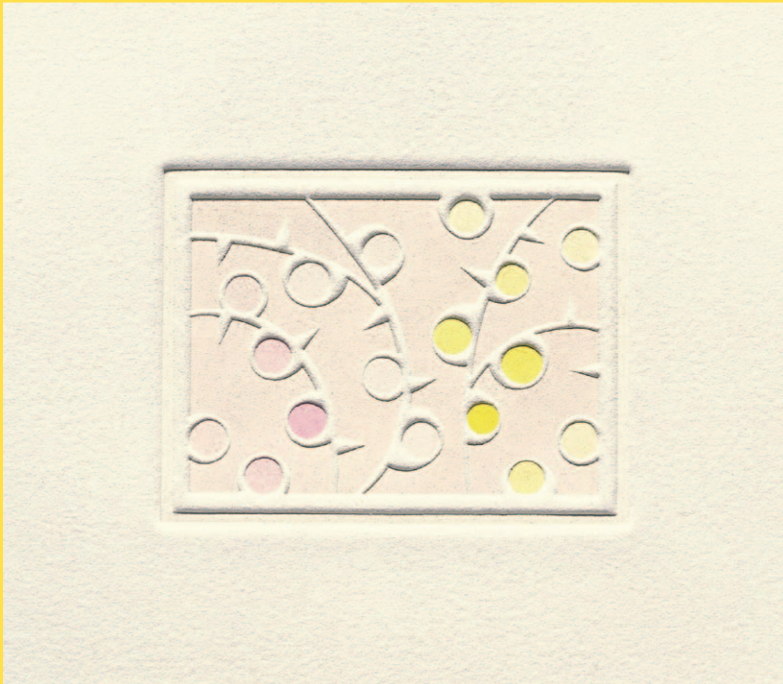
English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries



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Cultural Encounters with the English-Speaking World

Journal Editors: SMILJANA KOMAR and UROŠ MOZETIČ

Editors of ELOPE Vol. 12, No. 1: MONIKA KAVALIR and ANDREJ STOPAR

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Contents

PREFACE

Monika Kavalir, Andrej Stopar **5**

Cultural Encounters with the English-Speaking World
Kulturna srečevanja z angleško govorečim svetom

PART I: Cross-Cultural Landscapes

Weronika Gąsior **11**

Cultural Scripts and the Speech Act of Opinions in Irish English:
A Study amongst Irish and Polish University Students
Kulturni skripti in govorno dejanje izražanja mnenja v irski angleščini:
Raziskava med irskimi in poljskimi študenti

Monika Kavalir **29**

House and Home across Cultures
Hiša in dom v različnih kulturah

Lili Cavalheiro **49**

Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELF Communication
Razvijanje medkulturne komunikacijske kompetence v sporazumevanju v angleščini kot lingvi franki

Ljubica Matek **61**

Teaching Horror Literature in a Multicultural Classroom
Poučevanje grozljivk v večkulturnem razredu

PART II: Intercultural Landscapes

José Duarte 77

The Importance of Being 'On the Road': A Reading of the Journey in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) by Wes Anderson

Zakaj je pomembno biti »na poti«: Branje popotovanja v Darjeeling Limited *(2007) Wesa Andersona*

Jasna Poljak Rehlicki 91

Us vs. Them: Cultural Encounters in Warzones through Reading American War Literature

Mi proti njim: Kulturna srečevanja na vojnih območjih skozi branje ameriške vojne književnosti

Andrej Stopar 105

Encounters with National Stereotypes in Foreign Language Teaching: Adjectives Describing Americans

Srečevanja z nacionalnimi stereotipi v tujejezikovnem poučevanju: Pridevniki, ki opisujejo Američane

Janko Trupej 119

The 'Negro' in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men:* A Comparison of Socialist and Post-Socialist Strategies for Translating Racial Elements

»Zamorec« v delu Of Mice and Men *Johna Steinbecka: Primerjava socialističnih in postsocialističnih strategij za prevajanje rasnih elementov*

EPILOGUE

Jonathan Culpeper 137

Encounters: A Final Word

Kulturna srečevanja: Zaključna beseda

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS **141**

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Cultural Encounters with the English-Speaking World

The idea for the present volume grew out of a very successful series of summer schools bringing together students and staff from five different countries under the auspices of the Erasmus Intensive Programme "Cultural Landscapes: Negotiating Cultural Encounters with the English-Speaking World."[1] Focussing on the cultural aspects of the English-speaking world and on intercultural communication, this volume of *ELOPE* reflects both the main aims of the summer school and the fundamental mission of the journal to promote the research and discussion of linguistic and literary issues.

The papers in the present volume thus span not only different countries and ethnicities but also combine the traditional fields of English Studies – linguistics, literature, teaching and translation. What brings them together is the fact that they all take a close and critical look at the cultural differences and barriers encountered in interaction with English-speaking countries and the specificities of English-mediated intercultural communication. They acknowledge that "any definition of culture is necessarily reductionist" (Sarangi 2009, 87) and that the notion of culture should be seen as dynamic rather than static, internally heterogeneous rather than unified. The concept of Otherness, then, as used in the present volume, implies both blurred boundaries of what constitutes 'us' and 'them', as well as the awareness that "'we' are the others' other" (Cerqueira 2013 in Sarmento 2014, 605).

Somewhat in line with Braudel's (1980) classic criteria for the study of social groups, the volume is divided into two parts. The four papers in the first part – "Cross-Cultural Landscapes" – work on identifying individual cultural areas (which may be national, e.g., American, Croatian, British, Irish, Polish, Slovenian, or international, exploring English as a lingua franca) or various loci within their boundaries, including the creation of new pockets of shared culture. When several cultures are involved, this research is cross-cultural, looking at different domains across cultural borders.

Weronika Gasior's paper "Cultural Scripts and the Speech Act of Opinions in Irish English: A Study amongst Irish and Polish University Students" brings a detailed investigation into how opinions are expressed in Irish English by Irish and Polish native speakers. She discerns differences in the cultural scripts for opinions in each culture that reflect linguistic formulas as well as divergent sociopragmatic attitudes and shows the contrast between the Anglo focus on tolerance and the Polish rational approach.

In "House and Home across Cultures," Monika Kavalir chooses the notions of 'house' and 'home' as the starting point of her exploration of various American, British and Slovenian cultural practices and concepts. Her contribution discusses the size of people's dwellings, the use of light, colour and style, hygiene, class distinctions, and their attitudes to house and home. Relying on corpus and

[1] The summer schools were supported by Erasmus IP grants (ERA-IPR 04/11, 08/12, and 17/13) and held in Glasgow (2012), Swansea (2013), and Newcastle upon Tyne (2014). We are immensely grateful that we were able to work together with and learn from the following wonderful colleagues: Sandarenu Kumarasamy and Kathrin Luckmann from the University of Duisburg-Essen; Weronika Gasior from the University of Limerick; Lili Cavalheiro and José Duarte from the University of Lisbon; Anamarija Šporčič from the University of Ljubljana; and Ljubica Matek, Jasna Poljak Rehlicki, and Alma Vančura from the University of Osijek.

statistical data, Kavalir presents the intricacies of the links between language and culture, and shows that language cannot exist outside culture.

In "Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELF Communication," Lili Cavalheiro examines the characteristics of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and shows how interactants meet in a new cultural space where the concept of (intercultural) communicative competence (ICC) is an important goal for both frameworks. She provides a succinct but informative exploration of this notion and supplements it with examples of how ICC is reflected in ELF in the use of such strategies as backchanneling, negotiation of meaning, repetition, and self-repair, arguing for more attention to be devoted to developing such skills in all kinds of language pedagogy.

The final article "Teaching Horror Literature in a Multicultural Classroom," by Ljubica Matek, tackles the challenge(s) of discussing horror literature in the classroom. Drawing on some cognitive and emotional benefits of including horror texts in the syllabus, Matek rejects the reservations some teachers have about tackling macabre themes with their students. Moreover, by analysing Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and H. P. Lovecraft's stories, she demonstrates that teaching horror literature can be used as a means of deconstructing our preconceptions of the Other and creating a shared field centred on what is universal rather than different across people.

The second part of the volume – "Intercultural Landscapes" – brings four papers that pay attention primarily to the borrowings of cultural elements across cultural groups and the way this exchange is evaluated. This is intercultural research looking at actual encounters involving "new experiences mediated through new or additional languages and cultures" (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013, 48) and encompassing different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which can be perceived either positively or negatively.

José Duarte's essay "The Importance of Being 'On the Road': A Reading of the Journey in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) by Wes Anderson" invites us to join the author on the road and experience the cultural and personal landscapes explored in road movies. Duarte provides an overview of the road movie genre, discusses its evolution through decades, and mentions some of its most typical representatives. The focus of his analysis, however, is on an atypical road movie – the film *The Darjeeling Limited*. He claims that journeys such as the one presented in *The Darjeeling Limited* matter because they give us the opportunity to learn about ourselves and the Other.

"Us vs. Them: Cultural Encounters in Warzones through Reading American War Literature," the paper by Jasna Poljak Rehlicki, presents the significance of understanding different cultures and civilizations from the military perspective. Drawing on her reading of American novels about the wars in Vietnam and Iraq, she analyses the cultural encounters that the protagonists in her corpus of (non-)fiction works have with their adversaries. Poljak Rehlicki concludes that cultural training aimed at winning a war will rarely help one culture appreciate the other.

What are the main stereotypes Slovenian university students of English have about US Americans? In his article "Encounters with National Stereotypes in Foreign Language Teaching: Adjectives Describing Americans," Andrej Stopar takes as his starting point research done in the USA and adapts it to gauge Slovenian students' reactions, investigating not only which stereotypes are present but also how they differ in their content and (positive/negative) connotations compared to the original studies, thus providing valuable information for ELT pedagogy in Slovenia and ideas for similar undertakings elsewhere.

Janko Trupej's paper "The 'Negro' in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*: A Comparison of Socialist and Post-Socialist Strategies for Translating Racial Elements" discusses John Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* and its three existing Slovenian translations in the light of racial discourse. Aside from individual translators' choices, the analysis of micro- and macrostructural shifts with regard to racial terms such as 'nigger' and 'negro' shows how social and cultural circumstances, such as a socialist outlook or the relations between the then Yugoslavia and the USA, can influence the style and either suppress or accentuate ideological elements present in a work of literature.

Looking at a number of domains and contexts, the papers included complement each other in interesting ways. Once cross-cultural differences are identified, they will logically be considered as potential sources of problems (or benefits) in intercultural communication, and any investigation into intercultural encounters as shifts in values and affective factors necessarily builds on cross-cultural analysis. The two parts of the volume thus form a continuum rather than a dichotomy and the two approaches naturally intertwine. Similarly to other projects exploring intercultural communication (e.g., Culpeper, Crawshaw, and Harrison 2008 or Žegarac and Spencer-Oatey 2013), it can be seen here as well that research into actual cultural encounters informs the theory behind it and vice versa.

Intercultural communication is often linked to miscommunication and it should not be forgotten that, quite apart from theoretical considerations, "it is human beings bearing the whole burden of culture-in-communicating as individuals, who meet, converse, talk, have conflicts, struggle, i.e., communicate in face-to-face interaction" (Hinnenkamp 2009, 186). It is therefore our fervent hope that the insights provided by the authors (helped by a great many reviewers, to whom we offer our sincere thanks) will not only make a difference in the lives of students and staff who participated in the summer school project but will also contribute to the field and benefit the public at large.

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Editors of ELOPE Vol. 12, No. 1

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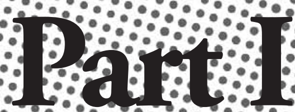

Part I

Cross-Cultural Landscapes

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Cultural Scripts and the Speech Act of Opinions in Irish English: A Study amongst Irish and Polish University Students

ABSTRACT

Studies in pragmatics have been limited to a handful of illocutionary acts such as requests, apologies or compliments, and opinions remain underrepresented in the existing literature. In this paper I present the results of a study of opinions in Irish English, conducted in an intercultural environment of Irish-Polish interactions. Departing from a traditional approach of speech act realisation studies, I applied the theory of *cultural scripts* to analyse opinions. In contrasting the Irish and Polish formulas for expressing opinions, as well as sociopragmatic attitudes towards this speech act, a difference in the cultural scripts for opinions in each culture was observable. Apart from already documented Polish frankness in opinions, the study discovered also a rational approach to presenting good arguments to support one's assertions among the participants. In relation to the Irish script for opinions, the findings are in line with previous classifications of opinions in Australian English, showing a certain level of variational uniformity amongst the English-speaking cultures in this regard.

Keywords: opinions; Irish English; cultural scripts; Polish; intercultural pragmatics

Kulturni skripti in govorno dejanje izražanja mnenja v irski angleščini: Raziskava med irskimi in poljskimi študenti

POVZETEK

Dosedanje raziskave na področju pragmatike so se omejevale na zgolj nekaj ilokucijskih dejanj, na primer na prošnje ali zahteve, opravičila in poklone, medtem ko so mnenja v obstoječi literaturi slabše zastopana. V članku so predstavljeni rezultati študije mnenj v irski angleščini, ki je bila izvedena v mednarodnem okolju irsko-poljske interakcije. Za razliko od tradicionalnejšega pristopa k raziskavam realizacije govornih dejanj je tu za analizo mnenj uporabljena teorija *kulturnih skriptov*. Skozi primerjavo irskih in poljskih formul za izražanje mnenj ter sociopragmatičnih stališč do tega govornega dejanja se pokaže razlika med kulturama pri kulturnih skriptih za mnenja. Poleg že dokumentirane poljske odkritosti v mnenjih razkriva študija tudi racionalni pristop k predstavljanju dobrih argumentov za podporo lastnih trditev nasproti drugim udeležencem. Ko gre za irski skript za mnenja, se ugotovitve ujemajo s predhodnimi klasifikacijami mnenj v avstralski angleščini in tako v tem oziru kažejo na določeno stopnjo variacijske uniformnosti med angleško govorečimi kulturami.

Ključne besede: mnenja; irska angleščina; kulturni skripti; poljščina; medkulturna pragmatika

Cultural Scripts and the Speech Act of Opinions in Irish English: A Study amongst Irish and Polish University Students[1]

1 Introduction

The social and linguistic landscape of Ireland has changed dramatically in the last decade. Ireland saw a boom of inward migration after the 2004 European Union expansion, which attracted many workers from the new member states as a result of economic prosperity known as the Celtic Tiger. One of the largest immigrant groups that speak a language other than English has been the Polish community, which by 2011 increased to 122,585 (Central Statistics Office 2012, 7), despite the economic downturn after 2008. This cultural and linguistic contact between Irish and Polish communities also inspired the research described here.

Politeness across cultures has been the focal point of researchers in numerous studies investigating how people 'do things with words' in different speech communities. Some of the most documented aspects have been requests and apologies, which can be formulated in many ways in different cultures and languages. Problems usually occur when formulas which work perfectly in one language (such as the imperative for requests in Polish) are transferred or translated into another one in which they are not the preferred form, such as English (see Zinken and Ogierman 2013). Repetitive occurrences of linguistic transfers lead to stereotyping and miscommunication. In some cases, language may be used to actually cause offence, and impoliteness studies (namely, by authors such as Culpeper (2011)) investigate how 'rude' language functions. However, in general, misunderstandings are more often than not unintentional and cross-cultural studies help us to understand how and why they come about. Moreover, cross-cultural pragmatic research can also prescribe ways to overcome differences in the quest of building more harmonious multicultural societies. In fact, the topic of politeness has been attracting the attention of the general public too, recent cross-cultural research being reported in newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* (Doughty 2012).

When discussing intercultural communication, another interesting area to study would be casual conversations. In such situations, people usually tell stories and jokes, gossip or exchange opinions (see Eggins and Slade 1997). Incidentally, in reference to the Irish and Polish cultures in contact, opinions are also the type of talk where different linguistic and cultural preferences can be identified. 'Pity him who makes his opinions a certainty' says an old Irish proverb guiding us in knowing the difference between an opinion and a fact ("World Proverbs: Proverbs with Opinion" 2005–2013). But no such proverb exists in Polish. Additionally, previous research suggests that speakers of Polish often overstate, while speakers of English tend to understate their opinions (Wierzbicka 1985, 163). An important question to ask is what happens when the two cultures and languages meet, specifically in reference to the high number of Polish people living in Ireland. Furthermore, speakers of Irish English (henceforth IrE) are said to be indirect and avoid disagreement even more than those of other English-speaking nations (Kallen 2005b, 53). These differences could result in a sociocultural clash between Polish and Irish speakers exchanging opinions. Comparing how Irish and Polish speakers of English express opinions can indeed shed light on the linguistic and cultural differences between them.

[1] This article is based on the author's PhD thesis (Gąsior 2014), University of Limerick, with minor parts reproduced verbatim.

The cultural scripts for opinions presented here are taken from a broader investigation of opinions in IrE in contrast with Irish-Polish interactions (Gąsior 2014). In this paper I zoom in on the analysis within the cultural scripts framework, which should allow me to offer a new perspective on opinions and an opportunity to refer also to the 'bigger picture' by zooming out and discussing the characteristics of Irish politeness and opinions as a speech act in English.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Prelude

Given the importance of the concept of culture in this paper, a working definition of the term is due. Since the main theoretical framework in this paper is that of Natural Semantic Metalanguage and cultural scripts, I also adopt Wierzbicka's definition of the term (which she, in turn, introduces following Geertz 1979, 89, quoted in Wierzbicka 1997, 20–21): "The culture concept to which I adhere denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitude towards life."

Furthermore, Wierzbicka argues that "language – and in particular, vocabulary – is the best evidence of the reality of 'culture' in the sense of a historically transmitted system of 'conceptions' and 'attitudes'" (1997, 21). This is an especially good object of study as both language and culture are heterogeneous and changeable. Keeping this in mind, the discussion provided in this study should be seen as only a snapshot of the cultures and languages involved, providing an insight into one particular aspect and not a definite classification of the nations discussed here.

In order to provide a sound basis for the discussion, I firstly review relevant characteristics of opinions in the Irish and Polish traditions, the research background, and offer an overview of the theory of cultural scripts. After that, I turn to the details of the empirical study carried out. Later, the presentation of research results and their accompanying examples is followed by a discussion and a conclusion.

2.2 Opinions

Studies in pragmatics have identified opinions as a possible point of friction between Polish and Anglo[2] cultures. Opinions in Polish are expressed "fairly forcefully" and they are rather similar to statements of fact (Wierzbicka 1985, 160). Furthermore, being statements of 'truth', opinions in Polish are not typically introduced by 'I think', 'I believe' or 'in my view'. On the other hand, in English "the difference between fact and opinions is usually expressed lexically, with opinions containing either expressions of modality, or appraisal lexis" (Eggins and Slade 1997, 193–94). The preference for differentiating between opinions and facts in English to some extent reveals that there may be more deeply engrained presumptions about one's right to an opinion and preferences for expressing them. Wierzbicka (2003, 44) summarised this cultural Anglo value by saying that "in English, hedged opinions go hand in hand with hedged, indirect questions, suggestions or requests. People avoid making 'direct', forceful comments as they avoid asking 'direct', forceful questions or making 'direct', forceful requests."

[2] Following Wierzbicka (2006), the term 'Anglo' is used here to denote the linguistic and cultural heritage of the inner-circle of Englishes (synonymously to the use of term 'Anglo-American'). However, some aspects of Irish English may not fall under the category 'Anglo', showing uniqueness to the Irish context and derivation not traceable to the 'Anglo' culture.

Conversely, the confrontational style in Polish may seem overly direct or even rude to outsiders. However, as Rakowicz (2009, 9) concluded, "the prevailing wisdom is […] that if we all agreed, we would have nothing to talk about. If there is disagreement, discussion is possible."

The Anglo preference for indirectness and respect for one's autonomy is reflected in a rather elaborate framework of hedges in English. Everyday conversations are full of expressions such as 'kind of', 'I think', 'well', 'perhaps', 'rather', 'I mean', 'somehow', 'I guess'. "Polish [on the other hand] tends to overstate (for emphasis) rather than understate. In Polish, opinions are expressed directly, forcefully and, one might say, dogmatically; in English, they tend to be expressed tentatively and to be clearly distinguished from statements of fact" (Wierzbicka 1985, 163). Comparing French and English, the same dichotomy has been pointed out by Mullan (2010, 59), who claims that "expressing opinion is highly valued among French speakers, whereas Australian English speakers may remain noncommittal for the sake of social harmony or at least do not impose their opinion on their interlocutor." A similar point was put forward by Brown and Levinson (1987, 116), who assigned the hedging of opinions in English to the positive politeness strategies, "so as to make one's opinion safely vague" and minimise disagreement. As the authors further explained, hedges, such as 'sort of', 'like' or 'in a way' "may be used to soften face-threatening acts of suggesting or criticizing or complaining, by blurring the speaker's intent" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 116). This may also be applied to expressing opinions.

Generally speaking, English-speaking cultures conceal their true feelings to maintain a more pleasant interaction on the surface since sharp opinions are believed to disrupt "social conviviality" (Stewart and Bennett 1991, 150). Wierzbicka (1985, 154) suggested this particular cultural assumption was reflected in English speech as follows:

> Everyone has the right to their own feelings, their own wishes, their own opinions. If I want to show my own feelings, my own wishes, my own opinions, it is all right, but if I want to influence somebody else's actions, I must acknowledge the fact that s/he, too, may have his/her feelings, wishes or opinions, and that these do not have to coincide with mine.

When it comes to 'agreeing to disagree' or 'compromising', Polish speakers appear to dislike the latter, that is, *iść na kompromis*. The word *kompromis* has a pejorative meaning in Polish suggesting a "moral weakness, a deplorable lack of firmness, a sell-out of values" (Wierzbicka 2003, 49). Similarly, being inflexible (*nieugięty*) has a positive connotation in Polish but it is negatively evaluated in English. Standing firmly by one's beliefs is a desirable attitude in Poland, while compromising is something undesired one "gives into" (Wierzbicka 1985, 164–65). On the other hand, in English, reaching a compromise can often sound like a goal, an objective that can be reached, even though it can also have some negative connotations (Kalisz 1993, 114). A book by Paul Super (1939, 75), an American immigrant in pre-World War II also described the Polish attitude to compromising by saying that "[the] Pole is a poor compromiser; in no aspect of life is he a more confirmed idealist than in his dislike to compromise."

In a similar account of experiences of an American in Poland, Klos Sokol talked about cultural and linguistic differences between the two nations, noticing that Americans tend to exaggerate positive aspects and minimise any negativity by hedging. Therefore, "when Americans say it was great, I know it was good. When they say it was good, I know it was okay. When they say it was okay, I know it was bad" (Klos Sokol 1997, 176). On the other hand, in Poland, these qualifiers are more moderate and the need to minimise speaking in negative terms may not be as pronounced.

Hoffman's (1989, 146) memories of learning English in Canada after emigrating from Poland as a teenager also point towards the issue of indirect, hedged opinions:

> I learn also that certain kinds of truth are impolite. One shouldn't criticize the person one is with, at least not directly. You shouldn't say, "You are wrong about that" – though you may say, "On the other hand, there is that to consider." You shouldn't say, "This doesn't look good on you," though you may say, "I like you better in that other outfit." I learn to tone down my sharpness, to do more careful conversational minuet.

Overall, the cultural preferences for direct expression of beliefs in Poland and a stronger preference for indirectness in the English-speaking world may be identified as a possible area of conflict. Since exchanges of opinions are often associated with disagreements and a juxtaposition of viewpoints, the way one engages in such face-threatening activities may lead to interpretations of interlocutor's strategies as being impolite in intercultural Anglo-Polish encounters. This possible threat was also an incentive to investigate opinions in this context.

2.3 Cultural Scripts

Traditional studies of how 'people do things with words' in different languages and cultures have been approached from the perspectives of speech acts and politeness studies, such as the seminal CCSARP study (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989). As an alternative approach, Goddard and Wierzbicka (2004) proposed a framework which provides an objective, universal language to study languages and cultures, the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (Wierzbicka 1996). The NSM can be then used to formulate *cultural scripts*, which are "a powerful new technique for articulating cultural norms, values and practices in terms which are clear, precise and accessible to cultural insiders and to cultural outsiders alike" (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004, 153).

The metalanguage of semantic primes or NSM consists of about 60 words and grammatical patterns which are thought to have their equivalents in all languages (Goddard 2008, 1). The lexical primes in the NSM include a minimal number of words in a series of categories, which together form a language sufficient to label different sociolinguistic phenomena and compare them between various languages and cultures in a systematic and objective way. In the NSM language, the substantives, for instance, include I, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING and PEOPLE; mental predicates are limited to THINK, KNOW, WANT and FEEL; while various other evaluators and descriptors are based on dichotomies of GOOD–BAD, BIG–SMALL, etc. (cf. Goddard 2002, 14). The language can be then used to represent different phenomena, especially abstract ideas, using the simplest words in the form of *cultural scripts*. Wierzbicka (2006, 23) described the theory of cultural scripts as a step forward from ethnography of speaking to "ethnography of thinking." The cognitive-semantic focus of cultural scripts opens a path to study social practices, such as speaking, in order to gain a deeper understanding of a particular society's attitudes and values.

The theory of cultural scripts stems from a universalist perspective and a belief that "we need to understand people (both individuals and social groups) in their particularity, but that we can understand them best in terms of what is shared, and that one thing that is shared is a set of universal human concepts with their universal grammar" (Wierzbicka 2006, 24).

However, despite the universality outlook, cultural scripts aim to discover emic understandings of cultures. Therefore, the universality of the cultural scripts theory is represented in the language used to describe cultures, presuming a common language with lexical universals and a universal grammar. The individual explorations of cultural traits in different societies, however, are not aimed at formulating universal theories.

The empirical focus on studying language as a reflection of culture is one of the biggest strengths of the cultural scripts theory. For instance, an examination of the semantic shift of the English word 'rather' across time can also reveal a shift in the value of hedging in the English culture. Whereas in pre-Shakespearean English 'rather' meant 'earlier', its meaning then shifted to being an 'anti-exaggeration device', reflecting a change in the need *not* to exaggerate in the English society (Wierzbicka 2006, 31). Consequently, a cultural script which reflects this need to avoid exaggeration could be formulated as the following:

> [people think like this:]
> sometimes when people want to know that something is big
> they say words like 'very big'
> sometimes when people want to know that something is bad
> they say words like 'very bad'
> it is not good if a person speaks [says things] in this way
> (Wierzbicka 2006, 31)

The initial research within the NSM and cultural scripts frameworks focused on analysing different cultures by their "key words," thus identifying sociocultural changes over time through chronological lexical analyses (Wierzbicka 1997). However, this approach has been criticised for trivialising national cultures (Ramson 2001) and presenting rather inconclusive results (Aitchison 1999). A methodological flaw often quoted was Wierzbicka's choice of sources for analysis, for instance, not consulting the Oxford English Dictionary in analysing English language/culture (Ramson 2001, 182). On the other hand, another decade of research into NSM and semantic primitives has evolved in the direction of more systematic tests, responding to earlier criticisms of "superficial analyses" and "hard to pin down frameworks" (Aitchison 1999, 88). Moreover, the use of corpus analysis and established approaches in lexicography can help to complement and strengthen the NSM and cultural scripts framework (such as Mullan 2010). Further application of the framework to other cultures, languages and speech acts should also be seen as an attempt to validate and test the value of this approach (cf. Murray and Button 1988).

In conclusion, the NSM and cultural scripts can be quite helpful in supplementing politeness research and speech act studies. The focus on drawing a link between language use and the underlying cultural values behind the use could be seen as also drawing a link between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. However, its biggest advantage is that it allows explaining complex cultural concepts with great clarity. Thanks to this transparency, the theory of cultural scripts is a paramount element in the discussion of the results of my study.

3 The Study

3.1 Participants and Data

The data for analysis of opinions were gathered through experimental methods (open role-plays and focus groups), which allowed good control of variables and provided comparable sets of records in the two groups investigated. The interactional role-play data were gathered in two linguistic groups communicating in English; one consisting of Polish-Irish pairings and the other recording interactions of Irish-Irish dialogues. This was supplemented with focus group interviews which explored issues of sociopragmatic attitudes and awareness in expressing opinions. A mixed-method

approach allowed for a more comprehensive study of opinions and drawing a stronger link between the linguistic role-play data and the sociopragmatic information from the focus groups.[3]

The sample in this study was selected using a mixture of purposeful and snowball sampling (Patton 2002, 243). The selection criteria for participation were quite general, that is, native speakers of Polish as well as IrE were sought to take part. To ensure comparability between the linguistic groups, the sample was limited to students of a university in the West of Ireland, both undergraduate and postgraduate. In total, data were gathered from 32 informants, specifically, 8 Polish and 24 Irish participants. The average age of all participants was 24; with a somewhat male-prevailing gender distribution (every 2 out of 3 participants were male).

There were six role-play scenarios which varied in terms of Power, Distance and Imposition (PDI) scores, traditionally used in speech act studies. Some participants therefore took on roles of a Boss, Friend and a Stranger to represent the situational variability in the scenarios (in the Polish-Irish role-plays, only the Irish participants took on those roles).

The research participants were instructed to start interacting immediately after reading the cue card, continuing until the conversation reached its natural end. The focus group interviews that followed the role-plays had a semi-structured design and were conducted in Polish or English, according to the linguistic group. The main issues discussed in the focus groups centred around general rules of expressing opinions (in Ireland), the emotional involvement in expressing them, and issues such as ways of disagreeing agreeably.

The corpus of interactions collected amounted to approximately 27,000 words of role-plays and 16,500 words of focus groups. The relatively small amount of data allowed for a detailed qualitative analysis of the role-plays, which can be seen as an advantage in discourse studies (O'Keefe, Clancy, and Adolphs 2011, 28). This also permitted a thorough involvement of the researcher in the qualitative analysis of the focus groups. The results presented in this paper refer mostly to the focus group data.

3.2 Analytical Approach

The qualitative analysis of the role-play data was influenced by two main disciplines: the tradition of cross-cultural speech act studies (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989) and discourse analysis (Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton 2001). Therefore, the units of meaning investigated in the role-plays were designed similarly to the analytical framework for other speech act studies, focusing on head acts and supportive moves, with their derivatives. The qualitative analysis of politeness strategies focused on describing strategies in categories of face-threatening, face-saving and face-enhancing moves, and was supported at times with quantitative analyses using WordSmith Tools corpus analytical software (Scott 2006). Additionally, the concept of cultural scripts (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004) played a significant supplementary function in the analyses. While the originator (Wierzbicka 2006) of cultural scripts refers to them as a theory and a research technique, the concept was applied to the analysis of opinions as an additional analytical and explanatory perspective. Moreover, it allowed a clear cross-cultural comparison between Polish and Irish attitudes towards opinions.

The focus groups were analysed within a thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke 2006). A thematic analysis requires a strong interpretative involvement of the researcher, since it can entail

[3] The transcriptions were based on the LCIE corpus (Farr, Murphy, and O'Keefe 2004), VOICE corpus conventions (2007) and Jefferson (2004). To ensure easy readability, the pronoun I and proper nouns have been capitalised and punctuation typical of literary texts has been used. Commas signal short pauses; ellipses signal pauses typical in hesitant speech; laughter is represented with the @ symbol, and the equal sign = is used to to represent latched speech.

identifying themes expressed implicitly (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012, 10). After the initial identification of themes, later analysis can also include comparing code frequencies or "identifying code co-occurrence, and graphically displaying the codes within the data set" (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012, 10). However, the position of the researcher and the underlining theories which guide the interpretation of themes with reference to research questions play the key part in thematic analysis. In fact, as Braun and Clarke (2006) argued, the subjectivity of the analysis carried out by the researcher is the strength of thematic analysis, not a drawback. Carrying out the data collection and transcription phases ensured the researcher's high familiarity with the content of the focus groups and, consequently, a thorough involvement in the various stages of analysis.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Role-Play Results

While, in English, the difference between an opinion and a fact is believed to be quite clear, in analysing the role-play data structurally it appeared that the moves labelled as either *opinion* or *evidence* cannot be easily separated. While an opinion can stand by itself and does not need to be supported by evidence, the evidence move has more significance than just supporting the opinion. Evidence, in fact, acts as not only support for the opinion, but as an implied repetition of the opinion. Thus, the illocutionary strength of saying "I think Christmas products are on sale too early" can be almost the same as saying "It's only October" or "We haven't had Halloween yet" (one of the role-play scenarios discussed opinions about the Christmas hype in Ireland). Conceptually, the first utterance would count as an opinion, and the other two as evidence (since they are facts). However, the shared common knowledge between the interlocutors allows both to interpret the presentation of facts as grounding as well as the implied opinion in one move. By saying "It's only October," the speaker implies "thus, it is too early to have Christmas products in the shops." Moreover, many opinions and evidence were expressed implicitly, stretched over a number of turns or even allowed to drift off. This is not only a strategy for avoiding a face threat, but also the difficulty of translating feelings and beliefs (which opinions are meant to express) into words. The emotional investment in opinions may explain the presence of unfinished opinions, leaving the interlocutor to do the work of interpreting what the speaker meant.

As suggested earlier, the Polish style of expressing opinions may appear confrontational when compared to the Irish participants' strategies. The data analysis of the role-play revealed, for instance, that some of the Poles in my study positioned themselves as outsiders and demanded an explanation, rather than enquiring about an opinion from the Irish interlocutor (regarding the Christmas rush). Moreover, the preferred Irish strategy was to pose an open question about an opinion, "What do you think about *x*?" while Poles phrased the question with their opinion implied in the introduction, for instance "Don't you think *x*?"

Example 1. Scenario: Talking about getting a driving licence – Polish data.

> <Magda> Hi. I was thinking of getting driving licence. What do you think? <{Friend1 starts shaking head}> **Don't you think it's like very useful nowadays?** No?[4]

The "Don't you think *x*?" formulation puts more pressure on the interlocutor to agree and makes disagreement more difficult, thus requiring more complex facework (and perhaps also syntax). A disagreement to "Don't you think *x*?" nearly pleads for a hedged response such as "Well, actually, I

[4] The use of question tag 'No?' may be a pragmatic transfer from the Polish tag 'Nie?/ Co nie?'.

don't think *x*." This is because rhetorical questions in exchanges of opinions are arguably one of the strongest stance markers on behalf of the speaker. They are 'the truth', which is not expected to be 'negotiated' – and this is believed to be the ultimate weapon in arguments (Danielewiczowa 1991, 161). Without some softening devices, the disagreement could be compared to a counter-attack to the original 'opinion as a question' by firing back at the speaker. The less frequent use of this strategy in the Irish data suggests that it is not a preferred way of expressing opinions in IrE. Moreover, Polish opinions are believed to be expressed more dogmatically, without a strong emphasis on the subjectivity of the claims of the speaker or concern for the hearer. The use of "Don't you think *x*?" is an example of this preference among the Polish participants. The speaker's position is quite strong in uttering those words, suggesting they are right and that the hearer should see that he or she is wrong. This contrasts with the Irish preference for using introductory moves and indirectly enquiring about someone else's opinion. Additionally, further dialogues in the Irish data were often garnished with abundant hedging, hesitation, indirectness and concessive (dis)agreements.

Example 2. Scenario: Talking about getting a driver's licence – Irish data.

<Andy> Hi there. I went to see about getting my driver's licence, there, the other day.

<Friend1> Why?

<Andy> **You kinda- you kinda need one, like, you know.**

<Friend1> Yeah… I have no interest=

<Andy> =yeah=

<Friend1> =it's too expensive.

<Andy> 'tis alright=

<Friend1> =you have to get the lessons, like.

<Andy> 'Tis alright, but like, I suppose in the long run, you know, it'd be kinda great, probably gonna save me money. […]

The different face needs that are behind Irish/Polish preferences can potentially lead to the misinterpretation of each other's intentions in exchanges of opinions. Poles may think Irish 'beat around the bush' while the Irish may find Poles confrontational and direct. However, the risk of a serious breakdown in communication is not a threat to be concluded from the role-play data.

4.2 Focus Group Results

Dealing with disagreements was one of the most discussed issues in relation to exchanges of opinions in the focus groups. In terms of differences between themes raised while talking about reactions to disagreement the Irish groups mentioned emotional involvement in the topic, while the Polish groups focused on knowledge instead. The Irish participants mentioned, for instance, the importance of beliefs and folklore in shaping one's opinions (as opposed to facts). On the other hand, among Polish participants, reactions to disagreement were discussed in relation to determining the believability of the arguments presented by the interlocutor. The key words in the Polish groups were *argumenty* (points), *zargumentować* (to reason) and *wiedza* (knowledge). Another theme common to both groups was the focus on the interlocutor and putting oneself in their position. However, in the Irish groups, again, it had a stronger emotional dimension, stressing a conciliatory approach to the interaction. The relationship between the interlocutors was stressed as more important than being right or wrong. In the Polish group, on the other hand, putting oneself in the interlocutors' place had the aim of understanding their opinion to prepare a better counter-attack rather than empathising with them.

The most obvious difference emerging from the above summary is between understanding one's emotions and understanding one's opinion by analysing their arguments, which can be traced to previous studies of cultures according to uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede 1980, 1984). Thus, to Poles, who have a lower acceptance for uncertainty, facts are of a high importance in an exchange of opinions. The Irish culture, on the other hand, accepts uncertainty and *how* one came to form a certain view appears to be less important than the opinion itself. Furthermore, the emotional value of the opinion is what validates it, not the facts. As one Irish participant (in the role of Boss) said, "[It's not like you can] just develop a fact box and be able to bring it out every time […] You have to take every person's true position into account."

The two main themes that emerged in both the Irish and Polish groups as a typically Irish way of expressing opinions were the use of strategic approach and, in a sense, being 'politically correct', which allows speakers to be ambiguous in expressing their point of view. This means that a person can assess the situation (especially if they are not the first person to offer the opinion) and 'go either way'. This strategic approach is also seen in 'active listening' and acknowledging the other person's input with the use of formulaic expressions such as 'I see what you mean' – a strategy acknowledged and commended in one of the Polish focus groups:

Excerpt 1. Acknowledging interlocutor's point commended by a Polish participant.

> <Jurek> *Ale Irlandczycy… no ale oni tak fajnie bo coś im powiesz i oni na przykład się z tobą nie zgadzają to… Oh I see where you're coming from, BUT! I wprowadzają swój argument. I później ja mówię no zgadzam się z tym punktem ale nie z tym i tak… no nie zgodzimy się, no mówi się trudno. Może zgodzimy się następnym razem. Nie sądzę żeby to było coś wielkiego.*
>
> (But the Irish… it's nice because if you tell them something and they for example do not agree with you then… 'Oh I see where you're coming from, BUT!' and they introduce their argument. And then I say that I agree with this point, but not with that one and so… well, we won't agree, then tough. Maybe we'll agree next time. I don't think it's a big deal.)

The Irish groups also mentioned explicitly that in Ireland people expect hedging and indirectness to maintain the ambiguity and neutrality of opinions. Some participants assigned this attitude to the idea of a colonial master where "you do your work for them and it's yes sir, yes sir, and then talking behind their back… what a…"[5] Others mentioned political correctness where there is a "strong move towards being completely above board on everything." This results in people being almost afraid of expressing their opinions. One expression that fulfils this function is saying, "I don't know," which signals to our interlocutor that we do not wish to explore the topic further, meaning, "I'm not trying to say that I know the answer, but I'm trying to plant the seed that you mightn't know either." As one participant observed, "the amount of times yes and no would be put in the same sentence to correlate the same point by an Irish person would be massive."

The reluctance to express real opinions is also reflected in IrE in examples such as in the use of the verb 'to doubt', which, due to semantic shift, actually means to 'strongly believe' in IrE (Todd 1989, 34–35, 40). These types of semantic discrepancies between varieties of English can be a source of trouble for those who are unaware of them. However, the example of the verb 'to doubt' may also be just the tip of the iceberg when one considers the Irish fondness of indirectness. In fact, a short quote from one of the Irish focus groups summarises quite well the opaque and 'twisted' ways of speaking in Ireland:

[5] See Martin (2005) on indirectness and lack of self-revelation as the "legacy of colonialism" in Ireland.

Excerpt 2. Speaking indirectly in Ireland.

<Stranger2> […] People never say what they're actually thinking.

<Boss2> Or they say what they're NOT thinking=

<Stranger2> =Yes, and see what you're gonna think about it.

Overall, the results of both role-play and focus group data provided additional evidence for the already documented characteristics of Polish 'dogmatic opinions' and Irish preference for indirectness.

4.3 Discussion

Since the current study investigated exchanges of opinions, one of the most relevant scripts available in reference to English are those explaining the differences between the expressions 'I think' and 'I know' (in Australian English, AuE henceforth), as presented below.

'I think' vs. 'I know'

when I want to say something about something

it is good to think like this:

if I don't know something I can't say that I know it

if I think something about something,

I can say that I think like this, I can't say that I know it

(Goddard 2003, 131, quoted in Mullan 2010, 70)

This means that in Australian culture (and probably within the Anglo cluster), the difference between a fact and an opinion is quite clear. An opinion is subjective, and one should thus not express it as something certain, something they 'know' but rather more subjectively, that they 'think' or 'it seems to them that *x*'.

A study of the expression 'I think' in AuE further suggested a cultural script in relation to Australian culture and expressing opinions, which entails a whole set or 'rules':

it is not good for people always to say what they think

because of this, I do not always say what I think

there are things that I do not want to say

when I say what I think about something

I cannot say it like a thing that I know

I cannot say it like a thing that is true

if I do, people will think something bad about me

when I say what I think about something

it is good to say something like this:

'I think this

I know that other people don't have to think the same'

(Mullan 2010, 263)

Therefore, the script above explains how one should behave and what one can expect in Australian society with reference to exchanging opinions. For instance, "it is not good for people to always say what they think" expressed as advice could help a person to whom Australian culture is alien. Moreover, expressing an opinion as a fact can lead to someone being perceived as impolite; that is, "people will think something bad about me." The final part of the script also offers advice as to respecting others' opinions by simply stating that "other people don't have to think the same."

The use of cultural scripts allows making a connection between a language and its culture. Here, the expression 'I think' can be linked to existing values in Australian culture. The question is whether principles such as "it is not good for people to say what they think" can be applied to all English-speaking cultures, and, most importantly, to the Irish culture. Evidence from the focus groups points to these principles, suggesting that, indeed, the principles also apply to the Irish context. These are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Cultural scripts for opinions with Irish focus group data examples.

Cultural Script Principle	**Australian English Cultural Script (Mullan 2010, 263)**	**Irish Focus Group Example**
1	it is not good for people always to say what they think	<Dave> But… ehm… to give an opinion at the party about other individuals you should- you'd probably choose to keep it to yourself.
2	because of this, I do not always say what I think	<Stranger1> Yeah, but like when we first went into that situation, I knew immediately that I was going to start hedging… Like, I wouldn't walk right up to a stranger and I wouldn't expect them to walk right up to me and be like 'God! This is crap', you know that kind of a way. […]
3	there are things that I do not want to say	<R> So what sort of opinions is it better to keep to yourself? <Peter> With the party you couldn't really say why the fuck did she pick this place… <R> Mhm… <Peter> Like, you could I suppose, but you'd appear extremely rude… especially to a stranger.
4	when I say what I think about something I cannot say it like a thing that I know if I do, people will think something bad about me	<R> So what opinions do you think it's better to keep to yourself? […] <Boss3> Things that you don't know anything ABOUT. I know it didn't come up but I wouldn't start talking about anything I didn't know anything about 'cos then I'd seem like a fool.

5	when I say what I think about something I cannot say it like a thing that is true if I do, people will think something bad about me	<Friend1> I think if someone is always my way, my way, my way then you (would) just kind of make it a running joke about them, you know.
6	when I say what I think about something it is good to say something like this: 'I think this I know that other people don't have to think the same'	<Stranger2> […] I mean if somebody has a genuine difference of opinion ehm… fair enough. You know, we try and ehm… empathise where they're coming from sometimes but, you know, it DEPENDS again on the- on the issue. […] <Stranger2> And there's a point when in some arguments everyone is actually right but they're coming at it from a different angle. […]

In contrast, the above scripts may not fully correspond to the Polish script for thinking, and thus expressing opinions. The cultural preference for saying 'exactly' what one thinks is reflected in the Polish script for expressing opinions. The fundamental difference between a fact and an opinion echoes once again in how expressing opinions is approached by native speakers of English. Because opinions and facts are so epistemologically different, it is not expected that opinions should be based on facts. However, this sort of understanding may not be so clear in Polish. In fact the importance of presenting good arguments and facts discussed by Polish participants in the focus groups leads to the conclusion that opinions are meant to be based on facts. One possible interpretation of such preference is the unique script for 'opinions based on facts' with reference to Polish culture I propose below.

> When I say I think something
> I say it because I know something that is true and that I know
> OR
> When a person says they think something
> they say it because they know something that is true and that they know

Following this scheme, Poles approach an exchange of opinions from the principle that when "a person says they think something," that is, when they express an opinion, it is because they base their opinion on a fact. Thus, the basis on which an opinion and a fact is constructed appears to be quite similar – reality, an event, a phenomenon that can be proven to have happened or to exist. This is in direct contrast with the English script for a categorical difference between a fact and an opinion, which are linear opposites of each other on a subjectivity continuum. In Polish culture, on the other hand, one seems to be the result of the other (opinion is a result of facts). The focus group data suggest that there is a link between opinion and fact that has a causative dimension, or even a reversed causative dimension. That is, to Poles, opinions are somehow expected to be based on facts, thus supported by evidence in exchanges of opinions. In the English-speaking world, the basis for an opinion is a belief, whereas "facts are facts" and can be verified on grounds that opinions cannot (Wierzbicka 2006, 41–46). Furthermore, the process of placing an utterance

along a subjectivity continuum is a result of a shared mutual belief or a negotiation of meaning. Speakers who come from different cultures and languages may not share the same belief about what constitutes an opinion or a fact. Moreover, they may assign different value to opinions and facts, which is an issue emerging in the discussion with reference to Irish and Polish cultures.

While some semantic scripts about opinions in Polish culture and language have been explored, they deal mostly with the issue of expressing opinions honestly, for instance:

> Polish – it is good to say what I think
>
> Anglo – it is not always good to say to another person what I think
>
> about this person
>
> if I say it this person can feel something bad because of it
>
> (Wierzbicka 1999, 272)

Furthermore, in Polish honest opinions are expressed despite the fact that the addressee may not like what they hear, as the elaborated script suggests:

> (1) I want people to know what I think
>
> If I think that someone thinks something bad,
>
> I want to say it to this person
>
> (2) if someone says something to me
>
> I want to say to this person what I think about it
>
> if I think something bad about it,
>
> I want to say it to this person
>
> (3) If I think that you think something bad
>
> I want to say it to you
>
> I don't want you to think something bad
>
> (Wierzbicka 1994, 81)

Focusing on the last three lines of the script proposed by Wierzbicka, the need to 'correct' others ("I don't want you to think something bad," meaning 'wrong') is what stands out as different to the Anglo script. This characteristic sums up the Polish attitude towards perlocution and convincing the interlocutor, or correcting their point of view. The most common way to change someone's mind is to provide evidence which, in turn, will change their belief about something. This could explain the focus on presenting good arguments and trying to convince the interlocutor which emerged in the Polish focus groups.

Along the lines of the differences between 'knowing' and 'thinking' or 'reason' and 'emotion', another disparity between Polish and Irish attitudes became apparent, namely, compromising. Compromising is believed to be tied to a negative emotion in Polish, signalling a weakness of character, giving up and essentially losing an argument. However, it is said that in English it has more positive connotations, being seen as a result of negotiation, an objective to be reached when one's opinions differ (Wierzbicka 1985; 2003, 48–49). What the focus groups also revealed about compromising is a more rational approach to exchanges of opinions among Poles, who often talk about presenting arguments in a discussion. Consequently, when Poles fail to convince their interlocutor with the arguments presented and, subsequently, they are forced to compromise, it

feels like they have failed and thus compromise reluctantly. Standing one's ground is important and compromising is a result of the other person not convincing the interlocutor to their viewpoint, as expressed by one of the Polish participants: "… *no dobrze to jest twój punkt myślenia, to jest mój i zostajemy przy swoim, no nie przekonłeś mnie i tyle*" ("… okay, that's your point of view, this is mine and we agree to differ, you just didn't **convince** [author's emphasis] me and that's it").

In comparison, the Irish focus groups talked about taking the interlocutor's true position into account to empathise with them and try to understand them, stressing the emotional side of expressing opinions.

Excerpt 3. Empathise with your enemy.

> <Stranger2> […] empathise with your enemy. So see where they're coming from and, okay, don't agree with them, you know that there'll be no middle ground but try and get inside where they're coming from and realise that they have a certain- even if the guy knows himself that he's not right and that he's not gonna back down out of in a sense of losing face or feeling weaker so just, you know…

Therefore, when the Irish fail to understand a person, it is less of a lost battle because they tried their best to understand that person and not to make that person see their point. This attitude points to a sort of a paradox when it comes to cultural values, considering previous research on Polish and Irish cultures. On the one hand, there is the Irish (and Anglo-cluster) reluctance to expressing strong emotions, which is reflected in the fact that in Ireland people 'do not say what they really mean', but they try to emotionally empathise with their interlocutor. Feeling and believing is what makes an opinion valid. On the other hand, Polish culture allows for exposure of strong feelings, even if they are negative feelings, such as reprimanding someone in public spheres (Hoffman 1989, 438; Wierzbicka 1985, 16). However, it also pushes emotions to second plan in exchanging opinions, giving more value to rational evidence which validates opinions in Polish discussions. This latter rational attitude discovered in my data is an aspect which may be added to the previously described cultural scripts for opinions in Polish, as I propose earlier. The Irish script seems to reflect rather closely the script described with regards to the Australian variety of English on the general level. The uniqueness of IrE opinions may be then visible in the execution of such scripts in communication manifested in particular pragmatic strategies such as IrE discourse markers or hedges.

5 Conclusion

In my paper I have argued that opinions described in terms of cultural scripts for expressions 'I think' and 'I know' in IrE show characteristics similar to those described with reference to AuE. That is, there is a clear difference between opinions and facts which must be signalled in communication, and the inherent respect for opinions of others and one's own honour by not expressing subjective statements as facts. In contrast, in Polish opinions, the principle of frankness may override other politeness maxims (such as indirectness), and Polish speakers of English may transfer these strategies into English. Furthermore, the distinction between fact and opinion in Polish culture may not reflect the Anglo rules; rather, the results suggest that in Polish opinions may need to be supported by facts to be valid.

The consequences of these differences may result in misinterpreted intentions of speakers in Polish-Irish English-medium exchanges of opinions. On the one hand, the Irish side in such dialogues may

find the Polish style too direct and confrontational or even dry because of the stress on presenting facts. On the other hand, Poles may find Irish interlocutors rather vague and uncommitted to their opinions. While a breakdown in communication is not a conclusion to be drawn from the results, a certain level of possible emotional miscommunication should be noted. On a positive note, the indication of the existence of the differences in attitudes, provided by this research, should also be seen as the first step in the process of the two cultures understanding each other better.

Regarding the limitations of the current study, firstly, it should be acknowledged that using a larger number or participants would have allowed me to make stronger generalisations. However, in compromising scale for focus, research gains integrity and data of similar size to the corpus gathered in the current study have been reported in the field of discourse analysis in Ireland (Palma Fahey 2005; Vaughan 2009). In addition, it is important to note that gathering a corresponding corpus of Polish-Polish interactions would have added further value to the contrastive aspect of comparing speech act behaviour between different cultures. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies should aim to triangulate data to address both cross-cultural as well as intercultural paradigms in similar research.

The conclusions and boundaries of this study open a number of avenues for future research. In the first place, it is important to mention the value of using spoken data in researching politeness. Role-plays provided rich material for analysis in the present study. However, while the interactions recorded in the role-plays allowed for a balanced comparison between the two linguistic groups, future studies should aim to use naturally occurring data and strive for a larger sample. Collecting naturally occurring samples would also provide richer data for corpus analysis, especially in contrasting Irish strategies with large, international corpora.

Another suggestion for future research refers to the application of alternative analytical frameworks. The fields of Interactional Sociolinguistics or Conversational Analysis could provide an opportunity to analyse opinions from a structural-sequential perspective. Furthermore, the NSM and concept of cultural scripts could enrich the study of opinions by providing an unbiased, intercultural clarity in describing and analysing opinions across languages and cultures. Further explications of the speech act *set,* and perhaps extending description to a variety of contexts and modes, could provide an extensive classification of opinions.

As a concluding remark, it may be important to note that research in cross-cultural pragmatics has been limited to a few speech acts, and clearly there is a need for new speech acts to be investigated. The study described here has been intended as a small step in addressing this apparent gap in our knowledge of intercultural communication with the hope of opening an avenue for further research into opinions and cultural scripts.

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House and Home across Cultures

ABSTRACT

Based on the assumption that language and culture are inextricably linked, the paper looks at some characteristics of the domain that can be labelled 'house and home' in the British Isles and North America, and contrasts it in particular with the situation in Slovenia(n). It examines the construction materials used, the size of people's dwellings, the use of light, colour and style, hygiene, class distinctions, and the attitude to house vs. home, showing that like almost any concept in any language, the notions of house and home are culturally determined experiences of time and space – they are not coincidental but have to do with structural traits of the three cultures. In addition, a corpus analysis of expressions to do with house and home is carried out to demonstrate the intimate link between language and culture and to show that mastery of a language goes hand in hand with understanding the target society/societies.

Keywords: language and culture; British culture; American culture; Slovenian culture; collocations

Hiša in dom v različnih kulturah

POVZETEK

Članek temelji na predpostavki, da sta jezik in kultura neločljivo povezana, in na tej osnovi obravnava nekatere značilnosti domene, ki jo lahko poimenujemo »hiša in dom«, na Britanskem otočju in v Severni Ameriki ter jo primerja s slovensko situacijo. Ob podrobnejšem pregledu gradbenih materialov, velikosti stanovanj, rabe svetlobe, barv in slogov, higiene, razlikovanja med družbenimi razredi in odnosa do hiše v primerjavi z domom je pokazano, da sta, kot skoraj vsak koncept v vsakem jeziku, pojma hiše in doma kulturno določeni izkušnji časa in prostora – tu ne gre za naključje, temveč za povezavo s strukturnimi značilnostmi obravnavanih kultur. Razpravo dopolnjuje korpusna analiza izrazov, povezanih s hišo oziroma domom, ki jasno pokaže tesno povezavo med jezikom in kulturo ter ponazori, kako pomembno je razumevanje ciljne kulture oziroma kultur za obvladovanje jezika.

Ključne besede: jezik in kultura; britanska kultura; ameriška kultura; slovenska kultura; kolokacije

House and Home across Cultures

1 Introduction

When it comes to the sphere of house and home, the differences between cultures are noticeable enough for migrants of any kind – travellers, expatriates, and others – to marvel at. It is easy to look in consternation at the cylindrical pillow on your bed in France, or to wonder why it is your Slovenian hosts want to force slippers on you as you enter their home. These same differences may not be quite so accessible to students of a particular language and culture abroad, however, as they are not physically confronted with them. Furthermore, even when outsiders are aware of the intricacies of domestic life in a particular corner of the world, understanding where they stem from and how they fit into the context of that culture may be beyond their grasp.

Taking as granted that language and culture are closely linked, the paper examines some characteristics of the domain that can be labelled 'house and home' in the British Isles and in North America, and contrasts them in particular with the Slovenian language-and-culture (in terms of Byram, Morgan et al. 1994). Like almost any concept in any language, these notions are culturally determined experiences of time and space. Thus, to be able to study them in another culture, one must necessarily become aware of one's own cultural concepts in the field. A major part of this undertaking therefore revolves around conceptualising differences between the individual's own culture and the target culture.

The purpose of the paper is two-fold. First, it examines the domain of house and home to show that there are considerable differences between the three cultural milieux, and that these differences are not coincidental but have to do with structural traits of the three cultures. Second, it uses a corpus analysis of the expressions involved to demonstrate the link between language and culture in this specific area and to show that mastery of a language goes hand in hand with understanding the target society/societies.

2 Culture and Its Relationship to Language

For the purposes of this article, culture is understood as "a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour" (Spencer-Oatey 2008, 3). The groups in question correspond to the American, British, and Slovenian societies.[1]

It is easy enough to start listing specific traits of an individual society that make it stand apart when compared with other cultures, but it takes a greater effort to see how they are interrelated and how they connect in a dynamic system that is the "'grammar' – or 'mindset' or 'ethos' or '*gemeingeist*' or 'cultural genome' or whatever you want to call it" (Fox 2001, 400) of that culture. Offering such an overview is well beyond the scope of this paper and yet it sheds light on the place that house and home take in the cultural network of a particular society – somewhat in the spirit of cultural relativism, which sees a culture as a "social world that reproduces itself through enculturation" and naturally engenders ethnocentrism, that is the belief that one's values and practices are "uniquely satisfying and superior to all others" (Brown 2008, 364–65).

[1] Where applicable, reference is made to individual 'subcultures' (for instance, the Scottish culture); most of what is described here as 'British' is prototypically English (cf. Fox 2001, 21) but applies throughout the British Isles.

Importantly, the approach taken here should not be understood as essentialist or nationist, as it does not assume a straightforward member/non-member interpretation of a collective identity for all citizens of a country or region. Instead, the way the British/American/Slovenian culture is described should be seen as an abstract social group with considerable dynamism in its membership and in a creative relationship with a number of other cultural identities. An individual living in one of these societies can thus exhibit the characteristics described fully, partly, or not at all, but this does not mean that they do not hold true for the society as a whole.

How are language and culture related? While there have been claims that there is a strong dichotomy between language and culture, and the latter has at times been seen as "contents conveyed by language, but separate from language" (as discussed in Penz 2001, 103), nowadays the great majority of scholars (for instance, in Senft, Östman, and Verschueren 2009; Trosborg 2010; Hager 2011; Son and Dashwood 2011), and indeed the public at large, agree that language and culture are intimately linked. The relationship seems to be very complex, however, and there have been different views on the directionality of the relationship.

There are many examples of language being used differently across societies and subcultures within societies, and the different pragmatics give rise to different language systems (for instance, in terms of honorifics, kinship vocabulary, etc.) or sublanguages (for instance, with marked differences according to register). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, on the other hand, is traditionally taken to claim also that language influences thought, and thus culture. The present study makes no such claims, but it does relate to the weak version of the hypothesis, acknowledging that "there are cultural differences in the semantic associations evoked by seemingly common concepts" (Kramsch [1998] 2014, 13).

Crossing boundaries from one language to another, culture will inevitably enter the fray, and there is fruitful interaction taking place between cultural awareness and language awareness, which are "both seen as essential aspects of communicative competence and inseparable from it" (Fenner 2001, 7). This acknowledgement has become particularly important in the field of language learning and teaching: "Since language and culture are inseparable, we cannot be teachers of language without being teachers of culture – or vice versa" (Byram, Morgan et al. 1994, vii).[2]

Building on prototype theory (Rosch 1978), one could say that in their lexicon, a Briton, a U.S. American and a Slovenian have specific prototypical mental representations of what a house or a home is, and that these concepts overlap to a certain extent. There is often enough of a match for them to think they are referring to exactly the same notions when some important details might be different. These differences can be a source of misunderstandings – particularly because speakers communicate under the assumption that 'they are talking about the same thing'.

To test the hypothesis about the relatedness of language and culture in this domain, the notions of 'house' and 'home' (*hiša* and *dom* in Slovenian, respectively) are investigated with the help of a corpus analysis where appropriate (not all topics lend themselves to a corpus investigation, however). For British English, the British National Corpus (BNC – 100 million words covering the period between 1960 and 1993; Burnard 2007) is used utilising the BNCweb platform; searches for American English are done using the online Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA – 450 million words covering the period between 1990 and 2012; information

[2] While it is recognized that learner identities are fluent, the paper does not touch upon identity changes occurring when acquiring a new language, or on affective factors influencing the process, such as "social distance" and "psychological distance" (Schumann 1976 in Holliday, Hyde, and Kullman [2004] 2006, 80–81).

given as part of the corpus interface); and the online corpus Gigafida (600 million words covering the period between 1990 and 2011; Amebis, n.d.) is used for Slovenian.[3] If possible, standard two-tailed statistical tests based on Z scores are carried out (α=0.01); because these play only a supporting role in the discussion, technical details are kept to a minimum.

3 What's in a House?

Houses are not mere assemblages of bricks, roofs, rooms, doors and furniture; rather, the notion is bound to a particular time and place – and in fact every aspect mentioned can be questioned when looking at cultures across the world. Shakespeare's Juliet claims that "that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet"; here, it is partly the name and the function that unites houses and homes across the world, rather than their structure. This can be seen in a number of examples, ranging from the foundations to the decorations, that are supported here with qualitative and quantitative data.[4]

3.1 Masonry Construction vs. Timber-Framed Construction

Whether or not a house is made with bricks depends on the individual builder, of course, but different parts of the world have very different inclinations. In the United States, the predominant method in constructing a house is timber-framed construction, where structural timber is used for the load-bearing part of the walls (American Forest and Paper Association 2001, 3). In the United Kingdom, masonry construction, also known as brick and block construction, has been the method traditionally used, but timber-framed construction is currently the fastest growing construction method and its share is approximately a quarter of the market (Brinkley 2009; Structural Timber Association 2014–2015), despite frequent concerns regarding fire safety (for instance, Dunton 2014). There is considerable variation present also within the United Kingdom as in some regions stone houses may still be common and Scottish homes specifically have traditionally been built with timber – in fact about two thirds of all new homes constructed in Scotland are timber-framed (UK Timber Frame Association 2010, 2).

In Slovenia, masonry construction has traditionally been the norm and civil engineering students and professionals[5] tend to sneer at American claims that timber-framed construction enables "[their] nation to have the world's best housed population" (American Forest and Paper Association 2001, 3), or that brick is a material of the past – with some U.S. educational materials only giving wood as an appropriate material to build a house with (for instance, in WGBH Educational Foundation 2000–2001). Nevertheless, the Slovenian public is becoming more open to the idea and wood-product based construction now has a 10% market share ("Intervju: Zdi se mi potratno, da bi si zgradil hišo iz opeke in betona" 2014), with the proportion of people aged 25–40 expressing a preference for timber-framed construction over masonry construction reportedly rising from 34% in 2006 to 42% in 2011 (Kitek Kuzman, Kušar, and Hrovatin 2007, 35; Kitek Kuzman and Vratuša 2011, 32). This shows that changes in perception are possible. Similarly, the growing demand for timber-framed construction in the UK is proving false such assertions as the one about masonry construction being "ingrained in [the British] national psyche" (The SelfBuild Guide 2009–2013).

[3] All queries involve lemmas rather than words.

[4] Due to differences in the methodologies used by different organizations, numerical data are not necessarily directly comparable and should be taken as indicative of trends rather than reflecting exact statistical differences.

[5] Based on the author's experience teaching at the Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering, University of Ljubljana.

Based on the predominant trait in the culture they come from, individuals as a rule find it easier to see the advantages of what they are familiar with. This may be understandable but is also a good example of how what is known and common within a culture becomes the norm and acquires inherent superior moral value. Clearly, both methods of construction have their advantages and disadvantages according to the particular situation and locale (including the greater cost of masonry construction, differences in availability of wood, etc.), but it is easy for people – even construction professionals – to fall into the trap of assuming that what they are used to is necessarily better. Furthermore, even such details as the material used for construction may be tied to broader cultural practices – Šabec and Limon (2001, 91), for instance, link the prevalence of timber-framed construction in the USA to the idea of "temporariness" and a greater mobility present in that country compared to Europe.[6]

The disparity between these cultural practices is to some extent reflected in the language as well. In timber-framed houses the wood is hidden inside the walls and we should not therefore expect Americans to talk significantly more about 'wooden houses'. When we turn our attention to masonry construction, however, the situation is noticeably different. In the vicinity (defined as a window span of five places to the left or right) of *hiša* (house), the Slovenian corpus Gigafida returns 276 instances of *opeka* (brick, n.), 132 instances of *opečnat* (brick, adj.), and 689 instances of *zidan* (built with brick or stone). In the American corpus COCA, on the other hand, there are 573 hits for 'brick' in relation to 'house' and 8 hits for 'masonry'. Even after adjusting for the different sizes of the corpora, the difference is statistically significant.[7]

3.2 Size

In both the UK and Slovenia, the average usable floor area of a household is approximately 100 m^2 for a house and a little less than 60 m^2 for a flat, but there is a considerable difference in the average household size, with 92 m^2 in the UK vs. 80 m^2 in Slovenia (Department for Communities and Local Government 2014, 67–68; Dolenc et al. 2013, 42–44). The difference is due to the fact that flats are a much more common type of housing in Slovenia compared to the UK: in Britain, 81% of all dwellings are houses or bungalows, whereas detached and semi-detached houses account for only 61% of Slovenian households (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010, 8; Dolenc et al. 2013, 42).

On the whole, the British attitude to flats is strongly negative (see for instance, Šabec and Limon 2001, 103), and O'Driscoll (2004, 174–75) finds this puzzling:

> The people who live in [flats] are those who cannot afford to live anywhere else […] In theory (and except for the difficulty with supervising children), there is no objective reason why these high-rise blocks (also known as 'tower blocks') could not have been a success. In other countries millions of people live reasonably happy in flats. But in Britain they were a failure because they do not suit British attitudes.

The reason he hints at, lack of privacy, would indeed seem to be relevant. Fox (2004) cites respect for privacy as one of the most important determiners of British culture. One particular trait that

6 The issue of material used serves only as a basic example of structural differences present and many more could be explored, for instance, types of windows (sash, bay, etc.), use of transition spaces (porch, patio, etc.), as well as different attitudes to the same elements (for instance, double glazing).

7 Using the same parameters, a further comparison with the British corpus BNC yields unexpected results with as few as 51 instances of 'brick' and only 3 instances of 'masonry' in the vicinity of 'house'. While this corpus is much smaller compared to the other two, the adjusted figures are still so low as to suggest there might be a difference at play in the make-up of the corpora.

she notices can be linked to the field of house and home: the moat-and-drawbridge rule, whereby street names and house numbers are "camouflaged" indicating "an obsession with privacy" (Fox 2004, 111–13).

Compared to Europe, the USA seems to be characterized by much greater variation and extremes in terms of size, with homes ranging from sprawling mansions to trailers in trailer parks. The median size of occupied housing units in a 2011 survey was found to be approximately 167 m^2, or 1,800 square feet (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development / U.S. Census Bureau 2013, 10), confirming the impression that American homes tend to be much larger than European ones.[8] The share of single-family detached or attached houses (including, for instance, terraced houses) is between 65 and 70% and has not seen major fluctuation since 1940 (U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division 2011), which shows that not only houses but also flats are more spacious. While considerable differences can be observed within the country – the data can be severely skewed in metropolitan areas such as New York due to population density and high real estate prices – this is true of all three countries under analysis.

Besides other contributing factors, such as the early history of European settlers in the United States when land was seen as available to anyone, one aspect that can help explain these differences is in-country mobility and the notion of the 'guest bedroom'.[9] Where the size of the country enables or encourages regular contact between family members, school friends, etc., visits continuing over several days will typically be less frequent, and extra rooms to accommodate the visitors will not be needed to the same extent. This difference is reflected both in the OECD data, which show that on average, U.S. Americans have 2.3 rooms per person while the British have 1.9 and Slovenians 1.4 rooms per person (OECD, n.d.), and in cultural attitudes, where to a Slovenian the idea of a guest bedroom typically just means wasted space.

A similar impression can be expected when people coming from cultures such as Slovenian, where "waste not, want not" is the motto (see Blake 2011, 100), are faced with the fact that American homes tend to have more bathrooms than European ones. Apparently, the American ideal is for each bedroom to have its own bathroom (see, for instance, Richmond 2009, 39): extra bathrooms can be seen as a status symbol and houses with a single bathroom are difficult to sell (see Schmich 2011). Perhaps surprisingly, given the British stress on privacy, homes in the UK do not normally have more than a single bathroom, with approximately 40% of dwellings having a second toilet and only 21% having a second shower or bathroom, compared to 63% and 51%, respectively, in the USA (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010, 30; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development / U.S. Census Bureau 2013, 5). It is equally telling that the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia does not collect information about the number of bathrooms per household unit (only whether there is at least one bathroom on the premises).

The concept of house size is another one where the normative nature of lived everyday experience is easy to observe. When asked to compare the size of Slovenian homes to American ones, students taking English courses at the Faculty of Civil Engineering, University of Ljubljana, tend to describe Slovenian houses as "average" – a notion that in this case makes more sense in comparisons within than across countries – or "just right", and members of a particular culture will tend to rationalize their preferences by producing a variety of arguments such as cosiness, intimacy, effort taken to

[8] There is considerable variation across the continent, of course. Deane (2014, 53), for instance, reports that German houses "are far bigger than British houses with large gardens front and back, a cellar, an attic, a utility room, guest room and plenty of space."

[9] Richmond (2009, 37–39) links big houses to individualism as an important characteristic of Americans and sees them as just one more example of the "American fascination with size," on a par with supersize hamburgers and the popularity of SUVs.

clean the home, etc. In this way, what is common in one's culture is redeemed against other, different practices, which can justifiably be looked down upon.

What this means for language use is that when Slovenian, British, or American speakers talk about 'a big/small house' (or *velika/majhna hiša*), they may feel they are talking about the same thing but in reality, what a Slovenian (or Briton) considers a big house may still be small to an American. This is a classic example of important cross-cultural semantic differences between what are seemingly the same expressions.

3.3 Light, Colour and Style

The paper makes no pretensions towards describing all the many differences present in terms of interior design, especially since differences between individual tastes tend to be much more pronounced than those between any national cultures. Nevertheless it can be argued that some perceptions of particular traits are characterized by a mainstream cultural element. Using the notions of creative and inherited cultural identities (see Holliday, Hyde, and Kullman [2004] 2006, 18–19), furniture and decoration styles are typically part of one's creative identity but some details are inherited even if individuals are not aware of this.

One such notion is that of light and the preference for better or less well-lit spaces. While styles change from person to person and historical period to historical period, the United Kingdom tends to have a greater tolerance for sombreness with respect to light and colours compared to either Slovenia or the USA. Quite apart from any weather-related phenomena, two particular contributing factors will be presented here, the so-called Window Tax and the influence of the Bauhaus Movement in Germany – although many other influences have doubtlessly had a hand in shaping today's preferences.

First of all, something that is alien to the other two countries is the Window Tax that was introduced in the UK in the 1690s, giving birth to the expression 'daylight robbery', and was in effect during the 18th and 19th centuries. The variable part of the tax depended on the number of windows installed, and as a result it became common practice to brick up window-spaces (Martin 1996–2015; "Window Tax" 2002). It is not too difficult to imagine that later generations born into such less than well-lit environments would consider them the usual state of affairs, which is all it takes for the process of transforming what is normal into what is the norm to start – and even today examples can occasionally be seen of new buildings being constructed with faux bricked-up windows (see Martin 1996–2015).

Another easily observable difference is in the choice of colours for interior house walls and the (un)popularity of wallpaper. The prevalence of white as the colour of choice, rejection of ornamental wall coverings and a particular focus on light in both the American and Slovenian societies can be traced back to Walter Gropius and the work of the Bauhaus School that grew out of Weimar in Germany in the 1920s and early 1930s. Part of the modernist movement, the artists involved paid particular attention to the notion of usefulness and found beauty in function. Their influence spread quickly around Central Europe, including the Slovenian territory, and later on to the USA when, persecuted by the Nazi regime on the eve of World War II (see "Bauhaus" 2013), they scattered around the world. Importantly, their ideas never had the same kind of impact in countries like Britain or France: to a British person these styles may therefore seem cold, bare and impersonal, whereas the functionally-minded Slovenian or American might find the interiors in the UK dark and oppressively stuffy.

While this particular area does not yield itself very well to corpus investigations, it can be informative to take a look at how frequently the lemma 'wallpaper', or *tapeta* (usually in the plural, *tapete*) appears in the chosen American, British, and Slovenian corpora. The raw frequencies are 1,782 hits in COCA, 472 hits in the BNC, and 4,224 hits in Gigafida. Two adjustments are in order. First, it makes sense to exclude all instances of the Slovenian metaphorical expression *na tapeti* (on the wallpaper), meaning 'under attack, discussion, consideration, etc.' and accounting for as many as 1,424 hits. Normalized, the figures correspond to 3.96 hits per million words in COCA, 4.72 hits in the BNC, and 4.67 in Gigafida.

The difference between the American and British corpora is expected and corroborates the ideas discussed; the observed discrepancies are statistically significant. Expectations are not met when the Slovenian data are taken into consideration, however, as the number of instances in Gigafida is much closer to the British than the American corpus. This irregularity can be explained as a result of the different semantic scope of *tapeta* compared to 'wallpaper': in Slovenian, *tapeta* is not only used for walls but can refer to different kinds of upholstery, for instance, on doors or in a car. In addition, corpus examples also testify to the fact that *tapeta* can (or could in the earlier days of computer software being translated into Slovenian) mean 'wallpaper' in the sense of a computer desktop background, a use that is presumably recorded much more in Gigafida compared to the BNC simply because the former corpus is newer – and there are of course precious few differences in what computers look like in different countries.[10] Of course, there are some differences that corpus results do not reveal, for instance, that wallpaper in Slovenia, when used, tends to be of the non-patterned beige variety.

3.4 Hygiene

Anecdotal evidence piles up to suggest that hygiene in general may not be a particular concern for Britons, with international students complaining about and trying to avoid sharing a kitchen with the locals, and the requisite spider being part of the stereotypical image of the British bathroom (for instance, in *The How to Be British Collection*, Ford and Legon 2003). This is not to say that people born in Britain are inherently less hygienic than those growing up elsewhere; across the globe, individuals can be found at either end of the cleanliness continuum. However, what can be pointed out is that some traits and behaviours may be treated as more or less acceptable by the local culture. The roots of these cultural beliefs might have to do with objective circumstances (for instance, the presence of mould due to high humidity in the UK) but others can be shown to be associated with events that have shaped the national culture.

A case in point is the abysmal state of common kitchens in British student residences, compared to the much cleaner spaces in Slovenian halls of residence.[11] Article 49 of the *Dormitory Rules of Študentski Dom [Student Residences] Ljubljana* (Council of Študentski Dom Ljubljana 2014) states, among other, the following:

> The residents are themselves and together responsible for cleanliness and hygiene in rooms, apartments and common areas. Residents must change their bed linen at least once every two weeks, in accordance with the schedule published by the keeper. In case of absence the residents must ensure that their co-residents change their bed linen for them [...] Internal

[10] Surprisingly, this use of 'wallpaper' is almost non-existent in COCA, even though this corpus is based on texts originating in the period 1990–2012.

[11] The claims about the Slovenian situation in this section are based on participant observation and an informal survey; significant variation is possible between different years and residences.

> cleanliness control is carried out based on the Rules on the work of the hygiene committee which is an integral part of these Dormitory Rules. Competent authorities carry out preventive health checks of the premises.

Similar stipulations exist across countries but there are important differences in how (if at all) they are enforced. In Slovenia, control over the state of the premises is exercised by the hygiene committee through the feared 'inspections' taking place several times a year (on pre-announced dates), and hygiene must be immaculate under threat of eviction. What is more, despite the stress and effort involved, the residents typically favour this arrangement and feel such interventions are justified.[12] Although they may not exercise their rights as a matter of course, the authorities can also request the residents to undergo health checks (Article 51) and fulfil various other duties related to public health.

Such an approach is unthinkable in British halls of residence.[13] The difference in how the residents' privacy is perceived can be linked to the differences in the social systems the two countries have experienced. On a political and social level, the British protection of privacy is related to the idea of personal freedom and the authorities should not infringe on it unless this is indisputably warranted.

The experience of having lived under a socialist regime (1945–1991), where the state was all-powerful and in many cases could significantly direct a person's life, means that still today the Slovenian populace is more tolerant of interference by the authorities in their daily life – and in fact often expects and welcomes it, rather than transferring the burden of responsibility onto the shoulders of the individual.[14]

It is true that the right to privacy is recognized by all signatory countries to the European Convention on Human Rights (Art. 8; Council of Europe 1950), but it is limited in the sense that interference is allowed in line with the principles of necessity and proportionality. In the UK, where "[t]he concept of private life […] is based on the classic civil liberties notion that the state should not intrude into the private sphere without strict justification" (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2012, 260), the long-standing tradition means the standards for what is deemed necessary and proportionate will often be stricter than in countries where privacy protection has historically enjoyed less privilege.

3.5 Class Distinctions

Fox (2004, 115–19) has a comprehensive list of decorative traits that mark various social classes in England. Upper and upper-middle-class homes are "shabby, frayed and unkempt" with "old, threadbare and mismatched furniture" (the same is true of lower-working classes and below, but for the former the reason is that these are antique pieces that have been inherited, for the latter it is simply the lack of money to renovate), "bare floorboards, often part-covered with old Persian carpets or rugs", a separate TV room, plain white bathrooms, and a "brag wall" (a display of photographs and awards) in the loo. The dwellings of working-class nouveaux riches are furnished with extremely expensive items, for instance, leather sofas. Both the middle-middle class and the classes below favour fitted carpets and a prominent brag wall, while cocktail cabinets, hostess trolleys and brand new

[12] In fact, the feeling is shared by one of the reviewers of this article.

[13] To a large extent, the issue is moot in the United States because most students who stay in residences opt for a meal plan and do not cook (consequently, there are often no cooking facilities available).

[14] Budak, Anić, and Rajh (2013, 102) similarly talk about "the public mindset inherited from the past regime" with regard to cases of low awareness about privacy protection legislation in Croatia, which was likewise part of former Yugoslavia.

matching furniture are specific to the middle-middle class. Lower-middle and working-class homes can be recognized by net curtains, embroidered armchair covers and collections of small objects or, as an alternative, by a waiting-room-like décor, but in any case they will contain large TV sets and colourful bathrooms, and these are also the homes where drink coasters are used.

Although no such in-depth studies are available for the USA and Slovenia, on its own this does not mean such class differences are not present. Compared to the UK, it can be argued that in the U.S. the disparities are just as great or perhaps greater. They are not, however, shown so much in the way homes are decorated (due to the size of the country, this may have more to do with the weather and regional influences) but in the sheer size of the property and the number of rooms (and of course bathrooms) that one can afford.

One particular example that stands out in the American culture is the relatively large number of people permanently inhabiting mobile homes and trailers. In the British Isles and Slovenia this is not unknown; however, it is associated with only a tiny sliver of the population, mainly particular ethnic communities (for instance, Travellers – traditionally itinerant ethnic groups – in Britain and Ireland, and some Romani settlements in Slovenia). In the United States, roughly 18 million Americans live in one of 50,000 trailer parks (Berlin 2011), meaning that more than 6% of all occupied housing units are mobile homes or trailers (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development / U.S. Census Bureau 2013, 8). While there are doubtlessly some people who live in a mobile home through choice, as the number of people living in poverty rises (according to the National Poverty Center (n.d.), 15.1% of U.S. Americans were poor in 2010, the highest rate since 1993), the booming trailer-park economy reflects the ever greater income gap.

A comparison of the term 'mobile home', in American and British corpora is more than telling: while a search in COCA retrieves 601 instances of 'mobile home', the BNC contains only 50 instances of 'mobile home'. Taking into account the disparity in the sizes of the corpora, the difference is statistically significant. Similar evidence is shown by comparing 'trailer park' and 'caravan park', 'caravan' being the usual British term where Americans use 'trailer'; the combination with 'park' is used to confine the investigation only to cases of trailers/caravans as accommodation. The COCA corpus has 418 instances of 'trailer park' and 0 instances of 'caravan park', while the BNC returns 3 hits for 'trailer park' and 55 for 'caravan park'; again the results are statistically significant.

It is difficult to compare the proportion of poor people. The CIA Factbook gives the percentage of population living below the poverty line as 15.1 for the USA, 16.2 for Britain, and 13.5 for Slovenia, but these numbers refer to nationally determined poverty rates and the thresholds differ across countries. The proportion of population living below the absolute poverty rate of 2 dollars per day is 0.0% in all three countries, showing that people's basic needs are in principle catered for. What can be compared, however, is the Gini coefficient,[15] and the distribution of income is the least unequal (0.237) in Slovenia, with the United Kingdom (0.323) and the United States (0.45) having considerably more inequality (CIA, n.d., estimates for 2007–2012).

The fact that Slovenia has the lowest levels of inequality among the three nations compared is a direct consequence of its socialist past and Slovenian homes likewise still bear this past's imprint. Throughout the fifty years of planned economy, the limited selection of furniture and furnishings available on the market resulted in a fairly uniform look of the interior of people's homes – today Ikea seems to be the great equalizer. If it can be assumed that citizens' satisfaction is determined

15 A measure of income inequality, the Gini coefficient ranges from 0 (income distributed completely equally) to 1 (all income goes to one person) ("Gini Coefficient" 2007).

not only by what they have or do not have, but also by what others have that they do not have, it becomes easier to understand why, despite the smaller average size of housing units and number of rooms per person, 93% of Slovenians claim a high satisfaction with their current housing situation compared to 89% of Britons and 86% of U.S. Americans (OECD, n.d.).

3.6 Home Sweet Home

The basic definitions of 'house', "a building for habitation", and 'home', which is first and foremost "the place where a person or animal dwells" and only secondly "[t]he place where one lives or was brought up, with reference to the feelings of belonging, comfort, etc., associated with it" (*Oxford English Dictionary* 2015), are so close that there are many cases where the two expressions are interchangeable, for instance, 'moving house' or 'moving home'. To the Slovenian mind, both expressions are surprising, partly because of their grammar (where 'moving a house/home' might mean transferring the actual structure to a new location, and 'moving home' may also express the direction, for instance, 'moving back home') but in part – especially talking about moving home – because the notions of house and home are much more closely connected and tied to the physical in the Slovenian culture. In the Slovenian context, one cannot actually separate the home from the house and can consequently not move home; because the two are inseparable, the only thing they can do is create a new home in a different house. Tellingly, the Slovenian expression can only be *seliti se* (move) with the optional addition of *v novo hišo/v nov dom* (into a new house/a new home), never *seliti hišo/dom* (move house/home).

No doubt the difference in the perception of the two notions is related to the considerable differences in ownership rates that can be observed: 90% of all Slovenian households are owner-occupied, compared to 65% in the United Kingdom and 64% in the USA (Dolenc et al. 2013, 42; Department for Communities and Local Government 2014, 8; Callis and Kresin 2014). It is easy to hypothesize that owning a home enables greater attachment. On the other hand, it is also conceivable that the conditioning might work the other way around as well so that residents would go to greater lengths to acquire a home.[16]

This affective factor does not only apply to tenants wanting to buy the home they live in but also to building one's house from scratch: it is still the 'Slovenian Dream' to commission the building of one's house and to have its layout tailored to whatever wishes the future owner might express. Such methods are quite rare in English-speaking cultures, where houses will typically be developed by private companies or in some cases local authorities (the former has lately become quite common also in Slovenia). This peculiarity also helps explain why Slovenian homes have so far been less uniform in appearance.

In the past the building of a house in Slovenia was not only commissioned but also executed by the owner (with the help of family and friends – as recently as the 1980s this was an important form of constructing detached houses; see Malešič in Vrečko 2014). As a consequence, there is also the attachment to the 'fruit of one's labour', or perhaps respect for the work of the owner's parents. In contrast, two thirds of all inherited British homes are sold immediately by the new owners (O'Driscoll 2004, 177).[17]

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[16] Cf. the film *Slovenka* (Slovenian Girl, 2009) about a university student who prostitutes herself for the express purpose of buying and holding onto an expensive unfurnished flat – something that might be particularly difficult for non-Slovenian audiences to comprehend.

[17] Cf. also Jason Blake's (2011, 97) observation that it is much more expensive to buy property in Slovenia than it is to rent it, "because Slovenians consider it a waste of money to pay for something you do not own."

The underlying reason for how much attachment there is to the house where one dwells seems to be linked to how prevalent mobility is in the society. As a country of just over 20,000 square kilometres (less than 8,000 square miles), Slovenia normally enables its citizens to live and work in the same area. There is relatively little in-country mobility and emigration figures are also traditionally low – apparently, it is just not a country of movers.[18] Size does matter, it seems, and it can be claimed that it is partly the sheer vastness of the USA that both facilitates and necessitates inter-state migration. Together with other contributing factors, such as cheaper and less regulated housing, the immigrant character of the nation, or job market flexibility, this helps to explain why internal mobility is still[19] significantly higher in the USA compared to European countries (Molloy, Smith, and Wozniak 2011).

While the concepts involved are fairly abstract, a corpus analysis can nevertheless be attempted. Using the collocation functions available in the three corpora used, the first twenty collocates (limited to the first position on the left) yielded for 'house' (*hiša*) and 'home' (*dom*)[20] are given in tables 1 and 2, respectively.[21]

Analysis of the data shows that some of the collocations are roughly equivalent, especially when it comes to prepositions or cases where 'house' is understood to mean an organization, for instance, 'safe house', 'opera house', 'publishing house' (also, for instance, 'fashion house', even though only the Slovenian expression ranks so highly among collocates). A close look suggests three kinds of differences.

The first type has to do with simple linguistic differences – for example, the expression for a 'guest house' in Slovenian includes neither a house nor a home but the notion is expressed by a separate lexeme, *gostišče* (or *penzion*). The same is true of cases such as a 'manor house' or 'country house' (*graščina*) and a 'public house' (*gostilna*), and likewise of the Slovenian *borzna* or *borznoposredniška hiša*, which can be rendered in English as one word, 'brokerage'.

Yet other cases involve the uses of a multi-word lexeme that does not include 'house' or 'home', for instance, *klirinška družba* (society) for 'clearing house', *polna dvorana* (hall) for 'full house',[22] or *pogrebni zavod* (institution) for 'funeral home', and conversely 'car park' for *garažna/parkirna hiša*, 'birth place' for *rojstna hiša*, and 'media company' and 'production company' for *medijska hiša* and *produkcijska hiša*. The cases of 'public house' and *mestna hiša* are particularly interesting because their literal translations are in fact collocations in the other language as well but mean something

18 There have been exceptions due to economic and political reasons, and the latest economic crisis has likewise seen the number of emigrants rise but the overall level of emigration is still relatively low and with the exception of one year (2010), Slovenia remains a net immigration country (Eurostat, n.d.). Nevertheless, these attitudes may well be changing as the younger generations seem more open to both moving abroad and commuting within the country.

19 Alexis de Tocqueville ([1835/1840] 1994, 136) is known for his remark that "[i]n the United States a man builds a house in which to spend his old age, and he sells it before the roof is on […]" Teague's (2011, 79) data suggest not much has changed: "In an average one-year period, one in five Americans relocates – 25 percent move to an entirely new state or region."

20 It is important to note that the English and Slovenian terms are not introduced here as equivalents but as concepts belonging to the same semantic field. This means that they belong to "a set of lexemes which cover a certain conceptual domain and which bear certain specifiable relations to one another" (Lehrer and Battan 1983, 119) – but the exact "specifiable relations" which they "bear to one another" within and across languages are yet to be determined.

21 All statistics use lemmas, where applicable. The results for the BNC and Gigafida corpora are based on log-likelihood as a measure of collocational strength to give preference to commonly used expressions (see Arhar and Gorjanc 2007, 105). The results for the COCA corpus are based on raw frequencies because the only other option available is the ranking based on mutual information, which proves less than informative (for instance, the top three collocates of 'house' are the hashtag ('#'), '435-member' and 'Aiken-Rhett'); all collocate queries in COCA apparently automatically exclude the definite and indefinite articles.

22 While this is true of many of these collocations (at least to some extent), a *full house* in particular can mean a number of things – besides referring to how busy a place is, it is also often used as a political term, or as a hand in poker.

Table 1. Collocates of 'house' (hiša) in BNC, COCA and Gigafida (1L).

Order of collocates	**BNC**	**COCA**	**Gigafida**
1	the	white	*stanovanjski* (residential)
2	white	's	*bel* (white)
3	's	my	*garažen* (garage, adj.)
4	opera	your	*mesten* (town/city, adj.)
5	manor	our	*v* (in)
6	a	random	*časopisen* (newspaper, adj.)
7	this	old	*medijski* (media, adj.)
8	your	opera	*rojsten* (birth, adj.)
9	guest	town	*varen* (safe)
10	his	beach	*biti* (be)
11	my	ranch	Riko
12	clearing	full	*star* (old)
13	country	main	*parkiren* (parking, adj.)
14	upper	safe	*založniški* (publishing, adj.)
15	council	guest	*operen* (opera, adj.)
16	our	halfway	*borzen* (stock exchange, adj.)
17	terraced	publishing	*borznoposredniški* (brokerage, adj.)
18	lower	clean	*večstanovanjski* (multi-unit, adj.)
19	big	brick	*moden* (fashion, adj.)
20	public	empty	*produkcijski* (production, adj.)

Table 2. Collocates of 'home' (dom) in BNC, COCA and Gigafida (1L).

Order of collocates	BNC	COCA	Gigafida
1	at	at	Cankarjev
2	go	come	*zdravstven* (health, adj.)
3	come	go	*kulturen* (cultural)
4	his	back	*gasilski* (fire brigade, adj.)
5	nursing	get	*naroden* (national/people's, adj.)
6	back	your	*dijaški* (secondary school student, adj.)
7	the	return	*študentski* (university student, adj.)
8	came	nursing	*na* (on)
9	their	stay	*svoj* (one's)
10	your	way	*biti* (be)
11	coming	bring	*predstavniški* (representative)
12	her	leave	*delavski* (workers', adj.)
13	returned	drive	*planinski* (mountain, adj.)
14	went	own	*zadružen* (cooperative, adj.)
15	way	funeral	*azilen* (asylum, adj.)
16	going	walk	*v* (in)
17	return	send	*materinski* (maternal)
18	matrimonial	ride	*počitniški* (vacation, adj.)
19	from	arrive	*od* (from)
20	get	hit	*celjski* (Celje, adj.)

different: *javna hiša* 'public house' in Slovenian is a brothel, rather than a pub, and a 'town house' in English is a descriptive term rather than a town/city hall, which is what *mestna hiša* denotes.

Less arbitrary are the grammatical differences. It can be observed that many of the collocates in English belong to the group of determiners. While articles do not have a counterpart in Slovenian, possessives exist in that language as well but are conspicuously absent from the tables, with the exception of *svoj* (one's). Any interpretations leaning towards a greater importance of private property in the English-speaking world would be exaggerated: because the use of determiners is obligatory with singular countable nouns and this role can be fulfilled by possessives, they simply happen to be overall more common in English compared to Slovenian due to structural grammatical reasons (see also Pisanski Peterlin 2009).

The second type has to do with examples of easily observable differences in the real world such as described in this paper, where to understand and appreciate the collocation one needs to know about the characteristics of homes in the three cultures: 'terraced houses' are typical of the UK, and 'beach houses' and 'ranch houses' are conditioned by American geography and urban planning. The presence of 'big house' and 'main house' recalls the previous discussion of the size of dwellings. Also present are expressions that have to do with specific practices in individual countries: 'council houses' in the UK are a type of social housing built by local councils, and a 'halfway house' is a part of the American correctional system that serves to facilitate the reintegration of ex-convicts. On the other hand, it is very common in Slovenia[23] for two or more families (as a rule belonging to the same extended family) to live in the same house (see Šabec and Limon 2001, 104), hence – at least partly – the significance of the terms *stanovanjska hiša*[24] and *večstanovanjska hiša* (residential house; multi-unit house) in Slovenian.

Some names of institutions widely present in the society (or at least in the textual samples included in the corpus) are also listed: Random House (publishing house), Riko hiše (construction company), Cankarjev dom (cultural and congress centre), Narodni dom (name of several cultural centres), Delavski dom (cultural centre), Celjski dom (cultural centre).[25] Similarly, the high prominence of the White House in the American society but also in the world media accounts for the greater part of occurrences of 'white house' in all three corpora.

Finally, the different attitude towards house compared to home discussed above can help explain a number of differences in the usage of the two words. Easily discernible is the fact that a chamber in a political sense is also referred to as a 'house' in English (so that the British Parliament is divided into the Upper House and the Lower House) but a *dom* (home) in Slovenian (interestingly, the concordances for *predstavniški dom* (representative home) in the Slovenian corpus refer almost exclusively to the U.S. House of Representatives).

This disparity is no coincidence. What can be observed and has been discussed previously in this section is the fact that the relationship between 'house' and 'home' is much closer in Slovenian than in English, and the idea of a home is almost impossible to separate from its physical representation in the form of an actual building. As a consequence, the semantic scope of *dom* (home) can cover much of what is subsumed by 'house' alone in English and can furthermore include buildings for

[23] Apparently, this trend is gaining ground in the USA as well, with multi-family housing accounting for 40% of all newly constructed homes in 2013 (Frizell 2014).

[24] To a large extent, the use of the adjective *stanovanjska* (residential) appears pleonastic, as houses are expected to be places of residence, and is characteristic of legal and business discourse.

[25] Several of these institutions in Slovenia go back to the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and later socialism, and the idea of the community taking care of the cultural edification of individuals.

various activities, such as *zdravstveni*, *kulturni* and *zadružni dom* (health, cultural, community centre), *gasilski dom* (fire station), *dijaški* and *študentski dom* (student residence), *azilni dom* (asylum accommodation centre), as well as *planinski* and *počitniški dom* (types of holiday accommodation, the first one found specifically in the mountains).

Another example, *materinski dom*, can be rendered as a '(mother and baby) home' in English as well, because it comprises both dimensions of home described: the physical rapport with a building in Slovenian, and the abstract concept of an intimate place where one feels sheltered and comfortable in English (cf. also 'nursing home', in Slovenian *dom upokojencev* or 'home of retired people'). It is this latter dimension that is very much present in the collocates for 'home' found in British and American English, both with adjectives such as 'matrimonial' and in activities having to do with this private sphere, for instance, 'come/return/leave/arrive home'.

4 Conclusion

Examining a field as run-of-the-mill as house and home confirms how misguided it is to think of cultures as compilations of various unrelated practices, or to say how quaint the British/Americans/ Slovenians are (or indeed any 'tribe'), because they do this or that: a culture is not a cabinet of curiosities where one can be fascinated by a particular artefact without any regard for the rest. Instead, what the analysis presented shows is that even seemingly banal details will often (but not necessarily always) be tied to other concepts and the system of values in the culture. It is equally evident that to really understand a language and appreciate its nuances, one must pay attention to the culture(s) where it is spoken, even in times of globalization and English as a lingua franca, because many linguistic phenomena, such as frequently used word combinations, do not exist in a void but are the direct result of cultural practices.

The subject tackled is broad in scope and all of the topics explored would benefit from further and more detailed analyses, possibly extending the research to other (English- and non-English-speaking) environments. Despite these limitations and despite the fact that it can be difficult to investigate the rationale behind cultural practices and abstract concepts cross-culturally with the necessary academic rigour, the paper brings together a number of ideas from different fields to provide insights into how people approach and talk about house and home, and how their manner of doing so is related to some of the central tenets of the cultures they are surrounded by. The notions discussed are corroborated with quantitative and qualitative data wherever possible. In this way, the paper contributes a new piece of evidence to show that the link between language and culture is of utmost importance, and that one's home may only be a castle in one's specific culture – and quite possibly seen as something else altogether in another.

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Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELF Communication

ABSTRACT

The traditional notion of English as a foreign language solely for communicating with native speakers can no longer be applied in a world that is constantly changing, hence paving the way for an alternative use of the language known as English as a lingua franca. As a result, instead of focusing only on grammatical correctness, research into language pedagogy has also come to recognize the importance of exploring bottom-up learning processes, and developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and more communicative-based methods. Nowadays, it is essential to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and critical cultural awareness necessary to communicate successfully. To show the importance of integrating ICC in language pedagogy, a recording from the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English is analysed here to demonstrate the significance of developing critical awareness as well as several communicative strategies, so that language learners can afterwards have the necessary ICC to interact in today's multi-lingual/cultural society.

Keywords: English as a lingua franca; intercultural communicative competence; communicative strategies

Razvijanje medkulturne komunikacijske kompetence v sporazumevanju v angleščini kot lingvi franki

POVZETEK

Tradicionalni koncept angleščine kot tujega jezika za sporazumevanje izključno z maternimi govorci ni več uporaben v svetu, ki se nenehno spreminja in tako tlakuje pot alternativni rabi tega jezika, znani kot angleščina kot lingva franka. Namesto osredotočanja samo na slovnično pravilnost zato raziskovanje jezikovne didaktike danes prepoznava pomen preučevanja učnih procesov od spodaj navzgor ter razvijanja medkulturne komunikacijske kompetence (MKK) in metod, ki temeljijo na sporazumevanju. Dandanes je bistvenega pomena usvajanje znanja, spretnosti, stališč in kritične kulturne zavesti, ki so nujni za uspešno sporočanje. Kot ponazoritev pomembnosti vključevanja MKK v jezikovno didaktiko predstavi članek analizo posnetka iz korpusa Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English, ki jasno pokaže pomen razvijanja kritične zavesti in nabora komunikacijskih strategij, ki učencem omogočajo MKK, nujno za delovanje v današnji večjezični/večkulturni družbi.

Ključne besede: angleščina kot lingva franka; medkulturna komunikacijska kompetenca; komunikacijske strategije

Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELF Communication

1 Introduction

Advances in technology, be they telecommunications, the Internet, or transportation, have greatly contributed to the increasing number of interactions taking place between people of different language and cultural backgrounds in ways and for reasons that were greatly unthinkable just a few decades ago. This interconnectedness has not only affected our daily lives, but has also triggered the need to encounter a collective voice so as to overcome the linguistic difficulties that may arise in contact. As a result, this relatively recent and diverse reality has contributed to the development of new 'emerging' language repertoires resulting from the immediate processes of language contact generated by specific communicative needs.

The English language has therefore played an essential role in creating a 'common voice' shared by the great majority of the world's population, firstly due to the British expansion around the world in the seventeenth century and then because of the role the United States of America has played throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in globalization and in the dissemination of its culture, with cinema and music being readily accessible to all. Accordingly, English has come to be the most prevailing global lingua franca. Many changes, however, have been verified in how the language is used. Graddol (2006, 11) draws our attention to the fact that it is no longer "English as we have known it, and have taught it in the past as a foreign language" but "a new phenomenon" known as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).[1]

Considering the notion of ELF, I will firstly discuss how it differs from the traditional concept of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), so as to better understand the consequences that its current use worldwide may have on English language teaching (ELT); afterwards, I will reflect on the ever increasing role intercultural communicative competence (ICC) plays in international and intranational interactions in English as well as pedagogically; lastly, I will exemplify the importance of fostering ICC in ELF interactions, in particular by analysing a short excerpt taken from VOICE, the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (2005–2013), where it is visible that critical awareness and communicative strategies are important in achieving effective communicative competence in today's multilingual and multicultural society.

2 EFL vs. ELF and Its Implications

The contexts of ELF use are many, various and familiar, and they include everyday exchanges amongst travellers, academic/scientific discussions at international conferences, and communication in politics and diplomacy at an international level. In fact, according to Kachru's concentric circle model (1985), what at first was the national language in Inner circle countries (for instance, in the United Kingdom and the United States) has grown to become the first true lingua franca worldwide. In addition to the Inner circle, Kachru's model also consists of two other circles, the Outer and Expanding circles. While the former consists of countries that are a part of the global Englishes paradigm and that are characterized as being multilingual, that is, using English as a second language (in India or Singapore, for instance), the latter refers to countries where English is

[1] For a more detailed description of the increasing number of non-native English speakers and how English is changing at a demographical, economic, technological and societal level, see Graddol (2006).

traditionally learnt as a foreign language (in Portugal, Brazil and China, to name a few). It is these Outer and Expanding circle communities that have especially been the object of study of current ELF use.

With these contexts in mind, Firth (1996, 240) states that ELF is "a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture and for whom English is the chosen *foreign* language of communication." And yet the majority of ELF researchers have not accepted this definition, as it excludes a crucial aspect in ELF interaction, the inclusion of native English speakers. At the time, Firth's aim was to explain how speakers with a low proficiency could often use English successfully in lingua franca communication. However, the comparison established lay essentially between a defective type of 'foreigner' English and a native speaker English standard, as opposed to considering ELF as a distinct type of English, in which its users are usually proficient with greatly developed skills.

The VOICE corpus website, on the other hand, presents a more current and basic definition of ELF describing it as the "English used as a common means of communication among speakers from different first-language backgrounds" (VOICE. Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English 2005–2013). From this perspective, native speakers of English are no longer excluded. However, they also do not take on the customary role of norm providers. Furthermore, seeing that ELF is viewed as an acquired system to interact effectively in multilingual and multicultural settings, native speakers cannot necessarily use their own native English in every circumstance. Thus, ELF can be described functionally according to its use in intercultural interactions, instead of formally by its reference to native-speaker norms, as Hülmbauer, Böhringerm, and Seidlhofer (2009, 27) believe:

> Speakers of any L1 can appropriate ELF for their own purposes without over-deference to native-speaker norms. This counteracts a deficit view of lingua franca English in that it implies equal communicative rights for all its speakers. So defined, ELF is emphatically not the English as a property of its native speakers, but is democratized and universalized in the 'exolingual' process of being appropriated for international use.

Widdowson (1994, 385) also further states native speakers have "no right to intervene or pass judgment […] The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it."

Moreover, it is imperative to stress that, for many researchers in ELF, EFL and ELF are two phenomena that can be clearly distinguished. Jenkins (2011), for instance, briefly describes these two concepts in terms of paradigms, perspectives, metaphor, as well as code-mixing and code-switching. EFL is a part of the *modern foreign languages* paradigm, in which English language learning does not diverge from learning other foreign languages and where the aim is to achieve near-native competence. In contrast, ELF is integrated in the *global Englishes* paradigm, where all types of Englishes are considered unique, not failed attempts to assimilate to a specific native speaker variety. For this reason, ELF adopts a *difference* perspective in comparison to EFL, which takes on a *deficit* perspective. In this sense, from an ELF outlook, variances from native speaker English are deemed as valid alternatives, whereas in EFL they are judged as mistakes. This being said, ELF users cannot necessarily always be regarded as proficient. There are cases in which they continue to be learners. However, there are also others in which the learning process has ended without them ever reaching a proficient level of English, and in these cases, variations are considered errors. Although it may not seem clear at times, there exists a sociolinguistic difference

between ELF learners' mistakes and competent ELF users' innovations, even though occasionally the two may lead to similar forms. Furthermore, Jenkins (2011) also refers to how metaphorically ELF is associated with *language contact and evolution*, in contrast with EFL, which is connected with *interference and fossilization*. Lastly, code-mixing and code-switching are both viewed as useful *pragmatic strategies* for bilinguals. In EFL, meanwhile, they indicate *gaps in knowledge*.[2]

Considering these notions, ELF can be viewed as a use of English, while EFL is mainly associated with a pedagogic subject. In other words, while ELF is mainly used in intercultural contexts, EFL continues to be taught in the majority of schools in Expanding circle countries, where native speakers are considered the ultimate aim to be achieved, and where native English speaker culture is also encompassed. In one particular situation a person can be in the position of an EFL user, while on another occasion, they can be an ELF user, all depending on the situation and the person with whom they are speaking with and for what purpose (Hülmbauer, Böhringer, and Seidlhofer 2009).

Given the transformation in the function and use of English worldwide, current views on language teaching have likewise been greatly affected. ELT traditionally based on the notion of English as a foreign language, which mainly "highlights the importance of learning about the culture and society of native speakers; […] the centrality of the methodology in discussions of effective learning; and […] the importance of emulating native speaker language behaviour" (Graddol 2006, 82), has given way not only to a greater socio-political awareness, but also to intercultural awareness.

Furthermore, while previously teachers were generally educated on the several approaches to description and instruction of 'proper' language, currently, there is a much wider diversity of concerns that demand at least as much attention as language proper. These issues have led to a wider conception in ELT discourse in which notions of correctness, norms, mistakes and authority have gone on to include also notions of a transformative pedagogy, learner-centeredness, awareness as well as (self-)reflection (Pennycook 1999), all depending on the learners' aims.

By abandoning this seemingly unrealistic notion of 'native-like' proficiency, ELT can concentrate on other skills and procedures deemed equally valuable in ELF exchanges. There have been several communication strategies and accommodation skills (Jenkins 2000) identified in order to characterize ELF interactions, of which the following may be included: assessing interlocutors' linguistic repertoires, resorting to extralinguistic cues, supportive listening, indicating non-comprehension in a face-saving way, paraphrasing, requesting repetition, self-repair, backchannelling, confirmation, in addition to the clarification of requests that allow participants to check, monitor and clarify understanding, among other skills (Mauranen 2006; Seidlhofer 2002). Furthermore, contact with a wide array of varieties of English, along with a multilingual/comparative approach, equally contributes to facilitating the acquisition of the communicative abilities.

In this sense, it may be argued that an ELF approach is more susceptible to the development of pragmatic ability, seeing that communicative competence among learners/users is intimately linked with the negotiation of meaning. This is especially the case when English is used among a diverse group of speakers, where flexibility and the ability to adjust are essential (Erling 2004, 251), when compared to foreign language knowledge, which focuses mainly on the acquisition of a strictly idealized norm, with particular emphasis on phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic forms. The aim then is centred on the process of learning rather than on the intended product (Perrett 2000).

[2] For further reflections on English as a lingua franca see Jenkins (2000, 2007); Mauranen and Ranta (2009); and Seidlhofer (2011).

3 ELF and (Intercultural) Communicative Competence

In light of what has been discussed about ELF, the importance of achieving effective communicative competence is clearly central in ELF interactions, as well as in language pedagogy, where awareness raising and pluricentricity are called upon. As Canagarajah (2005, 25) states, "new competencies [are] required for communication and literacy in today's world" and therefore, a single dialect of English "fails to equip our students for real-world needs." For this reason, the need to obtain communicative competence is imperative in both sociolinguistics and in pedagogical theory, where approaches solely concerned with grammatical correctness have given way to additional aspects of communicative effectiveness where the status quo of native speaker communicative competence might no longer be the most appropriate in international scenarios; hence, proposing notions like appropriateness, acceptability and intelligibility as relative notions in English pedagogy (Berns 2006).

In what concerns communicative competence, presently, the relationship between language, and society and culture is a deep-rooted construct. It is worth noting that the notion of communicative competence has taken into consideration two linguistic traditions: Hymes' ethnography of communication (1962, 1972) and Halliday's systemic-functional paradigm (1978). These contributions, despite being distinctive, complement the use of communicative competence as a theoretical paradigm in World Englishes studies (Berns 2006) and henceforth in ELF studies as well, which is part of the World Englishes paradigm.

Even though Hymes is attributed with presenting communicative competence as a linguistic concept in the early 1970s, it was J. R. Firth who had, some forty years before, already underlined the importance of context of situation, describing it as the particular communicative competence associated with each individual speaker who has grown in Expanding circle settings, for instance. Berns (2006, 719) sums up Firth's view (1930) by stating that "only through the inclusion of context of situation as a parameter for determining what communicative competence means do the pluralistic nature of a language and the independent existence and the dynamic creative processes of non-native varieties come into focus." This junction between the cultural and social components of communication later had an important impact on both Hymes and Halliday.

It is Hymes who coined the term communicative competence, as the ability users of a language have to choose what to say in addition to when and how it may be said, given that the situational context inevitably influences their linguistic performance. As Hymes (1980, vi) states, "social life shapes communicative competence."

Halliday (1978), on the other hand, considers the part of the social context and the choices language users need to make in order to do things with language in a particular context. He refers to the alternatives presented in each situation as *meaning potential*, in other words, the choices (either pragmatic, phonological or lexical) language users have for conveying, understanding and negotiating meaning among each other. These appropriate local choices and selections made by users in specific situations are centred on the restrictions of their systemic knowledge, and as Halliday and Mathiessen (2004, 23) note, "a language is a resource for making meaning, and meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice."

Given people's diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, communicative competence in lingua franca use will inevitably stress the importance of intercultural sensitivity. In addition to the interlocutor's cultural background, which needs to be taken into consideration, so does the cultural context as well as the cultural indications transmitted by the language employed, as is stated by Mauranen (2005, 274): "The contexts of use lingua franca speakers experience typically

involve interaction with people from highly diverse backgrounds. This requires constant intercultural sensitivity to a degree not normally experienced by mono- or even bilingual speakers in their native languages."

Perhaps a global definition of communicative competence at an international level may be that when communicating, competence is a universal and worldwide concept incorporating several interconnecting factors (such as discourse, intercultural, interpersonal, linguistic, pragmatic, and strategic) of exploitable knowledge, and the necessary skills and abilities to apply them in a range of societies as well as types of societies (Nunn 2007, 43). This competence not only includes spoken and written language skills, but also creativity and specific adaptive skills, like knowing how to negotiate meaning in a variety of different contexts.

It is worth noting though that total competence is beyond anyone's range. However, competent users are able to compensate for weaknesses in one particular area with the knowledge or skill in another, such as using a widely intelligible variety of English that may be adapted accordingly in awareness of the necessary requirements in intercultural scenarios, in which there may be several stages of proficiency and varied needs. Nunn (2007, 43) further reiterates the importance of competent speakers negotiating norms in order to achieve effective communication: "No one global standard will fit all users and communities but all competent users will have enough in common to be able to negotiate norms and interim norms in order to communicate successfully within and between particular communities and sub-communities."

Nunn (2007, 41) considers the significance of several essential aspects for communicative competence at an international level, namely: *multiglossic*, in which it is necessary for speakers to be sensitive not only to diverse identities, but also to be capable of intelligibly conveying their own identity; *strategic*, communicative strategies are vital and cooperative factors in intercultural ELF interactions; *pragmatic/discourse*, being able to adapt language according to the situation and solving differences of background knowledge, therefore preparation is required; and lastly, *intercultural*, in the sense of being able to adjust to unpredictable multicultural situations, rather than being familiar with solely a single culture for effective cross-cultural communication, for instance.

4 A Study from the VOICE Corpus

With roughly 1,250 proficient speakers of ELF from about fifty distinctive first languages, VOICE, the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (2005–2013), is a structured collection of language data capturing spoken ELF interactions, containing transcriptions of spontaneous, non-scripted face-to-face communication in international scenarios. The captured speech events conform to a number of conditions, namely, that it is ELF (most of the speakers come from different linguistic backgrounds and use English as a shared means of communication; in addition, the majority speak it as an additionally learnt idiom), spoken, naturally occurring, non-scripted, collaborative, face-to-face, and lastly, it is based on self-selected participation (for instance, interlocutors are the ones who make the decision whether they are able to use ELF to achieve certain participant tasks in the situations they partake in).

Upon analysing in detail the VOICE corpus, many are the examples of communication strategies and accommodation skills which play a part in achieving effective communicative competence in ELF interactions. The following extract will be used to corroborate and exemplify the importance of various communicative strategies suggested by Jenkins (2000), Mauranen (2006), and Seidlhofer (2002), namely, backchannelling, the negotiation of meaning, repetition and self-repair.

The conversation reported below belongs to the educational domain (transcript EDcon4 taken from the VOICE corpus) and it took place at a cafe on campus during an international summer school course. It is a conversation between a Polish female (S1) and a Romanian male (S2), each between the ages of 17 and 24. They are discussing what happened at a party the night before, in which S1 had a little too much to drink and she is now trying to explain to S2 the specifications of a game she played.

Extract 1.[3]

1	S1:	and <@> the problem was </@> that she was like
2		running
3	S2:	@@ @
4	S1:	the whole city and i was like (.)
5	S2:	@@ @
6	S1:	I'll be back and we saw the people because
7		the people were so smart (.) that they didn't
8		find the answer. (.) but they went to the tourist
9		office <@>and they asked for answers. </@> (.)
10	S2:	okay
11	S1:	and they gave
12	S2:	AH because they had to complete some erm
13	S1:	mhm
14	S2:	okay
15	S1:	how tall is the the tower o:r (.)
16	S2:	the tower? (.)
17	S1:	yeah the the the church tower and er how old
18		was the guy who died here and he was the founder
19		of the city (.)
20	S2:	was he was his name [last name2]? (.)
21	S1:	no
22	S2:	mister [last name2]
23	S1:	i don't know because i skipped few questions (.)
24		i didn't participate actively @ (.)
25	S2:	okay (2) so erm [first name3] was not upset (.)
26		[first name3] (.)

3 The mark-up conventions follow the 2.1 VOICE transcript conventions, which may be fully accessed on the VOICE corpus website. For instance, brief pauses are marked with a full stop in between parentheses (.), laughter is represented with the @ symbol and when reference is made to other names these are usually anonymized by [name1].

27 S1: about what (.)
28 S2: he was not upset? (1)
29 S1: about (.)
30 S2: that (.) you didn't participate. (.)
31 S1: well i (.) i went there i was physically there @@
32 S2: mhm
33 S1: only physically. (.)
34 S2: Mhm
35 S1: not mentally (1)
36 S2: @ @

A frequent interactional feature in conversations, as is visible in this particular exchange, is the use of backchannelling and resorting to positive minimal feedback. This is especially the case when S2 acknowledges S1's humorous tone of the turn by laughing at the story being told (ll. 3, 5, and 36), or also by repeating the word 'okay' frequently (ll. 10, 14, and 25), as well as by manifesting non-verbal acknowledgement tokens like 'mhm' (ll. 13, 32, and 34).

Although it may not seem essential, in general terms, backchannelling plays an important part in discussions, as verbal and non-verbal utterances (e.g., mhm, uh huh, yea, right), head nods and smiles are ways through which listeners may signal they are paying attention to what is being said, and they want the speaker to continue to talk. This is in addition to it being used as well as a sign of ensuring the efficiency of the communication. Instead of simply relying on correct language use for understanding and receiving messages, backchannels are also vital to "indicate that a piece of talk by the speaker has been registered by the recipient of that talk" (Gardner 2001, 13) as well as to "help the current speaker along while manifesting the listener's attention" (Stenström 1994, 81).

In line with the above, the negotiation of meaning is also a fundamental part in any interaction, as can be exemplified by both interlocutors in the excerpt, who resort to the negotiation of meaning between lines 23 and 30, where it is visible that S2 seems to have forgotten to make it clear to S1 what the topic of the question is. Through repetition, signalling non-comprehension and paraphrasing (l. 24 "I didn't participate actively," l. 30 "that you didn't participate") the intended message is clarified in the end, making it evident that the question is about whether someone had been disappointed with S1 not participating.

(1)

23 S1: i don't know because i skipped few questions (.)
24 i didn't participate actively @ (.)
25 S2: okay (2) so erm [first name3] was not upset (.)
26 [first name3] (.)
27 S1: about what (.)
28 S2: he was not upset? (1)
29 S1: about (.)
30 S2: that (.) you didn't participate. (.)

However, it is important to mention that various researchers have judged the use of repetition in interactions as an indication of incoherence, uncertainty, and flawed language use (for instance Scollon and Scollon 2001), whereas others (for instance Halliday and Hasan 1976; Tannen 1989) view it as a fundamental and cohesive factor in communication. As an accommodation strategy, repetition plays a key role, as it may simultaneously function in production, comprehension, connection, and interaction in order to make what someone says more accessible.

In this specific example, repetition is visible in lines 15, 16, and 17 concerning the word 'tower', where S1 asks about the height of the tower and S2 inquires – "the tower?" – and S1 hesitantly responds (repeating the article 'the' three times) clarifying and specifying the particular tower she is referring to, "the church tower." The primary concern of the speakers here appears to be that of convergence of both the intended and received message, so as to avoid any further breakdown in communication.

(2)

15	S1:	how tall is the the tower o:r (.)
16	S2:	the tower? (.)
17	S1:	yeah the the the church tower and er how old

Repetition may likewise be used to emphasise and clarify who or what is being referred to. This can be observed with S2's self-repetition, when he repeats at the end of his turn the person he is mentioning (ll. 25–26).

(3)

25	S2:	okay (2) so erm [first name3] was not upset (.)
26		[first name3] (.)

As for self-repair, it is equally part of effective communication. It allows interlocutors to rethink and restructure their message in order to make it clearer and more intelligible for the other speaker; in other words, being sensitive enough to measure the situation so as to prevent misunderstandings. By rephrasing, interlocutors are able to change their wording so as to adjust the initial formulation, correct it (either syntactically or lexically, for instance), and make it more understandable, or it may even be used for placing emphasis on a certain issue. When this occurs at the beginning of a turn, it may also be confused with false starts, which is a normal part of oral discourse. Even though these issues are usually associated with non-native speakers and therefore considered a problem that ought to be eliminated, Mauranen (2012, 213) believes that they actually have a valuable role (similarly to repeats), as they offer a respite "from high-attention processing" and provide some time for all the interlocutors involved to orientate the next step of the discourse.

An example of rephrasing/self-repair may be seen when S2 (l. 20) corrects himself and rephrases the question he is about to ask, by replacing the personal pronoun in favour of the possessive pronoun ('his').

(4)

20	S2:	was he was his name [last name2]? (.)

From the reflection on this short extract, several are the communicative strategies and skills used in order to negotiate meaning and achieve effective communication, be it in lingua franca situations in English, or with any other language. As has been pointed out, these strategies represent anything

but failed, incoherent, and defective language use. Contrary to written language, where there is time for reflection and preparation, in oral speech, interlocutors must measure and adjust their speech accordingly at the specific moment. As a result, intercultural sensitivity is constantly required in any given context, especially when involving interactions with people from various backgrounds. From an EFL perspective this is a feature often neglected in comparison to correct grammar use. But it is no less important, as it is a quality not generally experienced by many mono- or even bilingual speakers, while stressed from an ELF point of view.

5 Conclusion

As has been discussed, EFL is traditionally seen as a subject taught at school, aiming at native speaker standards and culture as the ultimate target to be achieved, not only in terms of communication, but also in what concerns assessment. These aims may be acceptable for those who wish to go study/live in an English-speaking environment or for those who will go on to work with native speaker colleagues/clients. In most cases, however, many Expanding circle language users will most likely employ English with other non-native speakers in contexts other than in English-speaking countries. In the latter case, simply mastering native English standards does not necessarily guarantee effective and successful communication, quite the contrary. The reason for this lies in the fact that in many EFL classes the focus tends to be on achieving certain measured standards, forgetting other essential communicative skills and strategies vital for international and intercultural contexts.

Even though ELF communication may be typically characterized by its participants having to contend with the lack of shared knowledge and assumptions, and with different varieties of English and levels of competence, all of which may increase the risk of misunderstanding, Meierkord (2000) describes ELF use as actually being supportive. This is because users of ELF tend to be helpful, rather than centring their attention on each other's weak points. In fact, in real life interactions, the occurrence of misunderstandings and of miscommunication in intercultural ELF communication is not as common as may initially be thought, and the misunderstandings that do arise cannot be particularly ascribed to the participants' cultural background (Kaur 2011; Mauranen 2006). Reconsidering these facts then, ELF may be viewed as "a form of intercultural communication characterized by cooperation rather than misunderstanding" (Meierkord 2000, 11).

Canagarajah (2007) explains how proficient speakers of ELF share a number of different competencies. For instance, in addition to *grammatical competence*, ELF users also share *language awareness*, which allows them to read and deduce the norms and standards of the other multilingual participants, *strategic competence*, in order to successfully negotiate meaning in interpersonal interactions, and *pragmatic competence* for adopting the appropriate communicative practices, keeping in mind the participant, intention, and situation in question. Regarding the lack of pragmatic competence, if the conditions do not conform to the established conventions, this may lead to severe communicative issues, which may consequently result in undesirable reactions from the listener.

Taking into account all these issues and the increase in exchanges between people from different cultural groups, currently there is a growing demand for courses that enhance intercultural communicative competence and that increase intercultural awareness, so learners can develop added/different skills and competences. The simple example given here taken from the VOICE corpus (among the many other recordings available in the corpus) helps illustrate not only the

widespread use of English around the world, but also provides a description of the linguistic features that may likely have a significant impact on the way ELT aims may be defined, consequently preparing learners for everyday real life situations.

It is only by considering language in context and in contact with several interlocutors and with the choices that are made that the transformations language undergoes can be observed. Consequently, this reality will undoubtedly have an effect not only on how people communicate, but also on traditional ELT approaches. In the latter case in particular, it can be concluded that more attention is now being given – and should continue to be given – to achieving intercultural communicative competence, which has an important impact on how students communicate once they leave school and enter the real world.

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Teaching Horror Literature in a Multicultural Classroom

ABSTRACT

As a genre, horror tends to be marginalized in literature classes because it is often mistakenly perceived to be inappropriate for the classroom environment due to the intensive emotional effects that the genre's typical macabre motifs and topics may produce in the reader. However, this paper argues that, for two reasons, horror texts represent a valid and important addition to a literary syllabus. First, they typically have a positive impact on the students' increased interest in reading, which is, in the pedagogical and scholarly sense, a desirable activity. Second, they tend to contribute significantly to the development of empathy with and tolerance for others, which is an especially valuable learning outcome in a multicultural classroom characterized by implied intercultural communication.

Keywords: horror literature; multiculturality; interculturality; learning outcome; empathy; tolerance

Poučevanje grozljivk v večkulturnem razredu

POVZETEK

Žanr grozljivk je pri pouku književnosti pogosto postavljen na stranski tir, saj ga mnogi po krivici dojemajo kot neprimerega za učno okolje, ker naj bi zanj tipični temačni motivi in teme v bralcu vzbujali premočne čustvene odzive. Prispevek kljub temu zagovarja nasprotno stališče in trdi, da so besedila z grozljivo tematiko lahko učinkovit in pomemben del pouka književnosti. Za to navaja dva razloga. Prvič, grozljivke običajno spodbujajo študente k branju, kar je zaželeno tako s pedagoškega kot z akademskega vidika. Drugič, grozljivke pomembno prispevajo k razvoju empatije in strpnosti do drugih, kar predstavlja dragocen učni izid predvsem v večkulturnih učnih okoljih, ki vključujejo medkulturno komunikacijo.

Ključne besede: grozljivka; večkulturnost; medkulturnost; učni izid; empatija; strpnost

Teaching Horror Literature in a Multicultural Classroom

1 Introduction: Teaching Horror

When Schopenhauer asserted that there are "two kinds of authors: those who write for the subject's sake, and those who write for writing's sake" ([1851] 2005, 10), he pinpointed the critical problem that presents itself before scholars, critics, teachers and students of literature who attempt to discern which, out of a myriad of published texts, are the ones worth reading and teaching. His essay on authorship illuminates the idea that the first group of writers write because they "have had thoughts or experiences which seem to them worth communicating" ([1851] 2005, 10), while others simply write for money. The first, we could tentatively say, write high literature, while the others create trivial works.[1] Horror literature is a typical disreputed genre, the works of which are often collectively, and quite unfairly, put into the category of trivial, which is why the notion of a literary representation of *thoughts and experiences worth communicating* becomes especially relevant when discussing horror literature as a means, among others, to decide whether a text is worth teaching or not. Horror texts typically aim at engaging the reader's emotions, at scaring or horrifying the reader, thereby targeting the most basic of human instincts: the instinct for survival. To survive, every human needs a self-preservation mechanism which becomes activated thanks to the feelings of pain or fear. Taking that mechanism into account, this paper aims to show that literature teachers can and should take advantage of this physiological fact in order to create a successful learning experience for racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse students in a multicultural classroom. By focusing on what is common to all, namely, the feeling of fear, they are able to unite their multicultural students under the joint flag of humanity. Moreover, the paper shows that despite heavy prejudice against the genre, horror has its rightful place in the literature classroom, particularly a multicultural one, as it provides an adequate framework to develop students' empathy for others as well as to dismantle prejudice against the Other(s).

2 The Specifics of a Multicultural Classroom

The paper focuses primarily on horror literature and its potential positive effect on achieving learning outcomes in a multicultural classroom,[2] but before tackling horror, a few words are due concerning the dynamics and challenges of teaching in a multicultural classroom. In a globalized and globalizing world, a multicultural classroom is an inevitable reality. Whether we are talking about a classroom assembled from students of the same nationality but a different economic background and/or cultural and/or racial and ethnic background (such classrooms typically exist in the United States of America), or assembled from students of different nationalities, which inevitably implies a different cultural, ethnic and possibly racial background (examples of such classrooms are more

[1] Of course, the problem is much more complicated in reality and Schopenhauer himself admits that writing just for the sake of covering paper can also be recognized in the best of authors (2005, 10). Thus, rather than labelling specific authors' entire ouvre or entire genres as trivial or not, we should be talking about and evaluating individual texts.

[2] With respect to teaching in a multicultural classroom as opposed to teaching in a non-multicultural classroom two points should be made clear. A separate paper, following adequate reasearch, could elucidate whether there are significant differences between teaching horror to students in a multicultural vs. non-multicultural classroom. However, this would demand a very clear definition of what we take to be a culturally homogenous classroom. My teaching experience so far has shown that it is hardly possible to find a non-multicultural classroom if we take culture to include not just race and ethnicity, but also gender, religion and class background, as well as membership of a particular subculture, which is a frequent situation with young people/students.

common in Europe when students are assembled together under the auspices of Erasmus or similar exchange projects),[3] cultural diversity presents teachers with specific dilemmas. Most notably, in line with Chesler (2003), both teachers and students bring with them "in one way or another the racist, classist, sexist, and homophobic baggage that abounds in our culture," which is why a teacher must find a way to overcome "patterns of racial and ethnic ideology and interaction" in order to create a safe environment which supports learning but also protects "moral sensibilities" of both the students and the teacher. Moreover, in such a classroom, even more than in a more homogenous one, the teacher must attempt to dismantle the existing stereotypes and prejudices, as otherwise he or she actually "permits these historical, cultural, and media-generated stereotypes and fears (or hostilities) about differences to persist" (also in Chesler 2003). Weinstein and Obear (1992) have noted that faculty themselves experience various issues in a culturally diverse classroom, such as the need to deal with their own biases, lack of knowledge or social and identity conflicts, and the need to respond properly to bias or discrimination when it occurs. Clearly, to overcome these problems and to handle these sensitive issues successfully (and thereby enable learning) both the teacher and the students need to be self-reflexive, and at the same time open for change. The typical strategy for overcoming bias in a literature classroom is exposing students to different voices. For instance, in her book *Thriving in the Multicultural Classroom; Principles and Practices for Effective Teaching*, Dilg (2003) suggests the following strategy to compile a syllabus: "The works will be artistically intricate and demanding. The writers will be, among others, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, African Americans, European Americans, and Middle Eastern Americans, as well as religiously diverse" (2003, 159). While it undoubtedly seems like the proper approach, as insight into diverse experiences enables understanding and fosters sympathy (and possibly also empathy), this paper offers another possibility, equally acceptable as the traditional one: to focus on texts that seem to be concerned with universal human issues, rather than specific cultural or ethnic ones, but nevertheless allow for many interpretations and offer a myriad of proofs that we are all the same: human and vulnerable.

3 Emotionally and Cognitively Engaged Reading

H. P. Lovecraft, a prominent figure in the history of literary horror, famously asserted that fear is the "oldest and strongest emotion of mankind" ([1927] 2013, 1). But already more than a century and a half before Lovecraft, and before modern psychology, Edmund Burke found that passions which concern self-preservation, namely, those connected with pain and danger, are the most potent ones. According to him, whatever awakens the ideas of pain or danger is terrible and thus the source of the *sublime*. The sublime is, in turn, "the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" because pain and the ideas connected to suffering have much stronger effects on both body and mind than any form or cause of pleasure (Burke [1757] 2014; see part I, sec. VII). In fact, the role of aesthetic representations of the horrible is a topic considered already at the very dawn of literary theory. In his *Poetics 4*, Aristotle notes that we thoroughly enjoy the mimesis of horror: "Objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when reproduced with minute fidelity: such as the forms of the most ignoble animals and of dead bodies."[4] Unlike the sights of actual violence, which people typically find abhorrent, mimesis of terrifying events and creatures garners much interest because literary representations of horror are realistic enough to

[3] In cases like this, we are typically talking about TEFL or teaching English literature to non-English students. This means that teaching and studying is in an English-mediated environment and that most (or all) of the students are not native speakers of English. This adds an additional dimension to the unifying classroom experience as it makes all students similar in the sense of having to deal with the language barrier.

[4] This and the subsequent translations of Aristotle's work are by S. H. Butcher (see Aristotle 2000).

stir our feelings and imagination ('what if…'), and yet we are at all times aware that this is fiction and this realization provides the necessary detachment needed for objective thinking. Scholarly and readerly interest in horror has not decreased despite the fact that it has been contemplated for millennia, which exemplifies the continuous relevance of horror. To illustrate, Ken Gelder makes it clear that horror is an integral part of the very fabric of our society: "the socio-political system needs these rhetorics, narratives and so on – that is, it needs horror itself – in order to be what it is and do what it does" (2002, 2). Precisely because horror is so essential to human existence, horror texts tend to be very engaging for the reader, and this is a quality that should be taken advantage of in a classroom environment. To achieve learning outcomes, it is beneficial to incorporate into the syllabi texts that will motivate the students to read and think about these outcomes.

Another benefit of adding horror texts to a literature syllabus is the fact that horror's ambition is not mere titillation of the senses. On the contrary, to skilled readers, or those aided by skilled teachers, horror gives the opportunity to ponder upon different, often taboo, issues of human existence, and the intricacies of the human mind and desire as they are presented in literary texts. They can think about them, learn from them, and finally create their own thoughts on the subject. The fact that violent or macabre subjects should be considered taboo in a classroom is rather odd, as life is, among other things, made up of various unpleasant or violent events which everyone must learn to deal with in a socially acceptable way. In a multicultural classroom this allows everyone to focus on our essential sameness, a realization that can typically be lost in such contexts where we tend to focus on differences. What is more, the effect of the horrible and scary in literature is such that it may produce thoughts which have a strong emotional impact on the reader. And it is this emotional response that the teacher should be able to take advantage of in teaching not only about literature, but also about life.

Because of its ability to scare (and sometimes to be repulsive), horror has always been quite popular, and therefore considered 'trivial'. The misconception that popular texts necessarily have to be trivial is somewhat understandable, as many popular texts indeed display atrocious characterizations, poor diction, predictable plots and other unseemly features that make a literary text trivial.[5] But even more than that, horror's controversial position typically originates from the misconceptions connected with its topics and motifs, as well as the readers' doubts concerning the authors' motivation to write about horrific situations and events. Horror stories seem to be superficial (especially when connected with the supernatural), undignified, and lacking in ambition to signify anything beyond mere depictions of carnage. Or, as Schwartz and Rubinstein-Avila have put it, the highest concern with regard to horror as a popular genre is the fear that young people cannot "make meaning" from such texts (2006, 40), which is not true.

According to Dawes, horror engages both our emotional and cognitive facilities as the readers' problem-solving cognitive structures utilize the readers' previous knowledge and their attitudes and values to create alternative solutions to the story at hand (2004, 449). For a successful literature class, students have to be motivated to search for a deeper meaning, and it is horror texts that very often "envelop the students into a new way of thinking, understanding, and conceptualizing the world around them" (Aho 2008–2009, 32). Dilg has a similar idea when she claims that to create a supportive environment, "[w]e need to design curriculum that appeals to students from multiple cultures and that aids them in understanding and constructing meaning in their world" (2003,

[5] But trivial texts have been produced within the realm of other genres – love stories, autobiographies, adventure stories, among all the others. Triviality is not inherently connected specifically with horror, a fact that tends to be disregarded. Objectively, of course, a horror text may be as well (or as badly) written as any other literary text which deals with less macabre topics and is therefore spared the initial prejudice and misgiving.

203). In other words, a text that has already intrigued the student with its content is more likely to make the student accept the responsibility for their own learning and persist in their classroom and out-of-class engagement, even if the search for meaning, that is, the learning process, becomes more demanding or difficult. In fact, with motivated students, the student-teacher relationship assumes a quality of complicity which is extremely rewarding for both sides as students feel that the class is not 'useless' or boring and that the teacher is offering them something they can relate to and understand, even if it is demanding, which is a necessary prerequisite for successful teaching and learning.

4 Horror as an Impulse for Positive Change

In addition to horror's alleged triviality, the idea that the interest in aversive stimuli in literature might somehow cause the reader to become violent is another argument against reading horror. In her study *Bloodscripts: Writing the Violent Subject*, Elena Gomel (2003) looks precisely at narrative influence on violent behavior and examines the way popular culture constructs violent subjectivity (for instance, in serial killers or perpetrators of genocide). She also claims that being a killer is the end result of social construction, just like being a woman or a man, and looks at modes in which narrative representation contributes to our capability of committing violent acts and resistance to them (Gomel 2003, xiv). By way of explanation, it is not (just) what we read that makes us violent, but, rather, violent identity is such a complex construct that it cannot be simply reduced to being a consequence of inadequate reading choices, or any other single reason. In line with this, there are many more studies that show how reading about tragic or horrific events provokes feelings quite opposite to aggression. In *Poetics 11*, for instance, Aristotle speaks of three components of the complex plot of tragedy: *peripeteia* (reversal), *anagnorisis* (recognition) and *pathos* (suffering). The first two represent unforeseen complications of events that have moral and psychological consequences for the protagonist(s). Pathos, however, is very graphic. It refers to a clear display of violence: "the destructive or painful action, such as death on the stage, bodily agony, wounds and the like" (2000, 16).[6] Strictly speaking, pathos is the horror necessary to make the moral of the tragedy more pronounced and to contribute to the final sense of catharsis. Tragedy, a noble genre, should "imitate actions which excite pity and fear" (2000, 17) and to a great extent, many horror texts are indeed tragic in the literary sense of the word.[7] Thus, horror seems to be a necessary ingredient of a complex play, as it provides the realistic context crucial for successful mimesis (which should provide us with the model for truth and beauty). Expressly, we should learn from the play/the horror and change our behavior for the better.

In her book-length study *Empathy and the Novel*, Suzanne Keen (2010) argues that we still do not know how much of the felt empathy caused by sympathizing with fictional characters is translated into the actual behavior of emotional readers, suggesting the need to examine how emotional readers behave in life. Following that line of thought, Bal and Veltkamp have conducted experiments with people on the basis of which they were able to give scientific proof that reading fiction enhances the readers' actual empathic skills. In fact, the more emotionally involved a reader is in the fictional text, the greater the personal transformation (2013, 9–10).[8] Their research shows that changes

6 Gomel concludes that "Pathos is what people react to when they throw up at the sight of blood. It is arguable that nausea is the true foundation of morality" (2003, xxiii).

7 This means they feature a tragic hero, one who is better than us, who makes some kind of tragic mistake or has some great frailty of character (fatal flaw) that leads to his downfall (consider Victor Frankenstein, Faust, or Dr. Jekyll, among others).

8 Bal and Veltkamp (2013) are not the only ones who have written about the personal transformations of readers subsequent to reading, but their paper contains actual research results with exact numbers and graphs illustrating the data (e.g. hierarchical regression analyses predicting empathy; standard deviations, means, reliabilities, and correlations of the study variables, and so on). Other relevant psychological studies that deal with this topic include: Miall and Kuiken (2002), Mar et al. (2011), and Kidd

occur even if the reader is not emotionally engaged, but these are changes of a different kind. For instance, if the reader is simply interested in how the story ends or how the mystery is resolved, he or she engages only his or her cognitive abilities and, thus, reading results in other outcomes, that is, enhanced problem solving skills, instead of higher empathy. For readers of horror fiction, which for the most part engages readers on an emotional level, the expected outcome then is to "identify and sympathize with others" (2013, 10),[9] but also to learn from their mistakes, as Aristotle suggests. This is not at all far-fetched if we look at several texts of the genre and the issues they promote and/or discuss.

5 Deconstructing Prejudice through Horror

One of horror's crucial qualities as a literary genre is its versatility and the ability of its tropes to represent and, more importantly, mean more than is obvious. This means that in addition to simply scaring the reader, which undoubtedly is its primary purpose, good horror texts also demand of the reader to reflect upon different (taboo?) phenomena related to human life, be they our (deviant) sexual impulses, forbidden desires, aggression, hatred, or any other part of individual psychology that we have to come to terms with in order to function in our social environments. These texts offer an insight into what happens when the boundaries of socially accepted behavior are transgressed,[10] and they reawaken the reader to the reality that our behavioral conventions are far from natural, but rather arbitrary social constructs and norms. Gelder explains that "horror's capacity to disorient and disturb" is its major strength because "the disturbance it willfully produces is in fact a disturbance of cultural and ideological categories we may have taken for granted" (2002, 3). That is to say, instead of perpetuating the status quo with its implied inequalities, intolerance and prejudice against the Other, horror texts have the "ability to call conventional representations of temporal, sexual, cultural and national identities into question" (Gelder 2002, 3). According to Dilg, in order for students and teachers to thrive in a multicultural classroom, teachers should promote a pedagogy of belonging and this means, among other things, "to understand our own strengths and weaknesses, the power and limitations accorded us by our own histories and identities" (2003, 203), which is precisely what certain horror texts enable and support.

While, for instance, a comparative approach in studying the linguistic differences among variants of a language (World Englishes) or in studying cultural differences which are in the focus of pragmatics has its theoretical and practical value in a multicultural English classroom, it is equally important to offer courses that approach the heterogeneous student audience from a different point of view. Instead of focusing on the differences, a course in horror literature will tend to examine different social constructs that are presented as defining and identifying of a group and dismantle them as they tend to contribute to prejudice and blur the truth of our universal human nature. In this, horror tends to (ab)use the body as the vessel for understanding more abstract ideas, for instance, freedom and equality. To put it bluntly, a horror story will make the student understand what the power-obsessed villain of Ayn Rand's novel *The Fountainhead* formulates with shocking cynicism: "We are all brothers under the skin – and I, for one, would be willing to skin humanity to prove it" (1996, 264).

and Castano (2013). Among relevant narratological studies are, for instance, Zunshine (2006), Phelan (2007), and Thrailkill (2007).

[9] Contrary to reading fiction, which typically causes people to relax from their everyday obligations, reading non-fictional texts may be associated with alternative consequences: instead of feeling empathy, readers of non-fictional texts that contain descriptions of horrific events may experience feelings of guilt or obligation (Slovic 2007).

[10] Of course, it can be said that this is one of the primary functions of (high) literature in general (see, for instance, Leitch 2001). This subsequently also implies that horror is not trivial by default.

6 Interpretative Richness of Shelley's *Frankenstein*

The motif of skin, to continue in the same tone, is symbolically a very potent one when it comes to teaching horror. The outside appearance of any horror story protagonist is very important because it (among other things) often offers a key for unlocking the possible meaning(s) of a literary text. Probably the most well-known literary (anti)hero whose appearance is crucial for his tragic destiny as well as the destiny of other characters in the novel is the nameless monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Because of its rich symbolism and Shelley's crafty employment of the archetypal story of creation, the novel offers numerous interpretative possibilities, one of which is certainly the issue of Otherness: how we deal with it and what the consequences of our behavior toward those who seem to be the Other are. Victor Frankenstein, the ambitious scientist, is the embodiment of a Western post-Enlightenment hero. He is white, male, well-educated, and rich. However, his desire for knowledge and his experiments, which include grave digging and desecration of dead bodies, are motivated by personal ambition rather than an urge to help humanity in its everlasting struggle with/against death. He defies authority and in his search for ultimate answers concerning human life rejects modern science and turns to alchemy:

> As a child, I had not been content with the results promised by the modern professors of natural science. […] I had retrod the steps of knowledge along the paths of time, and exchanged the discoveries of recent inquirers for the dreams of forgotten alchymists. Besides, I had a contempt for the uses of modern natural philosophy. It was very different when the masters of the science sought immortality and power; such views, although futile, were grand: but now the scene was changed. The ambition of the inquirer seemed to limit itself to the annihilation of those visions on which my interest in science was chiefly founded. I was required to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth. […] So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein – more, far more, will I achieve: treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation. (Shelley 1991, 32–33)

After becoming "capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter," Frankenstein's obsession with grandeur prompts him to change his original design: instead of creating "a being like myself, or one of simpler organization," he decides "to make the being of a gigantic stature; that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large" (Shelley 1991, 37–38). Blinded by ambition, he assembles a giant out of body parts stolen from the graves of people recently deceased and buried, never thinking that the final outcome might be anything but pleasing to the eye: "His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful" (Shelley 1991, 42). However, upon bringing the creature to life, he finds it to be an aesthetic "catastrophe": "now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart" (Shelley 1991, 42). Without ever attempting to communicate with it or to investigate its nature, he simply runs away into his bedroom, leaving it alone and unattended in the laboratory. Prejudiced by its unseemly appearance, he rejects the creature, instantly displaying a shocking lack of sympathy for the being he has just created as well as a lack of morality and responsibility toward mankind: if the creature is as evil as it is ugly, how could he simply leave it at large without warning anyone? The creature, who is – quite ironically – "naturally good" (Johnson 1991, xiii), follows him, attempts to speak and make contact, but the scientist runs away again unable to deal with the consequences of his work, which turned out to be aesthetically unsatisfactory. The essence of the creature's nature is never questioned; rather, Frankenstein assumes it must be dangerous and malevolent because it is displeasing to the eye. Contrary to his assumption, it is Frankenstein's prejudice and intolerance,

his lack of empathy with and sympathy for his 'son' based solely on the creature's appearance, and not the creature's malevolence, that causes all subsequent tragedies. What is more, Frankenstein's actions are mirrored in those of the creature, and as the story unravels, the initial assumptions of Frankenstein as good and moral become subverted as the creature's search for love and acceptance and his innate altruism only emphasize Frankenstein's cowardice and selfishness.

Shelley's depiction of both of these characters makes it worthwhile for the teacher and students to discuss the justification of Frankenstein's actions. In cases of explicit racial prejudice, students will tend to respond 'automatically' and judge the discriminator without necessarily empathizing with either of the characters. They will judge based on what they have learned so far, namely, that it is wrong to discriminate against people simply based on their skin color or religion. But, in Frankenstein's case, this distinction is somewhat blurred because of the creature's 'unnatural' origin and its inhuman appearance. In order to make conclusions about both Frankenstein's and the creature's behavior, they will need to imagine themselves in such an improbable situation and make conscious correlations between Frankenstein's actions and similar situations in real life. For instance, why do certain parents leave their children at birth? Why the persistence of the trope somehow correlating beauty and brains or even virtue? Is the creature's unnatural origin necessarily proof of its bad character? Moreover, after Frankenstein abandons the creature and decides to keep everyone in the dark concerning his huge accomplishment, he seems to become the chief culprit for the creature's crimes; the only reason the creature kills is in order to get back at his father/creator for abandoning him. This can (and should) be brought into connection with issues concerning the students' life as well as certain major historical events, such as slavery, racial segregation, gender inequality, and causes and outcomes of different civil rights movements.

7 H. P. Lovecraft and the Issue of Race

While Shelley's novel champions, among other things, empathy with all living creatures and the need to take responsibility for our actions, there are horror texts that address the issue of Otherness from a different perspective. For instance, H. P. Lovecraft's stories represent the justification of the fear of the Other. Lovecraft is – and rightfully so – believed by many to be the master of horror. His stories can truly unsettle the reader with their specific atmosphere and depictions of malevolent alien races determined to destroy humankind. But unlike Shelley, who writes from the position of the Other (she is a woman struggling to succeed in the male-dominated profession of writing) and thus understands and reveals the injustices of the patriarchal world, Lovecraft's position is a different one. He is a white male Protestant of European descent, completely uninterested in women and women's issues (women practically never appear in his stories), as well as highly prejudiced against people of color. His letters reveal him to be quite racist (Joshi 2002, xi) and so do his stories in which miscegenation is represented as degenerative because it corrupts the blood of white people. For instance, in "The Call of Cthulhu" the narrator explains that the regions of "evil repute" in a city are "unknown and untraversed by white men" (Lovecraft [1926] 2002, 151), suggesting that white men are the pillars of decency and morality. Consequently, he further exposes people of mixed blood as those who are most susceptible to alien cults because they are mentally and morally challenged. Lovecraft describes them as an "indescribable horde of human abnormality" and "hybrid spawn," as "men of a very low mixed-blooded, mentally aberrant type." Furthermore, "[m]ost were seamen" with "a sprinkling of negroes and mulattoes, largely West Indians or Brava Portuguese" ([1926] 2002, 152–53). To the contemporary reader, such instances of racism may seem quite shocking, but they also provide an excellent opportunity to discuss the issue of racism in class. Lovecraft's representations of people of color as mentally and morally "aberrant" will allow

students to understand that fear is the crucial factor which fuels racist imagination, but they will also allow the students to take a stand against such misconceptions concerning the imaginary threat that arises from the presence of the Other.

In a multicultural classroom, students will be especially aware of injustices that follow from prejudiced generalizations based on skin color, race, nation, religion, class, and so on, and such topics may be especially pertinent to this type of a heterogeneous classroom, provided that both the teacher and the students understand that mutual respect is the required norm of behavior and interaction. Typically, students will share their personal stories and opinions as a response to problems presented in fictional texts – a very important step toward learning. Moreover, they might make parallels between their personal lack of knowledge and prejudices (or stereotypical notions) concerning certain cultures, and those of Lovecraft's narrators and protagonists who always construct the most horrific assumptions about the cultures they are not familiar with. As the fictional world comes into interplay with real-life circumstances of individual students, reading (and the discussion about the texts read) becomes an actual personal experience, which is the first step toward personal growth.

In this sense, Kaufman and Libby's (2012) research dedicated to reading as "experience-taking" that can change beliefs and behavior of readers is especially relevant for learning outcomes in a multicultural classroom. Experience-taking presumes that the reader immerses himself or herself into the text "as though they were a particular character in the story world, adopting the character's mind-set and perspective as the story progresses rather than orienting themselves as an observer or evaluator of the character" (2012, 2; also see Oatley 1999). In their study, they investigated how postponed disclosure of a character's sexual orientation or race may impact experience-taking, and such issues are crucial in multicultural classrooms where the acceptance of Otherness must be the norm. Reading allows us to "live as many more lives and as many kinds of lives" (Hayakawa 1990, 144) as possible, owing to our mental simulation of the characters' experiences which imply "new roles, relationships, personalities, motives, and actions" (Kaufman and Libby 2012, 17). Kaufman and Libby's experiments "demonstrate that the effects of experience-taking can be harnessed and directed toward such positive ends as increasing civic engagement and reducing prejudice and stereotyping" (2012, 17), which is a crucial outcome of intercultural communication within the classroom context. Specifically, this implies using different (experiential rather than conceptual) methods in class, such as discussions, role-plays or written assignments, that require students to actively and consciously suppress their conceptions of themselves in order to simulate the character's mind-set and their subjective experiences (Kaufman and Libby 2012, 15).[11]

8 Bloodless Horror – A Feast for Imagination

While it is true that the primary aim of horror fiction is to provoke feelings of fear in the reader, well-written horror texts also have the ambition to go beyond mere carnage (which is sometimes avoided altogether) or spookiness, and tackle certain universal issues. As Jean-Loup Benét (2005), a horror writer and English teacher, asserts: "horror is not all immature blood and guts" and "[s]avvy teachers can harness the students' love of the genre to engage them in meaningful lessons that will

[11] In order to simulate the character's "thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and motives" (Kaufman and Libby 2012, 15) students have to think of answers to questions pertaining to the context (time, setting), the character's familial ties and relationships, his or her education, social and cultural background, and experiences. This results in a better understanding of the Other as represented by a literary character (not necessarily adopting his or her position, but acknowledging it as legitimate), and, according to Kaufman and Libby, it also typically results in "a bottom-up change to individuals' self-concepts" (2012, 15) as they inevitably grow through the process of temporary experiencing and incorporating these attributes.

get them excited about learning." In other words, horror literature employs certain scary motifs and topics in order to deal with everything that causes anxiety in our everyday lives: from growing up, to illness and death, from loneliness and loss to faith, and so on. In fact, stories that lack any descriptions of violence seem to ultimately leave the deepest impact on the reader, as they can almost never be understood as a caricature or farcical exaggeration.

One such story is "To Kill a Child" by Stig Dagerman. The story, which describes how easily accidents can occur if one is driving too fast, was commissioned in 1947 by the Swedish National Society for Road Safety as a part of their traffic safety campaign and, unlikely as it may seem, it became one of the greatest short stories in Swedish literature. Dagerman's story is "a poignant tale of choice, chance, and human loss […] with a capacity to generate human empathy, identification, and understanding" (Hartman 2014), which are among the most important desired objectives of literature classes. The students' initial reaction is typically that "this is not horror" because there is no blood-spatter or actual murderous intent, but the more they talk about the tragic accident and the more they attempt to feel for and feel with both the driver (the perpetrator) and the parents who have just lost their child, the scarier the story gets. Dagerman ensures the reader that "life is constructed in such a merciless fashion" (1961,154) and that "[a]fterward everything is too late" (1961, 154), which creates a suffocating feeling of being trapped either by destiny or by one's poor choices. Either way, there is no happy ending for anyone:

> [T]hey will never forget. For it is not true that time heals all wounds. Time does not heal the wounds of a dead child, and it heals very poorly the pain of a mother who forgot to buy sugar and who sent her child across the road to borrow some. And it heals just as poorly the anguish of a once cheerful man who has killed a child. (Dagerman 1961, 155)

The possibility that one's life can be so utterly and irrevocably changed for the worse in a millisecond is so devastating that the story becomes more horrible the more one thinks (or talks) about it. In the case of "To Kill a Child," horror is more philosophical than visceral, which enables the teacher to prompt the student to think about issues such as guilt, responsibility, and atonement, because the child's death casts a shadow not just over the life of the driver, but over the lives of the parents, too. The strong philosophical and cautionary bent of the story allows the students to realize that horror as a genre has many faces, even though the immature, gory one might be the most famous. But it always and unmistakably aims at the most fundamental issues of life and humanity and thus it can very well motivate students to become people who will better their society. Social worth and learning outcomes that support students' development into better citizens are considered especially important, so Dewey suggests that the criterion of social worth should be used when choosing among a wide variety of available teaching materials (1966, 191–92; cf. Dilg 2003, 171–73).

Similar to "To Kill a Child" is Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lottery." Apart from being an excellent example of Jackson's masterful literary style and her ability to create suspense and intrigue the reader with her description of an (invented) gruesome yearly ritual somewhere in the rural US, it opens up a path for a discussion concerning different unpleasant or violent customs and cultural practices that can injure the integrity of an individual for the alleged sake of the community. The story focuses, through irony and shock, on the fact that people tend to give great importance to form regardless of the actual meaning and that often people are hurt for the sake of tradition. Through the chill, casual voice of the narrator who describes the village's preparation for the lottery, the reader finds out that the "original paraphernalia for the lottery had been lost long ago" (Jackson 2008, 7), suggesting that the lottery has somehow lost its purpose, but is being perpetuated unquestioningly by the elders of the village who do it simply because "[t]here's always

been a lottery" (Jackson 2008, 14). With every page the tension grows and the reader is intrigued about the nature and the purpose of the lottery, as well as about the reward for the winner. The gruesomeness of the ritual and the lack of a proper reward is revealed only at the end: "Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still remembered to use stones" (Jackson 2008, 20). Ironically, the lottery ends with the murder of an innocent victim. The sheer horror of what people can do to their neighbors in the name of a half-forgotten ritual with an obscure purpose underlines Jackson's point that people are violent and merciless, but also gullible and deficient in critical thinking. The idea of perpetuating various cultural practices and rituals in order to keep us safe from the Other, be that someone outside the community or, more frequently, some malevolent (super)natural force, is completely subverted as it becomes clear that people should fear one another the most. "The Lottery," originally published in 1948, is unfortunately still a very relevant text about culture and humanity as it reveals the absurdity of ritual killings. Human sacrifice seems to be justified in the name of tradition and faith, and the mass, guided by blind obedience, forsakes any empathy for the fellow man, instead resorting to murder in the name of God. What is more, in "The Lottery" it becomes quite clear that danger does not come from without, from another or the Other, but rather from within: from your family, neighbors and friends who are willing to stone you to death for the sake of tradition and form.

9 Conclusion

Despite typically being viewed as inappropriate material for classroom use, reading and discussing horror literature can be very rewarding for both the teacher and students. First and foremost, every literature class benefits from a syllabus which consists of texts that the students themselves find intriguing and that they actually want to read. A careful selection of texts that are neither trivial nor superficial, but such that they allow for multiple interpretations or enable contemplation on different phenomena of everyday life can result in successful achievement of different learning outcomes: both those connected with literature interpretation and theory, and those which imply the improvement of the students' English skills. Moreover, unlike many culture-oriented subjects that tend to emphasize the difference between students or literature classes that expose students to various voices in order for the students to understand and appreciate one another more, a literature course in horror focuses on what is universally common to all of us as humans, regardless of the cultural background. Students are encouraged to think and talk about abstract concepts such as fear, humiliation, tolerance, pain, hatred, suffering, and many others, which point to our basic vulnerability and sameness. Thus, students focus not on their mutual differences, but on their inherent similarity and equality as human beings, with the aim of understanding that everyone is entitled to the safety and integrity of their person. In addition, instead of supposedly becoming more violent, they actually tend to be moved and become more appreciative of the human right to live and make choices for oneself. They learn the value of compassion and understanding toward one another, and, by becoming more emphatic, they also become more tolerant members of a(ny) society.

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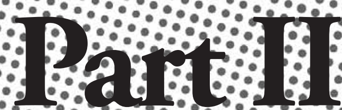

Part II

Intercultural Landscapes

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The Importance of Being 'On the Road': A Reading of the Journey in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) by Wes Anderson

ABSTRACT

Road stories are significant cultural objects that "provide a ready space for [the] exploration" (Cohan and Hark 1997, 2) of different landscapes, contributing to the encounter of the traveller with him/herself or with the Other. These cultural encounters offer the opportunity both for inner reflection upon the nation in which the protagonists travel. Such is the case of the Whitman brothers in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007, Wes Anderson), who embark on a journey in India seeking spiritual enlightenment from the problems of the past. The confrontation with the foreign Other will not only put into perspective a changed notion of the Indian nation but also their true purpose in life. Based upon the idea of the transformative power of journeys, and considering *The Darjeeling Limited* as a road movie, this article analyzes the brothers' awakening as they travel deeper into the Indian landscape to emerge with a renewed sense of self.

Keywords: journey; road stories; cinema; transformation; *The Darjeeling Limited*; Wes Anderson

Zakaj je pomembno biti »na poti«: Branje popotovanja v *Darjeeling Limited* (2007) Wesa Andersona

POVZETEK

Zgodbe ceste so pomembni kulturni objekti, ki »nudijo pripraven prostor za raziskovanje« (Cohan and Hark 1997, 2) raznolikih krajin in tako prispevajo k srečevanju potujočega s samim seboj ali z Drugim. Takšna kulturna srečevanja so priložnost za notranjo refleksijo o narodih, v katerih se protagonisti gibajo. Tak je tudi primer bratov Whitman v *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007, Wes Anderson), ki se odpravijo na popotovanje po Indiji, med katerim iščejo duhovno razsvetljenje in se soočajo s svojo preteklostjo. Spopad s tujim Drugim jim na novo osmisli tako predstave o Indijcih kot življenjske cilje. Članek z vidika transformacijske moči popotovanj in prek analize filma *The Darjeeling Limited* kot filma ceste proučuje prebujenje bratov, ki na poti do samospoznanja potujejo vse globlje v indijsko krajino.

Ključne besede: popotovanje; zgodbe ceste; kinematografija; transformacija; *The Darjeeling Limited*; Wes Anderson.

The Importance of Being ‘On the Road’: A Reading of the Journey in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) by Wes Anderson[1]

“There are no foreign lands. It is the traveller only who is foreign.” – Robert Louis Stevenson

“In a world in which there’s no more ‘away’ and in which distance has disappeared, do road movies still have a reason to exist?” – Walter Salles

1 Introduction

In an article entitled “From *Easy Rider* to *Nebraska*: The road movie allure,” Jordan Hoffman (2013) explains that the road movie has been one of the most enduring genres in the history of Hollywood, especially because it has been used as a “ready space for [the] exploration” (Cohan and Hark 1997, 2) of different cultural landscapes. In fact, the genre continues to be valued as an important tool to chronicle the major changes that have occurred throughout time, as it generates new perceptions upon the questions of identity and belonging, possibility and transformation. By focusing on the importance of movement and displacement, the road movie provides a unique opportunity to look at many aspects of the American nation, since it registers the experiences and feelings expressed by the travellers in their search for meaning.

The 20th and 21st centuries saw an explosion of road stories throughout the world, giving voice to the many challenges of contemporary society, thus presenting alternative visions to the ones already established. Filmmakers are constantly returning to the road movie genre because its potential lies within its flexibility to accommodate multiple worldviews, as Hoffman (2013) comments:

> [The road movie] is also enormously flexible: it can take in other genres, comment on political issues or set out a philosophical worldview. This is one reason the road movie has remained consistently popular since the advent of sound cinema – with detours and potholes here and there.

The openness to adapt to the different circumstances and, indeed, to respond to certain key moments in history is what makes the road movie such an appealing genre to spectators and filmmakers alike. The genre became so popular that it was imported from the United States[2] to other nations as a cultural vehicle in which directors could explore the crises and the tensions of their own country or of another foreign country. In this sense, the road movie genre stands as an important visual document that registers and accommodates different identities and cultural maps that emerge in contemporary society (Mills 2006, 18).

1 This article is based on the author’s PhD thesis (Duarte 2014), University of Lisbon.

2 It is important to note that there are some critics who argue that the road movie is not solely a genre born in the United States, in the sense that other journeys on the road can likewise be traceable in other nations, more or less at the same time as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967, Arthur Penn) and *Easy Rider* (1969, Dennis Hopper), the founding narratives of the road movie. However, in line with Corrigan (1991) or Laderman (2002), these films will be considered the roots of the road movie in this essay as well.

Adding to the innumerable film productions – both American and foreign – it is important to note the rise in critical thought on road movies, particularly in what concerns non-American productions, like in Brazil, France or in South America in general.[3] These studies contribute to highlighting the importance of this genre worldwide and are a good example of the global impact of road pictures. However, the purpose of this study is not to explore these particular works.

Instead, attention will be given to the road movie genre in the United States, followed by an analysis of *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007), understood here as a renewed version of the classical notion of a road story. Wes Anderson's film is a good example of how mobility continues to play an important role in constructing one's identity. By travelling to and within the Indian landscape the main protagonists of the film – the Whitman brothers – will be able to flow in between loss and discovery and slowly renew not only their trust in each other as family, but also as individuals.

What makes *The Darjeeling Limited* such an interesting case study is the fact that the filmmaker chose a foreign nation – India – to explore the doubts and uncertainties of the main characters. This is particularly relevant considering how the road story inquires into transformation occurring outside familiar territory. By travelling in an alien culture the brothers are confronted with their own self as new perspectives are revealed, making them embrace the difference embodied by the (Indian) Other but at the same time by themselves.

With this in mind, and for the sake of better organization, this article is divided into three major parts. The first section encompasses an introduction to the road movie, by trying to provide a brief history of the genre and its major characteristics, with special attention given to contemporary works. A theoretical framework related with the road movie and its impact supports this short introduction to the genre.

The second part will analyze *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007), taking into consideration the protagonists' journey to India and their confrontation with the Other, and how this opposition helps the Whitman brothers rediscover themselves. In this sense, what is to be proven here is why journeys matter and, in particular, why road movies continue to play such a significant part in our cinematic culture. This latter issue will be explored in the concluding remarks titled "Why do journeys matter?"

2 The Road Movie: Some Notes

According to Hayward (2006, 335), "[r]oad movies, as the term makes clear, are movies in which the protagonists are on the move." This brief definition is further developed by Hayward in her book, in which she points out other features that contribute to better defining the genre. Historically speaking, the relation between 'man + car + road' could already be noticed in many books and films before the 1960s,[4] as the road movie is "very much a postwar phenomenon" (Corrigan 1991, 143), in which technology, in particular all kinds of motorized vehicles,[5] played an important role. Cars, trucks or motorcycles, for instance, are present in the majority of road movies, promoting the possibility of escaping the system and providing a new beginning.

[3] See, for instance, the studies of Archer (2012), Brandellero (2013), and Pinazza (2014).

[4] Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, published in 1957, is one of the major literary influences of the road movie. Some films produced before *Easy Rider*, like *It Happened One Night* (1934), by Frank Capra, also had a major impact.

[5] The road movie succeeds another well-known American genre, the Western, by continuing to explore – now in a modernized version due to technology – the significance of the American landscape, the importance of the quest and the imagination of the "nation's culture" (Cohan and Hark 1997, 3).

While on the road, most protagonists end up learning valuable lessons that will play a part in their better understanding of themselves and the world. In a sense, the road film protagonist is travelling into the unknown, on a journey from one place to another that will help them rediscover the landscape.

An interesting definition for road movies is the one presented by Correa in an article where he tries to pinpoint the main features of the genre. For him, the road movie is characterized by the presence of travelling heroes or nomad characters – mainly young, male, marginal figures – wandering around the country in search of themselves (2006, 272).

Easy Rider, the film directed by Dennis Hopper in 1969, is a good example of Correa's definition of the genre. Considered by many critics and film historians the first road movie, along with *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967, Arthur Penn), it specifically focuses on Wyatt and Billy's journey across the nation in search of the real America, hence possessing many of the features that characterize the genre.

Both films were produced at a time of rebellious impulses towards the ruling system. As Laderman suggests (2002, 43), these narratives are "propelled in spirit and theme by the visionary rebellion of the counterculture." While *Bonnie and Clyde* is a narrative celebrating the couple's "fugitive mobility" (Laderman 2002, 43), *Easy Rider* celebrates the possibilities offered by the open road and, at the same time, relates to the countercultural critique typical of the 1960s. This division seems to lead to two different paths: (1) the outlaw road movie descending from *Bonnie and Clyde*, and (2) the quest road movie, descending from *Easy Rider*. The division presented here is not always well-defined, since on many occasions the road movie narrative possesses elements from both types.

Easy Rider's narrative praises the importance of mobility in pursuit of the true America, but it is also proof that it is possible to be disenchanted while on the road, since in the end, their search for the true America fails. This is especially true in the final scene, where both Wyatt and Billy are confronted with a cultural Other – represented by the 'redneck' group, and here understood as an oppressive group that is against what is 'different' – who is unable to accept them and what they stand for and, therefore, eliminates them from the road and, of course, from the nation's landscape. In this sense, the quest for the true American nation is unsuccessful when opposed by the forces of conservatism that do not tolerate alternative views and ways of life. Wyatt and Billy's position can only be marginal and nothing else.

Hopper's film is a good example of some of the existing tensions in road movies, paving the way for future road stories. The ending in *Easy Rider*, for instance, would be very important in the following decade, since the 1970s narrative focuses its attention on doubting the promise of the open road, as Laderman notes (2002, 81): "Still modernist, the road movie's proliferation during this period is characterized by a movement away from the idea(l) of social rebellion, toward exaggerated cynicism, irony and nihilism." Films such as *Two-Lane Blacktop* (1971, Monte Hellman) or *Vanishing Point* (1971, Richard C. Sarafian) are two good examples of how the road can often lead to nowhere and be devoid of sense. In these films, driving is just an act in itself because the excitement of being on the road is transformed into emptiness.

The 1980s recover the rebellious feature of the road story thriving in the postmodern era, in particular within the sphere of independent cinema. *Paris, Texas* (1984, Wim Wenders) or *Stranger than Paradise* (1984, Jim Jarmusch), for instance, illustrate how the postmodern road

movie continues with the rebellious features of the 1960s, only to become self-conscious about it, pervading the road movie with irony and exaggeration. The road movie flourishes in the 1980s and, in the 1990s, brings new ways of looking at the journey, renewing some of the themes explored in previous decades (identity problems, cultural tensions, or the dissolution of the family, to name a few). A closer look at some of the road stories produced during this decade testifies to the openness of the road movie to multicultural issues that are not present in the white-male-only narratives of the previous decades.

Thelma and Louise (1991, Riddley Scott), *My Own Private Idaho* (1992, Gus Van Sant), *Get on the Bus* (1996, Spike Lee), *Smoke Signals* (1996, Chris Eyre) or *The Straight Story* (1999, David Lynch) invert some of the codes of the road movie and reuse its counterculture discourse to express the issues of their own specific communities. As Mills points out (2006, 188) in her reflection on the road movie, the 1990s reveal the importance of the transformation while on the road:

> The road remains a space of metamorphosis, as it has been throughout the postwar decades, but in the nineties this evolution extended beyond those who travel on the road to those communities touched by the protagonist who travels. Alienation exists only as a conflict to be resolved through the community's transformation rather than the individual's rebellion. Walt Whitman once noted, "I am bigger than I thought myself," and the films of the nineties shift focus from the self to the interconnections of that self to a larger group of people.

Not only do the nineties renovate the genre, they also revitalize it by giving voice to important groups of the nation that up until then were on the margins. Taking a look at each of the films individually, *Thelma and Louise* puts, for the first time, two women on the road, while *My Own Private Idaho* revolves around two gay characters, and *Smoke Signals* as well as *Get on the Bus* put into perspective the Native-American and African-American communities, centering their attention on the social tensions of the time by exploring questions of identity and belonging, thus presenting to viewers an unfamiliar and marginalized cultural landscape previously unknown to them. Finally, *The Straight Story* challenges the genre itself by placing an elderly man on the road. The main character, Alvin Straight, goes against the road movie convention of young fast-driving males on the road by driving a slow-moving lawnmower. All in all, with the 1990s road movies, it becomes clear that the genre travels in many different directions, particularly because it becomes difficult to *just* talk about 'road movies'.

Describing the road movie genre in the 21st century is a very complex task, as the term has become difficult to define in recent years; it encompasses many different features, especially with genre blending. The road movie narrative is no longer just connected with journeys in the traditional sense. In other words, the journey is not only made by car, it can also include travelling by foot, hence expanding the road movie's potential and focusing on a voyage that is much slower and, in a sense, more introspective, like in the case of *Into the Wild* (2007, Sean Penn) or *Wendy and Lucy* (2008, Kelly Reichardt).

The amount of road stories produced in the last decade continues to rise, possibly because the genre explores a variety of different issues, and responds to the crises and tensions of each decade, as demonstrated in these brief notes. In the case of contemporary road movies, for instance, the characters seem to travel through an identity crisis, angst and the inability to be responsible and grow up, addressing the genre's "potential for romanticizing alienation" (Cohan and Hark 1997, 1). Some of these issues can especially be observed in contemporary narratives like *Garden State* (2004, Zach Braff) – a clear example of the road movie's flexibility – or *Sideways* (2004, Alexander Payne).

Now that some of the recurrent motifs of the road movie have been established, let us move on to the second part of this article, an analysis of a contemporary road story like *The Darjeeling Limited* that puts the main protagonists on a journey in a non-American landscape towards self-discovery and emotional fulfillment.

3 Contemporary Journeys: A Reading of the Journey in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) by Wes Anderson

Before embarking on the film analysis per se, it is important to state that Wes Anderson is not a typical director and that *The Darjeeling Limited,* like most contemporary road stories, is not a classic road movie. Anderson is a very peculiar filmmaker, in the sense that he is involved in the whole process of film creation, as Browning (2011, ix) expresses:

> Anderson is a rare example of a modern director who has a significant input in a number of areas of production, resulting in a distinctive style, which links his films together and separates them from the work of others. He directs, writes, and sometimes produces, and takes an almost forensic approach to the look of his sets.

The complete immersion in all the aspects of his films gives him a certain freedom to make real his vision as an *auteur*. *The Darjeeling Limited* is a curious case in Anderson's filmography, since it is set in India[6] and, therefore, estranged in a certain way from his other films. However, some of the issues portrayed in this film do not stray from the ones explored in his previous creations; special attention is placed on the themes of family dissolution and confrontation, parenthood, and a certain alienation and apathy towards reality. Another recurrent theme is the journey, and the possibility it presents even if the type of emotional transformation at the end of the film is not conclusive, like in the case of *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004).

The Darjeeling Limited is set on a train and not on a road, as the train is one of the most important means of locomotion in India. Notwithstanding, and taking into consideration my previous reflection upon contemporary road stories, the film can be understood as "an update of the classic American road movie" (May 2009) as the brothers – much like in *Easy Rider* – are in search of a deep transformation that will occur at the end of their journey. *The Darjeeling Limited* addresses the journey of three brothers (the Whitman brothers), Francis (Owen Wilson), Peter (Adrien Brody) and Jack (Jason Schwartzman), who, a year after their father's death, go to India in search of their mother. Contrary to most road movie conventions, the Whitman[7] brothers travel not by car, but by train, which is quite significant.

If the isolation of the car[8] encourages the confrontation between travelers, the journey by train is especially peculiar, as it denotes a return to the past and (although parts of the journey are done by other means of transport) represents a change in the characters' emotional state: they are not the same as when they depart and, indeed, they do not enter the same train at the end of the film, a metaphor for their change. *The Darjeeling Limited* is a road story in a broader sense of the term, since it combines almost all the tropes previously presented: movement, confrontation, inner

6 It is important to note that the viewer assumes the country depicted in the *The Darjeeling Limited* is India, but it is never mentioned that the film's country is in fact India.

7 Also noteworthy is that the name Whitman is a clear reference to the American poet Walt Whitman, who wrote "Song of the Open Road," published in *Leaves of Grass* (1856), where he celebrates the importance of the road in American culture, as the place for learning about one's own being.

8 The train carriage plays a similar role to that of the car, as it represents an isolated place where the tensions and crisis between the brothers take place and can also be resolved.

reflection and, finally, a possible change. The Whitman brothers, as in most buddy films,[9] need to solve their problems while on the road – which is here represented by train tracks – and, at the end, understand their inner self so as to embark on a new life.

In addition to identifying the importance of the journey, the aim here is to look at the way the Indian landscape plays a significant role in the transformation of the three brothers, since the journey throughout India will accommodate the characters' coming to terms with their problems and losses. In order to better understand the emotional catharsis of the brothers, the film will be examined from two different perspectives. Firstly, it is necessary to understand how Francis, Peter and Jack fail to perceive the cultural landscape in which they are inserted. At the beginning of the film – and indeed throughout the greater part of the narrative – the brothers opt to play the role of the Western tourist who favors a mystical version of India rather than the real nation.[10] For the Whitmans the simple act of being in a foreign nation is enough for spiritual illumination and emotional change, but they seem oblivious to the reality that surrounds them.

Only after being adrift and without a guide[11] do they slowly abandon their Western view in favor of a more non-Western perspective. Nonetheless, though they do not truly grasp the real meaning of the foreign country through which they are travelling, they seem to get a glimpse of the real India, a place that will be important in the transformative experience of the brothers, as they slowly solve their problems. It is with this in mind that the second part of the film analysis will consider and reflect on how this transformation occurs.

In *The Darjeeling Limited* each character carries some sort of emotional baggage: Francis tried to kill himself, Jack suffers due to the breakup with his girlfriend[12] and Peter cannot overcome the death of their father, as well as accept his responsibility as a soon-to-be parent. At the same time, the brothers have a difficult relationship with each other: Peter only talks to Jack about his problems and vice-versa, and Francis seems obsessed with being in control of his brothers. He is also the one responsible for the organization of the journey to India, possibly in search of a spiritual awakening that will reinforce the bond between them.

Regardless of Francis' attempt, the intent on experiencing India as a spiritual place becomes a complete farce due to how the brothers undermine that very notion, travelling like tourists – in a carriage that only a privileged few can afford[13] – and by not making an effort to experience and respect the country through which they travel. Indeed, in a study on the masculine crisis in Wes Anderson films, Robé (2013, 120) expresses a view where he considers *The Darjeeling Limited* a racist film where "Eurocentric pain and desires constantly trump that of the Indian characters." Francis, for instance, always wanting to be in control, maps out a complete itinerary

9 The buddy film is a cinematic subgenre that can be usually included within the context of the road movie. While most road movies focus on a one-man journey, the buddy film usually portrays two friends in conflict on the road and it is only on the road that their conflicts can be overcome. A good example of a road movie/buddy film is *Sideways* (2004, Alexander Payne). Similarly, *The Darjeeling Limited* is in line with the buddy film; however, instead of two friends, Anderson choses three brothers. For a more detailed description of the buddy film, see the relevant chapter in Casper (2011, 247–52).

10 According to Bill Ashcroft et al. (1998, 97), contemporary tourism can be understood as an updated version of the exploratory travels of the 19th century where "[t]he tourist enters the territory of the Other in search of an exotic experience." This seems to be case of the opening scenes of *The Darjeeling Limited*, but the film is much more than that, since it is my belief that the brothers do achieve a transformation due to a better understanding and respect towards India.

11 At a certain point in the film, Francis ends up dismissing the guide, his personal assistant.

12 This story is told in *Hotel Chevalier* (2007), a short film that was exhibited along with *The Darjeeling Limited* and that can be seen as a kind of prologue to the feature film.

13 More than that, as Bose (2008, 3) suggests, the exaggerated colors of the carriage, as well as of other elements, seem to be an ironic play by Anderson on the way Westerners imagine India.

for their journey, not leaving any room to really appreciate and take in the landscape. In addition, as Browning proposes (2011, 80), Francis' notion of a spiritual journey is one that includes his own daily routine, which implies, in a certain way, his own emptiness and self-centered views of the world. This lack of depth can likewise be seen in the way Jack seduces Rita, the Indian waitress, or in all the Louis Vuitton suitcases and objects the brothers carry with them: Francis' leather belt and loafers (a symbol of consumerism), pain killers, perfume, car keys, including a poisonous snake that Peter buys and that will eventually be responsible for their expulsion from the train.

In this sense, the brothers become the Other, since they become the object of profound irony when in contrast with the Indian landscape. I am considering here the Other as defined by Ashcroft et al. (1998, 169): "The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' […] as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view." The Other, as Ashcroft et al. develop, becomes the way in which difference and identity is established, in a sense "the norm against which everything is measured" (Nadel 1997, 184). In *The Darjeeling Limited* the first impression we get of the brothers is that their look upon India obeys the stereotypical notions portrayed by Western culture towards the East. However, this opposition seems more a critique of the Western world, as the brothers dedicate themselves to futile actions while at the same time expecting to have a moment of great revelation.

Instead of searching for true meaning in their journey, they prefer to dedicate themselves to consumerism and to touristy activities. These activities become the object of mockery, for instance, in the scene where the children looking down from the rooftops start laughing at their awkward appearance, as Nandana Bose (2008, 3) explains:

> A key sequence depicts Indian children on roof-tops, diegetic spectators who assume the position of the non-Western viewer, laughing at the obvious awkwardness and discomfiture of the three brothers who are clearly marked as foreign/Other, attired in their crisp suits that are incongruous in the heat of Rajasthan, heavy garlands hanging like nooses around their necks and sporting red *tikkas* (dots) on their foreheads.

In her study on the film Bose considers *The Darjeeling Limited* a reflective critique on Orientalism,[14] where the discourse suggesting the exotic (Other) as inferior, mystical or sexual is ironic. It is significant to point out that, as Nadel notes (1997, 184), for American audiences the discourse and representation of the exotic Other is a reproduction of the English modes of representation in the 19th century. The author gives an example of *Gunga Din* (1939, George Stevens), which is based upon the poem of the same name by Rudyard Kipling and is a film saturated with stereotypical images of India: exotic, inferior, but also highly dangerous.[15] As already mentioned, the first scenes from *The Darjeeling Limited* do correspond to an oversimplified vision of the India landscape, with the brothers embodying an orientalist vision that is being parodied by Anderson.

[14] For a better understanding of this question, see Bose's 2008 paper, which is based upon a reading of the film supported by Edward Said's influential 1970s work *Orientalism*. I am considering here Orientalism as defined by Ashcroft et al. (1998, 168): "The significance of Orientalism is that as a mode of knowing the other it was a supreme example of the construction of the other, a form of authority. The Orient is not an inert fact of nature, but a phenomenon constructed by generations of intellectuals, artists, commentators, writers, politicians, and, more importantly, constructed by the naturalizing of a wide range of Orientalist assumptions and stereotypes. The relationship between the Occident and the Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony."

[15] Although Wes Anderson is influenced by George Stevens' film, in *The Darjeeling Limited* he produces an ironic ironic vision of the Whitmans' futile and stereotypical comments.

Yet, as the film progresses the brothers seem to be affected by India, particularly after a scene that puts everything into a different perspective; it is the river sequence,[16] in which the family's disagreements are put aside in order to save three other brothers who are drowning. Francis and Jack manage to save two children, but Peter fails to do so – "I didn't save mine." The following scenes present the Whitman brothers in a small Indian village in which they are invited to spend some time after the river incident. In this particular scene, the spectator gets a glimpse of the true connection established between the brothers and the Other foreign culture; for instance, Jack helps with flowers, Francis with some of the children of the village and Peter, the soon-to-be father, holds a baby on his lap.

The moment becomes even more intense when the brothers are asked to attend the funeral of the child Peter was unable to save. The images of the funeral held in the village are superimposed with a flashback from Jimmy Whitman's funeral (the Whitman brothers' father) to reveal the contrast between traditions and rituals. While in the first case the villagers are dressed in white, in the latter the brothers are dressed in black. Furthermore, for the villagers, death seems to be a natural part of life and, therefore, there is a different understanding of the grieving process and of the pain in losing someone dear.

All the same, this experience creates an opportunity for the brothers to bond and realize the importance of family. As the brothers wash themselves in the nearby river – a metaphor for purification – the viewer senses some spiritual growth and, in fact, upon reaching the airport, each character seems to seek redemption. Francis not only apologizes to his assistant and asks him to go back to work for him, but he also acknowledges the need to continue his healing process, both physical and spiritual; Jack calls his ex-girlfriend; and Peter calls his wife to tell her he is ready to assume his parental duties.

The journey would not be complete without the brothers encountering their mother. Their reunion, when exiting the airport, corresponds to a new understanding of the family dynamics. By confronting Patricia Whitman, they are finally able to bury the past and move on with a fresh perspective in what concerns the present and the future, symbolized in the ritual they perform with the feathers.[17] Now, more than ever, the Whitman family is ready to embark on a new journey.

Contrary to what Browning claims (2011, 87), I would argue that India performs an important role, a "choric function, a primordial, timeless presence" (Bose 2008, 6), a backdrop where the brothers can learn to once again trust each other. Moreover, the fact that they represent both the Other and are confronted with the Other is a fundamental element in their transformation, since it allows them to look at the landscape from a different perspective. Being away from their comfort zone and from their busy lives and routines gives the brothers the opportunity to slow down and access a deeper meaning of life.

At the end of the film, the brothers manage to catch another train to return home, one that symbolizes their transformation. Special attention must also be given to Peter, who no longer feels the need to wear his father's sunglasses, a sign that he has overcome his grieving period. Furthermore, in order to catch the train, they all discard their expensive suitcases, an action that functions as a double metaphor. Firstly, it stands for how they are emotionally lighter and, secondly, the brothers

[16] A reference to the film *The River* (1951, Jean Renoir), also set in India, in which Renoir tried to avoid the British Imperialist vision and where "he rejected the India of exotic action and spectacle" (Christie 2005).

[17] Although the ritual is somehow the object of mockery, this is an interesting turning point in the Whitmans' journey; they are finally ready to continue with their life as adults and are able to understand their inner emotional conflicts.

have finally reached a higher spiritual stage by getting rid of their symbols of materialism. It is true that Anderson does not try to encounter a mystical purpose in life as he explores India, because although the brothers have in fact changed, there are still many issues to be resolved.

Nonetheless, as Penner (2011, 73) mentions, the brothers are at least transformed in two ways: (1) they no longer see themselves in the same way both individually and as a family; (2) the brothers have learnt to appreciate India differently, now "as an equal rather than a subordinate nation." After all, the Whitman brothers – as their name indicates – are now ready to be "pioneers of the open road" (Duarte 2014, 223), that is, ready to discover what this new journey holds in store for them.

4 Conclusion: Why Do Journeys Matter?

This essay has been an analysis of the importance of road stories and their meaning. My aim was to look at the history of road movies and the way each decade remaps how journeys are depicted. As Mills (2006, 223) observes, by focusing on powerful themes, such as identity and change, the road movie is constantly faced with new challenges.

Taking into consideration a film like *The Darjeeling Limited*, the aim here was to examine how Anderson explores the concept of identity crisis in a specific foreign nation, in this case, India. By considering the film a renewed vision upon the road story, this study inquired on the importance of the Whitmans' need of spiritual and emotional growth.

As illustrated throughout the film, although this is an atypical road movie, *The Darjeeling Limited* displays almost all the distinctive traits of the genre. The Whitmans' journey is purposefully slow, decisively going against today's rapidly changing world. This is an especially recurring feature of most recent road movies, which no longer seek the thrill of motion and speed or of the open road, but rather immerse themselves in deep contemplation and inner reflection.

This is an understandable reaction, since road movies, according to the Brazilian director Walter Salles (2007), challenge the culture of conformity. They are a form of resistance in today's complex global village, claiming independence over the system and ultimately reclaiming one's own identity in the end, as Mills (2006, 233) comments:

> Optimism, subversion, opportunity and innovation – these are the recurring themes of the road genre, and they should be ours as well. Over the past sixty years, the road story has served as a kind of declaration of independence, offering a vision of how we might break free of unwanted loyalties and obligations to create new identities for ourselves.

The response to the question posed, why journeys matter, is that they matter because they offer everyone the possibility of claiming their own identity, providing the opportunity to learn about themselves and about the Other. Journeys matter because we continue to believe in possibilities and transformation. The road movie has been exemplary in this sense, surviving throughout decades, renovating itself (Mills 2006, 223) to tell the right stories and voice the predicaments of our time.

The Whitmans' travel within India is, in fact, an expression of the tensions and crisis of a certain American white middle class that cannot find its place and lives in a perpetual malaise and existential uncertainty. The protagonists' lack of emotional depth and understanding is revealed in the superficial comments on the foreign nation, one that they can only perceive through the lenses of the capitalist Westerner. They are constantly obsessed with buying exotic objects, such as the snake, or with finding an immediate response to their problems by simply praying in religious

spaces. This primary, romantic notion only heightens the senseless purpose of their spiritual quest and, at the same time, of the modern way of living, one that prevents the full experience created by this journey.

In spite of that, as the brothers go deeper into the foreign landscape – and are lost and found – they seem to grasp the real meaning of the journey. From one train to another, in between tracks, the brothers learn the value and importance of family and of understanding each other, particularly after the funeral scene, a moment that contrasts with Jimmy Whitman's funeral (fast paced, confusing and cynical), with little space for true mourning. If there is a critique implicit in *The Darjeeling Limited*, it is the emptiness that characterizes contemporary American society.

Anderson's choice to insert the narrative in a foreign nation is to go back to a moment that recovers the importance of a constant renewal of the collective and individual self. The result is that the brothers restore their trust in each other. This can only be achieved by a distancing from their original culture and, as the journey progresses, the Whitmans free themselves from their heavy past: they get rid of small objects but also of the heavy baggage, an obvious metaphor for a spiritual uplifting.

If for some *The Darjeeling Limited* is, as Weiner (2007) claims, "[Anderson's] most obnoxious movie yet," for others (Bose 2008; Duarte 2014) this particular narrative is representative of the Andersonian cinematic universe, characterized by a certain ironic look upon the white American middle class: constantly on the lookout for emotional fulfillment. It is also true that the ending scene is not very conclusive. Although we sense some sort of transformation, the Whitmans still have a long way ahead, proof that in most contemporary road stories the road – or, for that matter, the tracks – functions as the place for a continuous spiritual reflection.

What also seems to be implicit in *The Darjeeling Limited* is that the American landscape is no longer sufficient for spiritual contemplation due to its fast-moving way of living. By inserting this story outside the brothers' reality, Anderson is forcing them to embark on a journey that will highlight the importance of brotherhood, family and that, above all, is a way of expressing true feelings. In Anderson's world the brothers are seen as marginal or outside figures who can no longer relate to their own country and have become unable to experience true emotion. Lost without a father and abandoned by their own mother, the Whitmans represent a nation immersed in ennui, oblivious to the necessity of introspection towards spiritual awakening, devoid of purpose and direction.

In this context, the Indian landscape, more than being the object of an orientalist vision, is the place of new beginnings, arrivals and departures, gradually opening itself to the renewed interpretation of the brothers now that they are also willing to accept a new path, no longer blurred by their own past or selfish way of living, but characterized by a new fierceness – the tiger no longer a menace – towards life and the living.

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Us vs. Them: Cultural Encounters in Warzones through Reading American War Literature

ABSTRACT

In 1996, Samuel Huntington argued that the end of the Cold War Era marked the end of global instability based on ideological and economic differences and preferences. However, he did not predict any kind of a peaceful future for humankind but maintained that future conflicts will arise from cultural differences. The clashes are inevitable, he claims, as long as one side (usually the West) insists on imposing universalism to other civilizations whose cultural awareness is on the rise. Ever since the Vietnam War, American military tacticians have believed that the knowledge and understanding of the enemy's culture will lead to victory, and American military academies and schools are dedicating more attention to cultural studies within their general strategy. This paper is based on the reading and analysis of several American fiction and non-fiction novels from the Vietnam and the Iraq Wars. Since all of these works are first-hand accounts of war experience and soldiers' cultural encounters with their 'adversaries', the research is focused on the (im)possibility of soldiers' true understanding and appreciation of different cultures/civilizations during wartime. It also suggests that knowing the enemy is to no avail if wars are fought with the goal of Westernizing other cultures.

Keywords: Culture; West; United States of America; war; American literature

Mi proti njim: Kulturna srečevanja na vojnih območjih skozi branje ameriške vojne književnosti

POVZETEK

Leta 1996 je Samuel Huntington predstavil tezo, da konec hladne vojne pomeni tudi konec globalne nestabilnosti, ki temelji na ideoloških in ekonomskih razlikah oziroma preferencah. Hkrati je napovedal, da prihodnost človeštva kljub temu ne bo mirna, pač pa da bodo prihodnji konflikti izhajali iz kulturnih razlik. Zapisal je, da so spopadi neizogibni, dokler ena od strani (običajno Zahod) vztraja na vsiljevanju univerzalizma civilizacijam, katerih kulturna zavest se krepi. Vse od vietnamske vojne so ameriški vojaški taktiki prepričani, da poznavanje in razumevanje sovražnikove kulture vodi k zmagi, zato ameriške vojaške akademije in šole v svojih strategijah vse bolj poudarjajo kulturne študije. Pričujoči prispevek temelji na branju in analizi več ameriških leposlovnih in neleposlovnih romanov o vietnamski in iraški vojni. Ker vsi predstavljajo neposredne izkušnje in kulturna srečevanja vojakov z njihovimi »nasprotniki«, se raziskava osredinja na njihovo (ne)zmožnost resničnega razumevanja in spoštovanja različnih kultur oziroma civilizacij v času vojne. Prispevek pokaže tudi, da je poznavanje sovražnika zaman, če je cilj vojne preoblikovanje drugih kultur po zahodnem zgledu.

Ključne besede: kultura; Zahod; Združene države Amerike; vojna; ameriška književnost

Us vs. Them: Cultural Encounters in Warzones through Reading American War Literature

1 Introduction: War and Culture

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order is a seminal work by Samuel Huntington. As early as in 1993, he realized that the fall of the Iron Curtain would not lead to global peace. A new world had emerged, not one of peace and stability, but one in which global politics (and conflicts) were "reconfigured along cultural lines" (1996, 19) instead of ideological:

> In the post-Cold War world, the most important distinctions among people are not ideological, political, or economic. They are cultural […] People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions. They identify with cultural groups: tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations, and, at the broadest level, civilizations […] The most important groupings of states are no longer the three blocks of the Cold War but rather the world's seven or eight major civilizations […] In this new world, local politics is the politics of ethnicity; global politics is the politics of civilizations. The rivalry of the superpowers is replaced by the clash of civilizations. (Huntington 1996, 21)

Despite the numerous definitions of culture and civilization that can be found in scholarly studies (see Braudel 1982, 177–81; 1995, 4–5; Wallerstein 1991, 215; Melko 1969, 8–9 to name just a few), Huntington (1996, 43) offers his straightforward version: "A civilization is the broadest cultural entity […] [or] the highest cultural grouping of people and at the broadest level of cultural identity people have […] Civilizations are the biggest 'we' within which we feel culturally at home from all the other 'thems' out there." He also adds that religion is usually the most distinctive element between civilizations and thus divides them into the following: Western, Orthodox, Islamic, Hindu, Sinic, Buddhist, Latin American, African, and Japanese.

As much as it was praised, Huntington's book was also subjected to fierce criticism (see Russett, Oneal, and Cox 2000; Fox 2005). Said (2001, n.p.) being one of the most vocal opponents of Huntington's theory, claimed that it offered too simple a view of the world's affairs by disregarding "the internal dynamics and plurality of every civilization," and Chomsky (2001) saw it as a study that seemed to suggest pointers for the West to exploit other civilisations more successfully. However, even though Huntington realised that this "civilizational approach" (1996, 36) to world affairs will not be valid forever, he claimed that it offers a valuable insight into forces shaping the world at the turn of the millennium. According to him, the book is intended to be "meaningful to scholars and policy makers" (1996, 13), not as a means of promoting future conflicts but rather as a means to greater understanding and appreciation of civilisational differences.

Problems and conflicts between different civilisations emerge from the fact that one side believes that it is or should be superior to all others. That kind of reasoning proves that civilisations "comprehend without being comprehended by others" (Toynbee, quoted in Huntington 1996, 42), and seem to observe the world only through their own prism. Furthermore, John Keegan argues that "war embraces much more than politics […] [I]t is always an expression of culture, often a determinant of cultural forms, in some societies the culture itself" (quoted in Karsten 1999, 197), suggesting that war and culture/civilisation mutually influence and shape each other.

Interestingly, Major B. C. Lindberg from the United States Marines Corps wrote a study *Culture… A Neglected Aspect of War* (1996) in which he maintains that culture is "a significant factor of war" because "cultural differences are […] serving as the main impetus of war." The purpose of his study is "to explore cultural conflict – its causes and effects" in order to "educate Marines on the relationship between culture and war." As a military professional, he understands that culture is a significant factor of war and as such must not be overseen or disregarded, because the failure to understand different cultures often leads to failure in the battlefield. As an illustration of that idea Lindberg explains that Americans were successful at waging the so-called "total wars" (World Wars) but that "limited wars" (those fought in a limited space and time, like the Vietnam War or operation in Somalia) "provided painful lessons of a failed strategy, leaving the credibility of the United States in question."

In the light of these ideas, the paper will deal with war narratives that have emerged from two limited wars Americans fought – the Vietnam War and the Iraq War: Ron Kovic's *Born on the Fourth of July* (1976), Philip Caputo's *A Rumor of War* (1977), Tim O'Brien's *If I Die in a Combat Zone Box Me Up and Ship Me Home* (1973), *Going after Cacciato* (1978), and *The Things They Carried* (1990), Kayla Williams' *Love My Rifle More Than You* (2005) and Colby Buzzell's *My War: Killing Time in Iraq* (2005).[1] Since all the selected novels extensively and explicitly deal with the problems and issues that arise when two cultural groups 'cross swords', the focus of the analysis will be on the aspect of culture and cultural encounters in order to see how and why American soldiers failed to understand the culture of their enemies; that is, to explicate how their own cultural heritage disabled them from understanding the Other. The analysis of war novels will try to provide an answer to the question if the understanding and appreciation of another culture is even possible and/or necessary in conflict situations.

2 American Way of War

In the article "American Way of War," Chambers (1999, 777) claims that "military institutions and war reflect the part of the society that creates them." Therefore, we must be familiar with the American history, culture, and the American perception of the war if we wish to provide an in-depth analysis of war narratives and the aspect of cultural encounters during war.

In the chapter "The Rise of the West," Huntington (1996, 51) explains how the West started ruling the world in the 16th century, when it became technologically and militarily dominant to others and started colonising. As much as the Americans wish to separate themselves from their European cultural origins, in essence they have repeated the same thing; they used force and technological superiority to achieve different goals they had throughout history. Even though Americans claim that they are a peace-loving nation, and view war as an aberration, "war has been a regular part of American history, integral to the way the nation developed" (Chambers 1999, 777). In his book *American Myth, American Reality*, Robertson explains that the unique vision of war in American consciousness stems directly from their experience:

> Americans still tell tales of and believe in the unity, the great purposes, and the ultimate destiny of the American nation. Very often they are tales of organized, mass action; tales of war which embody nationalism and the vision of freedom. American wars are revolutions, the Civil War on a world scale. The end and the purpose of those wars is freedom, the destruction of slavery (whatever its form), and the construction of individual and national independence.

[1] Except for the fictional novels *Going after Cacciato* and *The Things They Carried*, all other novels examined here are non-fiction, or to be precise, authors' memoirs based on their training and combat experiences.

> Wars, in American Myth, are the expression of the belief that Americans can do anything they desire, can build nations and rebuild societies, can speed progress, bring freedom and democracy to the world, so long as they are united, organized, and willing to devote all their human and material resources to the end desired. America, the imperial America, is "one giant step for mankind." (Robertson 1982, 349)

The idea of the 'destiny' of the American nation takes us back to 1630, to the time when John Winthrop held a sermon aboard *Arabella*, during the dangerous and difficult journey to the new land. He asked of his people to build a new form of community there, one that would serve as a model to all Christianity: "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us" ([1630] 1974, 25). If we examine the Bible, we notice that Winthrop's words are a direct reference to the Gospel according to Matthew (New Revised Standard Version):

> You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid.
>
> No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basked, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.
>
> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Mt 5:14–16)

Therefore, it was their 'destiny' and an obligation toward God, who had blessed their quest and journey, to be the chosen people who would found a model community to serve as an example to the rest of the world. Robertson claims that Winthrop's "Model of Christian Charity" marks the beginning of American mythology, and the idea of them being the God chosen people with a special mission in the world prevails to this day:

> Most Americans agree that the United States is among the most powerful nations on earth. They would also agree that that power ought to be 'good for something'. They believe America has a mission and that its destiny is not simply to be rich and powerful and big, but to be for some God-given purpose. Few believe that America arrived at its present state of wealth and power by accident […] [M]ost Americans believe America can do something about the state of the world: America has a responsibility […] The vision of Crusader, of Fortress, of Champion, of the freedom and democracy and happiness (the unique qualities) of the New World, is still the controlling vision, still the primary explanation Americans can find – the logic they find most reasonable – for their sense of mission and destiny. (Robertson 1982, 25–27)

This quotation also explains that the American Myth, together with the American mission and destiny in the world, is closely connected to war efforts, and American wars are indeed the 'good wars' in their collective consciousness and memory. With the Revolutionary War (1775–1783) the colonists rejected the British colonial system and created a free and independent nation. The Mexican War (1846–1848) is a result of the belief (Manifest Destiny) that the growing nation should stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific shore even if that meant robbing Mexicans of their territories. The American Civil War (1861–1865) resulted in the abolishment of slavery and the victory of industry over agriculture. Simultaneously with all these wars, Americans fought the Native Americans, taking over their territory as well. The beginning of the 20th century marked the end of wars fought on American soil and the beginning of a wider international intervention. In World War I Americans gained international respect, and by the end of World War II the United States established itself as

a world superpower. The pattern is more than evident; for Americans war is, although undesirable, justified because it defends "American lives, property, and ideals" (Chambers 1999, 777). What is more, war is the fuel that secures one of the imperatives of the American spirit – progress.

Their World War II triumph marked a shift in the American perception of war. As Robertson asserts, "[t]he myth of war, with all its analogies, its aggressive and heroic metaphors, […] and its implications of national unity, national prosperity, and national success, has become the most important model of American behavior since World War II" (1982, 335). This belief has led them to the denial of cultural differences and their importance in warfare. As Lindberg precisely notes, the idea that all men are created equal and that they all have the same inalienable rights "establishes the primacy of an individual's rights in politics and law […] [Therefore,] Americans readily and incorrectly assume their values are *universal*, and that other countries should embrace and share these same views" (1996, 9). In a nutshell, the post-World War II confidence about the supremacy of their political and military system, as well as their way of life being the only right, made Americans insensitive about other cultures and civilisations. Since history taught them that they could win any war just as long as they were unified and dedicated to it, they started to neglect other cultures and their history and customs, which proved disastrous in Vietnam and Iraq.

3 Limited Wars – Vietnam and Iraq

The post-World War II period in the United States was one of stability, indulgence, and prosperity. Unlike Europe, the United States remained territorially intact, which enabled it to confirm its position as a world power. Soon, the Cold War began, providing Americans with a new enemy: Communism, an ideology they believed threatened their liberties and their way of life. The so-called 'red scare' was the cause of wars in Korea and Vietnam because "the United States saw Vietnam as crucial in its Cold War strategy of 'containing' the Communists, fearing that if South Vietnam fell, the rest of Southeast Asia would quickly follow suit in accordance with the controversial Domino Theory" (Carpenter 2001, 348).

The Vietnam War (1960–1972) was the first modern war Americans lost, and that to an economically and technologically inferior enemy. This war divided American society, threatened their economy, and more importantly, called into question their world influence, responsibility, and mission in the world. Americans simply could not make sense of how and why they lost the war in Vietnam; their logic of war failed them in South East Asia, even though they were superior in almost every aspect:

> American soldiers went to action in Vietnam with the gigantic weight of American industry behind them. Never before in history was so much strength amassed in such a small corner of the globe against an opponent apparently so inconsequential. If Ho Chi Minh described this war with the French as a struggle between "grasshoppers and elephants," he was now a microbe facing a leviathan. (Karnow 1983, 435)

In the American logic of war, it seemed impossible for them to lose. Lindberg claims that "the events in the Vietnam War exemplify failure at the highest level to appreciate culture as an aspect of war" (1996, 9), suggesting that the lack of knowledge and understanding of the opponent's culture resulted in a bad strategy for that war, and ultimately led to loss. As Olson and Roberts further explain, "[American policymakers] have no knowledge of their enemy. They have not read the works of Mao Zedong, Karl Marx, or Vladimir Lenin. Instead they believe that American dollars will lead to victory" (1996, 75).

Today, many scholars find similarities between the war in Vietnam and that in Iraq (see Ricks 2007; Ballard 2010; Keegan 2005). Once again, the American policymakers failed to provide a clear cause and strategy for the war, and once again, the American society stood up against the war. Even though many political and military leaders rejected any comparison between Vietnam and Iraq, the general comment in John R. Ballard's book *From Storm to Freedom: America's Long War with Iraq*, detects the same problem America faced forty years ago in Vietnam: "[t]he coalition's inability to understanding the culture and society within the battlespace led to important errors" (2010, 144).

The study and analysis of American war literature succinctly offers the causes, reasons, and explanations of cultural mayhem that happened during the Vietnam and the Iraq War. All of the chosen novels depict their characters before, during, and after the war. The authors give a valuable insight into the myths the characters were born with, and how those myths eroded during the war. In that manner, they also indirectly explain that the superficial understanding of both their own and enemy's culture fuelled frustration, anger, and violence during their deployment.

3.1 American Cultural Heritage

The first instance to examine is the authors' cultural heritage, that is, how their upbringing and the love for their country encouraged them to join the military.

For example, in his memoir *A Rumor of War*, Caputo claims that he was "seduced into uniform" by the "age of Kennedy's Camelot" (1996, xiv), suggesting that the post-World War II period shaped American vision and culture as victorious, right, just, and dominant. Kennedy, who in Caputo's mind revived the Puritan belief of them being a city upon a hill, is responsible for the naïve idealism and "the implicit conviction that the Viet Cong would be quickly beaten and that we are doing something altogether noble and good" (1996, xiv). Caputo continues (1996, 353–54): "[O]ur self-image as progressive, virtuous, and triumphant people exempt from the burdens and tragedies of history came apart in Vietnam, and we had no way to integrate the war or its consequences into our collective and individual consciousness." Scholar John Hellman speaks directly to this point in his study of Vietnam War literature, *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam*:

> Vietnam is an experience that has severely called into question American myth. Americans entered Vietnam with certain expectations that a story, a distinctly American story, would unfold. When the story of America in Vietnam turned into something unexpected, the true nature of the larger story of America itself became subject of intense cultural dispute. On the deepest level, the legacy of Vietnam is the disruption of our story, of our explanation of the past and our vision of the future. (Hellman 1986, x)

Similarly, in his first novel about the Vietnam War, the memoir *If I Die in a Combat Zone Box Me Up and Ship Me Home*, O'Brien mentions that he was born out of the World War II triumph: "I grew out of one war into another […] I was bred with the haste and dispatch and careless muscle-flexing of a nation giving bridle to its own good fortune and success. I was fed by the spoils of 1945 victory" (1999b, 11). Another Vietnam War veteran, Ron Kovic, depicts his upbringing in the memoir *Born on the Fourth of July*. As an all-American boy, a good and humble Christian, an excellent athlete, and a patriot, Kovic pledges that he will join the Marine Corps as soon as he graduates from high school because he feels it is his obligation toward the country that has been so generous to him. Unlike Kovic, O'Brien in his later novel, *The Things They Carried*, tries to fight the sense of obligation because he does not believe that the war in Vietnam is right and just. However, his attempt to desert quickly fails due to the centripetal force of the American myth:

> Intellect had come up against emotion. My conscience told me to run, but some irrational and powerful force was resisting, like a weight pushing me toward the war […] I saw my parents calling to me from the far shoreline. I saw my brother and sister, all the townsfolk, the mayor and the entire Chamber of Commerce and all of my old town teachers and girlfriends and high school buddies […] and Abraham Lincoln, and Saint George, and […] several members of the United States Senate, and LBJ, and Hick Finn, and all the dead soldiers back from the grave […] I did try. It just wasn't possible. All those eyes on me – the town, the whole universe – and I couldn't risk the embarrassment […] I would go to war – I would kill and maybe die – because I was embarrassed not to. (O'Brien 1998, 49–57)

American cultural heritage, the American myth, proved to be an integral part of both the proponents (like Kovic and Caputo) and opponents (like O'Brien) of the war, creating in them the feeling of either obligation or embarrassment and thus landing them in the Vietnam War.

On the other hand, the Iraq War novels illustrate that this generation of soldiers is much more reluctant to ingest the politically created mythic image of the war. Their reasons for joining the military are quite 'secular'; Williams signed up to make some personal changes in her life, such as to gain financial security, a chance to see the world, and to better her "career prospects" (Williams and Staub 2005, 41). As for Buzzell, he admits that he did not join the Army because he had been traumatized over 9/11 but because he believed that the Army might be a "quick-fix solution to his problems" and because "it was not just another job, it was an adventure" (2007, 20).

3.2 Clueless in Vietnam and Iraq

American cultural heritage and experience shaped a unique, specific, and profound way of reasoning about themselves and the world, thus impairing them from observing, acknowledging, and comprehending their enemy's cultural heritage. For example, in *A Rumor* we read that the only thing the American soldiers know is that they are the soldiers of the greatest country in the world. As for their knowledge of the other side, Caputo notes, "we hardly knew where Vietnam was" (1996, 8). Furthermore, Caputo explains how unfamiliar they were with the guerilla tactics (since they had only studied Clausewitz and Napoleon during their officers' training) but still confident in their easy victory: "Asian guerillas did not stand the chance against U.S. Marines […] There was nothing we could not do because we were Americans, and for the same reason, whatever we did was right" (1996, 69–70).

For Kovic, the American myth painted the world black and white until the Vietnam War smeared the colours in a confusing shade of grey, specifically, when his platoon accidentally killed innocent Vietnamese civilians: "He never figured it would ever happen this way. It never did in the movies. There were always the good guys and the bad guys, the cowboys and the Indians. There was the enemy and the good guys and each of them killed the other" (2005, 191). Having been raised on John Wayne movies, Kovic is unable to see conflict any other way.

In *Going after Cacciato*, O'Brien dedicates an entire chapter to listing the things American soldiers did not know about Vietnam:

> Not knowing the language, they did not know the people. They did not know what the people loved, or respected or feared or hated […] They did not know false smiles from true smiles, or if in Quang Ngai a smile had the same meaning it had in the States. "Maybe the dinks got things mixed up," Eddie once said, after the time a friendly looking farmer bowed and smiled

> and pointed them into a minefield. "Know what I mean? Maybe… well, maybe the gooks cry when they're happy and smile when they're sad. Who the hell knows? Maybe when you smile over here it means you're ready to cut the other guy's throat. I mean, hey, this here is a different culture." (O'Brien 1999a, 261–62)

Reading *Love My Rifle* and *Killing Time*, one notices that some efforts were made in order to make this new generation of soldiers more knowledgeable about the country and the culture they were soon to be fighting. However, the manner in which they were taught about another culture seems to be just an illusion and offers soldiers a false sense of knowledge about the Arab culture:

> 22 Oct 2003
>
> Today we got the Iraqi customs and language brief. I fell asleep during the first half hour of the brief, but when I woke up, the soft-spoken civilian guy who was giving it, who looked to be of Middle Eastern descent, told us a bunch of stuff about it being impolite to show the locals the bottom of your boots, and then we all got a quick crash course in Arabic. He would say something in Arabic, and we'd all repeat it. Like do they really expect us to memorize anything that was taught to us today? We're going to Iraq for at least a year, and we all get a one-hour course in Arabic, and they expect us to be able to speak a little of it after this brief? (Buzzell 2007, 64–65)

Buzzell also offers a transcript of the "Civilian Rules of Interaction" that were issued to American soldiers before deployment and that explained how to behave in order not to offend or humiliate the Iraqis. However, upon examining the cursory list, one gets the impression that the rules have been put together just for the sake of having them on paper and not really to be implemented and exercised. What is more, all these rules again examine the foreign culture from the American point of view and bluntly imply that American culture is superior to Iraqi:

> Be firm, but be courteous. You can afford it – you have the gun […] Their culture *is not* your culture; their customs *are not* your customs. They do not care about ours – we need a working knowledge of theirs […] Nothing in these rules of interaction limits your obligation to take all necessary and appropriate action to defend yourself and your unit. (Buzzell 2007, 63)

Once Buzzell arrives in Iraq, he witnesses all the might and glory of American industry and its sole purpose of making American soldiers as comfortable as possible. At the Forward Operating Base Marez American soldiers have "phone centers, internet cafes, cow halls, hajji shops, PX stores, fruit-juice stands, tailor shops, public shitters, the MWR (morale, welfare, recreation) centres, and public transportation" (2007, 147–53) at their disposal. Still, soldiers tend to complain because there are not enough electrical outlets in their vehicles: "You figure there's like 10 guys in the vehicle, that's at least 10 things that need to be recharged, like portable DVD players, Gameboys, electric razors, MP3 players, Discmans, digital cameras, electric toothbrushes, laptop batteries, crap like that" (2007, 207). In his book *Fiasco*: *The American Military Adventure in Iraq,* Ricks testifies to Buzzell's claims saying that the American military was more concerned about their own wellbeing than about helping the Iraqis, who at the time did not even have electricity or water (Ricks 2007, 200).

The situation was a bit different for Kayla Williams, since she was not as uninformed about the culture as the rest of her comrades. She had dated a Lebanese for some time and during that period learned some Arabic, a bit about the Muslim religion, and was able to detect and compare major differences between the cultures. Therefore, when Kayla joined the military as a linguist and was deployed to Iraq, she admitted that her previous connection with the Arab men and

Arabic culture had given her "more sympathy, understanding, and respect for the people in Iraq" (Williams and Staub 2005, 109). At first, Kayla is caught between two worlds/cultures. She has a working knowledge of the Arab culture, but at the same time, she justifies the actions of her fellow soldiers who do not share her knowledge about the Iraqi culture and customs. For example, she knows how difficult and frightening it might be for an eighteen-year-old American soldier with a loaded weapon when an Iraqi approaches him yelling something the soldier does not understand:

> In the Middle East, people have different communication style than Americans do. Americans have this three-foot-space rule. We do not want anyone to invade a space within three feet of us when we talk. For most Americans this is standard. In the Middle East the space is much less – it's more like a foot or six inches. They get right up in your face. And they will yell. It looks to most Americans like aggression. But it isn't. It's friendly. (Williams and Staub 2005, 109)

Despite her willingness to understand obstacles that arise when trying to live, communicate, and work (fight) in another culture, Kayla is at certain moments shocked by how far the ignorance of her fellow soldiers goes. To illustrate, Kayla is attached to a platoon of infantrymen who are conducting searches for weapons and prospective insurgents. Once, they arrive at a monastery and question the monk about any weapons he might posses with the goal of confiscating it. Kayla is the interpreter between the lieutenant and the monk, and even though the monk speaks good English and understands everything the lieutenant is saying, the lieutenant keeps turning to Kayla for translation. "Is it possible the lieutenant cannot understand the monk – simply because he *looks* different?" (Williams and Staub 2005, 115), Kayla asks herself, suggesting that for some it takes more than speaking the language to bridge the gap between cultures. Kayla quickly learns that all the pre-knowledge about the Muslim culture is indeed just a mirage because once American soldiers find themselves in Iraq, they show no "respect for the customs of the people, for the rhythms of their lives, or for the shit they've had to suffer. There was way too little attempt to communicate with the people. Too many soldiers acting like it was *shoot-em-up* time" (2005, 142).

3.3 Frustration

The confusion about the foreign culture quickly transgressed into frustration and anger simply because the soldiers were puzzled by the reactions of the locals to American violence. Caputo testifies how during a hamlet search, a woman paid no attention to her house being ransacked by American soldiers, once again demonstrating that he is able only to analyse events from the American perspective:

> The girl just sat there and stared and nursed the baby. The absolute indifference in her eyes began to irritate me. Was she going to sit there like a statue while we turned her house upside down? I expected her to show anger or terror. I wanted her to, because her passivity seemed to be a denial of our existence, as if we were nothing more to her than a passing wind that had temporarily knocked a few things out of place. I smiled stupidly and made a great show of tidying up the mess before we left. See, lady, we're not like the French. We're all-American good-guy GI Joes. You should learn to like us. We're Yanks, and Yanks like to be liked. We'll tear this place apart if we have to, but we'll put it back in its place. See, that's what I'm doing now. But if she appreciated my chivalry, she did not show that either. (Caputo 1996, 89)

Caputo mentions that he at first pitied the Vietnamese for the terrible things they were enduring, but also that their indifference is something he can never understand. It is obvious that he expected the same reaction he would get in the U.S.:

> […] their ability to control emotions was just as inhuman […] They did not behave as I expected them to behave; that is, the way Americans would under the same circumstances. Americans would have done something: shaken their fists, wept, run away, demanded compensation. These villagers did nothing, and I despised them for it. (Caputo 1996, 133–34)

Even though Caputo understands that the Vietnamese behave in such a manner because of their history of perpetual invasion, occupations, wars, violence, ransacked houses, and burnt down hamlets, he does not appreciate their inertia and believes that they deserve all that is happening to them: "Why feel compassion for the people who feel nothing for themselves?" (1996, 134)

In *The Things They Carry*, O'Brien also displays his inaptitude to analyse another culture objectively. The main character, whom the author gave his own name of Tim O'Brien, is traumatised by the sight of a dead enemy – the one he thinks he killed. As he stares at the body, he imagines the man's life and thoughts, as if they were the same:

> He had been born, maybe, in 1946 in the village of My Khe near the central coastline of Quang Ngai Province, where his parents farmed, and where his family had lived for several centuries, and where, during the time of the French, his father and two uncles, and many neighbors had joined the struggle for independence. He was not a Communist. He was a citizen and a soldier […] from his earliest boyhood the man I killed would have listened to stories about the heroic Trung sisters and Tran Hung Dao's famous rout of the Mongols and Le Loi's final victory over the Chinese at Tot Dong. He would have been taught that to defend the land was a man's highest duty and highest privilege. He had accepted that. It was never open to question […] he was afraid of disgracing himself, and therefore his family and village […] he enlisted as a common rifleman with the 48th Vietcong Battalion. He knew he would die quickly. (O'Brien 1998, 119–24)

O'Brien creates this young man's history as if it were his own, born the same year, with almost identical convictions and personal history. By that O'Brien implies that American values and upbringing are universal, or at least should be.

What created a tremendous sense of frustration and anger for Kayla Williams were the constant changes in the rules of engagement that dictated who posed a possible threat to American soldiers. This ultimately led her to a change of hearts toward the locals:

> I consider myself a reasonably compassionate person. I speak the language; I have Arab friends, so I believe that I am better equipped than most soldiers to see these civilians as people. Not simply as *the enemy*. But even for me there are times I am feeling overwhelmed by the situation. God, why can't we just kill everyone – or leave them to fucking kill each other? Because I cannot care anymore. I cannot walk this line all the time. It's too hard. I get too angry.
>
> Increasingly many of us are just feeling angry all the time. When we think about the population now, we're thinking: What are you people doing? We're here to help you! And you're trying to kill us! Are you insane? Do you even *want* peace? Or Freedom? Or democracy? Do you want anything? Or do you just want to kill all the time? What's wrong with you?
>
> What's wrong with these people? (Williams and Staub 2005, 238)

Being understanding and appreciative of another culture becomes unbearable for Kayla toward the end of her deployment. Therefore, she clearly takes her stand as an American now presuming that the whole 'normal and sane' world should hold freedom and democracy as holy as Americans do.

As for Buzzell, he is more frustrated by the American military system and strategy in Iraq than by the locals. Even though he is often critical and satirical of those aspects in his writings, he still complies and accepts all that is happening. For example, he participated in shooting down the mosque in Mosul ("'Jesus Christ, I can't believe I'm actually shooting at a holy place of worship.' I thought we weren't allowed to do this kind of think. Fuck it." (Buzzell 2007, 134–35)), and felt both horrible and ridiculous when they were driving over Iraqi graves.

3.4 Hate

Finally, the built-up frustration eventually turns into an open hatred for the whole culture. Soldiers now rarely discriminate between the enemy and the civilians, and start treating everybody the same. In *If I Die*, O'Brien testifies that the war turned into mere survival and retaliation for lost comrades in the form of burning Vietnamese hamlets and torturing everybody and everything in sight: "It was good to walk from Pinkville and to see fire behind Alpha Company. It was good, just as pure hate was good" (1999b, 119). Caputo (1996, 119) speaks of an almost identical scenario: "You let the VC use your village for an ambush site, I think, and now you're paying the price […] These villagers aided the VC, and we taught them a lesson. We were learning to hate."

The culmination of hatred for Kayla happened when she was asked to participate in the interrogation of Iraqi civilians; her function there was not to be an interrogator but to humiliate:

> I found myself yelling. I found myself calling this jerk every insulting name I knew […] It was making me even angrier that the guy knew we couldn't touch him – or he was so drunk that he didn't care if we did […] I grabbed a broom handle and banged it loud on some pipe attached to the wall.
>
> "Rise and fucking shine, you asshole!"
>
> Yet yelling at this guy did feel so perversely good. Because it was something I was allowed to do. No one does this in our society; we don't just decide we can scream at random people who have their hands tied and who have no power to resist.
>
> I don't like to admit it, but I enjoyed having power over this guy. (Williams and Staub 2005, 204–5)

Such frustration is a by-product of their own sense of helplessness. Soon, Kayla is again asked to participate in interrogation, but they need her now because she is a woman and because she can humiliate more:

> I am told what they will want me to do.
>
> "We are going to bring these guys in. One at the time. Remove their clothes. Strip them naked. Then we will remove the guy's blindfold. And we want you to say things to humiliate them. Whatever you want. Things to embarrass him. Whatever you can say to humiliate them."
>
> […]
>
> The civilian interpreter and the interrogator (who also speaks Arabic) mock the prisoner. Mock his manhood. Mock his sexual prowess. Ridicule the size of his genitals. Point to me. Remind him that he is being humiliated in the presence of this blond American female. Anything. Anything that comes to mind […] I am prompted to participate. To mock this

> naked and crying man […] "Do you think you can please a woman with that thing??" I ask gesturing. (Williams and Staub 2005, 247–48)

By the end of her deployment, Kayla (Williams and Staub 2005, 253–54) admits that she is "very close to hating the Iraqi people" and she offers even more justifications for her fellow soldiers even when they commit atrocities: "Understand that these are not bad people. They were simply people who were beyond frustrated. Beyond angry. Beyond bitter."

4 Conclusion

Americans have fought wars the same way since the beginning of their independence. In the majority of cases, their way of war had a positive outcome for them. However, when, by the late 20th century, wars became clashes between civilisations and not ideological conflicts, the USA started to lose its ground. Why? One of the possible answers is that Americans still see war as a conflict of ideas (always presuming that their ideas are more enlightened that those of their enemies) and disregard the importance of culture.

The American myth is central to American identity and integrity, and they have the right to believe in it. However, the analysis of the novels presented here suggests just how difficult it becomes to appreciate the Other and how easy it is to deny that same right to others, especially in a stressful situation. The discourse of tolerance and acceptance disappears once the Other dares to disturb the West. To illustrate, the U.S. Secretary of state John Kerry described the Charlie Hebdo attacks as "a larger confrontation, not between civilizations, but between civilization itself and those who are opposed to a civilized world" (quoted in Younge 2015). Even though Kerry did not utter the word 'West', one might easily assume that he categorized the world in terms of the victim (the journalists/the good/the West) and the attacker (the terrorists/the bad/all that attack the West).

Even if American soldiers in Iraq received more cultural training than those in the Vietnam War, the efforts proved futile. It is more than obvious that it takes open-mindedness, tolerance, time, and inclusion to begin to comprehend, accept, and appreciate different cultures. The key problem seems to be that violence and war on the one hand and open-mindedness and tolerance on the other mutually exclude each other.

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Encounters with National Stereotypes in Foreign Language Teaching: Adjectives Describing Americans

ABSTRACT

Teaching (or learning) a foreign language is a complex, interdisciplinary undertaking. Teachers and students are required to tackle aspects of language that transcend its merely linguistic component. This article discusses the relationship between language, thought and culture, and explores some aspects of the integration of cultural content in the English classroom. To achieve these goals, a study is conducted that identifies the main stereotypes about Americans among Slovenian university students of English as a foreign language. The results of the research can be used as a means of questioning some frequent stereotypes about Americans, and thus contributing to the fulfilment of (sometimes seemingly abstract) curricular aims that emphasize the significance of intercultural communication, awareness of cultural variety, and intercultural sensitivity.

Keywords: national stereotypes; teaching culture; curriculum; intercultural communication

Srečevanja z nacionalnimi stereotipi v tujejezikovnem poučevanju: Pridevniki, ki opisujejo Američane

POVZETEK

Poučevanje (ali učenje) tujega jezika je zapleteno in interdisciplinarno delo. Učitelji in učenci se spopadajo z vidiki jezika, ki presegajo zgolj njegovo jezikovno komponento. Članek zato razpravlja o odnosu med jezikom, mislijo in kulturo ter se osredinja na nekatere vidike vključevanja kulturnih vsebin v poučevanje angleščine. To doseže s proučevanjem stereotipov: prispevek predstavi ugotovitve ankete, ki razkriva glavne stereotipe o Američanih med slovenskimi študenti angleščine. Rezultati raziskave lahko pripomorejo k dekonstrukciji pogostih stereotipov o Američanih in tako prispevajo k uresničevanju (včasih navidezno abstraktnih) ciljev v učnih načrtih, ki poudarjajo pomembnost medkulturne komunikacije, zavedanje kulturne raznolikosti in medkulturno občutljivost.

Ključne besede: nacionalni stereotipi; poučevanje kulture; učni načrt; medkulturna komunikacija

Encounters with National Stereotypes in Foreign Language Teaching: Adjectives Describing Americans

1 Introduction

Language teachers, especially those teaching cultural classes to foreign language (henceforth, FL) learners, often encounter preconceptions about the culture(s) their class is centred on. It is thus desirable and useful for them to explore the ideas, opinions, and even prejudices that their students may possess about the culture(s) and society (or societies) studied. When considering commonly held beliefs about the speakers of the target language, FL teachers should also reflect on: the complexities of the relationship between language, thought, and culture; the ways in which they approach cultural content; and the impact their work consequently has on their students' interaction with target-language speakers and intercultural communication in general.

The main aim of the article is to identify stereotypes about Americans that are prevalent in Slovenian students of English as a FL. To achieve this goal, a study is conducted that focuses on the beliefs of Slovenian university students of English. The reported stereotypes about Americans are also compared with the results of studies that explore the image(s) Americans have about themselves. Additionally, the study aims to identify which connotations are typically ascribed by Slovenian students to the adjectives denoting (stereo)typical American traits. In the process, the paper also addresses the relationship between language and culture, its implications for the language classroom, as well as the nature of stereotypes and some possible ways of handling them in the classroom.

The article is structured as follows. Section 2 presents an overview of literature related to language, thought and culture; teaching cultural content; national stereotypes; and tackling stereotypes in the classroom. Section 3 details the study on stereotypes about Americans in Slovenia. The last section (4) is a discussion of results and their implications for FL teaching.

2 Literature Overview

2.1 Language, Thought, and Culture

The "network of language, culture and behaviour" (Whorf 1956, 156) has long been part of scientific inquiry. In the first half of the twentieth century, Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir proposed that our culture determines our language, and that language affects our thoughts. Their influential ideas meant that the very structure of language also determines, or at least influences, the manner in which we conceptualize reality. Although the principle of linguistic determinism (or its weaker version, linguistic relativity) has been largely refuted and often substituted for theories of, for instance, universal grammar, some of Sapir's and Whorf's claims are evident in a number of more recent studies that explore the link between language and thought. In one such study, Konishi (1993) suggests that grammatical genders shape the feelings of speakers towards objects around them: the masculine form of *el puente* (bridge) in Spanish is thus perceived as "higher in potency" (Konishi 1993, 519) when compared to the feminine *die Brücke* in German (also see Deutscher 2011 for other examples).

A question may arise about the impact of the above claims on FL teaching and learning. In an extreme scenario, stating that the speakers of language *x* perceive the world in a different way from

the speakers of language *y* would suggest that teaching/learning an FL should, at least to some extent, be equated with teaching/learning the ways of thinking typical for the target culture. An example of linguistic research that conforms to these principles and has simultaneously significantly affected teaching practices is research on sexist gender-biased language. The approaches to using non-sexist, gender-neutral usage of language vary from one culture to the other (see Plemenitaš 2014, 25–28, for a comparison between English and Slovenian), but the basic tenet remains: changing the linguistic practices should change people's conceptualization of reality, and consequently their culture.

Even though deterministic explanations of the relationship between language and thought may not be equally relevant to every linguist, there appears to be a general consensus (see Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey 2002; Kramsch 1995b, 1993 among others) that in FL teaching and learning, cultural content is unavoidable, indeed essential. In fact, Brown (2000, 177–78) presents language as a fundamental expression of culture by (famously) stating that "a language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language" and that "the acquisition of a second language […] is also the acquisition of a second culture." The need to tackle cultural aspects has resulted in the FL teaching concept of *intercultural communicative competence*, which is considered part (and/or an extension) of every student's communicative competence (Byram 1997). Importantly, understanding the culture of the target language also contributes to students' awareness of "the distinctness of their own" (Skela 2014, 115).

Despite the multifarious and sometimes lacking definitions of terms such as "culture" and "intercultural communication" (see Limon 2007, 91–93 for some examples), it should be acknowledged that linguistic knowledge, which has been traditionally regarded as central in the language classroom, should be complemented by intercultural communicative skills. Or, as Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, 15) claim, "[i]f language is viewed as a social practice of meaning-making and interpretation, then it is not enough for language learners just to know grammar and vocabulary." Liddicoat and Scarino propose that language should be understood as social practice supported by a communication system based on linguistic structures. Each of these layers "affords opportunities for intercultural learning" (2013, 17) that can be supported by the study of cultures.

The interweaving of language, thought and culture can be observed on various levels, such as the levels of vocabulary, pragmatics, social roles and socio-economic status. This article addresses mostly the lexical component by presenting not only the most frequent adjectives describing Americans, as reported by Slovenian students of English, but also some of the connotative meanings that the students assign to these words.

2.2 Approaches to Culture in FL Teaching and Learning

As Kramsch (2001, 5; also see Kramsch 2000; 1995a) puts it, "teaching English as culture and voice entails showing [the students] how the choices made by individual users of English, be they native or non-native, construct relationships among utterances, and between utterances and their recipients." Even though teachers usually agree that culture should be approached by developing students' "critical language awareness, interpretive skills, and historical consciousness" (Byram and Kramsch 2008, 21), this is not an easy task to accomplish.

A very common approach to integrating cultural content in the FL classroom is to equate cultures with nations, which includes a strong focus on national attributes and thus results in distinguishing between, for instance, American, Australian, British and Canadian cultures. Students taking such courses are expected to learn about what is (stereo)typical for these nations/cultures, about their

geography, history, politics, economy, and the like. Liddicoat and Scarino explain (2013, 19) that, "[i]n such a view, […] language is used primarily for naming events, institutions, people, and places." Unsurprisingly, in its exaggerated form, equating cultures with nations can become a breeding ground for stereotypes since such discourse is prone to exclude the outliers, that is, anything that departs from what is stereotypical for the observed culture. Equating cultures with nations thus "constrains what is considered as a cultural group and what is considered as the culture of any particular group" (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013, 18). A similar approach to cultural content in FL teaching includes a focus on norms and values, which, again, treats culture as something static and "leaves the learner primarily within his/her own cultural paradigm" (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013, 19–20).

Unfortunately, the teaching materials available for language/culture courses often propagate such teaching, by, as Limon (2007, 93) succinctly establishes, including content that is "superficial and clichéd" and relies "on easily assimilated national stereotypes and images that are easy to market." Hence, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, 22) emphasise the importance of regarding culture as more than a (consistent) body of information but rather as a variable framework, which, according to Norton (as quoted in Liddicoat and Scarino 2013, 22), can be shaped by "time, place, and social category," as well as "age, gender, religion, ethnicity, and sexuality." In this respect, an FL teacher has to assume the complex role of a mediator providing factual knowledge, identifying some potentially erroneous preconceptions, and restructuring perceptions about our fluid realities.

2.3 Culture and the Curriculum

The role of culture in FL teaching and learning is also reflected in contemporary FL curricula. It has become standard for such documents to incorporate culture as part of interdisciplinary content. The practice is also encouraged by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 2001; henceforth, CEFR), which, despite being a descriptive framework, has a significant impact on contemporary language policies. In Slovenia, this can be observed both on the primary and on the secondary level of FL instruction: the primary school curriculum (for students aged 6–14) explicitly targets the CEFR level A2, while the curriculum for general secondary schools (for students aged 15–18) targets the level B2. The documents contain numerous references to cultural aspects of language teaching. Not surprisingly, the cultural component is also present in the university-level curriculum for the study programme BA in English at the University of Ljubljana.

A closer examination of Slovenian curricular documents reveals that the curriculum for English in primary education (Eržen et al. 2011) consistently refers to intercultural communicative competence. It emphasizes knowledge about characteristics of various English-speaking cultures, awareness and respect of the differences in value systems, awareness of cultural variety, learning about social and cultural norms, habits and rules, developing intercultural sensitivity, comparing and analysing intercultural similarities and differences, and transcending stereotypes. In addition, the content related to the cultures studied is to encompass topics on geography, history, and culture.

Similarly, even the introductory definition of English as a school subject in the secondary school curriculum (Eržen et al. 2008) goes beyond the purely linguistic content: mentioned are the role of English in the globalized world and the significant role that the increasing amount of contact between world cultures plays in the teaching of English. The general aims of the document also state that through learning English students develop the competence for intercultural and interlinguistic

communication. The presentation of other competences in the curriculum also routinely includes references to cultural elements – for instance, the document states that reading authentic literary texts in English develops students' general intercultural competence.[1] Moreover, intercultural competence requires from students that they understand how to behave in various social circumstances, how to avoid stereotypes and prejudices, and how to respect the integrity of others.[2] Secondary school students should also notice and recognize the relationships between different cultures, apply and interpret this knowledge, and develop cultural competences and knowledge in the realm of all four skills. The secondary school curriculum specifically mentions cultural content in the section on thematic areas: students should be familiar with the most important cultural achievements and popular culture; they should know the basic characteristics of various cultures; and they should be aware of cultural differences between, say, Slovenia and the US.

A comparable inclusion of cultural content can be observed in the BA-level university study programme in English at the University of Ljubljana. The programme offers cultural modules that consist of literature courses combined with the corresponding subjects on American, Australian, British or Canadian Society and Culture. According to the course descriptions, the emphasis is on studying culture, and developing cultural and intercultural awareness, understanding, and tolerance. The course content covers traditional high culture, geography, history, society, and popular culture, including sport.[3]

To summarize, the curricular documents described above share an explicit inclusion of the intercultural component in FL teaching/learning. Also detected can be an emphasis on national attributes, which is particularly relevant to our survey of stereotypes.

2.4 Stereotypes

Psychology provides several definitions of stereotypes. Schneider (2004, 17) claims that "there is no real consensus on what stereotypes are," his generalized definition being that they are "category-based beliefs we have about people" (2004, 29). A more detailed definition by Hilton and Von Hippel (1996, 240), which is adopted for the purposes of this paper, presents them as "beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviours of members of certain groups." Furthermore, in line with Khan, Benda, and Stagnaro (2012, 3), stereotypes represent "a type of mental shortcut" that allows us to form quick and effortless judgments about the abundance of information competing for our attention at any given time – they can be useful, but also inaccurate and even leading to discriminatory behaviour.

In a seminal study on stereotypes about ethnic or nationality groups by Katz and Braly (1933), Princeton students – at that time mostly affluent, white Americans – were asked to examine a list of adjectives and select as many as they felt necessary to describe different social groups. They were also required to choose five adjectives that they felt were most representative of the groups. In addition, they could provide some words of their own to describe the groups. The results of the study revealed that stereotypes about ethnic groups are surprisingly consensual, especially with regard to negative traits. For instance, African Americans were commonly described negatively, as

1 For more on intercultural communicative competence with regard to FL literature learning in the Slovenian context, see Skela (2014).

2 This aim is challenging – it can be a paradox for FL teachers/learners to avoid stereotypes and teach/learn characteristic behaviour at the same time.

3 The Department of English and American Studies at the University of Maribor, Slovenia's second biggest university, pursues similar goals (for more, see http://www.ff.um.si/oddelki/anglistika-in-amerikanistika/?language_id=1).

superstitious and lazy, while white Americans were mostly attributed positive traits, such as being industrious or ambitious. These responses prompted Katz and Braly to describe racial prejudices as a highly consistent set of generalized stereotypes. Also, the findings suggested that stereotypes are products of culture, since the students had little or no personal experience with the groups they were making generalizations about.

The Katz and Braly study was repeated in the 1950s and in the late 1960s (Gilbert 1951; Karlins, Coffman, and Walters 1969) to explore the changes in the attitudes of Americans towards different social groups. Interestingly, the respondents in the second and third studies expressed concerns and uneasiness about the questions; this was interpreted as evidence of a change in the attitudes towards making generalizations. Moreover, even though there was still a high degree of consensus among the respondents on most of the traits associated with various social groups, the researchers noticed a shift towards adjectives with positive connotations. As one of the aims of this paper is to analyse and identify stereotypes about Americans, table 1 summarizes the most frequent traits assigned to them in the three Princeton studies.

Table 1. The most frequent attributes assigned to Americans in the Princeton studies.

Katz and Braly (1933)	**Gilbert (1951)**	**Karlins, Coffman, and Walters (1969)**
industrious	materialistic	materialistic
intelligent	intelligent	ambitious
materialistic	industrious	pleasure-loving
ambitious	pleasure-loving	industrious
progressive	individualistic	conventional

Some perceptions of American traits have been explored in Slovenia as well, namely, in a study conducted by Šabec (2000). While her questionnaire mainly scrutinized the attitudes of Slovenian students towards British English and American English, one of the tasks also required the respondents to attribute fifteen personal traits to either speakers of General British or speakers of General American. The speakers of American English were attributed adjectives that carry mostly positive connotations. The five most frequent adjectives listed were: 'relaxed', 'friendly', 'sociable', 'self-confident', and 'fluent' (for a complete list see Šabec 2000, 77).

The beliefs and mental shortcuts encompassed in stereotypes have not been overlooked in the realm of FL teaching. Byram and Kramsch (2008, 31–32) distinguish between linguistic/cognitive stereotypes (for instance, the concept of 'hard work' in the American culture), categorization/evaluation stereotypes (Germans are 'orderly'), and the group myth stereotype, which involves "representations of collective national memory" (the authors give the concept of 'Oktoberfest' as an example). The present study explores the second type, that is, categorization/evaluation stereotypes, which Byram and Kramsch mark as the most problematic of the three types.

Byram and Kramsch (2008) propose that negative evaluations and categorizations can be avoided if students are offered "contact with a variety of people and points of view." This opinion is shared by Khan, Benda, and Stagnaro (2012, 6–7), who provide a useful overview of some well-established "theories and interventions" that should be used to deal with the potentially unfair inaccurate judgements about the world around us. Some of the approaches that they suggest to use in order to diminish or prevent the likely negative impact that stereotypes can have on the members of the

group being stereotyped include: (1) personal contact (forming relationships with members of the group in question); (2) recategorization (expanding the groups by including in them members not previously included); (3) bookkeeping (listing confirming and disconfirming information about a stereotype based on the encounters with the target person); and (4) situational attribution training (avoiding the tendency to utilize negative behaviour to confirm the stereotype). Most of the above are applicable in a classroom setting.

3 The Study

3.1 Participants

Sixty-nine respondents participated in the study, which took place in 2013. Their ages ranged from 20 to 40, the average being 21.9 (σ=2.7, $\mu_{1/2}$=21). Seventy-five percent of the participants were female (this is representative of the gender structure at the department where they study). All respondents were students of English at the University of Ljubljana with a very similar background in FL instruction: in order to enrol in the English Department they had to pass the Matura, the Slovenian secondary school-leaving examination in English, which is aligned with the CEFR as a B2-level examination.[4] In line with the focus of the study, only the responses of the students who identified as Slovenian were analysed (the results from 8 respondents were excluded from the study on the basis of this criterion – they include short-term exchange students or other students from abroad who had by then not lived in Slovenia for an extended period of time).

3.2 Instruments and Procedure

The respondents were presented with a questionnaire consisting of two parts.

In Part 1 they were asked to list three traits that they thought were typical of Americans. This open question was followed by a question on the factors influencing their answers. Here the respondents were given three options (the closed-ended options "Personal experience" and "The media," and the open-ended option "Other"); they were allowed to choose or provide as many answers as they felt necessary.

In Part 2 of the questionnaire, the respondents were provided a list of words describing personality traits based on the Princeton trilogy (Katz and Braly 1993; Gilbert 1951; Karlins, Coffman, and Walters 1969) and the study by Devine and Elliot (1995). First, the students were asked to use the list of attributes to identify as many specific characteristics or traits as they thought were typical of Americans. Then they were asked to choose five of the traits that they thought were *most* typical of Americans. Finally, they were required to judge whether they see the five most typical attributes as positive, neutral, or negative.

Since the respondents were FL students and the list of traits was in English, they were allowed to look up any unknown words in a dictionary.

3.3 Research Questions

RQ1: What factors do the respondents consider the ones most significantly influencing their respondents' perceptions of Americans?

[4] See Bitenc Peharc and Tratnik (2014) for overall CEFR alignment results, Ilc, Rot Gabrovec, and Stopar (2014) for a critical evaluation of the alignment project, and Ilc and Stopar (2014) for partial external validation.

RQ2: What adjectives do the respondents list as describing stereotypically American traits?

RQ3: Which traits (unlimited selection) from the list of adjectives used in the studies on racial stereotypes do the respondents perceive as typically American?

RQ4: Which five traits from the list of adjectives in the studies on racial stereotypes do the respondents perceive as most representative of Americans?

RQ5: What are the attitudes (positive, neutral, negative) of the respondents towards the traits that they perceive as most typically American?

3.4 Results

With regard to the factors influencing perceptions about Americans (RQ1), the majority of the respondents (85.5%) stated that their perceptions stem from the media. More than a third (34.8%) also claimed that the perceptions of stereotypical Americans are based on personal experience. One respondent (1.5%) added a comment of their own in this section of the questionnaire, saying that they do not believe in stereotypes.

In the open-ended section of the questionnaire on the adjectives the respondents would use to describe a typical American (RQ2), they listed 88 different traits. Since some were synonyms (for instance, 'stupid' and 'not bright'), the traits were finally grouped into 70 categories. The five most frequently mentioned traits are presented in table 2.

Table 2. Adjectives describing stereotypical Americans (open-ended question), N=69.

Adjective(s)	No. of Answers	% of Answers
stupid, not bright, not smart, ignorant	29	42.0
open-minded	15	21.7
proud	15	21.7
fat, obese, overweight	14	20.3
egocentric, egotistic, self-absorbed	8	11.6

When the respondents were asked to consider a list of adjectives and select those that are typical of Americans (RQ3), their choices ranged from 9 to 70 adjectives (per respondent). Hence, on average each participant selected 27 adjectives (σ=11.2, $\mu_{1/2}$=25). Table 3 presents the five most frequently chosen stereotyping adjectives.

Table 3. Adjectives selected as representing typical American traits (adjective checklist procedure), N=69.

Adjective(s)	No. of Answers	% of Answers
materialistic	58	84.1
ambitious	52	75.4
competitive	52	75.4
patriotic	52	75.4
talkative	48	69.6

The respondents were also asked to use the adjectives from the same checklist and to single out the five traits they feel are most typical of Americans (RQ4). Included on their lists were 71 different adjectives. The five most frequently chosen attributes are listed in table 4.

Table 4. Adjectives chosen as the most representative of Americans (i.e., top five from the adjective checklist), N=69.

Adjective(s)	No. of Answers	% of Answers
patriotic	32	46.4
materialistic	26	37.7
ambitious	20	29.0
competitive	16	23.2
ignorant	16	23.2

Since the same adjective can be understood in different ways, the respondents also judged whether the five traits that they perceive as most typically American were positive, neutral, or negative (RQ5). Table 5 below shows the connotations they ascribed to the five most frequently selected traits.

Table 5. The attitudes of the respondents towards the five most frequently selected traits, N=69.

Adjective(s)	% Positive	% Neutral	% Negative
patriotic	15.6	68.8	15.6
materialistic	0	11.5	88.5
ambitious	70.0	30.0	0
competitive	43.8	25.0	31.3
ignorant	0	0	100

It should be noted, however, that among the 71 adjectives that appeared on the respondents' lists of five most stereotypical American traits, nearly a half (44.1%) were judged as negative, a quarter (24.9%) as neutral, and less than a third (31.0%) as positive.

4 Discussion

The respondents' perceptions about adjectives describing stereotypical Americans are largely based on the information available in the media. While the true nature of media influence is still a contentious issue (for instance, see Browne and Hamilton-Giachritsis 2005), these responses are consistent with the finding that cultural and historical realities can be a common basis for stereotyped generalizations, which was also suggested in Gilbert's (1951) study on stereotypes. To continue, a third of the respondents specified personal experience as the basis for their answers, which attests to the extent of direct exposure FL students in Slovenia have to Americans, whether this means travelling to the US or encountering Americans in Europe. Both findings are relevant for the FL classroom context – the former as a reminder of the importance of media education, and the latter as a strong signal to the language teacher that the average Slovenian student nowadays very likely possesses pre-existing, first-hand knowledge of content related to the course (which should be exploited in the classroom). Also noteworthy is that one respondent expressed their

discomfort with the topic of the questionnaire and thus partly corroborated one of the reported findings of the second and the third studies in the Princeton trilogy: since the mid-20th century, college students in America have been more reluctant to make generalizations about national or racial attributes.

The results of the survey also indicate the impact of using different methodologies (question types) in stereotype research (see Devine and Elliot 1995). The open question about the stereotypically American traits yielded an extensive list of 88 adjectives (though some were synonymous). The number of students who listed a specific trait – even one of the five most frequent ones – was consistently low (see table 2 in the section Results): the range of frequencies was between 11.6 and 42.0%. The frequencies were significantly higher when the respondents were asked to select adjectives from the pre-set list using the adjectives checklist procedure: as table 3 shows, the most commonly chosen traits were chosen by 69.6% to 84.1% of the respondents. On the other hand, the question that required the respondents to list only five adjectives from the list resulted in the range of frequencies similar to that in the open ended-question, namely, in-between 23.2 and 46.4% (see table 4). We can also conclude that different question types yielded different results with regard to content: the most frequent attributes provided as answers to the open-ended question diverge significantly from the answers based on the checklist. In the classroom discussions following the survey, the respondents reported that their answers to the open-ended question were knee-jerk reactions (their most readily available associations about American character traits), whereas the list of attributes led them to a more careful consideration of typical American traits.

The majority of the adjectives in table 2 attest to the traditionally negative attitudes that Slovenians have towards the US. The 2013 study by the Meridian International Center and Gallup on US global leadership,[5] for instance, places Slovenia among the countries with the highest disapproval rating of US leadership. Ranked as seventh on the list (with a disapproval rating of 57%), Slovenia is in the company of Palestinian territories (80%), Pakistan (73%), Lebanon (71%), Yemen (69%), Iraq (67%), and Egypt (57%), see Hess, Calio, and Frohlich (2014) for more. Hess, Calio, and Frohlich also suggest that the negative attitudes towards the US seem to correlate with the citizens' negative opinion of their countries' government. Disregarding the wider historical context (especially that of the post-WWII period), their explanation can be substantiated in the Slovenian context by considering the unstable political climate of the recent years. Since 2012, Slovenia has undergone the formation of three governments led by prime ministers from three different political parties, and the political turmoil accompanying these changes included a number of public protests. The same reasons can explain the contrast between our findings and the findings of the study by Šabec (2000).[6] We should emphasize, however, that the attitudes towards Americans presented here are not unilaterally negative – the data in table 5 show that only two out of the five most frequently chosen adjectives describing Americans were judged as completely or predominantly negative, namely, 'ignorant' and 'materialistic'.

Also worth noting is that only one of the top five adjectives selected by Slovenian students (table 4) matches the observations of American students in all three Princeton studies; that is, the trait 'materialistic'. The adjective is interpreted as mostly negative by Slovenians, which matches the negative connotations for the word in American English (i.e. being preoccupied with possessions as opposed to intellectual or spiritual things). Another attribute that both Slovenian and American

[5] More on the study by Meridian International Center and Gallup is available here: http://www.gallup.com/poll/168425/global-image-leadership-rebounds.aspx.

[6] Another factor explaining the different results in the study by Šabec (2000) may be her predominant focus on the varieties of English rather than on American personal traits.

students assign to Americans is 'ambitious' – the adjective appeared in two of the Princeton studies and is also high on the list in the present study. Not all Slovenians regard 'ambitious' as having entirely positive connotations, which is hardly surprising for a post-socialist society. Incidentally, one of the examples of the typical uses for *ambiciozen* (ambitious) that can still be found in the latest edition of the Dictionary of Standard Slovenian (Gliha Komac et al. 2014, 82) is *bolestno ambiciozen* (morbidly ambitious). In contrast to 'materialistic' and 'ambitious', the adjectives 'patriotic', 'competitive' and 'ignorant' are exclusive to Slovenian perceptions of the most prominent American traits. The antonyms 'intelligent' (Americans about themselves) and 'ignorant' (Slovenians about Americans) further testify to this difference in (self-)perception. Hence, the results of the survey support the accepted view that the judgements that members of one culture have about themselves differ substantially from the judgements others have about them (see, for instance, Schneider's (2004, 527) elaboration of ingroup and outgroup effects).

The traits identified in the survey should prove a useful and practical resource for (Slovenian) FL teachers tackling US culture in their language classrooms. The most frequently selected adjectives represent a viable starting point for culture-based classroom activities. The general descriptions of the required intercultural competence levels that are provided in the curricular documents (see 2.3) can be easily translated into concrete topics and addressed explicitly in order to expand cultural knowledge and challenge some the often-inaccurate perceptions of the culture studied. Activities such as finding arguments to support or refute these perceptions; debating such perceptions with representatives of the target cultures; and examining in more detail the typical members of the stereotyped group (see Khan, Benda, and Stagnaro 2012; Byram and Kramsch 2008) may all revolve around the traits identified by the respondents in the survey.

As an example, let us consider some aspects of the most frequently chosen attribute in the open-ended question – the trait 'stupid'/'ignorant'. We can agree that Americans are often portrayed as lacking knowledge about the world outside the United States, and the global English media are no strangers to debates on such topics as the deficiencies of American educational system, the never-ending battles on teaching evolution in schools, or the infamous lack of geographical knowledge a stereotypical American is likely to exhibit. The proverbial kernel of truth in this stereotype may be identified in the key findings of the PISA study (Program for International Student Assessment; see OECD 2014b), where US students typically perform rather poorly in mathematics and science (in 2012 the mean scores were 481 and 497, respectively), and are only average in reading (498 in 2012).[7] On the other hand, the stereotype is relatively easily refuted by, for instance, examining the statistics that place the US among the top three performers in the field of research and development. Furthermore, we should note that, traditionally, elite US universities are ranked among the best in the world, and that there obviously exist sufficient pull factors to draw some of the most intelligent individuals to migrate to the US in the hope of realizing their American Dream. What is more, Slovenian students may also find it relevant that their PISA results are not noticeably better when compared to the US: Slovenia performed above average in mathematics and science (mean scores of 501 and 514 in 2012), but below average in reading (481). In fact, in 2002, Reindl described the similar results of the previous PISA study as "a rude awakening," especially since Slovenians perceive "the notion of a universally high literacy rate […] a significant, almost mythic, element of the Slovenian national self-image."

7 The numbers represent the average student score per country. The average score among all OECD countries is 500 points with the standard deviation of 100 points; about two-thirds of test-takers in these countries achieve a score between 400 and 600 points (see OECD 2014a).

5 Conclusion

The article presents a study on the stereotypes about Americans among Slovenian university students of English as a foreign language. The findings show (1) that Slovenian perceptions of Americans often differ from the judgements that Americans have about themselves (cf. the Princeton trilogy studies); (2) that these perceptions may not be stable (cf. Šabec 2000); and (3) that the adjectives Slovenians attribute to Americans range from positive to negative in their connotations. To substantiate these claims further, additional research is needed – for instance, the study should be extended to a more general sample of the Slovenian population; it should address in more detail the methodological issues described in the previous sections; and, ideally, it should be conducted longitudinally.

It is believed that the findings presented herein are readily applicable in an FL teaching context. The language classroom may remain predominantly language-centred; nevertheless, as language learners make their headway to higher proficiency, they should also become increasingly skilled in and aware of the competences that go beyond the narrowly linguistic ones. It is vital that their teachers aid them in their acquisition of these competences, guide them to reflect on their preconceptions about the target cultures, and consequently raise their intercultural awareness.

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The 'Negro' in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*: A Comparison of Socialist and Post-Socialist Strategies for Translating Racial Elements

ABSTRACT

The present article examines the translation of racial elements in John Steinbeck's novel and play *Of Mice and Men* into Slovenian. Using the basic concepts of Kitty van Leuven-Zwart's comparative and descriptive models for the analysis of literary translations (1989, 1990), we examine strategies for translating terms referring to African Americans along with strategies for translating the discourse of the only African American character in *Of Mice and Men*. After the microstructural analysis, the effects of the shifts on the perception of this literary work are discussed, and its reception in Slovenia is examined. Although shifts are established in translations from both the socialist and the post-socialist period, in the first translation of the novel, from 1952, the macrostructure of the text was affected to a greater extent than in the modern translations of the novel and the play, both published in 2007. Because translation strategies differ substantially, possible reasons for the differences are also discussed, taking into consideration relevant historical and contemporary socio-political factors.

Keywords: translation; shifts; racism; John Steinbeck; *Of Mice and Men*

»Zamorec« v delu *Of Mice and Men* Johna Steinbecka: Primerjava socialističnih in postsocialističnih strategij za prevajanje rasnih elementov

POVZETEK

Pričujoči članek obravnava prevajanje rasnih elementov v slovenskih prevodih Steinbeckovega romana in drame *Of Mice and Men*. S pomočjo temeljnih konceptov primerjalnega in opisnega modela Kitty van Leuven-Zwart za analizo književnih prevodov (1989, 1990) obravnavamo tako strategije za prevajanje poimenovanj za Afroameričane kot tudi strategije za prevajanje diskurza edine afroameriške pripovedne osebe v *Of Mice and Men*. Po mikrostrukturni analizi ugotavljamo učinke premikov na percepcijo tega literarnega dela in na njegovo recepcijo v Sloveniji. Čeprav smo premike ugotovili tako v prevodu iz socialističnega obdobja kot tudi v prevodih iz postsocialističnega obdobja, so v prvem prevodu romana iz leta 1952 na makrostrukturo besedila vplivali v večji meri kot v modernih prevodih romana in drame iz leta 2007. Ker so se prevajalske strategije bistveno razlikovale, obravnavamo tudi potencialne razloge za razlike, pri čemer upoštevamo relevantne zgodovinske in socio-politične dejavnike.

Ključne besede: prevajanje; premiki; rasizem; John Steinbeck; *Of Mice and Men*

The 'Negro' in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*: A Comparison of Socialist and Post-Socialist Strategies for Translating Racial Elements[1]

1 Introduction

While translation was once regarded as a purely linguistic process, in recent decades numerous scholars (see, for instance, Lefevere 1992; Venuti 1998; Hermans 1999) have argued that the process of translation is to some extent determined by dominant norms and ideology. Slovenia is no exception; research has shown that especially during the period of socialism (1945–1991) translation of literary works was influenced by contemporary ideology (see, for instance, Orel Kos 2001; Kocijančič Pokorn 2008, 2010, 2012; Svetina 2009; Mazi-Leskovar 2011). The present article is concerned with the question of whether and how Slovenian attitudes towards racism influenced translation.

The issue of racism towards African Americans in works of fiction has received considerable attention in the USA, while the same cannot be said of Slovenian translations of those works which were challenged in the source culture because they were perceived as racist. One such example is *Of Mice and Men*, in which John Steinbeck portrayed the life of farm workers during the Great Depression. While the plot primarily revolves around the struggles of the migrant workers George and Lennie, the racism faced by the African American 'stable buck' Crooks is also addressed. Upon publication in 1937, both the novel and the play of the same name were received favourably by the critics and the general public (Čerče 2006, 68). In recent decades, however, *Of Mice and Men* has frequently been challenged because of its alleged racism (Foerstel 2002, 277; Sova 2006, 239–40; Hinds 2008, 9). By analysing strategies for translating racial elements in the two Slovenian translations of this novel and the translation of the play, we aim to show how changes with regard to the severity of racist discourse may alter readers' perception of certain aspects of a literary work, and thus have some effect on its status in a literary system.

2 Methodology

An adapted version of van Leuven-Zwart's comparative and descriptive models (1989, 155–81; cf. Lambert and van Gorp 2006, 46–47) is used for the analysis of the texts; the original and the translations are first compared on the microstructural level (the phrase, clause, and sentence level); subsequently, the effects of the microstructural shifts[2] on the macrostructure (for instance, the reader's perception of the characters and the relationships between characters) of the text are described. Although van Leuven-Zwart differentiates between three main categories of shifts (modulations, modifications and mutations) with numerous subcategories (see 1990, 87), only the following categories are relevant for the present analysis (see 1990, 72–73, 80–81, 86):

- stylistic modulation involving register – neutral translation of a marked term, for instance, translating the pejorative English term 'nigger' with the neutral Slovenian term denoting a black person *črnec* (black);

[1] This article is based on the author's PhD thesis (Trupej 2013), University of Ljubljana.

[2] In translation studies, shifts are most commonly defined as "changes which occur or may occur in the process of translating" (Bakker, Koster, and van Leuven-Zwart 2009, 269). One of the first definitions was provided in 1970 by Anton Popovič: "All that appears as new with respect to the original, or fails to appear where it might have been expected, may be interpreted as a shift" (quoted in Bakker, Koster, and van Leuven-Zwart 2009, 271).

- syntactic-semantic modification involving grammatical classes – for instance, replacing a noun from the original with a pronoun in the translation;
- mutation – radical change of meaning, addition, deletion.

In addition to discussing the macrostructural effects of the identified shifts, we look at the Slovenian critical response to *Of Mice and Men* in order to establish whether and how the shifts affected its reception in the literary system of the target culture. We also discuss the possible reasons for the identified translation strategies, since, as Kirsten Malmkjaer notes, while some shifts occur because of the translator's insufficient knowledge of the source language or can be categorised as mistakes (2004, 149–54; cf. Lambert and van Gorp 2006, 43), many shifts are motivated and made consciously, in order for the translation to conform to norms in the target culture (Malmkjaer 2004, 142–43).

3 Comparison of English and Slovenian Terminology for Black People

In the USA, the attitudes towards several terms used for denoting African Americans have changed significantly throughout history. The term 'nigger' is widely considered one of the most offensive words in the modern English language (Hill 2008, 51; see also Battistella 2005, 75; Rattansi 2007, 120; Asim 2007, 9), and while its use was not always deemed as unacceptable as it is today, the term *was* pejorative by the time Steinbeck wrote *Of Mice and Men* (see Kennedy 2003, 4–5; Asim 2007, 11; Hill 2008, 51). In the 1930s, 'negro' and 'colored' were still neutral terms, although they would later also become pejorative, and thus replaced by 'black' and 'African American' (see Rattansi 2007, 116).

The historical development of corresponding Slovenian terminology can be established by analysing how and how frequently selected terms referring to black people were used during different periods, examining their frequency in Slovenian printed media available in the corpus of the Digital Library of Slovenia (2014). The results, together with an analysis of the contexts as well as dictionary entries, show that in the pre-World War II decades the terms *zamorec* and *črnec* were used with similar frequency.[3] After the war *črnec* developed into the standard term, while *zamorec* began to be perceived as pejorative and was thus used less frequently.[4] In the post-socialist period, another shift in terminology is evident; while the term *črnec* is still widely used, in the new millennium *temnopolt* replaced it as the most 'politically correct' term (see Trupej 2014c, 638–39; Prešern 2001).

To further establish modern attitudes towards racial terminology a survey was carried out. In one part of the questionnaire,[5] the 309 respondents graded selected terms with numbers from 1 to 5 – the higher the number, the more offensive the term. The medians are as follows: *temnopolt* (1.17), *črnec* (1.87), *črnokožec* (3.13), *zamorec* (3.22), *zamurc* (3.83), *črnuh*[6] (4.46), *črnuhar* (4.58), *črnavs* (4.61). The microstructural examination of the translations is based on these findings.[7]

[3] While *črnec* is derived from *črn* (black), the term *zamorec* denotes somebody from behind the sea ("Narodski običaji v Železnikah" 1854, 100; "Izlet iz Gorice v Tržaško okolico" 1885, 2; Pogačnik 1981, 172).

[4] In texts digitalised up to 1 September 2014, *zamorec* was used at least once in 11,511 and *črnec* in 9,828 publications from 1919 to 1945, while in the period between 1946 and 1991 *zamorec* was used at least once in 953 and *črnec* in 2,660 publications.

[5] The full text of the survey can be accessed at: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dEViZm5rX2ZxRzI2WVFOOFRDVVhQWkE6MQ.

[6] *Črnuh* is the most frequently used offensive Slovenian term for a black person and has been derogatory since at least the latter part of the 19th century (see Pleteršnik 1894, 114).

[7] For more details regarding Slovenian terminology see Trupej (2013; 2014b; 2014c).

4 Analysis of the Translations

4.1 Preliminary Information

Maurene J. Hinds notes that the frequent use of the term 'nigger' is one of the main reasons why *Of Mice and Men* is problematic to modern readers, although she is of the opinion that in this novel Steinbeck wished to address the unacceptability of racism (2008, 116–17, 122–23; see also Sova 2006, 239).[8] While the 16 occurrences of 'nigger' in the novel were less problematic at the time of its initial publication than they are today, the fact that this term is never uttered in the 1939 movie of the same name indicates that even then its presence was a somewhat delicate issue. In our analysis we focus especially on the translation strategies for this racial slur, while also taking the terms 'negro', 'colored' and 'black' into consideration – for the purpose of comparing translation strategies.

The translation is evaluated on the following basis: if at the time of the publication of the original text a certain term was considered neutral/offensive, and at the time of the translation's publication a corresponding neutral/offensive Slovenian term was used, this does not constitute a shift. If this is not the case, shifts are identified and categorised. Also examined are translation strategies for the discourse of the only African American character in the novel, by the name of Crooks.

4.2 *Ljudje in miši* (1952, Translated by Meta Gosak)[9]

4.2.1 Translation Analysis

The analysis of this translation shows that shifts occurred in all the instances of the term 'nigger' being used in the original, partly related to the fact that the translation is sometimes only loosely based on the original. Most frequently this term is translated into the neutral noun *črnec* (black) (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 22/25 (3×), 22/26, 32/36, 49/54, 80/87 (3×), 89/98, 91/100, 91/101, 110/123), which can be classified as a stylistic modulation with respect to register. 'Nigger' is twice replaced with a pronoun (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 22/25, 22/26), constituting a syntactic-semantic modification involving grammatical classes. In one instance a deletion occurs; the whole sentence which includes the term remains untranslated (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 22/26). All three categories of shifts occur in the conversation between the elderly worker Candy and the newly arrived George, during which the former relates to the latter how the farm workers allowed the African American 'stable buck' Crooks to associate with them for Christmas:[10]

> They let the **nigger** come in that night. Little skinner name of Smitty took after the **nigger**. Done pretty good, too. The guys wouldn't let him use his feet, so the **nigger** got him. If he

[8] An overview of Steinbeck's other writings about racial issues supports the view that he had no racist tendencies. He addressed racism in the 1936 short story "The Vigilante," in which he criticised the oppression of African Americans (Werlock 2006, 408–9), and in 1943 he protested against their stereotypical characterisation in the Alfred Hitchcock movie *Lifeboat*, which was based on a script that Steinbeck had written (Meyer 2006a, 212). Furthermore, in 1960 he wrote two articles about the struggles of African Americans for *The Saturday Review*, but later refused any further collaboration with this magazine because one of the articles had been edited without his consent (Ouderkirk 2006, 29–30; Meyer 2006b, 17). Steinbeck also voiced his opposition towards racial segregation in the travelogue *Travels with Charley* (see 1962, 215–42).

[9] Finding any relevant biographical data about Meta Gosak proved impossible. However, since her bibliography consists of only two translations (COBISS 2015), it is certain that she was not primarily a literary translator.

[10] In the analysis of the texts, bold print is used to emphasise the parts that are compared. The Slovenian translations are followed by a gloss, translated back into English by the author of the present article. Deletions are indicated by the symbol Ø.

coulda used his feet, Smitty says he woulda killed the **nigger**. The guys said on account of the **nigger**'s got a crooked back, Smitty can't use his feet. (Steinbeck [1937] 2006, 22)

Povabili smo tudi **črnca**. Mali Smitty se je spoprijel z **njim**. Nihče drug se namreč ni pustil obrcati in zato se je Smitty pač spravil nad črnca. [**Ø**] Ker se je posluževal v borbi nog, je [Smitty] rekel, da **ga** bo pobil, toda ker je imel **črnec** tako že polomljeno hrbtenico, so bili drugi na črnčevi strani in prigovarjali Smittyju, naj se vendar ne spušča v tako neenako borbo. (Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 25–26)

[We invited the **black guy** too. Little Smitty fought **him**. Nobody else would let himself get kicked, so Smitty took after the black guy. [**Ø**] Because he used his feet when fighting, he [Smitty] said he'd kill **him**, but on account of the **black guy** having a crooked back as it is, the others were on the black guy's side and tried to persuade Smitty not to engage in such an unequal fight.]

While the white characters on the ranch use 'nigger', Crooks most frequently employs 'colored' when referring to his race. For this term, Gosak used both *črnec* and *črnski* (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 80/87 (2×), 91/100, 93/103), the Slovenian noun and adjective both meaning 'black'. This will not be classified as a shift, because the original term was neutral at the time of the novel's publication, and the same is true for the Slovenian terms when the translation was published. However, a shift does occur in the one instance when the adjective *barvan* is used (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 85/93); since this Slovenian term does not denote race and can be defined as 'painted' or 'covered with paint', it constitutes a radical change of meaning.

When referring to his race, Crooks also uses the adjective 'black' in three instances, and since Gosak again employed the noun *črnec* (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 77/84 (2×), 82/90), this is not a shift. The same is true when *črnec* is the translation for 'negro', which is used by the third person narrator and by Crooks (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 56/62, 75/82, 79/87), since both terms were neutral at the time when the original and the translation were published. However, in one instance there is no corresponding term for 'negro' in the translation – the translator expanded the latter part of the following sentence, thereby emphasising the issue of racism:

Crooks had retired into the terrible protective dignity of the **negro**. (Steinbeck [1937] 2006, 89)

Crooksov obraz je postal resen in strog, dekle se je dotaknilo njegove ranljive točke – žalila je bila njegovo raso [**Ø**]. (Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 98)

[Crooks' face became serious and severe; the girl had touched upon his weak spot – she had insulted his race [**Ø**].]

Expanding or otherwise altering Crooks' discourse occurs numerous times in this translation. The most obvious change is the higher register in which he speaks,[11] as illustrated by the translation of the sentence 'I wonder the old lady don't move 'em someplace else' (Steinbeck [1937] 2006, 78); Gosak used the French word *madame* for 'old lady' (Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 85; cf. Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 67), which constitutes a stylistic modulation with respect to register. Several times Crooks' discourse is also altered by means of mutation. For instance, in the conversation between Lennie and Crooks, the translator radically changed the meaning of the sentence 'A guy needs somebody – to be near him' (Steinbeck [1937] 2006, 82) to convey a feeling deeper than closeness:

[11] The transformation of the characters' colloquial language into standard Slovenian is characteristic of this translation (see Čerče 2006, 244).

'*Človek rabi nekoga … nekoga, ki ga ima rad*' (A guy needs somebody… Somebody that loves him; Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 90; cf. Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 71). Later, Crooks' discourse is altered to an even greater extent:

> I seen things out here. I wasn't drunk. I don't know if I was asleep. If some guy was with me, he could tell me I was asleep, an' then it would be all right. (Steinbeck [1937] 2006, 83)
>
> Mnogo stvari sem že videl – in o njih premišljeval, toda ker nimam nikogar, s katerim bi se lahko pogovoril, me to tišči in sem dostikrat nesrečen. Včasih se mi zdi, kakor da bi sanjal, če kaj nenavadnega vidim ali slišim. Če bi imel koga, da bi mi rekel: »Glej prijatelj, vse to je res, ti ne sanjaš,« bi mi bilo tako lepo pri duši. (Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 90–91; cf. Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 71)
>
> [I've seen many things, and thought about them, but because I have no one to talk to, this lies heavy on me and often I'm miserable. Sometimes I think I'm dreaming if I see or hear something unusual. If I had someone to tell me: "Look, friend, it's all true, you're not dreaming," it would make my soul so happy.]

A similar expansion of this character's discourse was identified in the continuation of the conversation, when Crooks expresses his doubts that a simple farm worker can ever own a piece of land:

> I seen guys nearly crazy with loneliness for land, but ever' time a whore house or a blackjack game took what it takes. (Steinbeck [1937] 2006, 86)
>
> Videl sem že mnogo takih, ki so postali skoraj blazni, ker niso imeli nikogar, da bi se lahko pomenili z njim. Želeli so si zemlje, toda ko so imeli denar, so ga zapravili v mestu z ženskami ali pa s pijančevanjem. (Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 95; cf. Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 74)
>
> [I've seen many who almost went crazy because they had no one to talk to. They wanted land, but when they had money they spent it in the city on women or drinking.]

Expanding characters' discourse is otherwise not characteristic of this novel; Danica Čerče has identified numerous instances of discourse being simplified or even deleted, while she does not mention any additions (see 2006, 244–47). Thus, the translation strategy for the only African American character seems to have been an exception, and because of it he is featured more prominently in the translation.

4.2.2 Reception

According to the bibliography maintained by the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Steinbeck's name appeared in Slovenian print for the very first time in the newspaper *Jutro*, where *Of Mice and Men* was named as one of only two American works of fiction published in 1937 worth mentioning (G. K. 1938, 9). Although this novel was not translated until 1952, Slovenian moviegoers had a chance to get acquainted with its plot when the 1939 movie of the same name was shown in Slovenian cinemas in the late 1940s. An anonymous reviewer in *Celjski tednik* praised the movie because it allegedly painted a real picture of the United States and portrayed it as a country where the working class is ruthlessly exploited. However, he perceived the protagonists' "striving for property, the wish to settle in smalltownish comfort with rabbits, puppies, cows and calves"[12] as a threat to socialist ideology, since it represented the values of the bourgeoisie ("'Miši in ljudje' in še kaj" 1948, 6). A similar sentiment was expressed by Djurdjica

[12] Slovenian: "težnja za lastnino, želja po ureditvi lastnega malomeščanskega ugodja, z zajčki, psički, kravicami in telički."

Flere, who described *Of Mice and Men* as a "poorly dramatized novel about a fatal weakness and dependency of man – the individual"[13] (1948, 877).

In 1948, the Slovenian branch of Agitprop placed the novel on the list of works that were not to be translated/published (Gabrič 2008, 67). Taking these criticisms into consideration, we can presume that *Of Mice and Men* was banned not because of its display of racism, but because certain aspects of it – especially the striving for private property – were seen as unsuitable for audiences in the newly established socialist state.

After the government's grip on the publishing houses loosened somewhat in the early 1950s (see Pirjevec 2011, 338–39), *Of Mice and Men was* the first of Steinbeck's works to be translated in the post-war period, and only the second overall. Most reviews of it were short, and the issue of racism is not mentioned in any of them (see "Mala knjižica" 1951, 303; b 1952, 4; "John Ernst Steinbeck" 1952, 3; "Novosti našega knjižnega trga" 1952, 9; Skušek 1952, 7); the reviewers focus on George and Lennie, and link their struggles to the problem of the exploitation of the working class.[14] Commenting upon Gosak's translation, Čerče writes that it is the worst of all Slovenian translations of Steinbeck (2006, 244; cf. Čerče 2011, 37), and substantiates her statement by providing examples, but does not include any shifts regarding racist discourse (2006, 244–47; cf. Čerče 2011, 37–40).

4.3 *O miših in ljudeh* (2007b, translated by Danica Čerče)[15] and *Ljudje in miši* (2007a, translated by Tina Mahkota)[16]

4.3.1 Translation Analysis

In the retranslation of the novel, the term 'nigger' is translated as *zamorc* (a colloquial variant of *zamorec*) in eleven instances (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 22/23 (3×), 22/24 (2×), 32/31, 49/45, 89/76, 91/77, 91/78, 110/93). Although it was established in the survey that the majority of Slovenians consider this term to be pejorative to some extent, it is not the most offensive Slovenian term that can be used when referring to a black person (as is the case with 'nigger' in English); its use therefore constitutes a stylistic modulation involving register. Shifts also occur in the conversation between George and Candy to which we have referred in the previous section; the latter character uses a personal pronoun for 'nigger' twice in the translation (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/ Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 22/24 (2×)), constituting a syntactic-semantic modification involving grammatical classes. A stylistic modulation involving register occurs in all three instances when Crooks utters 'nigger' – *črnc*, a colloquial variant of the neutral term *črnec* is used in the translation:

> If I say something, why it's just a **nigger** sayin' it. […] This is just a **nigger** talkin, an' a busted-back **nigger**. (Steinbeck [1937] 2006, 80)
>
> Če kdaj kaj rečem, pravjo, da govori samo **črnc**. […] Samo **črnc** govori, samo pohablen **črnc**. (Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 69)

13 Slovenian: "slabo dramatiziran roman o fatalni slabosti in odvisnosti človeka-poedinca."

14 For a more detailed overview of the reception of this novel, see Čerče (2006, 217–18).

15 Danica Čerče is an associate professor at the University of Ljubljana, where she primarily teaches Business English. She wrote her PhD thesis on Steinbeck and has authored numerous articles, book chapters and monographs about his work. To date, she has also translated four of Steinbeck's novels into Slovenian (SICRIS 2015).

16 Tina Mahkota was a lecturer at the University of Ljubljana until 2003, when she decided to pursue the career of a freelance literary translator. She has translated dozens of novels, children's books, plays and other texts, and has received awards for her work as a translator, including the most prestigious Slovenian award for literary translators: the Sovre Award (Sigledal 2015).

[If I say something sometimes, they say it's just a **black guy** sayin' it. […] It's just a **black guy** talkin', a crippled **black guy**.]

Similar to Gosak, in most instances Čerče uses either the adjective *črnski* or the noun *črnc* for 'colored' (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 80/69 (2×), 85/73, 91/77, 93/79), 'black' (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 77/67 (2×), 82/71) and 'negro' (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 75/65, 79/68). She makes two exceptions when translating the latter term. Once it is translated as *temen* (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 56/50), which means 'dark' and is not used to denote race in Slovenian; it thus represents a radical change of meaning. In the following sentence, there is a deletion of the term 'negro' from the text:

Crooks had retired into the terrible protective dignity of the **negro**. (Steinbeck [1937] 2006, 89)
Crooks se je povlekel vase in si nadel dostojanstveni izraz [**Ø**]. (Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 76)
[Crooks retired into himself and put on a dignified expression [**Ø**].]

In this translation, colloquial Slovenian was used for all the characters, including Crooks, whose discourse is never expanded or shortened – the translation is integral.

In the play of the same name, Steinbeck did not preserve all the race-related discourse; thus, five instances of the term 'nigger' from the novel do not appear in the play (Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [1937] 2009/Steinbeck [Mahkota] 2007a, 32/56/14, 80/122/29, 89/134/31, 91/135/31 (2×)). For all the retained instances (including those uttered by Crooks), the term *zamorec* is used in the translation (Steinbeck [1937] 2009/Steinbeck [Mahkota] 2007a, 38/10 (2×), 39/11 (5×), 82/20, 122/29 (2×), 160/37). As we established previously, this constitutes a stylistic modulation involving register. The noun *črnec* was used for the retained instances of the terms 'black' (Steinbeck [1937] 2009/Steinbeck [Mahkota] 2007a, 118/28, 119/28, 124/29), 'colored' (Steinbeck [1937] 2009/Steinbeck [Mahkota] 2007a, 128/30, 133/31) and 'negro' (Steinbeck [1937] 2009/Steinbeck [Mahkota] 2007a, 91/21), not constituting a shift. In this translation also, Crooks uses colloquial Slovenian, and his discourse is neither shortened nor expanded.

4.3.2 Reception

In the new millennium, the racial issues addressed in *Of Mice and Men* received more attention than before; they are mentioned in writings accompanying the play, although they are not discussed in depth (see Mihurko Poniž 2007, 8; Doma 2007, 13; "Ljudje in miši" 2007, 17). While there were no reviews of the retranslation of the novel, in the year before it was published its translator wrote that "the sad story of Crooks, lonely, bitter and pushed aside by the workers […] uncovers the question of racial intolerance in all its depth"[17] (Čerče 2006, 77), but racial issues are not mentioned in the metatexts about the translation strategies she used in her retranslation (see Čerče 2007, 103–6; 2011, 45–51; 2012, 191–97; Žagar 2007, 107–9).

5 Comparison of Translation Strategies

In our comparison of the translations, we established that there were certain differences concerning translation strategies for elements pertaining to race. The strategies regarding the racial slur 'nigger' differ most significantly. In the 1952 translation, the neutral term *črnec* was used, and thus the racist connotation of the original term was entirely neutralised. While the term *zamorec*, which is

[17] Slovenian: "Žalostna zgodba osamljenega, zagrenjenega in od drugih delavcev odrinjenega delavca Crooka […] v vsej širini odstira vprašanje rasne nestrpnosti."

used most frequently in both 2007 translations, is pejorative to some degree, it is not as offensive as 'nigger'. The racist connotation of this slur and its importance for the text are most evident in the confrontation between Curley's wife and Crooks, during which the former threatens the latter with lynching, and is translated as follows:[18]

> Listen, **Nigger**[,] [. . .] [y]ou know what I can do to you if you open your trap? [. . .] Well, you keep your place then, **Nigger**. I could get you strung up on a tree so easy it ain't even funny. (Steinbeck [1937] 2006, 91)
>
> Poslušaj me, **črnec**[,] [. . .] [m]islim, da veš, kaj ti lahko storim, če ne boš držal svojega gobca? [. . .] Dobro! Potem pa ostani na mestu, ki ti pripada, **črnec**. Dobro veš, da te lahko dam obesiti na prvo drevo; pa še užitek ne bi bil prevelik, gledati vse to, ker me ne bi stalo dosti truda, doseči, da te obesijo. (Steinbeck [Gosak] 1952, 100–101)
>
> [Listen to me, **black guy**[,] [. . .] I think you know what I can do to you if you don't shut your trap? [. . .] Good! Keep the place that belongs to you then, **black guy**. You know very well that I can have you strung on the first tree, and it wouldn't even be a big pleasure to watch all of this, since it wouldn't take me a lot of work to have them hang you.]
>
> Poslušej me, **zamorc**[,] [. . .] [n]ajbrž veš, kaj te čaka, če odpreš svoj klun. [. . .] Dober. Potem se pa obnašaj seb primerno, **zamorc**! Tako enostavno te lahko spravim na drevo, da me niti zabaval ne bo. (Steinbeck [Čerče] 2007b, 77–78)
>
> [Listen to me, **negro**[,] [. . .] [y]ou probably know what awaits you if you open your trap. [. . .] Good. You keep your place then, **negro**! I could get you strung up on a tree so easy it won't even amuse me.][19]

In this context, the original term symbolises the daily danger faced by African Americans in the South, whereas the Slovenian terms have no threatening connotations; the term used by Gosak is not even pejorative. Since less offensive variants are used, the severity of the threat is somewhat lessened in both translations.

Further, the fact that in Čerče's translation Crooks uses the neutral term *črnc* in the place of 'nigger' indicates that the translator was aware of the original term's racist implication. Because Crooks uses 'nigger' only when complaining about the racism he faces (otherwise using 'black', 'colored' and 'negro'), it is evident that his vocabulary is not limited to this term only, and that its use is motivated. Therefore, it would have been important to preserve this aspect of his discourse in the translation, which neither translator of the novel has done. Several examples of shifts in Gosak's translation indicate that she also was aware of the racial issues addressed, but by constantly using the neutral term *črnec*, she reduced the severity of the racism; thus, readers of her translation were less likely to become aware of racial discrimination and deem it unacceptable. Furthermore, because in her translation Crooks' discourse is sometimes expanded and his language is standardised, his characterisation is altered to some degree; he plays a more important role and is more articulate than in the original.

Other characters constantly use 'nigger' when referring to Crooks, thereby indicating that racism is present and acceptable in their environment. Its use is in accordance with the social status of the characters; even before the racist connotation of 'nigger' became problematic, this term was

[18] This part of the text is not included in the play (see Steinbeck [1937] 2006/Steinbeck [1937] 2009/Steinbeck [Mahkota] 2007a, 91/135/31).

[19] We opted for the term 'negro' as the translation for *zamorec*, because both terms were neutral in the 1930s, while today they are pejorative to some degree.

considered vulgar and was used more frequently by the lower classes, as Jabari Asim notes (2007, 28). Shifts therefore altered the characters' register, especially in the 1952 translation, since the term *črnec* was neutral at that time. Because in all three translations the same Slovenian term was used for 'colored', 'black' and 'negro', the differentiation of the original racial terminology is lost, thereby making the language of the characters less vivid. Since the three English terms were not offensive at the time of the original publication, and the same is true for the term *črnec*, these shifts do not, however, substantially affect the macrostructure of the translations, as is the case with the neutralisation of the racial slur 'nigger'.

According to her own account, Čerče set out to transpose the discourse of the original into Slovenian as faithfully as possible in her 2007 retranslation (2011, 40). In an effort to determine the motivation for the shifts concerning racial elements, an interview was conducted with the translator on 18 October 2012 to enquire whether she had considered using any Slovenian terms other than *zamorc* and if so, why she opted not to use them in the end. She answered that she perceived *zamorc* as pejorative, and therefore considered it as the most appropriate translation for 'nigger'. She also stated that she opted for the term *črnc* in all the instances when Crooks used 'nigger' because she did not want the only African American character in the novel to use racist terms when referring to himself. Through e-mail, Tina Mahkota was asked the same question, and on 5 November 2012 the following answer was received: "As far as I can remember, the word *zamorec* just seemed suitable in the context of Steinbeck's play. I think I never really gave much thought to using *črnuh*, *črnuhar*, etc."[20]

6 Consideration of the Results in Their Historical and Ideological Context

There are several possible reasons why the offensive terminology referring to African Americans was completely neutralised in the first translation and only partially preserved in the modern translations. The translation strategies may have been partially influenced by the role that the Slovenian language has traditionally had; it has long been seen as "one of the pillars of Slovenian identity"[21] (Poniž 2002, 86), and thus there was a tendency to use standard language in literature (Hladnik 1983, 61), including in translated texts (see, for instance, Onič 2003, 400; Zlatnar Moe 2004, 223; Čerče 2012, 189; Trupej 2014a).[22]

Other ideological factors may have influenced the translation strategy for racial elements in the socialist period. An analysis of the contemporary commentaries related to the issues of racism in Slovenian state-regulated print has shown that in the newly established socialist system racism was seen as unacceptable (Trupej 2014b, 91–92). Furthermore, the contemporary relations between the USA and Yugoslavia might also have been a factor. As Jože Pirjevec (2011, 299–308) notes, while in the first post-war years there was considerable tension (even to the point of a possible military conflict) between the USA and Yugoslavia, which was backed by the USSR, relations improved greatly after the Tito-Stalin split in 1948 and Yugoslavia's subsequent expulsion from the Cominform. Because the USA was an ally of Yugoslavia at the time when *Of Mice and Men* was translated, this may have influenced Meta Gosak's decision to portray Americans as less racist.

[20] Slovenian: "[K]olikor se spomnim, se mi je zamorec zdel pač najbolj ustrezen v kontekstu Steinbeckove drame. Mislim, da na kakega črnuha ali črnuharja itd. nisem niti kaj dosti pomislila."

[21] Slovenian: "[eden] od slovenskih identitetnih stebrov."

[22] Bernard Nežmah notes that vulgar terms were often even excluded from dictionaries (1997, 21–27, 71; cf. Trupej 2014c, 636–37).

International relations were again substantially different when the translation of Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley* was published in 1963; once relations with the USSR gradually began to improve after Stalin's death, Yugoslavia again distanced itself from the Western bloc, and began to strengthen its ties with countries that later founded the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 (Pirjevec 2011, 308–20). In the translation entitled *Potovanje s Charleyem* Gosak used a translation strategy that differs considerably from the one she employed when translating *Of Mice and Men*. In the concluding chapter, where the issue of racism and segregation in the American South is addressed, the 28 instances of the term 'negro' are translated as either *zamorec* (Steinbeck 1962/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1963, 217/175, 218/175 (2×), 218/176 (3×), 219/176 (2×), 220/177, 222/178, 233/188, 234/188) or *črnec* (Steinbeck 1962/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1963, 216/174 (2×), 217/174 (2×), 226/182, 232/187 (2×), 233/187, 234/189, 235/189, 236/190 (2×), 236/191 (2×), 240/194).[23] Both Slovenian terms are used by Steinbeck (in his role as first person narrator and in dialogue), as well as by his interlocutors, therefore the motivation for the choice of either term is not clear.

In this part of the travelogue, the term 'nigger' appears 18 times, and in all but one of these instances the term *zamurc* (a more pejorative variant of *zamorec*) is used in the translation (Steinbeck 1962/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1963, 221/178 (2×), 222/178, 223/179 (2×), 223/180, 224/181, 238/192, 239/193 (5×), 240/194 (4×)). One omission can be noted: in the original, the collocation 'nigger-lover' is used three consecutive times, while in the translation it is translated only twice (Steinbeck 1962/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1963, 240/194). Because Gosak used a pejorative Slovenian term in this translation, one can presume that she was aware that different English racial terms have different connotations. The fact that by 1963 Yugoslavia's relations with the United States had somewhat cooled off again may have been the reason why this time she decided to preserve the racist terms in the translation.[24]

This is reminiscent of another example of different translation strategies used by the same translator for two texts in the same genre: in Pavel Holeček's 1948 translation of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the severity of racist discourse is increased several times (see Trupej 2012, 96–101; Trupej 2014b: 98–99), while in his 1957 translation of *Tom Sawyer, Detective*, it is censored in two instances (see Trupej 2014b: 101).[25] The first translation was published during the period of Yugoslavia's conflict with the USA, and the second was published when relations between the two states were better; this suggests that the contemporary political situation influenced how literary works were translated in Slovenia.

7 Conclusion

We can establish that socialist and post-socialist strategies for translating racial elements in *Of Mice and Men* were somewhat different: the offensive terminology referring to African Americans is completely neutralised in the socialist period, while in both translations published in the post-socialist era it is preserved to some extent, but the most offensive terms for black people are avoided in those texts also. These translation strategies were possibly influenced by the traditional demand for the use of the standard Slovenian language in literature, which is linked to the unifying role that language has historically had for the Slovenian nation.

[23] There is also one occurrence of the word *učenec* (pupil/student) (Steinbeck 1962/Steinbeck [Gosak] 1963, 234/188), but this radical change of meaning was probably an error.

[24] There is a possibility that Gosak was not aware of the racist connotation when she translated *Of Mice and Men* eleven years prior.

[25] An additional factor may have been the fact that by that time the widely publicised African American Civil Rights Movement had brought international attention to the problem of racism.

The decision to soften the racist discourse in the translation published in the socialist period may also have been ideologically conditioned: the socialist regime perceived racism as unacceptable, and furthermore, at the time of publication Yugoslavia was on friendly terms with the United States, which may have influenced the translator's decision to portray the characters as less racist than in the original. This claim is substantiated by the fact that in times when relations between the two states were tense, racism was preserved and sometimes even intensified in other translations.

The overview of the reception of the Slovenian *Of Mice and Men* translations shows that the issue of racism has not received a level of attention comparable to that in the USA. This indicates that – along with the fact that the issue at hand is less relevant to Slovenians – shifts in the translations influenced the reception of this literary work; since the racist discourse of the original is largely neutralised in the Slovenian translations, it was less likely that the racism would be perceived as problematic. We have thus shown how translation strategies for racist discourse can affect the perception and consequently the reception of a literary work. Therefore, this article may be of use to literary translators dealing with racial elements, and can also be a starting point for further research on related issues.

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III

EPILOGUE

ELOPE

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Cultural Encounters: A Final Word

The notion of "culture" must surely stand as one of the most controversial, most difficult to define concepts in academia. Such are the problems that one is tempted to evade the concept altogether. And if one is brave enough to pursue the concept, there lingers the suspicion that the concept is fatally flawed. Consider, for example, Sarangi's (2009, 87) point, as noted in the introduction to this volume, that "any definition of culture is necessarily reductionist." That raises the issue of whether it is worthwhile pursing research that has such a reductionist category as culture at its heart. In fact, in my view any kind of research that involves analysis is – perhaps by definition – reductionist. Analysis involves reducing phenomena to analytical categories by identifying commonalities amongst them. Perhaps the point here is that culture as a category it particularly reductionist. However, even that rather depends on how one defines culture and operationalizes it. This is where it is particularly instructive to consider how the papers in this volume have handled this issue.

This volume is usefully organised into two sections. We have one section including cross-cultural papers "identifying individual cultural areas" and examining them in relation to each other, and another section including intercultural papers examining "borrowings of cultural elements across cultural groups and the way this exchange is evaluated." Yet the editors are careful to note that these two parts do not form a dichotomy, but a continuum. Gąsior's paper on "Cultural Scripts and the Speech Act of Opinions in Irish English: A Study amongst Irish and Polish University Students" begins the first section. Here, culture is operationalized in terms of "cultural scripts," as devised by, notably, Anna Wierzbicka and Cliff Goddard, who pioneered Natural Semantic Metalanguage, a means of describing cultural issues without culturally biased language but instead universal semantic primes. This approach had never particularly been to my taste, partly because the descriptions often seem to be vague paraphrase. However, Gąsior's paper proceeds with care, noting limitations (e.g. describing her study as a snapshot of the cultures and languages involved, rather than a definitive statement on the nations involved), and producing evidence for all parts of its claims about cultural scripts. That evidence is provided by role-plays and focus groups, methodologies that are perhaps not used as much in cross-cultural research as they should be. By the end of the paper the reader is convinced of her conclusion that there are differences between the expression of opinion in Irish English compared with Polish, with the Polish speakers gravitating rather more towards frankness.

Kavalir examines characteristics of the domain that can be labelled 'house and home' in the British Isles, North America, and Slovenia. She draws on Helen Spencer-Oatey's (2008, 3), who defines culture as: "a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour" (Spencer-Oatey 2008, 3). Kavalir's paper is a useful reminder that much work on culture is rather narrowly focused on one focal issue, a specific speech act, for example. But, as Kavalir notes, "even seemingly banal details will often (but not necessarily always) be tied to other concepts and the system of values in the culture." A particular innovation of this paper is that it deploys corpus evidence, specifically collocates (words that regularly co-occur with the

target word and lend it meaning), to display evidence of those details. The use of corpora and corpus methods in many areas of the social sciences and humanities has seen remarkable growth over the last 10 or so years.

The final two papers of the first section, by Cavalheiro and Matek, consider culture in the context of teaching and learning. Cavalheiro focusses on intercultural communicative competence in ELF communication. This paper has an important message, namely, that English native speaker culture should not be assumed always to hold sway across the board. Conducting qualitative analysis of transcribed spoken ELF interactions, she shows us that in real interactions misunderstanding and miscommunication are not as common as one might think, and, importantly, when they do happen they are not readily ascribable to the cultural background of the participants. Matek's focus is on the teaching of horror literature in the multicultural classroom, as indeed many classrooms are. This may seem an unlikely topic for cultural issues. However, taking a broad notion of culture (one that includes race, ethnicity, gender, religion, class and subcultures), she shows how the horror genre can help students to focus on universal commonalities rather than differences, a valuable learning outcome for the multicultural classroom.

Three of the four chapters constituting the second part of the volume have in common the fact that they investigate cultural phenomena represented in literary and cinematic texts. Duarte examines "road stories," and specifically the film *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) by Wes Anderson. This chapter is well-placed to begin this second part, exposing, as road movies often do, striking interactions between cultures. The brothers travel through an "alien culture" and in the process are forced to adopt new perspectives on themselves and their original Indian culture. The theme of alien culture – the culture of the "us" vs. the culture of the "them" – is continued in the next chapter. Poljak Rehlicki investigates war literature, specifically, several American fiction and non-fiction novels from the Vietnam and the Iraq Wars, with the aim of finding out how and why American soldiers failed to understand the culture of their enemies. The answer seems to be that American soldiers are less able to understand the culture of the Other because of their own cultural baggage: "Americans still see war as a conflict of ideas (always presuming that their ideas are more enlightened that those of their enemies) and disregard the importance of culture."

The final two papers of the volume are superficially dissimilar. However, they are in fact united by their particular concern for the cultural reception and intercultural awareness. Stopar focuses on the national stereotypes of Americans in the context of foreign language teaching. He elicited the adjectives that Slovenian students would use to describe Americans. This research reveals some striking differences between how the Slovenian students perceive the Americans and how Americans perceive themselves as reported in various studies. These differences, the author points out, are not captured by materials in the foreign language classroom, which present cultures as if they can be equated with nations and as if they are constituted by a stable set of attributes. The instability in cultural meanings is explored further by Trupej in the context of translation, specifically of the 'negro' in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Importantly, this paper reminds us that culture has a historical dimension, exploring, as it does, differences in translation and reception between socialist and post-socialist Slovenia. The author observes rather greater "softening" of the racist discourse in the socialist era translation of Steinbeck's book compared with the post socialist translation. This, the author suggests, may be partly due to the fact that racist discourse did not sit comfortably in the cultural and ideological context of socialist Slovenia.

Overall, this volume demonstrates why the notion of culture is worth pursuing. Of course, it is nothing new to say that the notion of culture as simply a stable monolithic block is not tenable.

But this volume does so much more than this. It displays the multiplicity of cultures, the sites of cultural interaction, the perceptions of cultures, and so on. Moreover, it also shows how in practical terms one might go about researching culture. A final point: if all this is sounding too complimentary, note that I am a member of the English cultures of England, and, if the stereotypes are to be believed, they are not particularly generous with their compliments!

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The journal promotes the discussion of linguistic and literary issues from theoretical and applied perspectives regardless of school of thought or methodology. Covering a wide range of issues and concerns, ELOPE aims to investigate and highlight the themes explored by contemporary scholars in the diverse fields of English studies.

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