the tourist is the most prominent. The tourist moves around restlessly according to a pre-planned itinerary with aimless and short-term interests. She buys and then duplicates experiences and archives them randomly with her camera as a proof of her presence. For the tourist the present is experienced only in relation to how it would be presented in pictures and videos in the future. The tourist is constantly persuading herself that "[i]f this is a 'selfie', there must be a 'self' in it" (Kane 2020, 144). However, unlike the smiling tourists featured in pictures and advertisements, the postmodern subject is a tired tourist depleted by inauthenticity, dislocation, and disconnection.

It is in this crisis that postmodern art goes against the grain (Kane 2020, 126), creates a new sense of authenticity, and finds a way out of the simulacra by exposing the artificiality of its imposing signifiers. In the same vein and in his counterhegemonic divergences from western philosophy and culture, Deleuze champions subversive art and declares:

> The more our everyday life appears to be standardized, stereotyped and subject to an accelerated reproduction of objects of consumption, the more art must be injected into it in order to extract from it that little difference which plays simultaneously between other levels of repetition, […] in order that Difference may at least be expressed […]. (1994, 293)

For Deleuze this new form of art is rhizomatic.

In their interpretation of Kafka and other artists that stand outside the authority of the alleged state, Deleuze and Guattari value the "minor" artists who "deterritorize" themselves and break away from the forceful interpretations and codifications of the dominant culture. They believe the artist who is marginalized by the system is able to reinvent herself as the minoritarian outsider and thus sidestep being subordinated by the molar imperatives of the state (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 17). May explains: "To become minor is to jostle the reins of the majority identity in order to investigate new possibilities, new ways of becoming that are no longer bound to the dominant molar lines and their abstract machines" (2005, 150). Two points should be noted with regard to the minor literature: first, the attempts of the minor should not be seen as liberative, but "a matter of line of flight, escape…an exit, outlet" (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 13); the nomadic minor does not aspire for metanarratives of liberation, but is in a constant unravelling of limits and interpretation. Second, as Deleuze himself asserts, the active becomings of the rhizome are not to be judged with criteria of "justness" or "falsity", nor in terms of "success or failure", "but simply as an act the outcome of which is unknown" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 14). It is the constant rejection of fixity and counterhegemonic reinvention that maintains the subversiveness of the minoritarian.

In a world where the senses of coherence, connection, and progress towards a meaningful destination are lost, the rhizome substitutes metaphysical location with nomadic superficial becoming. Thus, the Derridean *différance* aligns with Deleuze's rhizomatic subjectivity

in postmodern narrative's dismissal of linearity of being and the corollary metanarrative seamlessness and unity (Weedon 1987, 105–6). As a rhizome that rejects the arborescent form ("a system of derivation: first the roots, then the trunk, then the leaves"), the postmodern artist denounces identity, unity, and essence and reinvents diverse selves in multiple, random, and parallel offshoots that reject the sequence from the beginning to an end; thus substituting being with "a local affirmation of becoming" and conjunction (Bogue 1990, 404). In this manner, the exemplary subversive text of postmodernism is rhizomatic (Leitch et al. 2010, 1448), with the postmodern individual becoming a "site of *différance*" (Punday 2003, 129) and "body without organs" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) rather than a logocentric being. As the world is no longer holding on to the myths of depth, the work of art has to be authentically two-dimensional. On a par with Derrida's *text*, the rhizomatic art in its two-dimensional and superficial form dismisses the illusion of depth of alleged simulacra and is thus able to unveil the deceptions and hollowness of signifiers of presence in its no-root structure and break with the exclusive rules of identity in its diverse emergences.

4 The Hole at the Heart, Deceiving Signifiers and Absent Signifieds

Smith's novels and short stories respond to the central issues of our time in both their structure and thematic concerns. Her characters voice their exclusions, disconnection, loss of centre, and entrapment in a flattened world of flashing signifiers. Yet like her characters, Smith's works aspire for hope. As Jelínková asserts: "underlying all of her work is a deeply human ethos, which emerges in her trademark carefully poised endings on a note of tentative reconciliation and qualified hope for the future" (2019, 9). In line with Punday's observation that postmodern narration is an act of "linguistic construction after deconstruction" (2003, 4), in her novels and short stories Smith has a philosophical concern with unveiling the illusion of false appearances by disturbing the givenness of the familiar and replacing it with the interruptive unfamiliar. In this way, Smith's works strive to "deterritorize" the postmodern individual and find a way out of the capitalist simulacra by forging new forms of meaningfulness. In some of her works, such as *Hotel World* (2001), Smith's illustration of the oppressions and marginalizations of Western capitalism is more apparent, and in others, such as *The Accidental*, it emerges more implicitly in the way they penetrate into the details of the mundane everyday life of the middle-class families who are unaware that they are surrounded by surveillance cameras, social and academic values, and rigid "standards".

Smith wittily chooses her narrative metaphors to expose the artificiality of capitalist signifiers and their promises of equality and prosperity. It was noted above that Bauman compares the postmodern subject to a tired tourist wandering around with no authentic sense of direction, distracted by transient spectacles, and consuming advertised attractions. In *Hotel World,* for example, we see that the hotel represents the Western world and how it enforces the hierarchization and exclusion of those who cannot afford it, and also the schizophrenic confusion of its wandering inhabitants. The hotel is a simulacrum like the world that completes its name. However, at the heart of the hotel there is a hole, a lack that haunts the dazzling spectacle of its colourful surface. Lea maintains:

> This metaphor of emptiness at the heart of a rigidly determined and policed space speaks well to Smith's criticism of the hollowness of capitalism, not just in a moral sense but as a system for providing order and meaning that encompasses all members of a society. (2016, 44)

The void at the centre of this grand structure discloses the absence of the base, the *inner* essence that was supposed to stabilize and hold the appearance together.

In *The Accidental,* however, the simulacra of deceiving authorial signifiers of capitalism are conveyed in the depthless and two-dimensional world of digital cameras, virtual impositions of the internet and academic clichés that purport "truth". The Smarts are a twenty-first century middle-class family, well-educated, and up-to-date not only in terms of the scientific and technological demands of their time, but also in the elitist tastes of their class. Astrid's recurring use of the word "substandard" in her evaluations of her surroundings is an example of the resoluteness of rules of acceptance in a society which assigns validation through language and hegemony. Despite their intelligence, money, and social status, the Smarts have lost their sense of connection with others, the external world, and their own authentic being: "Each is solipsistically engaged in pursuing justifications for their own worldviews and is consequently blind to the desperate need of the others" (Lea 2016, 48). Immersed in screen-based technology, streaming images, and news, they are not able to feel, sympathize, and respond. When Astrid is thinking about the "tragic news" she is constantly hearing she ponders:

> It is all everywhere all the time, it is serious, animals with ribcages and children in hospitals on the news with people somewhere or other screaming because of a suicide bomber or American soldiers who have been shot or something, but it is hard to know how to make it actually matter inside your head, how to make it any more important than thinking about the colour green. (2005*,* 141–42).

Bombarding people with pictures and news, the intensification of mobility has eroded the "reality" behind experiences and the possibility of emotional response. The same emotional detachment can be seen in Eve, Astrid's mother when, for example, looking at the tragic photos of death and torture in the newspaper, she realizes

> the more she looked at them the less she felt or thought. The more pictures she saw, the less they meant something that had happened to real people…She didn't know what to do about the looking, whether to keep on looking or to stop looking [...] She was living in a time when historically it was permissible to smile like that above the face of someone who had died a violent death. (2005, 199)

In recognizing the pervasiveness of pictures, digital technology, and screens, *The Accidental* is modelled on ocular narration; characters are constantly "gazing at" the culture (Kane 2020, 116, also see Baudelaire 1964), yet, similar to the hotel in *Hotel World* that is built upon a void, the objects and people in *The Accidental* are only fleeting appearances, disconnected and meaningless.

5 The Lost Concord, the Smart Family in Search of Sequence and Direction

As discussed above, one of the main features of postmodern time is its loss of direction and, as a result, sequence. Immersed in simultaneity and instantaneity, Astrid is constantly trying to locate the beginning by using her digital camera to go back and forth in time. She has taken multiple shots from the moment of dawn signifying "the beginning" of the day, but is not able to capture the signified in the outer world. It is *as if* the signifieds of time are absent; the correlative beginning and end are missing and without them the middle seems accidental and meaningless. Astrid notices the omnipresence and control of CCTV cameras over the lives of people when, for example, thinking about the woman working in the shop being recorded all day she wonders:

> when the woman gets home at night and sits at dinner or with a cup of coffee or whatever, does she realize she is not being recorded anymore? Or does she think inside her head that she still is being recorded, by something that watches everything we do, because she is so used to it being everywhere else? (2005, 124)

Astrid sees the world through the viewer of her camera, believing she is taking an active and critical stance towards it, yet she is not able to "deterritorize" her point of view. She is only copying what she thinks the world is doing to her, apathetically yet constantly watching.

Astrid's obsession with the beginning of day and "of things" (2005, 15), is a search for the moment of *origin*. Currie, in explaining the Derridean deconstruction of origin, writes:

> An origin is the first moment in an historical sequence. It is, in a sense, an easier moment to mythologise as presence because nothing comes before it and, at the time it occurs, it has not yet been marked by subsequent moments. This means that when you want to explain something, its origin is a useful bedrock for the explanation, very often narrating the history of that something from the point of originary purity and self-presence. (1998, 82)

In a world plagued with disconnection, Astrid is constantly trying to pin down beginnings and ends to make connections with the confused middle in which she finds herself. Without *the origin* her own origin and, as a result, her identity, become null and her story disjointed. In Astrid's point of view, as seen in the section opening "The Beginning", she imagines that the summers in the past, "before she was born", were much better and more meaningful: "they were perpetual beautiful summers from May to October" (2005, 19). In her loss of continuity, Astrid yearns for a "time before fragmentation" (Punday 2003, 165). Before her beginning, the sequence of time seemed to be still in place and her family along with it. In all her attempts to find the beginning, Astrid is detached from her own origin, her mother. Like all other members of her family, she is entrapped in a meaningless, insignificant, passive, and flattened middle, unable to find the beginning and grasp or comprehend the end.

Astrid's search for the moment of origin and the beginning, as Currie infers, also reminds us of St. Augustine's musings on the flow of time and the indeterminacy of the beginning. While

in St. Augustine the unquestionable presence of logos – as the pure moment of origin and the absolute truth leading to identicalness of the signifier and the signified – is able to constitute the connection between the word and the world, Astrid's camera and all her attempts to locate time end in absence and postponement, or in Currie's terms: "anticipation of retrospect" (Currie 2007, 113) when her shots would become meaningful and significant in the future, making her present and presence worthwhile: "In a hundred years' time these latches may not exist anymore and this film will be proof that they did" (2005, 24). This again reminds us of Bauman's comparison of the pre-postmodern "pilgrim" with the postmodern "tourist", the former moving towards a significant goal while the latter restlessly, in Kane's words, "darting all over the place" (2020, 138), constantly archiving her present in the hope of it having a significance for future spectators. However, since the future is as absent as the past, the present is rendered null as well. Lea maintains: "[the Smarts] regard their experience of the world as the negative to a rewarding, meaningful, and connected positive print" (2016, 51). Consequently, Astrid's contemplations can be seen as a postmodern pastiche of St. Augustine, turning what used to be sacred and meaningful into a superficial replica in postmodernism's society of spectacle (see Kane 2020, 114).

The disconnectedness and apathy of the Smarts does not only emerge in their immersion in the depthless transience of images and news, it also shows itself in their failed attempts at recounting real events. For example, Magnus, Astrid's teenage brother, in narrating the events that lead to the suicide of a female schoolmate whose face was photoshopped into a pornographic picture and spread in the school as a joke, says: "First they. They then. Then they. Then she" (2005, 48). Despite his role in the tragic event, Magnus like the rest of the Smarts is not able to feel anything or sympathize with the situation: "What really shocks him is that nothing happens. Nothing happens every time he thinks it. Didn't it matter?" (2005, 49). He too tries to find solace in signifiers that promise certainty, filtering the reality in calculus, yet he fails at articulating his emotions. Like the other members of his family, he wonders about the past, his past as the "hologram boy" (2005, 48). Describing it as an artificial three-dimensional appearance, Magnus used to be unaware of the illusions of the world and his own being, and now with the erosion of the hologram boy he has not been able to conjure a new self for himself and, disillusioned from his artificial beginning, is left with hollowness, formlessness, and nonexistence.

Unlike Astrid and Magnus who are questioning the givenness of signifiers and their magical power in conjuring the *truth* of the world in the word, Michael, their stepfather, is still faithful to clichés. In the first section told from his point of view we read: "Dr Michael Smart had been reduced to cliché" (2005, 69). He *believes* a cliché is "true, obviously, which was why it had become cliché in the first place; so true that cliché actually protected you from its own truth by being what it was, nothing but cliché" (2005, 70). He is articulate in analysing and theorizing a cliché ("he could crack a cliché wide open with a couple of properly pitched words") and citing canonical titles and eminent seminars on it. However, Michael, too, feels the difference between the past and the present and recognizes the recent depletion and dysfunctionality of *old truths* that once looked authentic and timeless. He ponders on how in the past everything felt newer, when he was "a fresh-faced (cliché!) twelve-year-old", unlike the twelve-year-old Astrid for whom "nothing was new and everything was so already known

and been and done and postmodern-t-shirt regurgitated" (2005, 70–71). He is yearning for a time when the acceleration of use had not made everything over-used and "misted by overexpression" (2005, 69), a time when clichés were still "fixed impression[s]" (2005, 270), unquestionable and eternal. With the fall of metanarratives, postmodernism with its strength to reproduce and propagate in great numbers and short time is constantly pasting the leftovers and contriving new unities that are inevitably hollow, like Astrid's "empty pear peel" that resembles the real one (2005, 28). Even Magnus' pornographic creation that makes him God (2005, 50) is a cliché. Clichés are clown-like pastiches in language; residues detached from depth and meaning, they grotesquely hover around in language unaware of their hollowness. Michael, like his clichés, rambles on trying to deny his obsoleteness and dysfunctionality.

Eve, the middle-aged mother of the family, shares the feeling of depletion and inauthenticity. As her name suggests, she is supposed to be the beginning and the beginner, the origin of all. Eve was previously married to Adam, another beginner, yet she is now severed from her original story and entrapped in an insignificant and flattened middle in her life, her marriage, her motherhood, and her career. Kermode believes the linear conception of time inaugurated with the Bible and with its story of *the beginning* – Adam and Eve, and the story of *the end* – apocalypse: "It begins at the beginning ('In the beginning...') and ends with a vision of the end ('Even so, come, Lord Jesus'); [...] Ideally, it is a wholly concordant structure, the end is in harmony with the beginning, the middle with beginning and end" (2000, 6). However, with the metanarratives of linear stories of concord between the beginning, the middle, and the end fallen from their credibility in the postmodern era, we need new concords to escape the idea that the end is our death and nothing more (2000, 58). As a postmodern individual, Eve has lost her sense of agency and authenticity for she feels like an insignificant, random presence in the middle, "cut off at both ends" (Bauman 1995, quoted in Kane 2020, 92), with no beginning and no overview of a meaningful end. She describes the last words of her mother before her death as "meaningless" (Smith 2005, 302), like the meaninglessness of the absolute end itself which is approaching closer. The middle for Eve means being dropped into predefined roles and subjugating "standards":

> It is very very hard work indeed […] to be a woman and alive in this hemisphere in this day and age. It asks a lot, to be able to do all the things we're supposed to do the way we're expected to do them: Talent. Sex. Money. Family. The correct modest intelligence. The correct thinness. The correct presence. (2005, 97).

She collects the stories of the people who have died "before their time" in the Second World War, and gives them "a voice – but a voice that tells his or her story as if he or she had lived on" (2005, 92). Eve is not able to find the purposeful sequence in these real life-stories, and attempts to create fictional stories, narrative concords, in order to defy the absurdity and futility she sees in them; new stories that would obliterate the morbid randomness of the real end, "the absolute end" (2005, 225), and displace it with a new beginning, middle, and end that would perhaps make the life narrative a meaningful and significant whole. Despite these attempts to create and change, Eve is not able to write; she, too, is consumed by emptiness, inauthenticity, and passivity. It is to this world with the hollow existence of things and people that Smith introduces another character: Amber.

6 Rhizomatic Subversion and the "Creative Possibility of Ambiguity"

Lea claims that if we want to summarize Smith's fiction in one word, it would be "but". As one of her fictional characters puts it " 'but' […] always takes you off to the side, and where it takes you is always interesting" (Smith 2012, 175; Lea 2016, 26). This questioning of fixity is more perceptibly conveyed in Smith's use of diverse characters and point of views "to reflect the crumbling of singular, authoritarian voices in contemporary discourses" (Lea 2016, 17). However, ambiguity in Smith's novels and short stories goes beyond this stylistic feature and is her artistic signature. Smith's works are built upon, borrowing Lea's words, the "creative possibilities of ambiguity", suggesting that her works aim at eradicating the set lines of long stablished definitions and certainties and thus opening up new and diverse outlooks.

In most of Smith's works it is with the entrance of an "outsider" that the barren solipsism of individual point of views (Lea 2016, 48) is interrupted and the dysfunctional narrative conventions are displaced by creative divergences. Amber in *The Accidental* is a stranger who arrives at the door of the Smarts' holiday house. No one knows where she comes from, but all the Smarts are amazed and influenced by her. Amber is the interruptive, accidental, and impossible (for she is not wholly real) character who emerges in the lives of the Smarts and exposes the hole behind their cardboard walls; as Lea asserts "Amber exemplifies a familiar trope in Smith's writing: the external catalyst propelled into the world of the narrative in order to make apparent to the protagonists the limits of their ingrained vision" (2016, 48). Examples of other works by Smith in which a character who is not completely material or physically present emerges and through his/her ghostlike presence/absence or impossibility exposes the unreality of the world of the characters include the ghost of Sara Wilby in *Hotel World* (2001), Miles in *There But For The* (2011), the spirit of a Renaissance Fresco painter in *How To Be Both* (2014), and Alhambra/Amber in *The Accidental* (2016, 48).

With the entrance of Amber, the reader gradually comes to realize that "Amber 'is' Alhambra" (Currie 2007, 116). Of the five characters that spend the summer in the holiday house throughout the story, Amber is the only one who does not have a point of view section assigned to her. On the other hand, as Alhambra and an immaterial voice she is the only one that has a first-person point of view. Alhambra is a conjured spirit of classical cinema. Her memories are those of the history of the cinema since its invention and fragments of all the famous movies that have shone on the screen and more:

> I was formed and made in the Saigon days, the Rhodesian days, the days of the rivers of blood. DISEMBOWEL ENOCH POWELL. Apollo 7 splashdowned […] I was born in a time of light, speed, celluloid [...]. The eidoloscope [...]The silver screen. The flicks. [...] Misty watercolour memories. (2005, 13)

Lea believes "Amber's lack of definition is key to her catalytic impact on the family." She is the ambiguity that inaugurates creative possibilities (2016, 63). In other words, borrowing from Currie's Derridean observation, she is a lie that tells the truth about a lie (Currie 2007, 49). Amber/Alhambra's nonphysical emergence, representing the Derridean "possibility of surface without depth" and "Phantasma" subverts the logocentric and *a priori* rules of the being

built upon the first-personal presence as the locus in time and space. Like the Derridean supplement, Alhambra/Amber is the absence that exposes the ontological lack of the origin and becomes more real than other characters and their deceiving reality.

Currie asserts Alhambra/Amber's multiplicity undermines linear temporality which applies only to unified beings (2007, 119). Her wristwatch has stopped at 7, suggesting that the time does not apply to her. It cannot be established that she is or is not. She is not a zero or a nonbeing, or if she is (echoing Magnus' confused calculations: "what does 0 =?" (2007, 176)) she is a zero that equals one, and two, and more. She is the embodiment of Derridean inventive impossible and secret, for "an invention must announce itself as invention of that which would not appear possible" (Miller 2001, 69) to be an invention. When contemplating on her name, Eve says: "Amber was an exotic fixative. Amber preserved things that weren't meant to last. Amber gave dead gone things a chance to live forever. Amber gave random things a past" (2005, 166). Like the secret that is an "act of survival after death" (2005, 72), Amber in her phantasmatic in-betweenness becomes the source of survival and regeneration for the Smarts.

As an outsider, Amber defies all the authorial rules in Smarts' lives. In the larger scale of the overall form of the story too, Alhambra's impossible first-person point of view, talking about her *beginning* before the chapter entitled "The Beginning", interrupts the spatiotemporal narrative conventions. Acting like the liminal Derridean *parergon* that reinforces the supplement and deconstructs the ontological division between in and out, Alhambra/Amber deconstruct the spatial relation between the centre and the periphery and temporal beginning and end. Currie connects these features of Amber with another Derridean metaphor, the paradoxical notion of a pocket larger than the whole:

> Amber's externality to time, like the word 'beginning', has a graphic dimension. … She is a framing device for the novel as a whole […] she is, in Derrida's words, 'invagination', or 'an internal pocket which is larger than the whole' (Derrida 1992b, 228; Currie 2007, 117).

Amber/Alhambra encapsulates Smith's spatiotemporal deconstruction by *being impossibly both within and without time and space* of her story (Currie 2007, 119). As Derrida maintains "deconstructive inventiveness can consist only in opening, in uncloseting, destabilizing foreclusionary structures so as to allow for the passage toward the other" (2007, 45); it is by unravelling spatiotemporal location and unity that spaces are opened for the emergence of the "multiplicity of voices of the other" (2007, 61). In this way, Amber/Alhambra as the indefinite is able to disrupt the defined realms of presence in her incorporeal multiplicity, and the beginning and end in her timelessness and thus "preserve".

Amber and Alhambra's superficial yet inventive presence with no ontological depth can also be associated with the rhizome. In their impossible presence, they function as the sites, bodies without organs (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), welcoming difference and temporary becomings. Unlike the three-dimensional structure of a tree developing an interconnected and concordant whole, the rhizome "has no beginning: no roots. It has no middle: no trunk. And it has no end: no leaves. It is always in the middle, always in process. There is no particular shape it has to take and no particular territory to which it is" (May 2005, 133–34).

Both Alhambra and Amber treat set definitions and divisions of time and space as clichés and open up spaces for accidental and parallel emergences of *becoming* both within the lives of the Smarts and the overall narrative; as Alhambra says: "I've had the time of my life and for all we know I'm going to live forever" (2005, 105). The Alhambra/Amber character does not unfold in a unified way with narrative beginnings and ends, but in constant transformations, with a lack of identity and random plural sprouts: "The tree imposes the verb 'to be', but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, 'and ... and ... and ...'. This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb 'to be'" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 25). Multiplicity is not only conveyed in Amber/Alhambra's already mentioned deconstruction of one beginning and one end, and hence the verb "to be", but also in them being conjunctive parallels (at the end of the story Eve, too, joins them in parallelism).

Accordingly, if the postmodern world is inevitably two-dimensional, the simulacra of capitalism takes on an arborescent form in order to enforce the hegemonic standards of the majority, while the rhizomatic superficiality is creative and "minoritarian". As the rhizome emerges "from a variety of perspectives that are not rooted in a single concept or small group of concepts" (May 2005, 134), it is able to grow outside the "molar lines of the majority" and become minoritarian and subversive "in favor of difference as yet unactualized" (May 2005, 150). Lea quotes Murray in saying "the force from outside is also a force from inside that reveals to Smith's characters that they have the choice of 'opening [their] world out into wider worlds or different forms or different notions'" (quoted in Lea 2016, 49). In cracking the illusive walls of simulacra, "deterritorrized" spaces open up for new forms that stand outside the boundary of dominant lines before the eyes of the characters who are so used to watching and being watched within the lines that they no longer see.

For instance, Amber rejects becoming a part of Michael's cliché fantasies (Smith 2005, 86). By throwing Astrid's camera from the bridge and breaking it, Amber forces her to dismiss both the capitalist technological imperatives of world time and the logocentric signifiers in language, in order to experience time authentically and in an accidental way. Magnus abandons his blinding and dysfunctional signifiers of logic and is able to finally *feel* sad: "Is there a calculus for sadness? Calculus enables you to reach the correct answer without necessarily knowing why. Is there a calculus that lets you understand why and how you reached a wrong answer? The letters had come. It was the end result. Something was wrong with it" (2005, 249). Furthermore, with Amber he directly experiences what he used to "watch" in the false reality of pornographic clichés. Eve, on the other hand, leaves her family and all the imposed roles she had to fulfil at the end and becomes another Amber to a strange family by arriving unexpectedly at their door. Instead of uselessly looking for contrived concords in her *reinvented real* stories, she changes role with Amber and becomes fictional, yet more real than what she used to be in becoming dynamically inventive. Amber, in robbing the Smarts' house and emptying it of all their possessions, even taking away the doorknobs that mark the safety and security of their simulacrum, seems to have, as Eve believes, brought about the "absolute end" (2005, 225), but ironically in her annihilation of false appearances and signifiers, she creates a new beginning and a blank page for diversity, circularity, and *becoming-minority*. Amber is the rhizomatic empty pocket that cracks the walls of the framing simulacra and makes room for the outside and subversive, and Alhambra the liminal parergon that exposes the void at the heart of the narrative linearity and the story of the moment of *origin*. By

joining the Alhambra/Eve nomadic non/existence, Eve *becomes* a minoritarion site of struggle rather than an ontological being (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), and only then is she able to survive eradication.

In its recognition of the foundational impact of visual technology and the culture of spectacle in the postmodern conception of time, *The Accidental* breaks its generic frame and merges with cinema. Deleuze claims after the Second World War, and as a result of the spatiotemporal crisis discussed earlier, cinematic productions outside the mainstream developed *time-images* (Deleuze 1989),[3] leading to the emancipation of time from action, agent, meaning, and sequence of movement-images (Deleuze 1986, *Cinema 1*) that were based on determinacies of time and space. In time-images the central "being" of action dissolves into the "may-being" of time, and the spatial metaphor of surface and depth transform into the temporal metaphor of all-becoming and everywhere stretched (1989, 31). Deleuze, following Derrida in introducing his notion of time-images, asserts everything is indeed a mere sign and time-images function like language (1989, 22): on the surface and without depth. "Crystal-image" is one of the main stylistic features in which these transformations are envisaged: "For there to be a crystal-image, the actual and the virtual must become indiscernible" (1989, 68–92).[4] In the simultaneous presence of parallels, the dividing line between the real and the virtual is obliterated. Alhambra as the time-image collage of fragments of movement-image cinema and Amber as the outside of time are crystal-images that gradually obliterate the reality of Eve and make her another parallel replication. Within the narrative structure of the story at the end, and unlike the conventional completion in movement-images, we go back to the beginning in circularity: "We see in the crystal the […] non-chronological time" (Deleuze 1989, 81/108–9). Amber is simultaneously Eve's past (she is like a younger Eve), present, and future (Eve becomes Amber). The conjunctive structure of the rhizome in Alhambra "and" Amber "and" Eve "preserves" time in *becoming,* which is also a *becoming minor* to the authoritative system of thought. As we can see, the rhizomatic art is able to change the passive postmodern archetype of the tired tourist to rhizomatic archetypes: the forger, the player, and the "deterritorized" artist, embodied by Smith's Amber, Alhambra, and at the end Eve who are able to disrupt and make change. Lea's observation that Smith's works are embodiments of "but" that leads to "creative possibilities of ambiguity" can thus be explained in *The Accidental's* rhizomatic form.

7 Conclusion

In this study it was described that with the temporal crisis of the postmodern era and the fall of metanarratives of meaningful progression, human beings were severed from a historical context, lost the concord between the beginning and the end, and, as result, were reduced to flattened insignificant middles. Like a tired tourist who satisfies herself with constant archiving as a validation of her identity, the postmodern subject aimlessly wanders around living advertised and preplanned experiences, finally being reduced to dead clichés.

[3] Deleuze's examples of time-images in cinema include Orson Wells' Citizen Kane and The Lady from Shanghai and works by Fellini and Antonioni.

[4] Other types of time images are opsigns, sonsigns, chronosigns, noosigns, and lectosigns, which are omitted here die to the focus of the research.

In this context the postmodern narrative becomes an act of survival by dismissing its suppositions of linearity and seamlessness and remains a source of assigning meaning to the individual human experience. Philosophers such as Derrida claim the two-dimensionality of fiction is the perfect medium for deconstructing the *metaphysics of presence* and thus welcoming the emergence of the excluded other. In line with Derrida's deconstruction of *being*, and informed by Deleuze's rhizomatic creative *becoming*, it is argued that postmodern fiction dismisses the arborescent structure of presence with its need for beginning and end, and replaces it with diverse, superficial, incorporeal, and accidental emergences. As the postmodern narrative is able to corporealize the Derridean supplement and Deleuzian "deterritorized" rhizomatic in its ontological deconstruction, it becomes the perfect medium for inventing forges that break the framing walls of dominant signifiers and open up blank spaces for authentic, minor, and subversive emergences.

Through rhizomatic characters of Amber and Alhambra that deconstruct the metaphysics of being and origin, and in line with the Derridean potentials of the non-truth of the fictional, *The Accidental* undermines the organic form of narration that lead to exclusion and hierarchization, and develops characters that emerge not from essences and roots that are prior to language but on the surface of language and fiction with no claim to depth and truth. Their fictive emergence seems to be supplementary to the real and the present, but they lead to "creative possibilities of ambiguity" that undo paralyzing codifications. Alhambra and Amber are not truly born, they are "fictional" and "impossible", yet they engender multiple births and beginnings like themselves. As the paradoxical yet creative force, freeing Eve from her walls of assigned roles and fixating definitions, they obliterate the distinguishing line between real and virtual and substitute the verb "to be" with its certitude and temporal centrality with "becoming" as the possible supplementary. Perhaps the rhizomatic form is the new concord of our era, helping us to survive the depthlessness of our world, and to continuously reinvent ourselves as active agents. In Smith's optimistic glance to the future, the postmodern archetype of the tired tourist is substituted by a "deterritorized" and "minoterian" nomad artist and forger who, in a Deleuzian vein, embraces randomness, multiple presences, and the destructive yet creative state of becoming.

At the end it is worth mentioning that in *The Accidental* authenticity is found outside the walls of the flashing and fleeting spectacles of the simulacra, and within a more direct and creative encounter with the world and others. Since the first publication of the book in 2005, the virtual culture of spectacle has expanded even more and worked its way even deeper into our existence, marking another digital revolution. This makes us wonder if once again a new concord is required, perhaps one that uses the inescapable simulacra rhizomatically to subvert it.

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