

Volume VII - Spring

Editors: SMILJANA KOMAR and UROŠ MOZETIČ

Slovensko društvo za angleške študije
Slovene Association for the Study of English

Oddelek za anglistiko in amerikanistiko, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani
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Perspectives and
Enquiries

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Sdaš

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I.

LANGUAGE

Some Further Observations on the Spelling of English Compounds

Summary

This paper explores the main factors which determine the spelling of English N+N compounds. On the basis of a corpus extracted from LDCE (2000) and LDCE (2003), I discuss the following factors, which may have an influence on the spelling of English N+N compounds: the number of syllables, the morphological structure of the first constituent of compounds and the nature of phonotactic transition at the morpheme boundary. The analysis shows that the first two factors exert major influences on the spelling of compounds, while the influence of the third factor varies depending on the number of syllables. In the examined corpus, very few compounds with more than four syllables are spelled solid. The majority of two-syllable compounds are spelled solid under all circumstances, while only 74 four-syllable compounds are spelled solid. The highest percentage of two-syllable compounds are spelled open (49.7%) if the first constituent ending in a consonant builds a consonant cluster at the morpheme boundary. The majority of three-syllable compounds are spelled open unless the first constituent ends in a schwa. The proposed analysis of the extracted corpus shows varied influence of different factors and enables us to establish their partial ranking.

Key words: English compounds, spelling, syllables, morphological structure, phonotactic transitions, factors ranking.

Nekaj novih opažanj glede pisave angleških sestavljenk

Povzetek

Članek raziskuje glavne dejavnike, ki določajo pisavo angleških sestavljenk, tvorjenih iz dveh samostalnikov. Na korpusu sestavljenk iz LDCE (2000) in LDCE (2003) analiziram naslednje dejavnike, ki morda vplivajo na pisavo angleških sestavljenk, tvorjenih iz dveh samostalnikov: število zlogov, morfološko strukturo prvega samostalnika v sestavljenki in naravo fonotaktičnega prehoda na zlogotvorni meji. Analiza je pokazala, da prva dva dejavnika najbolj vplivata na pisavo sestavljenk, medtem ko je vpliv tretjega dejavnika odvisen od števila zlogov. V analiziranem korpusu je zelo malo sestavljenk daljših od štirih zlogov, ki se pišejo skupaj. Večina dvozložnih sestavljenk se piše skupaj v vseh preverjanih pogojih, medtem ko se samo 74 štirizložnih sestavljenk piše skupaj. Največji odstotek dvozložnih sestavljenk (49,7%) se piše ločeno če se prvi del konča na soglasnik, ki tvori soglasniški sklop z začetnim soglasnikom drugega dela sestavljenke. Večina trizložnih sestavljenk se piše ločeno, razen še se prvi del konča na polglasnik. Analiza korpusa kaže različno vplivnost omenjenih dejavnikov in nam omogoča njihovo delno rangiranje.

Ključne besede: angleške sestavljenke, pisava, zlogi, morfološka struktura, fonotaktični prehod, faktorji rangiranja

Some Further Observations on the Spelling of English Compounds

1. Introduction

It is very well known that English compounds may be written in three different ways even in the case of having the same accent (Jespersen 1942, 136). Marchand (1969, 21) also noted “the complete lack of uniformity” in the spelling of English compounds. Quirk et al (1985) made the same observation, noting that some compounds may be written in all three ways: “solid”, “hyphenated” or “open”.¹ Nonetheless they concluded that “there is a progression from “open” to “solid” spelling “as a given compound becomes established”. Bauer (1998, 69) also notices that “English orthography is extremely inconsistent in dealing with noun + noun collocations” so that a single item may be written in three ways (e.g. girl friend, girl-friend and girlfriend). He guesses that orthography might reflect some linguistic intuitions, although it is difficult to pin them down. For example, it might be that longer words are written separately, independently of the stress pattern, while short words are more likely to be written together, but Bauer does not believe that such a statement may be a valuable linguistic generalization. One can, however, note that in one respect English orthography is consistent: the suffixes are assumed to be written solid. In this respect the English orthography seems to reflect the intuitions of native speakers, and I will try to build on this observation.

The spelling of compounds is usually mentioned only in discussing the definition of compounds, but is rarely studied for its own sake. In this paper I intend to do exactly this – to examine the possible regularities in the spelling of noun – noun compounds as they occur in the corpus extracted from the LDCE (2000) and LDCE (2003). I attempt to show that there are some important regularities in the spelling of English compounds which can, however, be described only as statistical tendencies. Here we shall limit our attention to compounds spelled solid or open; those spelled with a hyphen are a rather special case since this orthographic sign seems to be partly subject to special rules. In addition, within the LDCE one finds considerably fewer compounds spelled with a hyphen than those spelled open or solid so that the mentioned limitation will not substantially affect our investigation (see Table 2).

In this paper I try to isolate some factors which influence the way in which English noun – noun compounds are spelled. My observations are based on the corpus of 6020 compounds extracted from the LDCE (2000) and the LDCE (2003), but I do not believe that this fact can impair them as the spoken language is usually simpler than the written one.² It is therefore not plausible that there are in the spoken language compound structures which are not represented in the corpus

¹ These terms seem to be convenient labels for denoting different ways of spelling compounds and we will use them throughout this paper.

² Miller (2006) notes that spontaneous speech is “subject to the limitations of short-term memory”. In such speech “phrases contain fewer words and clauses contain fewer phrases” than in planned writing. He also notes that similar pattern holds for compound nouns. Besides, LDCE (2003) itself is strongly based on spoken language, so that “coverage of the spoken language is second to none” (LDCE 2003, Introduction, XI). One of the consequences of such an orientation is that polymorphous compounds are not at all numerous in our corpus.

extracted from the LDCE (2000) and LDCE (2003). Three main factors seem to influence the spelling of compounds. One of them, the number of syllables, has already informally been identified as the length of compounds. My analysis confirms that observation, but I go a step or two further arguing that there are two other factors which influence the spelling of compounds: the morphological complexity of the constituents and the kind of phonotactic transitions at the morpheme boundary.

In a recent work of mine based on the same corpus (Rakić 2008), I have shown that compounds with morphologically complex constituents tend to be spelled open. I have in particular demonstrated that those compounds in which suffixes take an inner position (e.g. *absentee ballot*, *aircraftwoman*, *amusement arcade*, *apartment block*, *blotting-paper* ...) are more often spelled open than those in which suffixes take an outer position (e.g. *adult education*, *aid worker*, *air conditioning*, *air freshener*, *air-hostess*, *baby-minder*...). If we denote the former group of compounds with the formula (Stem+Suffix)+Stem, and the latter with the formula Stem+(Stem+Suffix), we can illustrate the frequencies within the different ways of spelling in the following Table 1.

Compound structure	Sum	Open	solid	hyphenated
Stem. + (Stem+Suffix)	879=100%	547 = 62.23%	237 = 26.96%	95 = 10.81%
(Stem+Suffix) + Stem	733=100%	650 = 88.68%	82=11.19%	11 = 1.50%

Table 1.

The significant difference of these percentages shows that the morphological structure of constituents influences the way in which compounds are written. In particular, we have shown that the fact that suffixes are attached to the first constituent rather than to the second considerably influences the spelling of compounds.

In this paper I continue to examine the effects of morphological complexity in the spelling of compounds. Here I examine how the fact that the first constituent of compounds is a suffixal derivative affects the spelling of compounds which have a different number of syllables. In addition, I examine how the phonotactic transitions at the morpheme boundary affect the spelling of compounds. I distinguish two cases: the first constituent may end in a schwa, or it may end in a consonant which makes up consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary. The distribution of some suffixes in three-syllabic compounds suggests that such a distinction is relevant for the spelling of compounds. The analysis in Section 2 below suggests that different phonotactic transitions may have different effects on the spelling of compounds. In this way I can expand the analysis to compounds in which the constituents are morphologically simple. I can, therefore, claim that there is also some regularity in the spelling of compounds whose constituents are morphologically simple, although these regularities may only be presented as statistical tendencies.

My approach has been influenced by Hay's analysis on the parsability of complex words. She found that the parsability of complex words depends on two main factors: the probability of phonotactic transitions at the morpheme boundaries, and the relative frequency of the basis in respect to that of the derived word. The affixes which at the morpheme boundaries build phonemic combinations

which are unusual in monomorphemic words are easier to recognize and separate from the basis, and similar effects have a relative frequency of the basis in respect to the derived word. If the basis is independently more frequent than the derived word, the greater is the probability that the complexity of the derived word will be noticed as well as the particular meanings of its parts. It follows from these assumptions that derived words may have a different degree of complexity, depending on the kinds of affixes and the frequency of the constituent parts. Some affixes are easier to separate and recognize than the others – for example the suffixes which begin with consonants are usually easier to identify than the suffixes which begin with vowels, although the interference of the frequency makes it impossible to establish one-way dependence.

Hay (2000) did not consider a possible application of her theory to the orthography of English compounds, and it is not obvious that such an application is at all possible. It is easy to see that the relative frequency of constituents can hardly have an impact on the spelling of compounds in English. Following the lead of Hay's theory, one might assume that the compound is spelled solid if the compound is more frequent than its constituent. But it turns out that such an assumption is false in most cases. For example, in Francis and Kučera (1982) we can find that the frequency for the noun *ash* is 17, and for the noun *tray* 21, but for the compound *ashtray* just 1, and similar examples abound, so that it is difficult to find even a single counterexample; a quick check in a Google inquiry only confirms such a conclusion. Therefore, the clause of relative frequency is not applicable to the spelling of compounds. But when we consider phonotactic transitions, some regularity in the compound spelling seems to emerge. In order to keep different factors separated, I will compare the effects of phonotactic transitions on the spelling of compounds in which first constituents are not suffixal derivatives.³ It turns out that phonotactic transitions have some influence on the spelling of compounds, although the effects of this influence greatly depend on the number of syllables.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, I discuss the factors affecting the spelling of compounds. In sections 3, 4 and 5, I discuss respectively the spelling of two-, three- and four-syllable compounds. Finally, in Section 6 the main observations are discussed and summarized.

2. The factors affecting the spelling of compounds

A basic fact about the spelling of compounds is that it heavily depends on the number of syllables. This is shown in Table 2.

	2 syll.	3 syll.	4 syll.	5 syll.	6 syll.	7 syll.	8 syll.	9 syll.	10 syll.
Solid	1448	558	74	4	3	0	0	0	0
Open	840	1488	892	320	112	38	15	2	1
Hyphen	65	109	37	8	4	1	1	0	0
Sum	2353	2155	1003	332	119	39	16	2	1

Table 2.

It is obvious that the number of compounds quickly decreases as the number of syllables rises. The number of compounds written solid decreases even faster, so that not one compound with

³ If the first constituent is not a suffixal derivative, it can still be a prefixal derivative or compound; there are, in fact, in our corpus 3.73% of such compounds. For this reason, we cannot use the adjective "monomorphemic" instead of the expression "not a suffixal derivative".

more than six syllables is written solid. Table 2 therefore shows clearly that the greater number of syllables goes hand in hand with the open spelling of compounds.

I shall here examine the compounds which can be written solid or open, and these occur in greater numbers only with two-, three- and four-syllable compounds. There are very few compounds with the number of syllables greater than 4 which are spelled solid, so that all of them can be given in (1):

- (1a) deliveryman, assemblywoman, upperclasswoman, dipsomaniac
- (1b) radiotherapy, aromatherapy, laboratoryman.

In (1a) are the compounds with 5 syllables, in (1b) with 6. No compounds with 7, 8, 9 or 10 syllables are written solid in our corpus. I assume that this fact also has to do with processing – it is more difficult to process words with a greater number of syllables if the morpheme boundaries are not overtly indicated. My task is thereby greatly simplified because we are able to analyze only the spelling of compounds with 2, 3 and 4 syllables.

One of our premises is that the morphological structure of the constituents has a considerable effect on the spelling of compounds. Two-syllable compounds can contain only the suffix *-s* in the first or second constituent. There are 47 compounds containing *-s* in the first constituent, 39 of them are written solid and 8 open. The following compounds are spelled solid:

- (2) bridesmaid, bandsman, batsman, clansman, capslock, cockscomb, craftsman, cranesbill, draftsman, draughtsman, fieldsman, groomsman, groundsman, guardsman, helmsman, herdsman, huntsman, jobsworth, kinsfolk, kinsman, lambswool, linesman, marksman, nutscase, oarsman, pointsman, salesgirl, salesman, sportscast, sportsman, sportswear, statesman, steersman, swordsman, townsfolk, tribesman, tradesman, woodsman, yachtsman.

The form *man* can be regarded as a combining form (a semi-suffix).⁴ If we take away the examples with *man*, we are left with only 12 examples:

- (3) bridesmaid, capslock, cockscomb, cranesbill, jobsworth, kinsfolk, lambswool, nutscase, salesgirl, sportscast, sportswear, townsfolk.

There are also 8 compounds which contain the suffix *s* and are spelled open:

- (4) brains trust, sales slip, sales tax, sports car, sports coat, sports day, sports bra, trials bike.

⁴ The problems of combining forms (semi-suffixes) have been discussed in Marchand (1969), Allen (1978), Giegerich (1985); these forms are supposed to appear also as independent words. In literature different lists of such forms have been given. The semi-affixes (or affixoids) have been recently analysed by Booij (2005) from the position of the theory of grammaticalization and construction grammar. The rise of semi-affixes is a typical process of grammaticalization in that content words are becoming grammatical morphemes. When they are used as affixes their meaning is reduced, but they can still be used independently with "a greater range of meaning". According to this interpretation, the words derived with semi-affixes are special constructions which take the intermediate positions between compounds and derivatives. The use of the term 'combining forms' is justified in the context of my analysis because it points out to the particular character of the compounds in (2), in which some lexical units repeatedly appear as a second constituent. I follow COED (2004), in which the forms *man*, *woman*, *person*, *ware* and *work* have been classified in this way. I add to this list the form *way*, which, surprisingly, in COED has been labelled as a full suffix. For similar treatment of combining forms see Collins *Cobuild English Guide 2. Word Formation* (1993).

None of the combinations with *man* occur in (4), although it occurs in some compounds without *-s* (e.g. *hit man*, *stunt man*, *front man*). The combining forms (semi-suffixes) seem to be more ready to combine with the bases ending in consonant clusters than lexical free words. In general, *-s* clusters do not seem to disfavour solid spelling; in spite of the fact that we have eliminated the examples with combining forms, the number of solid spelling remains greater than the number of open spelling. This may be a particular property of the phoneme /s/: It is known that at the end of consonant clusters /s/ is extrasyllabic, it does not count as a member of coda (s. Giegerich 1993, 149, Ewen and Hulst 2001, 136); One can expect that the effect of consonant clusters in the spelling of compounds with 3 and 4 syllables may be different.

Two-syllabic compounds can contain only constituents derived by *-s*. Other suffixes can appear only in three- and four-syllable compounds, to which we now turn. The suffixes in three-syllable compounds spelled solid are given in Table 3, and those in three-syllable compounds spelled open are given in Table 4 and Table 5. The signs *suf1* and *suf2* refer to the suffixes added to the first and second constituents of compounds respectively.

	s	er	age	ice	craft	iers	ing	ant	ion	ess
suf1	15	10	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
suf2	10	128	0	0	0	0	39	2	1	3

Table 3. Suffixes in three-syllable compounds written solid.

The number of suffixes occurring in the compounds spelled open is much greater than that occurring in the compounds spelled solid so that the former must be given in two tables. This bare fact shows the impact of the morphological structure on the spelling of compounds – the compounds with morphologically complex constituents are more often spelled open than solid. In particular, there are a number of suffixes occurring only once in the first constituent of compounds spelled open. We represent them in Table 5.

	er	ing	s	age	ty	ion	y	ure	ings	al	dom	ie	ice	ist	ness	eer
suf1	35	205	8	15	8	8	5	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
suf2	81	43	44	2	0	11	1	5	0	0	0	0	4	1	3	0

Table 4. Suffixes in three-syllable compounds written open.

	ance	ee	ent	ery	ity	ment	um	or	th
suf1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
suf2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	5	0

Table 5. Suffixes in three-syllable compounds written open.

Table 3 shows that there are few suffixes ending in a consonant which apply to the first constituents in the compounds written solid. Let us look at these compounds:

(5) carriageway, passageway, aircraftman, frontiersman, serviceman.

The segments *way* and *man* can be considered as combining forms (semi-suffixes), and this means that we are left only with the suffixes *-s* and *-er*, which are the only suffixes appearing in a greater number of forms in Table 3. But these suffixes have a quite different impact on the character of the morpheme boundary: the suffix *-s* can build consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary, while the suffix *-er* cannot. One can notice that in Table 3 the suffix *-er* appears more often with the second constituent in solid spelling, and in Table 4 occurs in a much greater number with the first constituent in open spelling. And in general, there are 10 compounds in which the first constituent contains a suffix ending in a schwa and are spelled solid and 39 compounds with the same type of first constituent spelled open. Does that mean that compounds in which first constituents end in a schwa are more likely to be spelled open than solid? Not necessarily, this difference may also be the consequence of the fact that in Table 3 the first constituent is a suffixal derivative, for which we already know that it is an important factor favouring open spelling. Nonetheless, it seems to be a natural move to examine whether a vocalic ending of the first constituent favours open or solid spelling while assuming that it is not a part of suffixal derivation.

Another peculiarity in Table 3 and Table 4 is a curious distribution of the suffix *-ing*. This otherwise very productive suffix appears only in the second constituent in solid spelling, but it massively occurs in the first constituent in open spelling. The disproportion of 0:205 is so conspicuous that it is not likely that we can ascribe it only to the tendency of the compounds in which the first constituents are suffixal derivatives to be spelled open. This state of affairs provides us with another hint: the compounds N+N seem to be spelled open rather than solid when the first constituent ends in a consonant cluster. In Table 3 we find the suffix *-craft*, which ends in a consonant cluster, but it occurs only in the compound *aircraftman* in which the second constituent *man* can be understood as a combining form (semi-suffix).

Let us now look at some simple examples in which the first constituent builds consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary. Some examples with the noun *child* as the first constituent are presented in (6):

- (6a) childbirth, childcare,
- (6b) childbearing, childminder, child support,
- (6c) child molester, child benefit, child prodigy.

In (6a) the two-syllable compounds are spelled solid, while there is a vacillation with the three-syllable compounds (6b); in (6c) the four-syllable compounds are spelled open. The number of syllables must therefore be taken account of in the discussion of compound spellings – we can only compare compounds with the same number of syllables.⁵

We can now start examining the hypothesis that besides the number of syllables three other factors influence the spelling of compounds: consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary, the schwa at the end of the first constituent, and, particularly, whether or not the first constituent is a suffixal derivative. In order to estimate the strength of these conditions independently, we have

⁵ As consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary, we count only three-member clusters in the case when the first constituent ends in a consonant, and the second constituent begins with a consonant. The cluster CC.C can be dubbed a coda-cluster, and C.CC an onset cluster. The clusters in (7) are the examples of coda-clusters.

to distinguish the following subsets of compounds:

- (7a) the compounds in which the first constituents are derived by suffixes,
- (7b) the compounds in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivatives,
- (7c) the compounds in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivatives and end in a schwa,
- (7d) the compounds in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivatives and make up a consonant cluster at the morphemic boundary,
- (7e) the compounds in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivatives and do not fulfil any of the previous conditions, except (7b).

For each of these subsets we have to determine the percentage of compounds spelled solid and open. The subset (7e) is intended to show us what the “neutral” case is, i.e. what percent of compounds are spelled in either way when no special conditions on morphological structure and on phonotactic transitions obtain. All conditions (7a) – (7e) could have a different impact on the spelling of compounds depending on the number of syllables they consist of. We must, therefore, examine how these conditions are fulfilled in compounds with different numbers of syllables. We turn first to two-syllable compounds, and then to three- and four-syllable compounds.

3. Two-syllable compounds

In two-syllable compounds condition (7c) cannot be fulfilled; we can therefore examine only conditions (7a), (7b), (7d) and (7e). We start with condition (7a), and then examine conditions (7b), (7d) and (7e).

3.1 We first examine condition (7a), which refers to the compounds in which the first constituents are suffixal derivations. The counting above (see (3) and (4)) has shown that 12 two-syllable compounds in which the first constituent is derived by *-s* are spelled solid, and 8 open. We get the relation (10) with rounded percentages:

(8) 12:8=60%:40%.

This means that six in ten compounds with *-s* added to the first constituents are spelled solid.

3.2 Next, we turn to condition (7b), which refers to the compounds in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivatives. There are 1448 two-syllable compounds spelled solid, and 840 spelled open. From 1448 we first subtract 12 compounds in which the first constituents are suffixal derivatives, and then 113 compounds containing the combining forms *man* (53), *work/works* (34), *way/ways* (26) and *ware* (3). Subtracting this number, we get 1323 compounds spelled solid. In open spelling, only in 8 compounds are the first constituents suffixal derivatives. The subtraction gives 832 compounds in open spelling. The corresponding percentages are shown in (9).

(9) 1323:832=61.39%:38.61%.

This means that the addition of the suffix *-s* slightly influences the spelling of two-syllable compounds. Only 1.39% more compounds without *-s* in the first constituent are spelled solid than those with *-s*. This also suggests that *-s* in two-syllable compounds does not function like a linking element.

3.3 Now we examine condition (7d). This condition refers to the first constituents which are not suffixal derivations, and form consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary. We can distinguish the compounds with onset clusters and with coda clusters. There are 222 compounds spelled solid with consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary, the examples of those with onset clusters are shown in (10a), and those with coda clusters in (10b).

- (10a) bloodstain, breadcrumbs, buckskin, catchphrase, cockcrow, dogsled, drumstick, flagstaff, footbridge, beansprout;
 (10b) breastbone, calfskin, chestnut, clingfilm, driftnet, dustpan, fieldmouse, foxtrot, goldbrick, benchmark, campfire, wristband.

On the other hand, 220 compounds with consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary are spelled open (e.g. *brain drain, bank book, blood group, box lunch, brand name, change purse, crown price, change purse, death squad, dump truck, dust bowl*). We can now calculate the percentages of compounds spelled solid and open:

- (11a) $222:220=50.23\%:49.7\%$.
 (11b) shows that two-syllable compounds with consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary are slightly more often spelled solid than open.

3.4 Let us now look at condition (7e), which defines the “neutral” case when no special conditions examined so far are imposed. There are 1448 compounds spelled solid, and 840 spelled open. We assume that consonant clusters affect the spelling of compounds, as well as suffixes added to the first constituents. We have, therefore, to subtract the numbers of compounds in which these special conditions materialize. 113 combining forms *man* (53), *way* (24), *work* (33) and *ware* (3) occur almost all in the compounds spelled solid.⁶ We get, therefore, $1448-12-113-222=1101$ for the compounds spelled solid, and $840-8-220=612$ for the compounds spelled open.

We therefore get 1101 compounds spelled solid, and 612 compounds spelled open which do not satisfy any special conditions. The corresponding percentages are given in (12):

- (12) $1101:612=64.27\%:35.73\%$.
 Thereby we get that 64.27% of two-syllable compounds are spelled solid, and 35.73% spelled open. This proportion characterize the “neutral” case for two-syllable compounds.

3.5 The results of the analysis of two-syllable compounds may now be presented in Table 6:

	solid	open
no special conditions	64.27%	35.73%
first constituents expended by the suffix -s	60%	40%
first constituents are not suffixal derivation	61.39%	38.61%
first constituents make consonant clusters	50.23%	49.77%

Table 6. The effects of different conditions on the spelling of two-syllable compounds.

The first row shows a neutral case – this relation is specific for two-syllable compounds, since for

⁶ Only 4 examples with one-syllabic combining forms *man* and *work* are spelled open (*hit man, stunt man, front man, grunt work*) spelled open.

different numbers of syllables we expect to get different proportions. We assume that consonant clusters increase the open spelling of compounds, and *-s* suffix clusters do it considerably less than the clusters made by the constituents of the compounds. The fact that *s* – clusters favour open spelling to a lesser degree than other consonant clusters may be explained by the often made assumption that *s* at the end of consonant clusters is extrasyllabic in English.

4. Three-syllable compounds

4.1 We first examine condition (7a), which refers to the first constituents derived by suffixes. We can simply count the number of compounds with the suffixes in Table 2 for solid spelling, and in Table 4 and 5 for open spelling. There are 30 compounds spelled solid with the first constituents derived by suffixes, but (5) shows that 5 of them have combining forms as second constituents. We are therefore left with 25 compounds in solid spelling, 15 with *-s* and 10 with *-er*:

- (13a) craftswoman, kinswoman, oarswoman, salesperson, saleswoman, sportswoman, thanksgiving, townspeople, yachtswoman, backwoodsman, tribeswoman, tradespeople, sportsperson, sportswriter, codswallop.
- (13b) trollerman, fisherman, pokerwork, chatterbox, chatterline, checkerboard, clapperboard, halterneck, rubberneck, boilerplate.

When we eliminate the compounds with combining forms in (13), we are left with 12 examples:

- (14) thanksgiving, townspeople, tradespeople, sportswriter, codswallop, chatterbox, chatterline, checkerboard, clapperboard, halterneck, rubberneck, boilerplate.

Summing up the numbers for *suf1* in Table 4 and Table 5 we see that 314 compounds spelled open have the first constituent derived by suffixes. Thereby we get the proportion (15):

- (15) $12:314=3.68\%:96.32\%$.

(15) shows how much the morphological structure of the first constituent influences the spelling of compounds.

4.2 Now we shall examine the compounds in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivatives. There are 558 three-syllable compounds spelled solid, but 12 of them have the first constituent derived by some suffixes. Subtraction gives us the result of 546 compounds spelled solid. Again, we have to subtract 65 combining forms built with *man* (28), *woman* (14), *person* (3), *ware* (3), *work* (10) and *way* (7).⁷ The number of compounds with the monomorphemic first constituent is therefore reduced to 481.

⁷ Here is the list of these words: aircraftman, airwoman, alleyway, anchorman, backwoodsman, basketwork, bodywork, bogeyman, bridleway, businessman, carriageway, cattleman, chairperson, charwoman, clergyman, congressman, councilman, countryman, craftswoman, dairyman, donkeywork, entryway, ferryman, fisherman, frontiersman, highwayman, horsewoman, ironware, ironwork, journeyman, jurywoman, kinswoman, linkwoman, longshoreman, lumberman, masterwork, merchantman, metalwork, midshipman, minuteman, motorway, muscleman, needlework, oarswoman, paperwork, passageway, patrolman, pokerwork, policeman, repairman, saleswoman, salesperson, serviceman, signalman, silverware, spacewoman, sportsperson, sportswoman, tableware, tawlerman, tribeswoman, waterway, waterworks, weatherman, yachtswoman.

There are 1488 three syllable compounds spelled open. When we subtract 314 compounds in which the first constituent is derived by some suffixes, we arrive at the number of 1174. Therefore, the proportion (16):

$$(16) 481:1174=29.06\%:70.94\%.$$

This proportion shows that less than three in ten compounds are spelled solid under the given condition.

4.3 Now we shall examine the compounds in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivatives and end in a schwa. Counting shows that there are 101 solid compounds which satisfy these conditions, and 120 open compounds with the same property. We get the proportion (17):

$$(17) 101:120=45.70\%:54.30\%.$$

(17) shows that more compounds are spelled open than solid if the first constituents are not suffixal derivatives and end in a schwa in three-syllable compounds.

4.4 Now we shall examine the compounds in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivatives and make up consonant clusters at the morphemic boundary. Counting shows that there are 60 such compounds in solid spelling and 210 in open spelling. We can calculate the proportion (18):

$$(18) 60:210=22.22\%:77.78\%.$$

This proportion shows that more than two compounds in ten is spelled solid under the given conditions.

Obviously, less compounds are spelled solid under the given conditions than in 4.2.

4.5 We now turn to condition (7e) and examine the compounds whose first constituents are not suffixal derivatives and do not fulfil any other special conditions. According to the calculation in 4.2 there are 481 compounds spelled solid in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivations and do not contain combining forms. From that number we have still to subtract 101 compounds whose first constituents end in a schwa and 60 compounds which make up consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary. We finally arrive at the required number of 320 compounds.

From 4.2 we have 1181 compounds spelled open in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivatives. When we subtract the number of compounds whose first constituent ends in a schwa or forms consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary, we get 851 compounds spelled open which do not fulfil any special conditions on their first constituents. The proportion of the resulting numbers should reflect the “neutral” case characteristic for three-syllable compounds:

$$(19) 320:851=27.33\%:72.67\%.$$

These percentages should correspond to the probability of spelling a three-syllable compound solid or open if we do not impose any special morphological or phonotactic conditions on the first constituent.

4.6 We can now represent the results of our examination of the spelling of three-syllable compounds in Table 7.

	solid	open
no special conditions	27.33%	72.67%
first constituents are suffixal derivations	3.68%	96.32%
first constituents are not suffixal derivations	29.06%	70.94%
first constituents end in a schwa	45.70%	54.30%
first constituents make up clusters	22.22%	77.78%

Table 7. The effects of different conditions on the spelling of three-syllable compounds.

From the first row we see that more than about one compound in four is spelled solid, if no special conditions on the first constituents are imposed. We can infer that the fact that the first constituent is a suffixal derivation considerably increases the number of compounds spelled open since 96.45% > 72.67%. The condition that the first constituent ends in a schwa provides an interesting result regarding the proportion when no special conditions apply. This condition favours solid spelling because the greater percentage of compounds is spelled solid (45.21%) than in case when no special condition applies (27.33%). It is also conspicuous that under the condition that the first constituents of compounds are not suffixal derivations, more compounds are spelled solid than in the “neutral” case (29.06% > 27.33%). This “deviation” probably follows from the fact that condition (7b) does not exclude condition (7c) which apparently favours solid spelling. The most important difference is however between the first and the second row of the table: if the first constituent is a suffixal derivation only 3.68% of the compounds satisfying this condition are spelled solid, and this percentage falls far behind 27.33%, which represents the neutral case. It is evident that the mere fact that the first constituents are derivatives changes the outcome. The suffix *-s* in two-syllable compounds does not have the same impact.

5. Four-syllable compounds

Let us now look at the four-syllable compounds. There are only 74 compound spelled solid, and 892 compounds spelled open. The numbers of suffixes which can be added to the first constituents of compounds spelled solid and open are quite different: 9 suffixes can be added to the first constituents of compounds spelled solid, and 217 to the first constituents of compounds spelled open. All these suffixes are represented in Table 8, Table 9 and Table 10. The huge difference in the number of suffixes shows that the compounds with morphologically complex first constituents are much more readily spelled open than solid. The morphological complexity of constituents is obviously an important factor influencing the spelling of compounds.

	er	ance	craft	ery	ia	ice	ion	y	ing	s
suf1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
suf2	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1

Table 8. Suffixes in four-syllable compounds written solid.

	ing	er	ion	ment	ance	ty	age	ness	y	ity	s	ure	ation	ette	ery
suf1	95	29	12	10	8	7	6	6	6	4	4	3	3	3	3
suf2	40	107	25	10	6	1	2	0	2	1	31	3	0	1	4

Table 9. Suffixes in four-syllable compounds written open.

	ee	ice	ie	ist	al	eer	ent	hood	ings	ry	shire	ess	ions
suf1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
suf2	0	3	0	1	5	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	3

Table 10. Suffixes in four-syllable compounds written open.

5.1 There are 9 compounds in which the first constituents are suffixal derivatives. All these compounds are presented in (20):

- (20) ambulanceman, aircraft, woman, washerwoman, whippersnapper, nurseryman, militiaman, servicewoman, companionway, assemblyman.⁸

If we eliminate the compounds with combining forms we are left only with one compound: *whippersnapper*.⁹ In open spelling, there are 224 compounds in which the first constituents are derived by suffixes. The suffixes ending in consonant clusters like *-ing*, *-ment*, *-ance* and *-ings* are well represented in open spelling, but scarcely appear in solid spelling, and, if any, only with combining forms (e.g. *ambulanceman*, *aircraftwoman*). The proportion (21) shows that an overwhelming majority of compounds with first constituent derived by suffixes are spelled open.

(21) 1:224=0.44%:99.56%.

5.2 We now examine condition (7b), which requires that the first constituent of compounds is not a suffixal derivation. There are 74 compounds spelled solid, but in 9 of them the first constituents are derived by suffixes, and in one case the linking element *-o* appears between the constituents. Subtraction yields 64 compounds spelled solid. We have still to subtract the compounds with combining forms. There are 24 compounds including such forms:

- (22) aircraftwoman, ambulanceman, anchorperson, anchorwoman, cavalryman, clergywoman, companionway, infantryman, liveryman, militiaman, needlewoman, nurseryman, policewoman, servicewoman, underclassman, washerwoman, weatherperson, countrywoman, assemblyman, congresswoman, councilwoman, upperclassman, cameraman, clergywoman.

However, 8 such forms have already been subtracted above. The subtraction of the remaining 16 makes for 48 compounds in which the first constituents are suffixal derivatives.

The corresponding numbers for compounds spelled open are 892 and 678. We get the proportion (23):

(23) 48:678=6.61%:93.39%.

⁸ In this list the example *speedometer* has not been included. In *speedometer* *-o-* could be classified as a linking element, and, therefore, has a quite different function than suffixes.

⁹ There are five compounds with forms *man* and *woman* spelled open: *family man*, *lollipop man*, *medicine woman*, *career woman*, and *cleaning woman*. In open spelling these forms always bear secondary accents.

5.3 Now we apply condition (9c), which refers to the compounds in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivation and end in a schwa. The counting shows that 10 compounds spelled solid satisfy this condition:

(24) butterfingers, elderberry, motherfucker, motorcycle, paperhanger, quarterfinal, quartermaster, rumourmonger, watercolour, watermelon.

116 compounds spelled open also fulfil the same conditions. Here are some examples:

(25) banner headline, chamber commerce, danger money, feather bedding, fibre optics, flower people, future perfect, labour exchange, water cannon, etc.

Now we can calculate the proportion of the compounds spelled solid and open:

(26) $10:116=7.94\%:92.06\%$.

This means that almost eight compounds in hundred are spelled solid under the given conditions.

5.4 Now we shall look at condition (9d) which requires that the first constituents which are not suffixal derivatives build consonant clusters at the morphemic boundary. Only 2 compounds spelled solid satisfy this condition:

(27) passionflower, toilettraining.

Both examples in (27) represent onset clusters.

The number of compounds spelled open which satisfy condition (7d) is much greater – 76. Some examples of these clusters are shown in (24):

(28) bank holiday, batch processing, carpet sweeper, cement mixer, distance learning, field glasses, film festival, back-seat driver, blood transfusion, inkjet printer, remand centre, etc.

Both onset and coda clusters are possible in open spelling. We calculate the proportion of compounds spelled solid and open in the same way as in earlier cases:

(29) $2:76=2.56\%:97.44\%$.

The proportion (29) shows that less than three compounds in a hundred are spelled solid under the given conditions.

5.5 We see that four-syllable compounds are spelled open in a much greater proportion than compounds with a lower number of syllables. To estimate this relation in a more exact way we shall now calculate the “neutral” case as defined by condition (7e). It is sufficient to subtract from the number of compounds in which the first constituents are not suffixal derivatives the numbers established in 4.2. and 4.3. Therefore, we get $48-10-2=36$. For the compounds spelled open we get $678-116-76=486$.

(30) $36:486=6.90\%:93.10\%$.

5.6 We can now represent the results of our analysis in Table 11.

	solid	open
no special conditions	6.90%	93.10%
first constituents are suffixal derivatives	0.44%	99.56%
first constituents are not suffixal derivatives	6.61%	93.39%
first constituents end in a schwa	7.94%	92.06%
first constituents make up consonant clusters	2.56%	97.44%

Table 11. The effects of different conditions on the spelling of four-syllable compound.

We see again that suffixal derivation of the first constituents greatly favours open spelling over solid spelling since we have $0.44\% < 6.90\%$ and $99.56\% > 93.10\%$. The condition that the first constituents end in a schwa favours solid spelling of compounds because the percentage 7.94% is greater than the percentage 7.13% when this special condition does not apply. This confirms that the analysed conditions produce the similar results across different numbers of syllables, though the corresponding percentages may be different.

6. Discussion and conclusions

I have examined three factors which could influence the spelling of compounds: the number of syllables, whether or not the first constituent of compounds is a suffixal derivation and the nature of phonotactic transitions at the morpheme boundary. The nature of phonotactic transition at the morpheme boundary is further presented with two mutually excluded conditions: the first constituents may end in a schwa or it may build a consonant cluster at the morpheme boundary.

The number of syllables has already been noted as a factor which may influence the spelling of compounds, although informally identified as the “length” of compounds. The statistics of our corpus provide more precise information in this respect. Only two-syllable compounds are more often spelled solid than open; if the number of syllables is greater than two, the number of compounds spelled solid drops rapidly, so that no compound with more than six syllables is spelled solid in our corpus.

The number of syllables is also a factor that is always present: every compound must have a particular number of syllables. If the other factors are not present, we get a “neutral” case characteristic for a particular number of syllables. These “neutral” cases are presented in Table 12:

	2 syllables	3 syllables	4 syllables
solid spelling	64.27%	27.33%	6.90%
open spelling	35.73%	72.67%	93.10%

Table 12. The spelling of compounds with different number of suffixes – “neutral” cases.

When the first constituent is not a suffixal derivation, and no special phonotactic transitions at the morpheme boundary apply, only two-syllable compounds are more often spelled solid than open. If compounds have more than two syllables, the number of compounds spelled solid drops sharply.

If the first constituent is a suffixal derivative, only two-syllable compounds are more often spelled solid than open. Few three- and four-syllable compounds are in that case spelled solid. The percentages may be represented in Table 13.

	2 syllables	3 syllables	4 syllables
solid spelling	60%	3.68%	0.44%
open spelling	40%	96.32%	99.56%

Table 13. *The spelling of compounds in which the first constituent is a suffixal derivative.*

The first constituent in two-syllable compounds can be extended only by *-s*. This *-s* usually can be interpreted as the plural or as the genitive case of the first constituent, and it is often not clear whether it belongs to the underlying forms (e.g. *sales, spots*), the ambiguity which in dictionary notes surfaces with the remarks “usually” or “often” in plural. These are the circumstances which favour solid spelling. Besides, *s* at the end of consonant clusters may be interpreted as extrasyllabic. Nonetheless, in three-syllable compounds, more compounds with *-s* are spelled open than solid, and all four-syllable compounds with *-s* are spelled open.¹⁰

The spelling of compounds when the first constituent is not a suffixal derivative should show a considerable difference in respect to the spelling when the first constituent is a suffixal derivative. In fact, such a difference is obvious for three- and four-syllable compounds.

	2 syllables	3 syllables	4 syllables
solid spelling	61.39%	29.06%	6.61%
open spelling	38.61%	70.94%	93.39%

Table 14. *The spelling of compounds in which the first constituent is not a suffixal derivative.*

The difference is much smaller for two-syllable compounds (61.39%-60%=1.39%), because of the special characteristics of the suffix *-s* in these compounds.

The first constituent which is not a suffixal derivative can end in a schwa only in three- and four-syllable compounds.

	3 syllables	4 syllables
solid spelling	45.70%	7.94%
open spelling	54.30%	92.06%

Table 15. *The spelling of compounds in which the first constituent is not a suffixal derivative and ends in a schwa.*

¹⁰ There are 8 three-syllable compounds spelled open (*drinks machine, honours list, rights issue, sports centre, sports jacket, trades union* and *Brussels sprout*) and 5 solid (*thanksgiving, townspeople, tradespeople, sportswriter, codswallop*). The four-syllable compounds *futures markets, honours degree* and *sports scholarship* are all spelled open.

Both three- and four-syllable compounds are more often spelled open than solid, but the relatively high percentage of three-syllable compounds spelled solid shows that the schwa ending of the first constituent favours to a certain extent solid spelling. The percentage of these compounds spelled solid (45.70%) is higher than the percentage of solid spelling in the “neutral” case (27.33%).

If the first constituent which is not a suffixal derivative and forms a consonant cluster at the morpheme boundary, only two-syllable compounds are spelled solid rather than open.

	2 syllables	3 syllables	4 syllables
solid spelling	50.23%	22.22%	2.56%
open spelling	49.77%	77.78%	97.44%

Table 16. The spelling of compounds in which the first constituent is not a suffixal derivative and forms a consonant cluster at the morpheme boundary.

For three- and four-syllable compounds the number of compounds spelled solid is considerably lower than for the compounds in which the first constituent ends in a schwa. The difference between solid spelling and open spelling for two-syllable compounds reaches here the lowest level of 0.26%.

We can conclude that two-syllable compounds are under all circumstances more often spelled solid than open, although the difference is minimal if the first constituent which is not a suffixal derivative makes a consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary (Table 16). Only two-syllable compounds are more often spelled solid than open if the first constituent is a suffixal derivation. This property of two-syllabic compounds is contributed to by the specific properties of the suffix *-s*. However, slightly more two-syllable compounds are spelled solid (61.39% > 60%), if the first constituent is not a suffixal derivative. This shows that *-s* at the morpheme boundaries in English compounds does not function as a linking element.

The three- and four-syllable compounds in our corpus are spelled open rather than solid under all conditions. This is especially the case if the first constituents are suffixal derivatives – the percentages of solid spelling are 3.68% and 0.44% respectively for these compounds. The consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary also lower the percentages of these compounds spelled solid – they are lower than in neutral case (22.22% < 27.33% and 2.56% < 6.90%). If the first constituents end in a schwa, these percentages are, however, higher than in a neutral case (45.70% > 27.33% and. 7.94% > 6.90%), although the difference in the case of four-syllable compounds is small (1.04%). These relations indicate the ranking of different conditions influencing the spelling. The number of syllables and the fact that the first constituent is a suffixal derivative exhibit a dominant influence on the spelling of compounds. The fact that the first constituent forms consonant clusters at the morpheme boundary also increases open spelling, while the fact that the first constituent ends in a schwa apparently works in a different direction. The impact of the last two factors is, however, subordinate to that of the other two factors mentioned first.

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The Present Perfect and Preterite in British and American English

Summary

The objective of our article is to present the selected results of the research which was conducted for the purpose of our master's thesis. We focused on the transfer of the functions of the present perfect into the domain of the preterite in informal British and American English. We put together a British and an American corpus and analysed the differences and similarities between British and American English in this transfer. We examined some factors that may influence this transfer either in American or British English, or in both varieties. The major factors will be presented in this article. The results show that the differences between both varieties mostly occur in the frequency of this transfer. Moreover, in American English there are more significant factors than in British English. Nevertheless, we can observe that the general tendency is the same in both varieties. This fact may indicate that this phenomenon, which was first noticed in informal American English, is spreading to informal British English.

Key words: the present perfect, preterite, transfer, British English, American English.

Dovršni sedanjik in navadni preteklik v britanski in ameriški angleščini

Povzetek

Namen našega članka je predstaviti izbrane rezultate raziskave, ki je bila narejena za namen naše magistrske naloge. Osredinjali smo se na prehod funkcij dovršnega sedanjika v domeno navadnega preteklika v neformalni britanski in ameriški angleščini. Sestavili smo britanski in ameriški korpus besedil in analizirali razlike in podobnosti med britansko in ameriško angleščino pri tem prehodu. Pregledali smo dejavnike, ki lahko vplivajo na ta prehod bodisi v ameriški ali britanski angleščini bodisi v obeh variantah. Glavne dejavnike bome predstavili v tem članku. Rezultati kažejo, da se razlika med variantama pojavlja predvsem v pogostnosti tega prehoda. Nadalje je v ameriški angleščini mnogo več statistično pomenljivih dejavnikov kot v britanski angleščini. Vseeno pa opazamo, da se pojavlja enaka težnja v obeh variantah. To dejstvo lahko nakazuje, da se ta pojav, ki so ga najprej opazili v neformalni ameriški angleščini, začneja širiti tudi na neformalno britansko angleščino.

Ključne besede: dovršni sedanjik, navadni preteklik, prehod, britanska angleščina, ameriška angleščina.

The Present Perfect and Preterite in British and American English

1. Introduction

1.1 General

Our article aims at presenting the selected results of the research which was conducted for the purpose of our master's thesis. We focused on the transfer of the functions of the present perfect into the domain of the preterite in informal British and American English. The following subsection presents the research done by other linguists dealing with the same phenomenon. It also focuses on their varying views on this transfer.

1.2 Literature review

The review of the general literature shows that grammarians do not pay a great deal of attention to the transfer of the functions of the present perfect into the domain of the preterite in either AmE or in BrE. Comrie (1976, 53–4) mentions it only in one of his footnotes. We can find some information in the grammars of Quirk *et al.* (1985, 194–5), Leech (1987, 38–9), Leech and Svartvik (1994, 70) and Greenbaum (1996, 272) and the encyclopaedias of McArthur (1992, 39) and Crystal (1995, 225, 311). One claim that they have in common is that the tendency of replacing the present perfect by the preterite occurs above all in the resultative and experiential meaning of the present perfect (i.e. in indefinite meaning). This tendency extends also to non-American varieties (Crystal 1995, 225) and is considered substandard (McArthur 1992, 45). McArthur (1992, 39) also claims that the transfer in AmE mostly occurs in situations that lead up to the present moment (i.e. in continuative meaning).

A detailed treatment of this transfer can only be observed in the linguists who explicitly deal with this phenomenon (e.g. Vanneck 1958; Peterson 1970; Dušková 1976; Marshall 1979; Richards 1979; Sheen 1984, 1994; Elsness 1997;). Some of them mainly focus on AmE (e.g. Vanneck 1958; Peterson 1970; Richards 1979; Marshall 1982; Sheen 1984;), whereas some others do make mention of an important grammatical difference between AmE and BrE in the use of the present perfect and preterite (e.g. Dušková 1976; Sheen 1994; Elsness 1997).

As was discerned by Vanneck in 1958, there is a tendency towards replacing the present perfect by the 'colloquial'¹ preterite only in spoken AmE, whereas there is no such tendency in written BrE and AmE and also spoken BrE. Vanneck (1958, 238) emphasizes that "the colloquial preterite is a genuine preterite, not a perfect with the auxiliary slurred or omitted". He focused on the everyday speech of educated native-speakers of American English. He finds that very few speakers of AmE are aware that their use of the present perfect differs from that of BrE speakers. He does not mention which meanings are replaceable; however it is apparent that he has the resultative and experiential present perfect (i.e. indefinite meaning) in mind.

¹ 'Colloquial' preterite: a term used for the preterite that behaves as a free variant of the present perfect.

On the other hand, Marshall (1979) believes that the distinction between formal and informal AmE is far superior to that between the spoken and written AmE. The object of her study was spoken AmE and she included people of different social classes and ages into her research. Her research shows that speakers use the colloquial preterite to a large extent; however they themselves judged it to be less correct and acceptable than the present perfect.

Peterson (1970) deals exclusively with AmE. She analysed ten American plays and divided them into constructions according to the presence of adverbials. She finds that the transfer can occur in both constructions. Though Peterson does not explicitly mention the meanings where this transfer is possible, it is evident that the author has the resultative and experiential meaning (i.e. indefinite meaning) in mind. She does not define her concept of continuative meaning, and we therefore suppose that she assigns this meaning to the constructions with the adverbials *for...*, *since...*, *in...* and *all*. She claims that they are used with the present perfect because their use with the preterite would change the meaning. Peterson (1970, 5) believes that "(...) the choice between the present perfect and simple past seems to involve style rather than any rule of grammar".

This transfer is treated in a similar way by Peterson and Dušková (1976), the only difference being that the latter includes BrE besides AmE into her research. The object of Dušková's study is both the traditional and the colloquial preterite. She finds that the preterite is more frequent in AmE than in BrE, which could indicate that in AmE it takes over some functions of the present perfect. Dušková focuses above all on temporal modifiers (i.e. temporal adverbials), an initiative for her article being that of Vanneck (1958), which, as she claims, needs certain corrections. Her research shows that the use of the colloquial preterite is not only typical of spoken AmE, but also of spoken BrE. In the latter the preterite is used above all with *just*, *never*, *ever* and *always* although this phenomenon is more frequent in AmE (Dušková 1976, 59). Dušková (1976, 54) adopts the traditional approach in the treatment of the differences between these two tenses. She focuses on temporal modifiers. As she claims, the use of a certain tense with a temporal modifier becomes redundant if the part of the meaning, usually expressed by the tense alone, is expressed semantically. When the semantics of temporal modifiers is sufficient to indicate the temporal reference intended, the use of the present perfect is redundant and consequently it can be replaced by the preterite. This occurs more frequently in AmE than in BrE. When the semantics of temporal modifiers is not sufficient, then the present perfect's and the preterite's functions are kept well apart in both varieties. It is apparent that the transfer frequently occurs in resultative and experiential meaning (i.e. indefinite meaning). However, she also traces the continuative meaning, which is only rarely used with the preterite in the constructions with *since...*, *in...* and *for...* As to be considered is that the preterite with continuative meaning can be used with temporal modifiers as *all my life* and *all these years*. It follows that the meaning does not have an important role in the transfer. According to her claim (1976, 58), the fact that the period that leads up to the present is established semantically (i.e. by temporal modifiers) is of crucial importance in the transfer.

Sheen's research from 1984 focuses on AmE, whereas his research from 1994 focuses on the difference between BrE and AmE in this transfer. He finds that the transfer also occurs in BrE. The use of the preterite with the adverbials *ever* and *never* in BrE has long existed according

to him. However, his research of BrE reveals that this transfer extends to other adverbials. The difference between BrE and AmE lies above all in the frequency of this transfer, this transfer being of a less frequent occurrence in BrE. Sheen presumes that BrE may be under increasing influence of AmE. According to him, the finding that the colloquial preterite is more frequent in the spoken than in written language is not correct since there is a frequent occurrence of the colloquial preterite in the sports pages of newspapers.

Richards (1979) claims that the resultative meaning of the present perfect is the only one that can be expressed by both the present perfect and the colloquial preterite. According to him, all other meanings remain in the domain of the present perfect. It is worth mentioning that he does not recognize that the colloquial preterite can take over the functions of the present perfect of experience – this being a disadvantage of his analysis, which has been stressed by Sheen (1984, 377), who finds that the colloquial preterite may also convey other non-resultative meanings. Besides, Sheen (1984, 1994) concentrates on the constraints of this transfer. He is interested in under what circumstances the transfer is not possible. The essential role in the interpretation of this transfer, as he claims, may be given to Current Relevance Theory (henceforth: CRT). However, he is convinced that CRT is not sufficient in this interpretation; therefore the combination of CRT and the theory of redundancy must be taken into consideration. In his model, current relevance (henceforth: CR), a basic feature of the present perfect, becomes redundant when it is established either by the context (i.e. linguistic context) or the situation (i.e. extra-linguistic context). The temporal adverbials are a typical example of the linguistic context. They are supposed to create redundancy of conveying CR by the present perfect so that they themselves establish a period that leads up to the present and in this way also convey CR. This approach is very close to Dušková's (1976), who claims that the period must be semantically established.

Furthermore, Sheen (1984, 379) finds the importance of “situational redundancy” (i.e. the extra-linguistic context) in the transfer. In his conclusion, he says that the colloquial preterite takes over the functions of the present perfect both in spoken and also informal written language, albeit under certain constraints. According to his findings (382–3), only the present perfect is used: (1) “In verbal forms expressing a state which still exists at the time of speaking.”; (2) “In verbal forms used with *since*, *for*, and *now* and in subordinate clauses containing *when*, *after*, *before*, *until*, and *as soon as*; and (3) “In verbal forms in situations where the use thereof creates a state in the light of which future events must be viewed.” His article (1994, 45) brings additional finding: (4) in the present perfect constructions without temporal adverbials if the replacement with the colloquial preterite would denote a past situation without CR.

Hence it follows that the phenomenon of “free variation”, as it is called by Sheen, is possible in indefinite and continuative meaning with an exception in constructions with *for...*, *since...* and *now*. Other situations, as in constructions with *always* and *ever* that can lead up to the moment of speaking, can be used with the colloquial preterite.

In his extensive research composed of three parts, Elsness (1997, 229), among other issues, studies the difference between the present perfect and the preterite in BrE and AmE. He finds that the

present perfect is more frequent in BrE than in AmE. In his elicitation test, which was designed to find the difference between the BrE and AmE use of the colloquial preterite, he observes that the preterite is more acceptable in AmE, whereas in BrE it is the present perfect. The difference mostly occurs in borderline cases, which are, as he claims, the situations that do not lead up to the deictic zero-point and are not tied to the anchor that denotes a clearly distinct definite time in the past. Borderline cases have anchors that are mostly temporal adverbials which express unclearly distinct recent indefinite time where the separation from the deictic zero-point is not clearly indicated. These adverbials are *just, recently, always, never, ever, already* and *yet*. Elsness does not base his interpretation of this transfer on CRT, but on different temporal schemata of these two tenses. He finds that the difference between both varieties occurs in the borderline cases where speakers of BrE and AmE take a different choice.

Elsness (1997, 229–36) studies a great many factors to find the difference between the present perfect and the preterite in BrE and AmE. Moreover, Elsness finds that CR does not play a significant role in distinguishing the differences between the varieties, although CR may gain a certain effect when there are no other factors that could affect the tense choice in a construction or in the wider linguistic or extra-linguistic context. As he finds, the important factor may be the structure of the verbal phrase and its immediate surrounding. This can especially be applied to the spoken language where the distinction between these two tenses is not entirely clear-cut. His elicitation test demonstrates that in instances when it would be unusual to use the auxiliary in its uncontracted form (i.e. in affirmative constructions) and when the forms of the preterite and past participle are identical, speakers of BrE and AmE frequently choose the colloquial preterite. On the other hand, speakers of both varieties choose to use the present perfect when the uncontracted auxiliary is acceptable even in informal speech (i.e. in negative and interrogative constructions) and when the forms of the preterite and past participle are different.

2. Materials and methods

The research was done for the purpose of our master's thesis, where we focused on the transfer of the functions of the present perfect into the domain of the colloquial preterite. We put together a British and an American corpus, excerpting the material from plays. Each corpus consists of 360 constructions with the present perfect or the colloquial preterite. We sought out the first 60 constructions of these verbal constructions in each play. The original intent was to analyse 6 British and 6 American plays (i.e. 360 constructions in each corpus). However, some of the chosen American plays were too short; thus some additional were necessary to obtain 60 constructions. The present research focuses on the transfer of the functions of the present perfect into the domain of the colloquial preterite in informal BrE and AmE and is limited to finite perfect and preterite constructions. Non-finite perfect constructions are excluded from the coding. Modal auxiliaries are also not the subject of this research. We put the corpus material into the computer programme Microsoft Excel 7, then determined the categories (factors) and values of all categories. We used the tools of the Microsoft Excel 7 for counting the constructions, percentage calculations and shaping of the tables and figures. We chose the Pearson's χ^2 -test (95% significance level) (Ferligoj 1995, 160–6) to check the statistical significance of the factors

that were supposed to affect the frequency of the transfer. When the factor was statistically significant at 99% significance level, this information was also noted.

3. Results and discussion

To achieve our basic aim we sought and analysed:

- (1) the differences and similarities between BrE and AmE in the transfer of the present perfect into the domain of the colloquial preterite, and
- (2) the factors that affect the transfer in order to be able to compare the varieties.

Above all, it is worth emphasizing that discussing adverbials is not the subject of this article. As a consequence they are not dealt with in the following sub-sections. Our research definitely includes both those constructions with and without adverbials (i.e. adverbials were not eliminated from the research). However, we made a decision to examine some other factors that affect the frequency of this transfer rather than adverbials. The reason for that choice lies in the fact that we observed (see Section 1) that the majority of linguists puts a great deal of emphasis on adverbials. As far as adverbials are concerned, our results are similar to those of the above mentioned linguists. The major aim of this article is to examine this transfer from a slightly different perspective. Hence it follows that this article also deals with other factors which are rarely mentioned in linguistic literature. Our article thus provides a new insight into this phenomenon by treating it from a slightly different perspective.

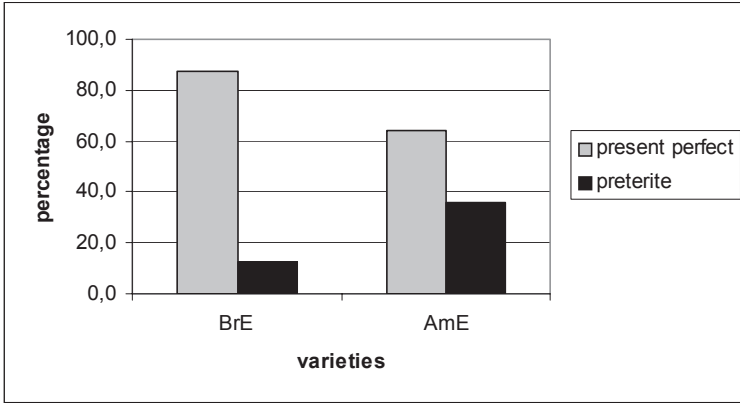
This section is divided into seven sub-sections. Hence it follows that we examine seven factors that may affect the frequency of this transfer.

3.1 General: The present perfect and the colloquial preterite in British and American English

	BrE		AmE	
	no.	%	no.	%
present perf.	314	87.2	232	64.4
preterite	46	12.8	128	35.6
Sum	360	100	360	100
perf.:pret.	6.8		1.8	
χ^2	s.l.> 99 %			

Legend: s.l.- significance level (henceforth: s.l.). (Žetko 2003)

Table 1. Distribution of the present perfect and the preterite in the British and American corpora. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance.



(Žetko 2003)

Figure 1. Percentage of the present perfect and the preterite in the British and American corpora.

The data in Table 1 show that the colloquial preterite takes over the functions of the present perfect in both varieties. The difference occurs in the frequency of this phenomenon. We try to find whether the factor of the variety affects the frequency of the transfer of the functions of the present perfect into the domain of the colloquial preterite by using the chi-square test (henceforth: χ^2 -test). The variety proves to be a statistically significant factor (with more than 99% significance level) that affects the frequency of the transfer, i.e. the transfer is more frequent in AmE than in BrE. These findings confirm the findings of the other research into this phenomenon as those of e.g. Dušková (1976), Sheen (1994) and Elsness (1997). The colloquial preterite which behaves as a linguistic variant of the present perfect is illustrated in the following examples taken from our corpora:

(1) BrE

You mean it's you buying the house? It's all you, Marion, is it? *I always hated you*. You horrible bitch, you cunt cunt cunt-
(Churchill 1973)

(2) BrE

I was never a lazy girl, Marion tries hard. I work like a dog. Most women are fleas but I'm the dog.
(Churchill 1973)

(3) BrE

So you read the treatment?
(Elton 1991)

(4) AmE

We just got here.
(Shepard 1978)

(5) AmE

My television is dead...My television...Is this Sandy?...*My television died.*

(Simon 1972)

(6) AmE

Listen, *I changed my mind.* I'm not doing it.

(Simon 1972)

It is worth mentioning that the above constructions are entirely replaceable by the present perfect from the temporal-referential point of view, e.g. the construction *I always hated you* is replaceable by *I've always hated you*, i.e. the temporal meaning is the same irrespective of the use of the tense or the construction *So you read the treatment?* by *So you've read the treatment?*, *My television died* by *My television has died* and *Listen, I changed my mind* by *Listen, I've changed my mind*, etc.

The colloquial preterite constructions fulfil all the criteria of the temporal-referential structure of the present perfect. However, we do emphasize that these constructions have unchanged meaning only from the strict temporal-referential perspective. The different connotations that the colloquial preterite denotes belong to an entirely different domain that has nothing in common with the temporal location.

3.2 Temporal meanings of the present perfect and colloquial preterite

At this point it is necessary to provide the definition of the indefinite² and continuative interpretation of the present perfect. The indefinite present perfect locates the situation in the period that reaches up to the time of utterance (henceforth: TU), whereas the situation itself lies wholly before TU according to Declerck (1991, 28). This interpretation does not require any explicit reference to a period that reaches up to TU. In indefinite interpretation this reference is usually made by the present perfect itself, which indicates that the period leads up to TU (e.g. *John has lived in Paris* → indefinite interpretation → no explicit reference). We consider indefinite interpretation to be more salient because it requires no explicit reference, whereas the continuative usually requires an explicit reference to a period that reaches up to TU. The continuative perfect indicates that the situation that is located in the period that reaches up to TU itself leads up to TU (e.g. *John has lived in Paris for some time* → continuative interpretation → explicit reference established by *for some time*).

We check the claim that the transfer especially occurs in the indefinite meaning, i.e. we check whether the meaning is a statistically significant factor that affects the frequency of the transfer in both varieties by using the χ^2 -test. The results are as follows:

² The majority of the above cited linguists do not use the concept of indefinite meaning, but they make mention of the resultative and experiential perfect, which roughly corresponds to the concept of the indefinite meaning.

British corpus

	indef.		cont.		other ³		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Br. perf.	236	85.8	71	91	7	100	314	87.2
Br. pret.	39	14.2	7	9	0	0	46	12.8
sum	275	100	78	100	7	100	360	100
perf.: pret.	6.1		10.1		-		6.8	
χ^2	n.s.							

Legend: indef. - indefinite meaning of the present perfect and cont. - continuative meaning of the present perfect. Note: We joined the categories indef. and other to perform the statistical test. (Žetko 2003)

Table 2. Distribution of the meanings according to the present perfect and the preterite in the British corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 test).

American corpus

	indef.		cont.		other		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
am. perf.	129	55.1	100	81.3	3	100	232	64.4
am. pret.	105	44.9	23	18.7	0	0	128	35.6
sum	234	100	123	100	3	100	360	100
perf.: pret.	1.2		4.3		-		1.8	
χ^2	s.l.> 99%							

Legend: indef. - indefinite meaning of the present perfect and cont. - continuative meaning of the present perfect. Note: We joined the categories indef. and other to perform the statistical test. (Žetko 2003)

Table 3. Distribution of the meanings according to the present perfect and the preterite in the American corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 test).

The test reveals that the factor of meaning is not of statistical significance in BrE. Despite this fact, the transfer is more frequent in the indefinite meaning. Conversely, it is less frequent in the continuative meaning. In AmE the factor of meaning is significant. It is more frequent in the indefinite meaning, whereas it is less frequent in the continuative meaning.

The above given data confirm the claims of some linguists that this transfer is especially frequent in the indefinite meaning. Meaning is a statistically significant factor that affects the frequency of the transfer in AmE, whereas this factor is insignificant in BrE – though this variety also shows the tendency of more frequent occurrence of the colloquial preterite in the indefinite meaning. This finding is logical if it is enlightened from the perspective of the different temporal-referential structure of the present perfect and traditional preterite.

³ Other: past in past and past in future expressed by the present perfect.

3.3 Regular and irregular verbs of the present perfect and the colloquial preterite

We use the χ^2 -test to check whether the factor of regular and irregular verbs significantly affects the frequency of the transfer in both varieties:

British corpus

	regular verb		irregular verb		indeter.		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Br. perf.	86	78.9	226	90.8	2	100.0	314	87.2
Br. pret.	23	21.1	23	9.2	0	0.0	46	12.8
sum	109	100.0	249	100.0	2	100.0	360	100.0
perf.: pret.	3.7		9.8		-		6.8	
χ^2	s.l. > 99%							

Legend: indeter. - indeterminate Note: We joined the categories regular verbs and indeter. to perform the statistical test. (Žetko 2003)

Table 4. Distribution of the regular and irregular verbs according to the present perfect and the preterite in the British corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

The test reveals that in BrE the factor of regular and irregular verbs significantly affects the transfer, i.e. the transfer is more frequent in regular verbs than in the whole corpus, whereas it is less frequent in irregular verbs.

American corpus

	regular verb		irregular verb		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Am. perf.	71	61.2	161	66.0	232	64.4
Am. pret.	45	38.8	83	34.0	128	35.6
sum	116	100	244	100	360	100
perf.: pret.	1.6		1.9		1.8	
χ^2	n.s.					

(Žetko 2003)

Table 5. Distribution of the regular and irregular verbs according to the present perfect and the preterite in the American corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

The test shows that in AmE the factor of regular and irregular verbs has no statistically significant role in the transfer although the same tendency can be noticed as in BrE. The transfer is more frequent in regular verbs than in the whole corpus, whereas it is of less frequent occurrence in irregular verbs.

The results are surprising because the factor of regular and irregular verbs is the only one that affects the transfer in BrE only, whereas in AmE it is insignificant. The percentage indicates that there is the same tendency in both varieties. The transfer is more frequent in regular verbs. The reason may lie in the fact that all regular verbs have the identical form of the preterite and past participle. Nevertheless, we believe that the checking the effect of the factor of the identical and different forms is far superior because the preterite and past participle of some irregular verbs are identical in form, whereas the others are different. We examine this factor in the following Sub-section.

3.4 The identical and different forms of the preterite and past participle of the present perfect and colloquial preterite

In this sub-section we test Elsness's finding (1997, 235–6) that the transfer is more frequent when the forms of the preterite and past participle are identical, whereas it is less frequent when the forms are different. According to him, this is typical of both varieties, but the tendency is stronger in AmE. We examine whether the factor of the identical and different forms significantly affects the transfer in both varieties by using the χ^2 -test. The results of our test confirm Elsness's findings. The test reveals that the identical and different forms of the preterite and past participle is a statistically significant factor (with more than 95% significance level) in BrE, which means that the transfer is more frequent when the forms are identical, whereas it is less frequent when the forms are different.

British corpus

	identical		different		other		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Br. perf	177	84.3	135	91.2	2	100	314	87.2
Br. pret.	33	15.7	13	8.8	0	0	46	12.8
sum	210	100	148	100	2	100	360	100
perf.: pret	5.4		10.4		-		6.8	
χ^2	s.l.> 95%							

Note: We joined the categories different and other to perform the statistical test. (Žetko 2003)

Table 6. Distribution of the identical and different forms of the preterite and past participle according to the present perfect and the preterite in the British corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

In AmE the results are similar as in BrE. Identical and different forms of the preterite and past participle is a statistically significant factor that affects the transfer with more than 99% significance level. The transfer is more frequent when the forms are identical. This factor has a statistically significant role in both varieties, but the difference appears in the level of reliability. In AmE this factor is significant, with more than 99% significance level, whereas in BrE it is so with more than 95% significance level. This finding is in accordance with Elsness's, who claims that this tendency is stronger in AmE.

American corpus

	identical		different		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Am. perf	123	54.7	109	80.7	232	64.4
Am. pret.	102	45.3	26	19.3	128	35.6
sum	225	100	135	100	360	100
perf.: pret.	1.2		4.2		1.8	
χ^2			s.l. > 99%			

(Žetko 2003)

Table 7. Distribution of the identical and different forms of the preterite and past participle according to the present perfect and the preterite in the American corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

Our results thus confirm Elsness's findings and reveals that this factor is of statistical significance not only in AmE but also in BrE. In our view, these results are the proof that the distinction between the present perfect and traditional preterite is problematic even among native speakers. The preterite is chosen only because of the identical forms of the preterite and past participle, i.e. for practical reasons, which are formally grounded.

3.5 The form of the verbal phrase of the present perfect and colloquial preterite

As Elsness (1997, 236) claims, the transfer occurs more frequently in the affirmative form, whereas it is less frequent in both the negative and interrogative form. He believes that the transfer occurs less frequently in the negative and interrogative form because the auxiliary appears in its uncontracted form also in informal language. On the other hand, the transfer occurs more frequently in the affirmative form. In this form the uncontracted auxiliary appears infrequently in informal language. The uncontracted auxiliary *have/has* in the affirmative form would be very unusual in spoken language, whereas in the contracted auxiliary it is almost inaudible, this being the reason for the preference of the colloquial preterite in both varieties.

British corpus

	affirm.		negative		inter.		other		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Br. perf.	232	86.2	37	94.9	43	86	2	100	314	87.2
Br. pret.	37	13.8	2	5.1	7	14	0	0	46	12.8
sum	269	100	39	100	50	100	2	100	360	100
perf.: pret.	6.3		18.5		6.1		-		6.8	
χ^2										n.s.

Legend: *affirm.* - affirmative and *inter.* - interrogative. Note: We joined the categories *affirm.* and *other* to perform the statistical test. (Žetko 2003)

Table 8. Distribution of form of the verbal phrase according to the present perfect and the preterite in the British corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

The test reveals that the factor of form of the verbal phrase is insignificant in BrE, but the transfer is more frequent in the affirmative and interrogative form, whereas it is less frequent in the negative form.

American corpus

	affirm.		negative		inter.		other		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Am. perf.	163	62.0	41	87.2	27	55.1	1	100	232	64.4
Am. pret.	100	38.0	6	12.8	22	44.9	0	0	128	35.6
sum	263	100	47	100	49	100	1	100	360	100
perf.: pret.	1.6		6.8		1.2		-		1.8	
χ^2	s.l. > 99%									

Legend: affirm. - affirmative and inter. - interrogative. Note: We joined the categories affirm. and other to perform the statistical test. (Žetko 2003)

Table 9. Distribution of form of the verbal phrase according to the present perfect and the preterite in the American corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

The results are different in AmE, in which the form of the verbal phrase is a statistically significant factor. The transfer is more frequent in the affirmative and interrogative form than in the whole corpus, whereas it is less frequent in the negative form. The difference between BrE and AmE occurs in the fact that this factor is of no statistical significance in BrE, whereas in AmE it is significant. Nevertheless, the tendency is the same in both varieties.

Our results are not in accordance with those of Elsness. Our test does confirm that the transfer is more frequent in the affirmative form in AmE, but it also reveals that it is even more frequent in the interrogative form. Thus the results show that the transfer occurs more frequently in the affirmative and interrogative form. The transfer is less frequent in the negative form. Unfortunately, we are not able to answer why the transfer also occurs in the interrogative form.

3.6 Number and person of the present perfect and colloquial preterite

Number

Elsness's findings (1997, 197–8) show that the ratio between the present perfect and traditional preterite is higher with plural than with singular subjects. We test whether number has a statistically significant role in the transfer. The test reveals that number is not a significant factor in either BrE or AmE. There is the same tendency in both varieties. The colloquial preterite occurs more frequently with singular subjects both in BrE and AmE, whereas it occurs less frequently with plural subjects.

British corpus

	sg.		unct.		pl.		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Br. perf.	253	86.3	7	87.5	54	91.5	314	87.2
Br. pret.	40	13.7	1	12.5	5	8.5	46	12.8
sum	293	100	8	100	59	100	360	100
perf.: pret.	6.3		7.0		10.8		6.8	
χ^2	n.s.							

Legend: sg. - singular, unct. - uncountable and pl. - plural. Note: We joined the categories sg. and unct. to perform the statistical test. (Žetko 2003)

Table 10. Distribution of number of the person according to the present perfect and the preterite in the British corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

American corpus

	sg.		unct.		pl.		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Am. perf.	213	64	2	100	17	68	232	64.4
Am. pret.	120	36	0	0	8	32	128	35.6
sum	333	100	2	100	25	100	360	100
perf.: pret.	1.8		-		2.1		1.8	
χ^2	n.s.							

Legend: sg. - singular, unct. - uncountable and pl. - plural. Note: We joined the categories sg. and unct. to perform the statistical test. (Žetko 2003)

Table 11. Distribution of number of the person according to the present perfect and the preterite in the American corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

Number is insignificant in each variety, but the tendency towards the more frequent transfer in singular subjects occurs in both varieties. These results can be explained by the Naturalness Theory as formulated by Orešnik (1999). According to his claim, the present perfect is a compound tense and as such it represents a strong variant. It is typical of a strong variant that it first prevails in less natural environments. On the other hand, the preterite is not a compound tense, hence a weak variant, which first prevails in more natural environments. As far as number is concerned, Orešnik (1999, 91) claims that the singular is 'less marked' or 'more natural' than non-singular. Hence it follows:

>naturalness (singular, non-singular); after Mayerthaler 1987, 49.

This theory enables us to explain why the colloquial preterite occurs more frequently with singular subjects, i.e. since the preterite is not a compound tense, it prevails in more natural environments (i.e. singular). The present perfect, on the other hand, is a compound tense. As a consequence it prevails in less natural environments (i.e. non-singular).

Person

Elsness (1997, 197–201) finds that the ratio between the present perfect and traditional preterite is highest for the first and the second person, whereas it is lowest for the third person. According to his opinion (1997, 198), the reason lies in the fact that the first and the second person usually express extra-textual, situational reference, whereas the third person expresses anaphoric textual reference. Hence it follows that the traditional preterite is more frequently used with the third person. Our hypothesis is that the colloquial preterite behaves as if it were the present perfect and is therefore more frequently used with the first and the second person. The test reveals that person is insignificant in either variety. But varieties have different tendencies. In BrE the transfer is less frequent with the first and the second person, whereas it is more frequent with the third person.

British corpus

	1 st pers.		2 nd pers.		3 rd pers.		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Br.perf.	146	88	66	89.2	102	85	314	87.2
Br. pret.	20	12	8	10.8	18	15	46	12.8
sum	166	100	74	100	120	100	360	100
perf.: pret	7.3		8.3		5.7		6.8	
χ^2	n.s.							

(Žetko 2003)

Table 12. Distribution of person according to the present perfect and the preterite in the British corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

The situation in AmE is different. Although person is not a significant factor, the transfer is the most frequent with the first person, whereas it is less frequent with the second and the third person.

American corpus

	1 st pers.		2 nd pers.		3 rd pers.		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Am.perf.	102	62.2	62	66	68	66.7	232	64.4
Am. pret.	62	37.8	32	34	34	33.3	128	35.6
sum	164	100	94	100	102	100	360	100
perf.: pret.	1.6		1.9		2		1.8	
χ^2	n.s.							

(Žetko 2003)

Table 13. Distribution of person according to the present perfect and the preterite in the American corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

The results show that the transfer occurs most frequently with the third person in BrE, whereas in AmE it is with the first person, which confirms our expectation. We believe that these differences are not necessarily a reflection of the actual differences between the varieties because this distribution may be due to extra-linguistic factors such as the type and nature of conversations, which may dictate the use of person and number. It is true that the third person expresses anaphoric reference more frequently, but this is not necessarily always true.

3.7 Independent and dependent clauses

We check the effect of the type of clause on this transfer. We want to find whether the type of clause is a factor that has a statistically significant role in the frequency of the transfer by using the χ^2 -test. The results are as follows:

British corpus

	independent		depend.		indeter.		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Br. perf.	227	85.7	85	91.4	2	100	314	87.2
Br. pret.	38	14.3	8	8.6	0	0	46	12.8
sum	265	100	93	100	2	100	360	100
perf.: pret.	6.0		10.6				6.8	
χ^2	n.s.							

Legend: depend. - dependent and indeter. - indeterminable. Note: We joined the categories independent and indeter. to perform the statistical test. (Žetko 2003)

Table 14. Distribution of the independent and dependent clauses according to the present perfect in preterite in the British corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

The test reveals that the type of clause is not a statistically significant factor in BrE, but the results indicate that the transfer is more frequent in independent clauses, whereas it is less frequent in dependent clauses.

American corpus

	independent		depend.		sum	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Am. perf.	176	61.5	56	75.7	232	64.4
Am. pret.	110	38.5	18	24.3	128	35.6
Sum	286	100	74	100	360	100
perf.: pret.	1.6		3.1		1.8	
χ^2	s.l. > 95%					

Legend: depend. - dependent. (Žetko 2003)

Table 15. Distribution of the independent and dependent clauses according to the present perfect in preterite in the American corpus. Number, percentage, ratio and statistical significance (χ^2 -test).

The test reveals that the type of clause is a statistically significant factor in AmE. The transfer is more frequent in independent clauses, whereas it is of less frequent occurrence in dependent clauses.

The factor of the type of clause has a statistically significant role in the frequency of the transfer in AmE. This factor is of no statistical significance in BrE although the tendency is the same as in AmE. In both varieties the transfer is more frequent in independent clauses than in dependent ones.

Our results can be made explicable by means of the Naturalness Theory (Orešnik 1999). As Orešnik states, the present perfect is a strong variant and prevails in less natural environments. On the other hand, the preterite is a weak variant, which prevails in more natural environments. As far as a clause is concerned, Orešnik (1999, 23) claims that an independent clause is ‘more natural’ than a dependent clause. Hence it follows:
>naturalness (independent clause, dependent clause).

It is therefore obvious why the transfer is more frequent in independent clauses. The preterite is a weak variant and tends to occur in more natural environments and independent clauses are more natural than dependent ones.

4. Summary and conclusion

The main finding of our research was that the factor of the variety has a statistically significant role in the transfer of the functions of the present perfect into the domain of the preterite, i.e. this transfer is more frequent in AmE than in BrE.

Factor	Variety		Tendency
	BrE	AmE	
meaning: indefinite and continuative	n.s.	s.l. > 99%	same
verbs: regular and irregular verbs	s.l. > 99%	n.s.	same
identical and different forms of the preterite and past participle form of the verbal phrase: affirmative, negative and interrogative	s.l. > 95%	s.l. > 99%	same
number of the person: singular and plural	n.s.	s.l. > 99%	same
person: 1 st person, 2 nd person and 3 rd person	n.s.	n.s.	different
type of the clause: independent and dependent	n.s.	s.l. > 95%	same

Table 16. Factors that have or do not have a statistically significant effect in BrE in AmE, comparison of the tendencies according to the percentages in both corpora.

The results of our research showed that the significant similarity between BrE and AmE (see Table 16) in the transfer occurs only in one factor, i.e. in the factor of identical and different forms of the preterite and past participle. This factor significantly affects the transfer in both varieties, i.e. the transfer is more frequent when the forms are identical and infrequent when the forms are different.

The research showed that the differences between BrE and AmE in this transfer mostly occur: (1) in the frequency of this transfer, (2) in the number of the statistically significant factors that affect the frequency of the transfer, (3) in the factor of meaning (indefinite and continuative), (4) in the factor of form of the verbal phrase (affirmative, negative and interrogative), (5) in the factor of verbs (regular and irregular), and (6) in the factor of type of clauses (independent and dependent clauses). There are only two significant factors that affect the frequency of this transfer in BrE, whereas there are more significant factors in AmE. The factor of meaning is not significant in BrE, whereas it is of statistical significance in AmE. This transfer is more frequent in indefinite meaning and infrequent in continuative meaning. Notwithstanding that the factor of meaning is not significant in BrE, the transfer is more frequent in indefinite meaning. The factor of form of a verbal phrase does not significantly affect the transfer in BrE. In AmE this factor is of statistical significance, i.e. the transfer is more frequent in affirmative and interrogative form, whereas in negative form it is infrequent. There is the same tendency in BrE. The factor of regular and irregular verbs significantly affects the transfer in BrE, i.e. the transfer is more frequent in constructions with regular verbs. In AmE this factor is not significant, but the tendency is the same. This factor is the only one that is significant in BrE but is of no significance in AmE. The factor of type of clauses (dependent and independent clauses) is not significant in BrE, whereas it is of significance in AmE, i.e. the transfer is more frequent in independent and infrequent in dependent clauses. There is the same tendency in BrE.

The factors that have no significant role in the frequency of this transfer either in BrE or in AmE are (1) the factor of number of the person (sg. and pl.), and (2) the factor of person (1st, 2nd and 3rd person).

In conclusion, although there is a considerable difference between BrE and AmE in the transfer of the present perfect functions into the domain of the colloquial preterite, we believe that both varieties are moving in the same direction and that the British variety is under increasing influence of AmE. Nevertheless, the general tendency is the same in both varieties. This fact indicates that this phenomenon, which was first noticed in informal American English, is spreading to informal British English. The question of whether or when this phenomenon enters the formal varieties cannot be answered for the time being.

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II.

LITERATURE

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Generating Alternative Worlds: The Indigenous Protest Poetry of Romaine Moreton

Summary

Since the 1980s, indigenous authors have had a high profile in Australia and their writing has made a significant impact on the Australian public. Given that poetry has attracted more indigenous Australians than any other mode of creative expression, this genre, too, has provided an important impetus for their cultural and political expression. Discussing the verse of Romaine Moreton, and taking up George Levine's view (2000) that works of art are able to produce critical disruptions and generate alternative worlds, the article aims to show that Moreton's mesmerising reflections on origin, dispossession, dislocation and identity of Australian indigenous peoples encouraged national self-reflection and helped create a meaningful existence for the deprived and the dispossessed. It also touches upon some other topics explored in Moreton's poetry and provides evidence of its universal relevance.

Key words: Australia, indigenous literature, protest poetry, inter-cultural communication, Romaine Moreton, *The Callused Stick of Wanting*, *Post Me to the Prime Minister*

Ustvarjanje alternativnih svetov: staroselska poezija protesta Romaine Moreton

Povzetek

V Avstraliji je od osemdesetih let dvajsetega stoletja opazen pravi razcvet staroselske književnosti. V vseh žanrih so nastala številna umetniško priznana dela in odločilno zaznamovala avstralsko politično in družbeno sceno. Še zlasti pomembno vlogo je pri tem imela poezija, saj je največje število avtohtonih Avstralcev izbralo prav ta medij za sredstvo svojega kulturnega in političnega izraza. Ob podrobni predstavitvi poezije Romaine Moreton, zlasti njene ostre družbenokritične note, in izhajajoč iz trditve Georgea Levina o politični moči umetniških besedil, avtorica članka ugotavlja, kako pesnično smelo razgaljanje družbene, politične in gospodarske neizravnosti Avstralije nagovarja neavtohtone avstralske prebivalce in prispeva k nastanku pravičnejše družbe, k odpravi rasizma, podrejanja in kršitve človekovih pravic. Poezija Romaine Moreton pa ni geografsko in časovno zamejena, kot jo zaradi kritične ostrine omalovažujoče ocenjujejo nekateri kritiki; zaznamuje jo tudi tenkočutni pogled v skrivnostni čustveni svet, kar ji daje občo veljavnost.

Ključne besede: Avstralija, staroselska književnost, angažirana poezija, medkulturna komunikacija, Romaine Moreton, *The Callused Stick of Wanting*, *Post Me to the Prime Minister*

Generating Alternative Worlds: the Indigenous Protest Poetry of Romaine Moreton

1. Introduction

In 1980, when Adam Shoemaker started the research for his ground-breaking work, *Black Words White Pages: Aboriginal Literature 1929-1988*, he was amazed to find how little known the Australian indigenous literature was in academia and in the broader arts community, let alone in Australian society as a whole. In contrast, less than a decade later, Kevin Gilbert claims in his *Inside Black Australia: An Anthology of Aboriginal Poetry* that “a whole new education ‘industry’ has arisen in the academic area, where it would appear that every student is doing his or her PhD thesis on ‘Aboriginal literature’” (Maver 2000, 13). Although Gilbert’s assertion is certainly exaggerated, the fact remains that the past thirty years have witnessed a veritable upsurge of critical interest in Australian indigenous authors. This is hardly surprising considering that there is no area of creative expression in which indigenous Australians have not made a significant contribution to Australian culture. Here are a few examples: in the field of narrative prose, Alexis Wright’s *Carpentaria* won the 2007 Francis Miles Award for the best Australian novel of the year. In 2000, this award was given to Kim Scott for his novel *Benang*. For the achievements in poetry, Kevin Gilbert and John Muk Muk Burke won the 1995 and 2000 RAKA Kate Challis Award respectively; the former for the collection *Black from the Edge* and the latter for *Night Song and Other Poems*.¹ Jack Davis’s play, *No Sugar*, received international acclaim at the 1986 World Theatre Festival in Canada. In the same year, Davis’s play was a co-winner of the Australian Writer’s Guild Award for the best stage play, whereas six years later, it received the RAKA Kate Challis Award. In listing the indigenous Australians’ accomplishments, it is impossible to overlook the success of Ivan Sen’s film production and Philip Noyce’s internationally renowned 2002 film version of Doris Pilkington’s 1996 novel, *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence*.² Stemming from the authors’ desire to illustrate the cataclysmic indigenous people’s situation in Australia during and after the era of colonization, these works function in a variety of ways; among the most important being an explicit call to white populace in Australia and worldwide to halt social injustice. Given that the major issues faced by indigenous Australians today, “equal rights, equal opportunities, equal housing, better health, better education. Everything equal [...]” (Brewster, O’Neill, and Van Den Berg 2000, 189), are common to many other oppressed minorities, the worldwide appeal and numerous translations of these books are fully understandable.³

¹ RAKA (Ruth Adeney Koori Award) is the award for indigenous creative artists. See <http://www.australian.unimelb.edu.au/public/awards/raka.html>

² Ivan Sen’s films *Beneath Clouds* and *Dust*, won the 2002 Australian Film Institute Award and the 2000 Australian Teachers of Media Award for Best Short Drama respectively.

³ In Slovenia, to date only a few works have found their way onto the desks of translators and publishers, all of them after the turn of the century. Beginning with the latest, the Slovene publications include: Doris Pilkington’s *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence*, known in Slovene translation as *Zajčja ograja*, Sally Morgan’s life story *My Place*, entitled in Slovene edition as *V objem korenin*, and two books of poetry: *Konec sanjske dobe*, a tiny anthology of contemporary indigenous poetry by Kath Walker (better known as Oodgeroo), Jack Davis, Kevin Gilbert, Lionel G. Fogarty, Herb Wharton, Mudrooroo Narrogin, Bobbi Sykes, and Lisa Belleair, and *Vesolje okrog kuščarja*, which includes verse by two indigenous authors, Oodgeroo and Lionel G. Fogarty.

2. Australian indigenous protest poetry

Poetry has attracted more indigenous Australians than any other mode of creative expression, so this genre, too, has provided an important impetus for their cultural and political expression. Adam Shoemaker suggests that “if there is any ‘school of Black Australian poetry, it is one of social protest,” arguing that “most Aboriginal poets reject the art for art’s sake argument and feel that their work has at least some social utility” (Shoemaker 1989, 201, 180). Indeed, in accordance with Michael Lipsky’s definition of protest activity as a “mode of political action oriented toward objection to one or more policies or conditions” (Lipsky 1968, 1145), much of contemporary indigenous poetry is characterized by political or social critique in objecting to the conditions of indigenous people’s minoritisation. Another essential aspect of protest poetry is its capacity “to offer revelations of social worlds [...] to which readers respond with shock, concern, sometimes political questioning” (Coles 1986, 677). As several critical readers have shown for other visible and prolific exponents of indigenous protest writing in Australia, such as Kath Walker (better known as Oodgeroo) and Kevin Gilbert for example, their writing is capable of ensuring maximum affective impact on the readers.

However, as several other critics have proved, it would be wrong to assume that protest is the only theme of this poetry and, on the basis of this assumption, to dismiss it as mere propaganda. And yet, despite the wide variety of indigenous writing, ranging from overt political commitment to celebrations of nature and personal introspection, critics often take this perspectival stance and discuss it in ways that serve to affirm its politics and find the aesthetics lacking.⁴ John Beston is right when he claims that the canonical ground rules of formalism do not always apply to this writing, and that indigenous poets indeed seem to feel comfortable in the “short line lyric with its established metrical and structural pattern” (Beston 1977, 458), or in free verse that often lacks fluidity, but this is not to deny the power of their poetic expression, nor is it to diminish the significance of their achievements.

Because of its overt political message, Romaine Moreton’s poetry has also been discussed dismissively and patronizingly (Brewster 2008, 59). In this essay, and in accordance with Anne Brewster, who positions Moreton within the context of Australian indigenous protest poetry, I discuss the affective impact of Moreton’s hard-hitting reflections regarding the political, economic and cultural subordination of Australian indigenous peoples (56). In this sense, and taking up the view that works of art not only had “a deep implication in the politics of Western imperialism and the suppression of ‘inferior’ races and cultures,” but also displayed a clear capacity “to disrupt the exercise of power” (Levine 2000, 383–4), I aim to show that Moreton’s work, like the work of other contemporary indigenous poets, has played an important role in generating de-colonial

⁴ Critics generally concur that a failure to achieve high standard English, symptomatic of much indigenous writing, has to be attributed to the limited formal education of these authors and their lack of confidence when entering a field that was previously monopolized by the white elite, as proposed by John Beston in 1977. Another aspect is political; as observed by Igor Maver, for many indigenous Australians the English language is still synonymous with colonial authority, so they are reluctant to purify it of tribal and colloquial speech patterns (Maver 2000). For more information on the ‘imperialism of English’ see also Adam Shoemaker’s *Black Words, White Pages: Aboriginal Literature 1929–1988*.

thought and has contributed to the significant improvement of the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. In addition to examining the poetess's rigorous voice of protest and audience responses to the rhetoric of her social and political critique, this investigation also aims to show that any reading that acknowledges only the socio-political relevance of her poetry is too narrow to do it justice. Despite her activism, Moreton also explores more subjective themes of human existence, which urges us to see her writing in a perspective much wider than that of a political imperative for social improvement.

3. Romaine Moreton's protest poetry

In Moreton's poem "Don't let it make you over", published in her collection *Post Me to the Prime Minister* (2000), there are these revealing verses: "It ain't easy being black/ this kinda livin' is all political" (111). Indeed, Moreton "sees black life in Australia as inherently political" (Brewster 2008, 64) and her work is marked by overt references to socio-economic issues concerning contemporary indigenous peoples. She has manifested her objection to the social and political marginalization of Australian indigenous peoples, and her Goenpul nation in particular, by writing poetry, performing her verse, and by making films.⁵ To date, she has published two collections of poems, *The Callused Stick of Wanting* (1995) and *Post Me to the Prime Minister* (2004). The former, which will be the main topic of this discussion, was republished in the anthology *Rimfire: Poetry from Aboriginal Australia*, published by Magabala Books in 2000. She is represented in several other anthologies of Australian indigenous writing, including *Untreated: Poems by Black Writers* (2001). Despite her awareness of the common unappreciative stance towards engaged writing, Moreton has continued to view her verse in the first place as a site of resistance: "I believe it is important as an indigenous poet that I create works that are not only accessible in terms of language and imagery to indigenous audiences, but also pertinent. As a result, the language and themes I do choose to work with have been considered rather confronting and challenging, which I can understand. However, the things I have to say and how I say them are a direct response to the environment in which I have grown up and continue to live in. To create works that do not deal with the morbid and mortal effects of racism for one, and the beauty of indigenous culture for another, would be for me personally, to produce works that are farcical."⁶

Expressing grievances and concern felt collectively by the entire indigenous community suffering racial discrimination, marginalization, dislocation, institutionalization, poverty and abuse, Moreton's poetry is perhaps among the most penetrating fictional indictment of colonization in Australia. Her angle of vision, coupled with the anger fuelled by righteous indignation and generative urgency, make her work sought after by a huge participatory audience. Moreton has ensured the maximum affective impact of her verse also by employing living linguistic structures, such as rhetorical questions, direct address to the reader, satirical antitheses, etc. that invite the reader's

⁵ Two of her films were sent to fringe festivals in Cannes. *Cherish* (1997) was included in a package of student works from all over the country, while her 1988 film *Redreaming the Dark* was screened at film festivals in Cannes and New York. Her third film, *A Walk with Words* (2000), based on her poetry and experience, won the award for the best international short film at the World of Women Film Festival.

⁶ See the transcript of her interview with Andrew Ford for the Music Show on Radio National on 25 January 2003, available at http://www.asu.edu/pipercenter/how2journal/archive/online_archive/v1_5_2001/curre (accessed 8 February 2010).

active participation through emotional identification, together with individual and communal conversion. As Brewster puts it, Moreton's verse engages the public in "a reassessment of history, an enquiry into contemporary cultural and economic inequality, and a scrutiny of white privilege, entitlement and denial" (2008, 68). "The First Sin", one of many poems in the collection *The Callused Stick of Wanting*⁷ that perform this function by pointing to the unconscionable suffering and tyrannical living conditions of the indigenous minority begins thus:

He was guilty of the first sin—
 Being Black
 He was sentenced very early in life—
 At birth
 and only substances appeased his pangs of guilt. (3)

In the same vein and aroused by both her anger and resentment at those inflicting injustice on other people, and her affection for those experiencing the inhumanity of racial subordination, Moreton reflects in "You Are Black?". The poem abounds in references to injustices the Black communities have had to endure under the white settlers' dominance. It begins in the manner of English mock-epic poetry and proceeds by piling on fact after fact about flagrant violations of the native Australians' civil and human rights, their loss of dignity, through threats, reprisals and violence.

If you are oppressed in any way,
 you are Black.
 If you are a woman who loves women
 or a man who loves men,
 you are Black.
 If it is that people do not accept you
 simply for what you do,
 you are Black.
 If they do not accept that their God is not yours
 or yours is not theirs, and would want to crucify,
 you are Black. (55)

The poem closes with allusions to the Black people's resilience and resourcefulness, which have kept alive their desire to live and retain their dignity on their own land: "[...] for you know how it is to fight/ for the simple right/ to exist/ As You Please" (56).

In "Genocide Is Never Justified", Moreton signals her moral outrage and the outright disapproval already in the poem's title. Her fusion of intimate narrative sentences with a set of rhetorical questions enforces a symphonic quality in the poem. Involving the reader in an imaginary conversation with the indigenous speaker, the poem resembles a dialogic concert, with voices overlapping, complementing or opposing each other. The first part reads:

⁷ All subsequent quotations of Moreton's poetry will be from her collection *The Callused Stick of Wanting*.

And the past was open to gross misinterpretation.
 Why do the sons and daughters of the raped and murdered
 deserve any more or any less than those who have prospered
 from the atrocities of heritage?
 And why do the sons and daughters refuse to reap
 what was sown
 from bloodied soil?
 And why does history ignore their existence?
 This land, *terra nullius* was never barren and
 unoccupied!
 This land was never void of human life!
 Instead
 thriving with the knowledge of tens of thousand of years. (31–2)

The poem is a powerful protest against the unbridled egoism of the white colonizers. Characterized by a direct manner of writing, which gains poignancy by the ironic subtleties of her statements, it exposes the key social injustices, including the tyranny of oppression and abuse, arrogance of power, poverty, and willful destruction of indigenous peoples. Although not an autobiographical confession, the poem is acutely personal; it is a harrowing cry against all the forms of suppression and victimization of the people who lived in Australia for thousands of years before the white settlement. But, “who was here first is not the question/ anymore,” Moreton continues her exposure of institutional and historical processes and logics that have maintained white racial privilege, suggesting at least the recognition of oppression by majority Australians: “It is what you have done since you arrived, the actions you refuse to admit to,/ the genocide you say you never committed!” (31).⁸ A startling effect is achieved by finally pointing to the indigenous peoples’ spiritual and emotional depth. This inherent quality has not only helped them survive in a hostile, morally decayed and emotionally sterile white environment, Moreton suggests at the end of this deeply felt elegy, but also distinguishes them from it:

Why are you so rich, by secular standards
 and we now so poor, by secular standards
 The remnants of a culture though,
 still
 Rich
 In
 Spirit
 and
 Soul. (32)

Several other poems in this collection also humanize indigenous Australians and attack the atrocities performed in the name of “civilizing the uncivilized,” as Moreton ironically refers to

⁸ Moreton also talks about her interest in the state of communication between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians in a 2003 interview with Andrew Ford, saying that the most indigenous population can hope for at the moment is that the emotional impact of colonization, evasion, being removed from the family, etc. is at least acknowledged by the non-indigenous population, before they will be able to fully understand their emotional state.

the inhuman practices of those who have “elect[ed] themselves as the/ supremacist race/ by virtue of the christened barrel, all in the name of peace/ and justice” in the poem “What Kind of People?” (45). “What kind of people would kick the heads off babies/ or rip at the stomach of the impregnated,/ as would a ravaged wolf,” the poetess continues in her disdainful address to an apathetic reader, who repudiates any suggestion that their ancestors were capable of “such murderous feats” (45). The poem proceeds in true Moreton fashion, compiling a catalogue of evidence to show the inhumanity of racial subordination. This is done in the form of rhetorical questions which Moreton frequently employs to point to “the absence of *responsiveness* in contemporary Australian culture and politics” (Brewster 2008, 66). It has to be borne in mind that it was not until February 2008 that Prime Minister Kevin Rudd opened a new chapter in Australia’s tortured relations with its indigenous peoples by making a comprehensive apology for the past policies, which had – in Prime Minister’s words – “inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss” (Johnston 2008, 3) on fellow Australians.

The underlying irony of her statements, a common poetic device of Moreton’s verse, is well-noticed also in “Forgive and Forget”. So is a high degree of seriousness and emotional commitment with which she approaches her material:

Sometimes images just fade
 and you find yourself
 wondering
 whether it was real
 or merely figments of our imagination.
 And it is easy to forget,
 If you are not reminded or educated
 about past atrocities.
 Mere wailings
 of archaic ghosts
 who live on in the flesh of presence,
 who refuse to die
although focussed extermination
 was the only purpose of a nation’s existence. (27)

The above poem also displays another characteristic that is symptomatic of Moreton’s verse in general: its dialogic structure. It is through such conversational tone and a direct address to a reader (“you”) that Moreton excels in revealing the tensions underlying the relationships between white and black Australians. While in several other poems, Moreton provides for a textual illusion of a discourse between the indigenous speaker and the non-indigenous reader, thus dramatizing the inter-racial encounter, in this poem she invokes indigenous addressee:

To forgive and forget is a fool’s utopia—
 Justice and peace should persuade the rich man’s pride.
 Justice and Peace will convince the rich man’s pride,
 until are all equal
 in truth

and all are equal
in life
as they are
in death. (27)

“This Place”, another poem that demonstrates Moreton’s power dynamics and her ability to address issues of social injustice through piercing scrutiny and deft argument, begins: “There is a place where babies are more burden than beauty,/ where education is an empty cause, [...]/. Where reading means just being able to sign your name,/ and arithmetic becomes obsolete, except when counting/ small change” (70). Like much of Moreton’s poetry, this poem proceeds as a “deductively reasoned analysis,” merging the feelings of sorrow and dark despair (Brewster 2008, 65). A heart-breaking picture of the reproduction of white privilege and the concomitant invisibility of indigenous peoples, which Moreton elaborates throughout the poem, takes an unexpected ending by not turning this invisibility to the indigenous peoples’ advantage. Rather, the last stanza reads: “The old remember all, for time drags her feet, while the/ young lay with hands behind their heads supine, swearing to/ never end up like the rest, their only true desire/ Is to get out of This Place” (71).

Despite the seeming darkness of much of her verse, and contrary to the above poem, Moreton’s conception of art is not pessimistic, and her thorny plight is often brightened with instances of hope and optimism. In “Time for Dreaming”, for example, she alludes to the passing of white supremacy by addressing the reader with the words: “Do not wonder about the ways of the whiteman/ for they have already run their course” (1). My Tellurian grandfather, too, ends on an optimistic tone, pointing to the native Australians’ capacity for survival in a hostile world: “[...] you can put the flame out/ [...] but there will always be fire” (29).

4. The invisibility of black women and other themes in Moreton’s poetry

In several of Moreton’s poems the invisibility of black women is either the central or the subordinate theme. Written as an intimate confession, these poems chronicle experiences illustrative of her own and the communal situation. “Ode to Barbie”, for example, is a welcome commentary for all black women who struggled as teenagers to fit into the mould of a blonde, beautiful and sexually appealing white woman. In an admirably condensed manner and conversational style, Moreton conveys the message that instead of suffering “a barbie doll complex,” a black woman should find her own identity (“we all do not have to look like barbie,/ anorexic bitch that she is”), and for doing that one does not need “barbie’s goddam permission” (21–5). In “Raggedy Anne”, Moreton attacks men’s selfish lust and ruthlessness by exposing their lack of sensitivity to other people’s need. Unlike a man, who quickly “pay[s] homage to his conscience” and “redeem[s] his innocence,” a woman is “sentenced to a lifetime of never being able to forget/ for his Crime” (64). This poem is also formally interesting: the opening conversational tone suddenly takes an unexpected turn with the short, only one or two word lines of blunt antitheses (“Yes/ I will/ No/ I won’t; Yes/ I do/ No/ I don’t”) to make the message even more emphatic.

The same holds true for the poem “Womankindness”, which opens with a series of rhythmic repetitions, with lines returning repeatedly, just as in oral delivery: “She is trying to get out/ She is trying to get out/ She is trying to get out/ This woman inside of me/ This woman inside of me/ This woman inside of me/ She is ready to come out/ She is ready to come out/ This woman inside of me/ This woman inside of me” (50). Like “Ode to Barbie” and “Raggedy Anne”, it is pervaded by a sense of female identity:

She has seen too much now
 this woman inside of me,
 to be ever the misinformed,
 menial
 meek,
 dutiful courtesan again.” (51)

Although initial rejection letters from publishers stated that her poetry was “more polemical than poetic,” as Moreton writes in the Introduction to her collection in *Rimfire*, several poems are nonetheless very illustrative of the opposite (Moreton, Taylor, and Smith 2000, viii). She moves freely in intellectual, philosophical and metaphysical spheres, thus transcending the narrowness of an individual, particular and local observation. In this sense, Moreton speaks not only to and of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, but of the universal. In the poem “Sanguine”, for example, she meditates on the quick passing of time, reminding the reader that life is inevitably approaching its end:

Each moment passes
 into the next
 And one day
 your regrets
 may multiply,
 because while you were regretting
 you were forgetting
 that
 Life is short. (2)

Thus, she advises the reader, “do not hold tightly onto that which can be purged by fire/ and water,/ but rather that which you can hold only/ in spirit and thought,/ emotion and memory” (2). Still, modern society gives priority to material wealth, Moreton laments in “The Callused stick of wanting”, for “everything had been sold/ [...]/ to that persistent evil,/ the monetary devil” (16). Moreton develops this theme also in “Poverty Is Silence” and criticizes the servile attitude of society towards this force: “The only truth/ being in/ monetary power,/ For Money Speaks/ and poverty is silence” (47).

Only a few of her poems deal with love. There is hardly anything more exciting in our life than those magical and buoyant moments when we fall in love, Moreton reflects in the short lyric “Love Infected”. The poem “Mother”, on the other hand, focuses on parental love; the

first-person meditation on the complexity of relationship within a family is supported by the speaker's knowledge that "all love takes time/ to comprehend and fulfill" (38). The quality of this poem, as well as of Moreton's poetry as a whole, rests on the sincerity of content arising from the personal tone she employs. In this sense, her oeuvre adheres to the traditional definition of poetry as a genre that expresses the emotions of the poet in conjunction with a particular experience or affinity. The things I never knew about you: me, another intimate piece of writing that suggests the flavor and dimensions of Moreton's recitation, is a lyrically even and logically coherent expression of the speaker's intuitive awareness that she has spent her whole life not knowing her true being and the hidden recesses of her heart. The poem springs from a personal experience: the speaker regrets that she has remained a stranger to herself. However, behind this individual aspect, one can read a general truth:

I think it is with much regret
that I never knew you,
the colour of your eyes,
the texture of your hair
or the shape of your mouth.
Yet it is your eyes I stare into
when I look into the mirror,
your lips my lover kisses, (38)

The notion that a person can transcend alienation from the self, as well as heal the split between the self and the world by making one's life genuine and sincere, also pervades the poem "Corners of Her Mind". By portraying a concrete personal situation as a source of reflection, Moreton conveys the wisdom that "beauty in the eyes of others/ is worthless/ without/ beauty in the eyes of self" (20). What really matters is not an outside world characterized by hypocrisy, indifference and betrayal, but human inner life, Moreton further meditates in "The Never Ending Rain". This is why she writes "Every breath I breathe I breathe for me/ and not for the one who would not notice my waving hand/ as I drown in this/ emotional sea" (33).

5. Conclusion

Without analyzing other poems we can conclude that Moreton is a very ingenious and creative author. Although she owes her fame and recognition much more to the fact that her verse embodies the shape of her faith and devotional posture than to the technical perfection of her expression, she has produced provocative and empowering articulations of racial traumas that have undermined the status quo and contributed to a positive change in Australia.⁹ This quality of her poetic expression places her in the league of poets like Oodgeroo, Jack Davis, Kevin Gilbert, Lionel G. Fogarty, Alf Taylor, Lisa Bellear, among others, who have considered verse as a "verbal discourse in which message is dominant and the aesthetic function is subordinate" (Mudrooroo 1990, 35). Given the increasingly wider public and scholarly interest in their message, which

⁹ For indigenous Australians this means their successful blending into the mainstream society; the process that has just begun after they were isolated from the rest of Australia, following the Nugget Coombs' 1976 plan for self-governing indigenous communities. See Adi Wimmer's article *Autonomous Aboriginal Communities in Australia*.

culminated in the Prime Minister's apology to indigenous Australians for past mistreatment and in the subsequent process of reconciliation, Moreton has provided additional evidence that works of art are an important site for negotiating change. Destabilizing white readers' assumptions about the authority and entitlement of their race, her poetry can be seen to contribute to what Walter Mignolo describes as the undoing of "the coloniality of knowledge" (2005, 391). And what is also important – alongside the dark picture of their disenfranchisement and a more radiant picture of their enduring resilience, inventiveness and power, which further Moreton's reputation as an important advocate of indigenous rights – her verse offers an illuminating insight into secret inner worlds and makes an excellent point of departure for many discussions on a global scale.

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Scouting the Desert of the Real: Avant-Gardism of the Avant-Pop

Summary

The paper examines the legacy of the European historical Avant-Gardes from the perspective of the shift of paradigms immanent in the formation of the Postmodern epoch. The existing theories generally regard the Avant-Gardes as an unsuccessful attempt to redefine the function of art in the social, cultural and economic environment of the early 20th century.

Examining the productivity and relevance of the historical Avant-Gardes from the perspective of the Avant-Pop, the first thoroughly Postmodern literary movement, I intend to show how the strategies of fragmentation and the breaking of organicity not only quintessentially defined the manner in which Modernity and its art came to an end, but how they also provided the basis for the formation of culture and art that no longer functions according to Cartesian principles.

Key words: historical/ahistorical Avant Gardes, Avant-Pop, Modernity, Postmodernity, institution of art, postindustrial capitalism

Izvidniki v puščavo resničnosti: Avantgardizem Avant-Popa

Povzetek

V članku se ukvarjam s pomenom evropskih zgodovinskih avantgard s stališča menjave paradigem, povezanih z oblikovanjem postmoderne dobe. Obstoječi teoretični pristopi obravnavajo fenomen zgodovinskih avantgard kot neuspešen poskus preoblikovanja funkcije umetnosti v družbenem, kulturnem in ekonomskem okolju začetka 20. stoletja.

S preverjanjem produktivnosti in pomena zgodovinskih avantgard v luči prvega postmoderne literature gibanja Avant-Pop nameravam pokazati, da sta avantgardistični strategiji fragmentarnosti in neorganskosti bistveno pripomogli k razkroju novoveške metafizike in umetnosti, hkrati pa zagotovili temelje za oblikovanje kulture in umetnosti postmoderne epohe.

Ključne besede: zgodovinske/ahistorične avantgarde, Avant-Pop, novi vek, postmoderna doba, institucija umetnosti, postindustrijski kapitalizem

Scouting the Desert of the Real: Avant-Gardism of the Avant-Pop

1. Introduction: The death of Postmodernism and the changing of paradigms

Mark Amerika declares at the very beginning of his 1992 Avant-Pop manifesto: “Now that Postmodernism is dead and we’re in the process of finally burying it, something else is starting to take hold in the cultural imagination and I propose that we call this new phenomenon Avant-Pop” (Amerika 1992). The implication suggested by the statement is at least twofold: on the one hand its aprioristic tone and the name of the movement take us back to the opening decades of the 20th century when similar declarations abounded in the manifestoes of movements we now associate with the historical Avant-Gardes. On the other hand, a much broader issue is being somewhat casually addressed, namely that of the death of Postmodernism.

Amerika certainly was not the first to have made the claim. More or less substantiated obituaries to Postmodernism appeared in both specialized and general media throughout the second half of the 1980s, along with claims to its succession. If nothing else, the latter signal the increasingly obvious incapacity of Postmodernism to adequately represent and significantly comment upon the existing reality. However, regardless of how urgent the appeals to find a way out of the Postmodernist self-referential feedback loops may have been, only few attempts to steer away from the Postmodernist dictum succeeded in evading at least partially the retrograde revival of the Realist tradition.¹ From the perspective of the *Geistesgeschichte* approach to the transformations of the historical and literary epochs, the problems with finding new modes of expression are understandable. In terms of the *Geistesgeschichte* methodology Postmodernism reveals itself as the ultimate realisation of metaphysical nihilism. As such, it disqualifies the last remaining category defining the Modern Age specific understanding of the world – the immediate reality of the contents of consciousness. The literary period succeeding it should therefore rely upon the paradigms, which would not only separate it from preceding literary movements and periods in the sense of rearranging relations among the basic Modern Age categories,² but would transform the very content of those categories and thus render them obsolete, at the same time signalling the dawning of a new, Postmodern epoch.

The first products of the new literary period would therefore fulfil the function which literary history associates with the Avant-Gardes in the ahistorical sense. At this point, the repeated and more or less explicit Avant-Popsters’ references to their movement as a Postmodern Avant-Garde invite the most serious scrutiny. From the perspective of literary history, both terms require careful inspection, as they are frequently used at random in artistic as well as in pop-cultural contexts. A successful theoretical justification of the first term automatically reveals the nature of the second. In other words, if the entire literary machinery concerning the phenomenon of the

¹ In this respect, the greatest amount of attention was paid to the cyberpunk movement, which introduced a number of innovations, yet nevertheless remained essentially bound to postmodernism as it essentially materialized postmodernist formal techniques on the level of content (cf. McHale 1992, 225–42)

² I am referring to the *Geistesgeschichte* categories of Transcendence, Subject, Truth and Reality.

Avant-Pop evades the metaphysical framework of the Geistesgeschichte paradigms specific to the Modern Age, then the Avant-Pop is the first truly Postmodern literary movement, and as such Avant-Garde in the ahistorical sense.

A brief inquiry into how the members of the Avant-Pop movement theorise the “Avant” part of the movement’s name immediately raises questions regarding its Postmodern status. Amerika’s manifesto as well as Olsen’s and McCaffery’s writings on the subject rely heavily upon the vocabulary, strategies and examples of the historical Avant-Gardes.³ As I will show over the next few pages, the emergence of the historical Avant-Gardes was fundamentally connected to the institution of art as conditioned by the metaphysical systems of Modernity. It seems at least suspicious, then, that what was potentially the first movement of the new epoch should be so intimately bound to movements whose main objective was to reinforce and restore the core metaphysical values of the previous age. This paradox certainly demands further investigation, especially as the thorough analysis of the Avant-Pop literary production in relation to its social, economic and cultural environment, which I will briefly introduce in the next section, revealed significant departures from the Cartesian model.

2. Avant-Pop and/in the desert of the real

Hunting for instances of literature which would change the very content of existing metaphysical categories, render them obsolete and at the same time indicate the rise of a new epoch is extremely problematic due to the lack of historical distance and of comparable patterns. However, certain guidelines can be established on the grounds of the processes governing such major transitions in the past, and by application of ascertainable common mechanisms working broader social, cultural and economic changes upon the notion of literature. Leaving aside for the moment the paradoxical references to the historical Avant-Gardes, the Avant-Pop manifesto as well as the theoretical framework established by the movement’s founders correspond to the characteristics of the new epoch exposed by all the major theoreticians of Postmodernity. No previous attempt to transcend Postmodernism and offer a more adequate literary reflection of reality had been so thoroughly in synch with the mechanisms governing the social, economic and cultural processes commonly associated with the epochal shift of paradigms. For that reason, the Avant-Pop seemed the obvious candidate to consider as the first representative of literature no longer defined by Modern Age metaphysical models.

The Avant-Pop movement emerged at the beginning of the 1990s within the reorganized Fiction Collective writers’ co-op. The founding members Mark Amerika, Ronald Sukenick and Larry McCaffery borrowed the name from the 1985 Lester Bowie album, on which the trumpeter submitted evergreens and pop tunes to jazz improvisational play.⁴ The movement’s main

³ Cf. Amerika 1992, articles 2, 3, 4, 6, 7; Amerika, Olsen 1995, 5–6, 13–14; McCaffery 1993, xviii, xix.

⁴ Bowie’s intention was to show that materials, the structure and meaning of which seem fixed, can offer and provide myriads of hidden meanings, alternative contexts and fresh combinations. Transferring unquestioned and unquestionable socio-cultural artefacts to the level of raw materials that can be arbitrarily shifted, combined and transformed corresponds to the basic tendencies of the Avant-Pop movement.

objective was the production of independent, innovative literary and literary-theoretical works criticising and undermining the ubiquity of corporations and consumerism in general. Their strategy, emphasised both in Amerika's manifesto and McCaffery's introductions to the two Avant-Pop anthologies,⁵ could be summarised as the (ab)use of pop-cultural segments, which we are no longer aware of due to their ubiquity and which represent the *sine qua non* of our social memory, with the tactics articulated by the historical avant-gardes. Just as popular culture absorbs everything that is new, fresh and interesting, exposing merely the qualities which suit its growth and development in the service of the third phase of capitalism, so does the Avant-Pop employ everything that is innovative and exciting; however, it foregrounds and uses the characteristics which reveal popular culture in all of its artificiality and subservience to the mechanisms capital uses to control the masses. This requires intimate knowledge of popular culture, and an efficient means to accumulate, transform and spread information faster than the pop-cultural media. Internet is, of course, the medium best suited to such aspirations, enabling both rapid accumulation and exchange of information, as well as easier access to like-minded individuals, who with their active participation further accelerate information production, manipulation and transfer. The medium also drastically intervenes with the established distribution formula, reducing it to a network relation "authors – interactive participants" (Amerika, Olsen 1995, 21), in which the two roles are in constant flux.

The phenomenon of the Avant-Pop would very probably have remained a marginal literary curiosity in the context of Postmodernism were its rise not simultaneous with the spreading of the World Wide Web and the irruption of the logic conditioning the functioning of the computer into the social sphere by means of the technological sociality it enables. Considered in the context of broader social, economic and cultural transformations taking place after the Second World War, hypertext reveals itself as the embodiment of the principles all major theoreticians of Postmodernity⁶ agree to be the defining mechanisms of contemporary society and culture (Krevel 2005, 152–4). However, the electronic medium most conspicuously coincides with Jean Baudrillard's notions of hyperreality and fractal subject, as they are fundamentally network systems of differential signs that can be combined, disassembled and shifted at random in accordance with one's preferences (Baudrillard 1981, 66). Artistic works produced within the environment of hyperreality correspond to his concept of the third order simulacra, copies without an original, patterns which anticipate and accelerate the (hyper)real world of Postmodernity. As such, they function like media, providing the information for structuring the systems of our everyday hyperreality.

In my analysis of the Avant-Pop literary production from the perspective of the electronic medium, simultaneously applying the results to the categories proposed by Jean Baudrillard, I observed significant departures from the established models. First of all, the environment of the electronic medium finally provides an effective means for a thorough restructuring of the

⁵ *Avant-Pop: Fiction for a Day Dream Nation*, published in 1993, and *After Yesterday's Crash* from 1995.

⁶ I am referring to Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality, Jameson's concept of culturalisation of all the aspects of social life within post-modern situation (cf. Krevel 2003, 45–6), Lyotard's model of the self as a node in an information network, Debord's theory of society of spectacle, Deleuze's and Guattari's concept of rhizome and above all the famous McLuhan statement in his *The Medium is the Massage* that "[s]ocieties have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication" (McLuhan 2001, 8).

categories of author and reader, which was unsuccessfully attempted by the Postmodernists already. The phenomenon of the Internet “wreader”, the reader who “creates the story apart from authorial control in choosing links” (Landow 1994, 14), is essentially enabled by a medium built upon such links; however, it is not restricted to it. The fact that in the 1990s hypertext spreads into the social sphere and becomes the chief means of human interaction allows us to consider the possibilities of “wreading” in other media as well,⁷ most pressingly, perhaps, in the context of the printed book. Applying the logic of Internet link-choosing to Baudrillard’s selection of information to create (non-electronic) systems of hyperreality, wreading in print would involve the presence of media transferred information which has already become part of our every-day hyperrealities. In other words, wreading print would depend on the density of the third order simulacra, which the readers verify and manipulate in accordance to their own hyperreal systems, thus shaping/co-writing the printed information into new, personified hyperrealities.⁸

The Avant-Pop achieves just that with a consistent application of media realities and media archetypes to the very core of their character and environment creation, as well as to their intrinsic stylistic features. Regardless of whether appearing in hypertext or print, the Avant-Pop characters and environments are constructed in a way that they prevent traditional reading and analytical approaches. They can be best described as arbitrary and unstable systems of signs, most of which have already been incorporated into the existing hyperreal systems, offered to the receiver to accept and manipulate them into new hyperrealities according to his/her preferences. Similarly, the defining feature of the Avant-Pop style would be the absence of a system of familiar references. Its abundant neologisms have no symbolic correspondents; they are yet to be actualised in the manner of the third order simulacra in the hyperrealities of individual receivers. As such, they decisively define the direction of the possibilities for a story and its meaning. The Avant-Pop metaphors are probably the best example of how a third order simulacrum attracts and incorporates raw data within its hyperreality. Fulfilling the traditional function of describing the unknown with the familiar, the Avant-Pop metaphors rely exclusively upon the artefacts of the mediagenic society – those which has already become part of our every day hyperreality.⁹ These function much as the hypertext links, since the receiver’s familiarity with them conditions the creation of the story. The governing principle of the Avant-Pop’s activity and production, then, predominantly corresponds to Baudrillard’s notion of simulacra of simulation, forming hyperreal systems foreign to the Cartesian dialectics and principles of organicity, hierarchisation and linearity.

Even if we consider the novelties the Avant-Popsters introduce less a consequence of a conscious effort than an inevitable result of the fact that they were the first generation of writers to have fully adopted and internalised the electronic medium, their insistence on promoting their Avant-Gardism with the strategies, the rhetoric and the examples of the historical Avant-Gardes seems utterly paradoxical. In the light of the Avant-Pop’s purpose to offer a productive alternative to the exhausted institution of Modern Age literature, such close association with the movements

⁷ Cf. McLuhan’s statement quoted in footnote 6.

⁸ For a more detailed treatment see Krevel 2006.

⁹ Some random examples from Coupland’s *Miss Wyoming*: “He felt intact but worthless, like a chocolate rabbit selling for 75 percent off the month after Easter” (Coupland 2000, 53), “I look like a used Pampers” (82), “Staring at the pavement, like prince William behind his mother’s coffin [...]” (12).

from the first half of the 20th century seems nothing short of naive. As it is hard to believe that the founding members of the movement, many of whom are professionally involved in literary criticism, would have overlooked the paradox of attempting to obliterate and transcend a given state with the very tools of its creation, let us examine whether a significant connection with the historical Avant-Gardes can be made at all.

3. Into the paradox: Avant-Pop and the historical Avant-Gardes

From the existing theoretical approaches to the historical Avant-Gardes, which establish the impact and the characteristics of the latter according to their authors' respective ideological standpoints, I will focus upon those general findings which appear common and undisputed, and which seem to be in accord with the economic, cultural and social processes of the first half of the 20th century. For that reason I will primarily concentrate upon the findings of the theoreticians who explore the essence of the Avant-Gardes in connection to the *Zeitgeist*, relying upon the *Geistesgeschichte* methodology and philosophical analysis.¹⁰ In this respect, there are two authors whose studies summarize the two major views on the reasons why the Avant-Gardes failed to bring art back to life within the historical environment in which they emerged. The works of both Peter Bürger and Janko Kos are founded upon Renato Poggioli's seminal *Teoria dell'arte d'avanguardia* from 1962, but each explains the destiny of the historical Avant-Gardes according to his own ideological provenance.

Considering the original meaning of the term Avant-Garde – a small group of experienced soldiers exploring the terrain ahead of a large advancing army – which emerged in the 12th century already, it is not surprising that the characteristics implied by the metaphorical usage of the term transcend the historical boundaries of the movements from the first half of the 20th century. Infiltrating the hostile territory of tradition in the sense of introducing new traditions has been a constant practice throughout the history of literature, which is why the term is frequently used ahistorically in both literary and everyday discourses. In this respect, the usage of the term for specific instances of literary production seems primarily a matter of literary history, as it involves evaluation exclusively based on formal and thematic characteristics of such works.

Literary criticism has had much greater difficulties with the self-proclaimed Avant-Gardes from the first half of the 20th century – namely Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism and partly Expressionism, as well as the movements appearing after the Second World War, the so-called Neo-Avant-Gardes. The main problem faced by literary criticism in its treatment of these movements is that the essence of the Avant-Gardes cannot be deduced from literature alone, since the major part of their production comprises programs, manifestoes and performances, which are semi-literary at best. Since the historical Avant-Gardes were primarily *groups* with a common goal, the essence of the Avant-Gardes is crucially connected with literary sociology. This already implies the importance of the social circumstances and processes which produced the movements for the detection of their common characteristics.

¹⁰ This is one reason why I am leaving out such major names as Adorno, Greenberg, Calinescu or Buchloh; the other is the fact that those of their findings which are relevant to our discussion coincide with one of the two approaches I find the most productive in my discussion of the Avant-Garde status of the Avant-Pop.

From the historical point of view the Avant-Gardes were organised movements with the task of conquering new territories, which anticipated the provocation of conflict, realised as a methodical destruction of the entities pertaining to the bourgeois tradition. The “violence” involved employment of elements which were shocking to the society defined by that tradition. The common goal of these movements was bringing art back to life and the aesthetisation of life in general, which is also the point where the theories on the Avant-Gardes diverge – more specifically, why this aim was never achieved.

In his study on the essence of the Avant-Gardes, Janko Kos (1983) identifies the idea of progressivism as the underlying common denominator to the tendencies expressed by the historical Avant-Gardes. In their case the idea of progress is fundamentally attached to the notion of individualism, central to the Modern Age metaphysics from the Renaissance on. As such, the movements in question are indelibly bound to the Modern Age understanding of subjectivity¹¹ by their belief that “the advancement can be accelerated especially by means of poetry and art”¹² (Kos 1983, 228). But since the historical Avant-Gardes articulate Modern Age progressivism as an absolute realisation of subjectivity by demanding to bring art back to life, the actualisation of the subject within art alone is obviously no longer possible, which is also signalled by the demise of high symbolism.¹³ Thus, the Avant-Gardes still retain the Neo-Romantic will to absolute subjectivity, though they no longer attempt to actualise it within works of art. Rather, they promote literature as a distinctive mode of social action and influence, as a way of life which enables the realisation of absolute subjectivity.

According to Kos, this retrograde Neo-Romantic will to re-establish absolute subjectivity was the decisive reason for the demise of the historical Avant-Gardes. The concept of subjectivity they were promoting was no longer suited to the social, cultural and economic environment of the first half of the 20th century. It is not surprising, then, that the primacy in literature was soon taken over by a movement that was formed parallel to the historical Avant-Gardes, namely literary Modernism. Emerging within the same historical environment, the new movement recognised the inadequacy of the metaphysical foundation of the Neo-Romantic subjectivism, and based its literary production upon a type of subjectivity attested by the continuous production of the contents of consciousness.

Peter Bürger’s understanding of the relation between Modernism and the Avant-Gardes is slightly different, and corresponds to the ideological bases of his theory. At this point I would like to emphasise again that it is not my intention to pass judgements regarding which of the theories is more suitable or more correct: what I am interested in are the common features observed in the theoretical handling of the historical Avant-Gardes. Even though Bürger’s *Theory of the Avant-Garde* from 1962 has been severely criticised – primarily in terms of his predictions on the future development of literature – his treatment of the Avant-Garde phenomena from the perspective of the shift of production relations caused by the rise of high capitalism emphasises

¹¹ In case of the historical Avant-Gardes this refers to the absolute Subject of Romanticism.

¹² My translation.

¹³ Kos understands symbolism as an attempt to realise the metaphysics of the Cartesian subject within (autonomised) art after the breakdown of the rational metaphysics.

the relation between art and consumerism, which is crucial to the understanding of the Avant-Pop phenomenon.

Like Kos, Bürger also discusses the Avant-Gardes' fundamental concern to bring art back to life. Such a demand, he observes, only makes sense when art becomes an autonomous institution and loses connection with life. The autonomisation of art as a social subsystem begins with the formation of the bourgeois society; however, its origins have been implicit in the ideas of the Modern Age subjectivity ever since the Renaissance.¹⁴ The process reaches its peak when art becomes the subject-matter of art in the Symbolist absolute aestheticism.

The time-frame Bürger is referring to coincides with the development of the mechanisms *Geistesgeschichte* recognises as instrumental in the formation of the Neo-Romantic will to absolute subjectivity, which is the central notion in Kos' explanation of the historical Avant-Gardes. Bürger, however, explores the period from the perspective of work distribution typical of the developing bourgeois society. The process involved increasing specialisation of artists to the point where their experience within the specialised social subsystem of art could eventually no longer be translated into the praxis of life. For the first time in history, the conditions were set for the criticism of the whole institution of art, and not just its individual styles, which was rendered possible by the specific spiritual and historical context governing the beginning of the previous century.

Historical Avant-Gardes are thus, according to Bürger, an assault on the very status of art in bourgeois society; unlike previous critical movements, they do not negate "an earlier form of art (a style) but art as an institution that is unassociated with the life praxis of men. [...] The demand is not raised at the level of the contents of individual works. Rather, it directs itself to the way art functions in society" (Bürger 2002, 49). Their efforts were, in short, ultimately an attempt to organise a new life praxis founded upon art.

The Avant-Garde practice therefore involves negation of the elements which are crucial for the existence of the autonomous art, that is, the aestheticist gap between art and life, individual production and a separate individual reception. Bürger – like Kos – comes to the conclusion that the Avant-Gardes managed to realise none of the goals they had set out to achieve. His explanation of the failure, however, differs significantly from Kos' explanation, as he understands it as a consequence of the false equalisation of art and life within the consumerist mass aesthetics promoted by the high and late capitalism.¹⁵ In other words, the Avant-Gardes were devoured by the institution of art they were striving to destroy.¹⁶ It is understandable, then, that Bürger

¹⁴ Bürger suggests that the first signs of the emancipation of art can already be traced in the context of courtly art, namely in its detachment from the sacred references of the medieval art. The artists were no longer craftsmen in the service of transcendence, but individuals conscious of the originality of their work. Yet because their creations still served to praise the courtly aristocracy, their function remained representational. (Bürger 2002, 47)

¹⁵ For a more detailed explanation see *idem* 54.

¹⁶ Bürger illustrates this point with the example of the 1950s and 1960s Neo-Avant-Gardes. Although founded upon similar premises and promoting similar tactics as their historical predecessors, within a social environment that had already commodified and aestheticised the principles and the works of the latter, the new movements were received as any other instance of traditional art by the fully developed critical apparatus handling their works, and a favourable general reception.

considers the phenomenon of literary Modernism a retrograde phase in the development of literature, its rise signalling the returning of art into the service of capital.

4. The Avant-Garde virus and/or the cultural logic of late capitalism

One would expect the story of the historical Avant-Gardes to end right there; however, it is difficult not to wonder about the nature and the motives of the apparatus capable of appropriating – falsely or not – the strategies that the Avant-Garde movements developed to pursue their goal of bringing art back to life. The reason is, of course, the *modus operandi* of this apparatus of late capitalism, which, to paraphrase Jameson, relies upon aesthetisation of all the aspects of life for the purpose of their marketing. Regardless of how destructive the rise of late capitalism proved to be for the existence of the historical Avant-Gardes, it is hard to ignore the fact that it was this very logic that established some of the fundamental premises of the historical Avant-Gardes as the defining elements and the aesthetic foundation of the majority of both artistic and mass media production of the 20th century.

I am referring to the Avant-Garde tendency of equalisation of all artistic means of expression, which is a consequence of treating art in its entirety, and not only its individual materialisations. The most emblematic example is the principle of montage. Used frequently as a stylistic device in pre-Avant-Garde art, it is now transferred to the level of the organising life principle. Within this ‘montage logic’ all the elements involved have the same inartistic value, while their collective effect – the inability to produce meaning – equates the aesthetic with the capability to produce shock. The fact that, as Bürger observes, “[n]othing loses its effectiveness more quickly than shock” (Bürger 2002, 81) explains, on the one hand, why the Avant-Gardes primarily promoted novelty, chance and speed. On the other hand, it also explicates the changes instigated by the commodification of the montage principle in the fields of production and reception of the post-Avant-Garde art. At the level of production, we can observe modifications in the very structure of works of art, a transfer from the organic structuring, anticipating an impression of entirety, to the inorganic, where individual elements have a higher level of autonomy than the whole. The inorganic structure of a work of art, as well as its intended task to produce shock, also affects the reception, which is no longer focused on the meaning of the art work but rather to the principles of its construction (*idem*).

To summarize: The basic aim of the historical Avant-Gardes, which the theoreticians recognize in their effort to destroy tradition by bringing art back to life, was not achieved. The reasons seem both the consequence of the fundamental motives of the Avant-Gardists – their tendency of realising the Neo-Romantic ideal of absolute subjectivity – as well as of the social and economic situation in the first half of the 20th century, the functioning of which enabled the inclusion of the historical Avant-Gardes within the institution of art as one of its sub-systems.

5. The principle of inorganicity and Postmodern paradigms

From the current perspective, however, the very elements which functioned as a novelty in the context of the historical Avant-Gardes, that is, the introduction of the elements of reality into

artistic concepts and the commitment to the inorganic structuring of the art-works, are at the core of the new production relations. As such, they are revealed as an appropriate means for the artistic interpretation of reality formed according to the mechanisms, against which the Avant-Garde movements were directed. This ultimately explains why the latter could absorb them.

Keeping that in mind, the reason for the Avant-Gardes' failure to achieve their primary goal seems to be the inconsistency of their rejection of organicity. I am referring to the model of subjectivity upon which they centred their activities, the thoroughly organic absolute subjectivity anticipated by Modern Age metaphysics. Although we may agree that it was outright naive to attempt a radical, let alone productive, break with tradition by striving to reinstate the already obsolete segments of that tradition, the social, cultural and political situation at that time did not yet allow for any major interventions within the Modern Age *Geistesgeschichte* models. Modernism did offer a new type of subjectivity, but this was still firmly anchored within the Cartesian metaphysics. Needless to say, Modernism was, from its conception, not only part of the late capitalist institution of art but a major vehicle of its development.¹⁷

The mechanisms governing the economy of that time already implied a radically different concept of subjectivity, one better suited to the demands of high and especially of late capitalism. Its development after the Second World War relied primarily on the expansion of advertising, media and information technology, which, according to Jameson, was reflected in the intrinsically Postmodern culturalisation of all aspects of social life, including economy and finance (Jameson 1998, 111). Culture and society in general, in their turn, approached the economy by observing the laws of the market and by producing cultural objects of consumption. Postmodern cultural and social paradigms as established by the mechanisms of late capitalism are thus based on a *definitive* rejection of organicity, which is rendered possible only when individuals perceive themselves as systems of signs in the sense of Baudrillard's fractal subjects. The formation of the latter is completed with the hypertext becoming the chief medium of communication and with the consequent irruption of its logic onto the level of the individual's experience of the world and of the self.

With that, we return to the phenomenon of the Avant-Pop, the first literary movement to have adequately responded to the new situation, and – it seems – the last chapter of the story initiated by the historical Avant-Gardes. In other words, when the logic of the Avant-Garde strategies becomes the logic of Subject creation with the subjectivisation of the hypertext logic, the historical Avant-Gardes are truly concluded and as such definitely historical, at the same time serving as a foundation of a new *Geistesgeschichte* paradigm setting – a new historical epoch. In this respect, the paradoxicality of the Avant-Pop's attachment to the historical Avant-Gardes, which I mentioned at the beginning of this article, disappears, as the connection is not only unavoidable but essential in the disintegration of the specifics of the Modern Age world-order.

¹⁷ In America, the logic of cultural and media development turned the pre-war modernist elitism into an institutionalized, generally useful and used trendy art form. The situation became so acute that one of the main protagonists of the American Modernist project, Lionel Trilling, refused to lecture on European literary Modernism at Columbia University so not to contribute to its further integration into the general consumer's economy (Debeljak 1988, 220)

6. Conclusion: Life that is Art

Avant-Gardism of the Avant-Pop is then ahistorical in the sense of artistic movements which have paved the way into the unknown territory of epochal changes throughout the history. It has to be emphasised, though, that its advancement relied heavily upon the strategies and the example of the historical Avant-Gardes; these are, in fact, at the very core of what the Avant-Pop implies as an ahistorical Avant-Garde. Most notably, the fact that the Avant-Pop production can no longer be adequately either explained or evaluated by the existing literary-theoretical categories and tools which rely upon clearly defined binarisms (Krevel 2003, 146-9) suggests destruction of the institution of art as developed in Modernity. Furthermore, the fundamental goal of the historical Avant-Gardes – bringing art back to life – is finally realised in the context of reality structured by the third order simulacra, in which literature assumes the role of any other medium. As such it becomes an information generator, providing material for creation of individualised hyperrealities. The demarcation line between art and life is completely blurred, and, what is more, literature – together with other media – ultimately serves as a model for life.

The situation also involves massive changes in terms of the concept of subjectivity, which yet again becomes productive precisely because it is structured from information received and incorporated by individuals within their systems of identity. Formation of the latter relies entirely upon the principles of inorganicity and is as such in constant flux (idem, 99–114). The productivity of such subjectivity is virtually limitless; its ability to randomly adopt and manipulate any piece of information ultimately suggests the inevitability of drastic alterations on the level of production relations as developed by Modernity and realised in the form of capitalism. The current global crisis may have surprised the economists¹⁸ – but it was certainly implicit in the direction the society, economy and culture were taking after the Second World War, and merrily accelerated by the artistic movements such as the Avant-Pop. These recognised the lethal potential of the seed so carelessly devoured by high and late capitalism, and used it to finish the job. With that, the goals of the Avant-Garde movements from the first half of the previous century were finally achieved, and the latter finally over and thus truly historical.

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¹⁸ The predictions of all the major analytical firms regarding the economic growth and market trends for 2009 proved far too optimistic (cf. Koražija 2009, Kenda 2009).

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Writing/Reading the Victorian Past through Spiritualist Séances in A.S. Byatt's "The Conjugal Angel"

Summary

One of the dominant concerns of postmodern writing is to discuss the importance and modes of knowing the past. The aim of this paper is to explore how the British novelist A.S. Byatt rereads the Victorian past in her novella "The Conjugal Angel" by using Victorian spiritualism as a multilayered metaphor for dynamic communication between the past and present. Spiritualist rituals will also be read as a cultural practice characterised by the playful undermining of gender roles and norms. Finally, the paper will discuss spiritualist séances as a metaphor for the writing and reading of historiographic metafiction seen as a process of restless summoning of and intense communicating with the ghosts/texts from the past.

Key words: A.S. Byatt, "The Conjugal Angel," gender norms, historiographic metafiction, metaphor, postmodernism, spiritualism, séance.

Pisanje/branje viktorijanske preteklosti s pomočjo spiritualnih seans v noveli "Zakonski angel" pisateljice A.S. Byatt

Povzetek

Eno poglavitnih zanimanj postmodernega pisanja je proučevanje pomembnosti in načinov poznavanja preteklosti. Članek se ukvarja z raziskovanjem obravnave viktorijanske preteklosti v noveli »Zakonski angel« izpod peresa britanske avtorice A.S. Byatt, ki vpeljuje viktorijanski spiritualizem kot mnogoplastno metaforo za vzpostavitev dinamične povezave med sedanostjo in preteklostjo. Spiritualni obredi so med drugim predstavljeni tudi kot del kulture, ki jo zaznamuje igrivo spodkopavanje spolnih vlog in norm. Nazadnje se članek posveti spiritualnim seansam kot metafori za pisanje in branje zgodovinske metafikcije, ki jo razume kot nenehno prizivanje duhov/besedil iz preteklosti in kot tesno komunikacijo z njimi.

Ključne besede: A.S. Byatt, "Zakonski angel", spolne norme, zgodovinska metafikcija, metafora, postmodernizem, spiritualnost, seansa

Writing/Reading the Victorian Past through Spiritualist Séances in A.S. Byatt's "The Conjugal Angel"

1. Introduction

In a world profoundly saturated with theories of self-referentiality of language and literature, A. S. Byatt may equally claim the status of an anachronism and an embodiment of postmodern eccentricities and complexities. Specifically, on the one hand, Byatt instinctively rejects the alienation and forced enclosure of language and literature as they are elaborated by postmodern literary theory and chooses instead the warm comfort of the past which celebrates identity of thought and language. Her curious clinging to what is commonly known as the idea of "undissociated sensibility," as well as her obsession with metaphors as flowers which engender her multilayered novels, earn her the status of an anachronism, or even a nostalgist, in an age that mercilessly dissects these remnants of the past out of recognition. On the other hand, both in her novels and critical essays Byatt casually but extremely knowledgeably flirts with various branches of literary theory, thus changing her allegiance from an erudite advocate of tradition to an agent of postmodern and poststructuralist literary theory in disguise. It is in the context of these oppositions that I propose to discuss her writing and reading of the Victorian past through spiritualist séances.

Byatt casually experiments with the notion of spiritualism in her highly acclaimed *Possession* by composing the poem "Mummy Possesst" which, unlike its Browningsque model "Mr Sludge, the Medium," celebrates the power of female mediums. However, it is only in her novella "The Conjugal Angel," published as part of a collection titled *Angles and Insects*, that she unleashes the remarkable potential, both thematic and metaphorical, of spiritualist séances so as to approach the Victorian period through its greatest fears and obsessions. Although in her critical essays on Victorian culture Byatt often invokes the definition of spiritualism as a new religion in an age of materialism, she, nevertheless, uncovers, in these secretive controversial rituals, a place where the material and spiritual world are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Furthermore, apart from using the subversive energy of spiritualism to reconstruct a period of intense spiritual crisis and attempts made to overcome its looming spectre, Byatt recognizes in séances a powerful metaphor of liminality, which activates intense rethinking of some of the key oppositions in "The Conjugal Angel" such as presence/absence, fact/fiction, sensual/textual experience of the Victorian reality, subject/form and many others.

The first part of this paper will try to elucidate the aforementioned aspects of séance through an analysis of metaphoric nature of language and in reference to Paul Ricoeur's discussion of living metaphor and the iconic element of metaphor, thus once again juxtaposing Byatt's postmodern and Victorian identities and allegiances. The dominance of female mediums in "The Conjugal Angel" and Alfred Tennyson's emotional breakdown under the weight of Arthur Hallam's presence in his poem "In Memoriam" open the space for discussion of instability of Victorian gender norms in the second part. Finally, bearing in mind that all the aforementioned oppositions and discussions related to spiritualism are enacted through Byatt's masterful staging

of the textual encounter of the nineteenth and late twentieth century, I will read “The Conjugal Angel” as an example of “textual haunting” (Wolfreys 2002, ix) in literature. In other words, the spiritualist séance will be considered as a metaphor for the writing and reading of historiographic metafiction seen as a process of restless summoning of and intense communicating with the ghosts/texts from the past.

2. The coexistence of spiritual and material reality in séance evoked through the metaphoric power of language

Séance in “The Conjugal Angel” is a fascinating fusion of the spiritual and material experience of death which is exquisitely rendered through Byatt’s delicate postmodern irony. Although a superficial perception of the Victorian cultural and spiritual life may suggest the existence of antagonism between science and spiritualism and define the craving for communication with ghosts as an impulsive response to the impersonality of science, Alex Owen convincingly claims the opposite in her influential book *The Darkened Room: Women, Power and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England* (1989). She writes that the need to communicate with the dead was undeniably fuelled by the desire to overcome the fear of the mere physicality and the materiality of human existence, in addition to attempting to provide *scientific evidence* for life after death. By analogy, séances were seen as experiments in controlled conditions where conversation and exchange of messages with the departed constituted an empirical procedure whereby the materiality of soul, or so-called *spirit matter*, was firmly established after the death of the body. Accordingly, Owen indicates in her introduction that spiritualist literature speaks of “test séances” and “test conditions” in order to lend respectability to the evidence of the spirit’s survival after death. Supporters of spiritualism largely appropriated the language of materialism, which gave their beliefs credibility and made them visible within the social and cultural space dominated by the philosophy of materialism.

Byatt weaves these ideas into her novella and fastens them to its vibrant Victorian core by means of playful postmodern intrusions which unmistakably reveal her narrative stitches without diminishing the reader’s pleasure. A fine example of this is the conversation between two séance participants, Captain Jesse, Emily Tennyson Jesse’s husband, and Mr Hawke, a “theological connoisseur” (1992, 166), about the noxious effects of Swedenborg’s incessant coffee-drinking on his communication with spirits.

... God made the world, and therefore everything in it, including, I suppose, the coffee-bush and the coffee-bean. If coffee disposes to clear-seeing, I do not see that the means injures the end. No doubt seers are as regular fabrics as crystals, and not a drug or berry is omitted from their build, when it is wanted. We live in a material time, Captain Jesse – apart from metaphysics, the time is gone by when anything is made out of nothing. If the visions are good visions, their material origin is also good, I think. Let the visions criticise the coffee and vice-versa (167).

The spiritual crisis in the nineteenth century was largely caused by Darwin’s theory of evolution which dethroned man from his dignified position in the Chain of Being and tied him irrevocably

to the lower links in the chain by means of the “Tree of Life.” Thus deprived of the comforting vicinity of angels and the sphere of pure spirituality, many Victorians took passionate interest in the world of spirits in order to regain their lost spirituality, even if it meant allowing for a curious compatibility of their occult rituals and the emerging scientific ideology. Byatt beautifully captures this advance of man on the realm of the dead in her novella and demonstrates how it turns into a dead race where *séance* attendees eagerly claim their portion of an alternative reality. On the other hand, Darwin’s use of the biblical metaphor of the tree of life clearly indicates that scientific discourse cannot be cleansed of traces of religious discourse; it cannot control its own metaphoricity since very often the terms on which science is based happen to be metaphors whose figurative nature has long been forgotten. It is precisely these contradictions and intertwinements that constitute the phenomenon of *séance* as a cultural practice and a multilayered metaphor.

Victorian spiritualists found their inspiration mostly in the works of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), a Swedish scientist, philosopher and mystic, whose ideas are deeply rooted in the text of “The Conjugal Angel.” In his *Heaven and Hell* Swedenborg emphasizes that man is a spirit in human form, whereas the body only serves the spirit as an instrument. Furthermore, the spiritual part of man represents whatever is living and sensitive in man and that is why man continues to *live* even when the body is separated from the spirit by the act of dying, whereas, on the other hand, those who are still alive in their bodies can converse with the departed precisely on account of their *living spiritual* connection. It is known that, apart from theology, Swedenborg took a keen interest in science in the age of Isaac Newton. His scientific and empirical research seems to have curiously resurfaced in his mystic teaching as a firm belief in man’s ability to retain human form and sharp senses of sight, hearing and, particularly, touch even after he leaves the material world (1758/1885, 228–32). Thus, the soul demonstrates its so-called matter quality and spiritualists have the genuine ability to see, hear, and touch the spirits.

These ideas are more than knowingly transposed in “The Conjugal Angel” through Byatt’s delightful invocation of the metaphorical power of language. Her medium in the novella, Sophy Sheekhy, is an ethereal, almost transparent creature who lulls herself into trance by chanting Keats’s poems and passages from the Bible, especially the hymn-like words from St Paul’s anecdote in II Corinthians 12, “whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth” until all the words “were mad and bristling with shiny glass hairs, and then very simple and meaningless, like clear drops of water.” Her smooth transition from spiritual and textual liminality into the palpable materiality of words accounts for the fact that “the creatures and objects called up by poems and the Bible, or the creatures which came from nowhere and stayed awhile, could be described to other people, seen, smelled, heard, almost touched and tasted – some were sweet, some were smoky” (1992, 192).

The liminal area between reality and fiction, or between the power of words to address things and/or some indefinable warm space within themselves, is where Byatt locates “The Conjugal Angel.” Since liminality seems to be taken as a given, Byatt refuses to question the authenticity of Sophy Sheekhy’s mediumship when soon after, in a rather bizarre manner, the dead Arthur Hallam and the living Alfred Tennyson appear to her since “what finally matters is not that they

were *images of the real*, but that they were *real images*” (Levenson 2001, 166). Instead, Byatt focuses all her narrative energy on reconstructing the amazing moment when Sophy chants “The Eve of St Agnes” and “Ode to a Nightingale” to summon Hallam, the artist whose premature death turned into a national memorial and one of the most beautiful and intriguing poems in English literature, “In Memoriam.”

However, their communication is not exhausted by a mere textual exchange. On the contrary, it reaches its full intensity and materiality when Sophy instinctively clings to Hallam’s cold body and words turn into touches, cold ghastly touches with which our conscious being tries to comprehend and possess death. In that moment Tennyson “appears” before Sophy and Byatt materializes him through the strong tobacco scent which always surrounded him, but now it crushes everything under its formidable stale weight: “Perhaps he stank? He lifted the ends of his fingers to his nostrils. He heard the buzzing of little flying fragments of language that hung around his head all the time in a cloud, like the veils of living and dead smoke” (1992, 254). Invoking Tennyson’s presence through the smell of tobacco subtly summons new metaphors so that whiffs of smoke transform into flying fragments of language, or winged angels, which leads us to the powerful metaphor contained in the title of the novella. Thus Byatt’s metaphor-ridden mind transforms the “ruling” metaphor of *séance* not into abstract truths, as one may expect, but into more metaphors (Poznar 2004). Uncanny visions and morbid encounters with the spirits of the dead are reconstructed as mental conditions teeming with life and it is this protean metaphoric dimension of *séance* that enables the reader to inhabit simultaneously several planes of reality.

Byatt’s understanding of the metaphorical nature of language is discussed in her much praised collection of essays *Passions of the Mind* (1993), whose very title indicates her infatuation with the sensuousness of language.

I don’t know how much is known about the difference between those who *think* with mental imagery and those who don’t. I very much do – I see any projected piece of writing or work as a geometric structure: various colours and patterns. I *see* other people’s metaphors – if there is an iconic content to a metaphor I will “see” a visual image on some inner mental screen, which can then be contemplated more precisely, described discursively (the sap rising inside Milton’s “light” green stalk, like light) (7).

Although her erudite critical and literary writings (very often it is impossible to distinguish one from the other), which move insouciantly from painting and literature to insect societies, may often appear intimidating, Byatt manages to convince even her sadly uninitiated readers of the truthfulness of her coloured, moving, densely textured words. That is what happens when the reader visualizes her words “mad and bristling with shiny glass hairs, and then very simple and meaningless, like clear drops of water” (1992, 192) and allows himself to be taken into her darkened rooms for *séances*.

Byatt’s metaphors are not exhausted in their immediate expression, which explains her fascination with Ricoeur’s elaboration on the iconic element in metaphors. Namely, iconic representation can

point towards original resemblances, whether of quality, structure or locality, of situation, or, finally, of feeling (1975/2007, 224). Accordingly, those previously mentioned “flying” metaphors, begotten by the smoke of Tennyson’s cigar, open up as concentric circles which eventually revert only to meet again in the living metaphor of *séance*, which thus encompasses all the anxieties, illusions, and beauties of the Victorian mind. Byatt’s *séance* is a place and mode of mourning and remembering, and an attempt to both challenge and accommodate the impersonal scientific version of the Biblical history; it is a place where woman’s “innate passivity” unexpectedly transforms her into a perfectly receptive medium between two worlds, and finally, it is a place where the power of language to resurrect the long forgotten meanings and awaken resemblances through the intense rereading of “In Memoriam,” in particular, is more than fully achieved. Thus *séance* becomes what Ricoeur calls a “living metaphor” (225), which demands the reader to follow its clues and identify manifold parallel meanings, uncover the buried sensuality underneath complex cultural layers and thus, feel a genuine pleasure in an enhanced experience of the past.

That *séance* is indeed a *living* metaphor is ingeniously hinted at through the *lively* character of Mrs Liliás Papagay, a widow in straitened circumstances. Her mediumistic powers are limited to automatic writing, which is in her case also a viable source of income. This incredibly earthy woman is fully aware of the new knowledge with which man has unravelled the secrets of both heaven and earth, that is to say the stars and the remote exotic lands of Australia and New Zealand. Still, the advance of science and the colonisation of the Earth’s territories beyond the frontiers of the known do not convince her to relinquish the comfort of her personal angel too easily. However, it is not spiritual comfort or the confirmation of religious truths about the Hereafter that she craves and summons through her passive writing: “But it was not for that, she knew in her heart of hearts, that she travelled to *séances*, that she wrote and rapped and bellowed, it was for *now*, it was for more life *now*.” Unlike Sophy’s textual invocation of the spirit matter, Liliás consciously engages herself into this “traffic with the dead” (1992, 171) and openly claims possession over her own portion of the material world, whereby two aspects of reality are once again locked in a passionate embrace.

3. *Séance* and subversion of gender norms

The instability of gender roles is another aspect of Victorian life which resurfaces in Byatt’s *séances*. “Victorian ideology of femininity” established domesticity and motherhood as the only socially acceptable spheres for female activity, thus supporting the thesis of woman’s biological predetermination for the role of passive caretaker. Owen emphasizes that the notion of *innate* female passivity and the representation of femininity as *unchanging* were crucial for determining a woman’s place (1989, 7). However, in the context of spiritualist *séances*, a woman’s innate ability to renounce her own self proved to be vital for development of mediumistic powers. Moreover, female mediums freely transgressed gender norms during *séances* by assuming the position of authoritative guides and embracing dramatic and theatrical forms of behaviour. This transgression was not met with disapproval since it was viewed as a part of the newly appropriated role of mediums (1989, 11). Therefore, the Victorian ideology of femininity proved to be unable to control the dichotomies and gender divisions it initially installed and female mediums were given an opportunity, even if

only for the duration of *séance*, to break free from the limited social space allocated to them upon birth, and freely cross the borders between the so-called male and female sphere.

In “The Conjugal Angel” three extraordinary women, Sophy Sheekhy, Liliás Papagay and Emily Tennyson Jesse, take an active part in spiritualist rituals. Byatt reconstructs *séance* as our unconscious being which does not recognize the mechanisms of our conscious being, or in this case of the Victorian gender norms, and allows the breakthrough of silenced female voices. Liliás Papagay intuitively hears these voices and turns them into stories. After the disappearance of her husband, Captain Papagay, in a sea storm, she finds herself in a very vulnerable and dubious social space, subject to various interpretations, given the fact that her husband’s death has never been confirmed. However, this endows her with an *innate* mediumistic ability or instinct to feel and hear untold stories and fantasies of other women present in *séances*. Liliás is thus positioned in an entirely liminal social space, which, amongst other things, enables her to be acutely aware of her own sexual needs as well as the sexual frustrations of the participants, even in the moments of most intense concentration when she is decoding the troubled messages of the deceased. In spite of Liliás’s authoritative position within the novella, Byatt’s postmodern ironic voice does not too easily allow the imposition of a new woman-dominated hierarchy at the expense of the existing male dominance, but simply exposes the essential fluidity of socially constructed dichotomies. Consequently, Liliás’s stories spun out of her spiritualist experiences prove to be “stilted, saccharine rubbish” (1992, 168) that no one would want to read, whereas her source of historical knowledge is Walter Scott’s romanticised representation of the past.

Although this partly discredits her as a medium or mediator between the readers and the story, it, nevertheless, gives her a peculiar sort of materiality and liveliness in the obscurity of spiritualism, which enables the reader to perceive her as the only *reliable* guide in a story which constantly oscillates between reality and fiction, spiritual and physical reality. On the other hand, Liliás is a somewhat mischievous, not to say manipulative guide, for while holding the hands of expectant attendees and ushering them into the world of spirits, she initiates an eruption of obscenities through her passive writing, thus mocking and banalising Swedenborg’s concept of the conjugal angel i.e. heavenly marriage or what Tillyard identifies in Donne’s poetry as the unification of lovers in a single over-soul (1943/1970, 97). The verses released through Liliás’s mediumship demonstrate what Owen recognizes as the “expressions of the unknowable, unutterable, and forbidden” or the “undermining [of] the normative connotations of feminine passivity” (1989, 215):

The Angel spreads his golden wings
 And raises high his golden cock
 And man and his wife together lock
 Into one corpse that moans and sings (Byatt 1992, 286).

Sophy Sheekhy is the only genuine medium in “The Conjugal Angel” because she incarnates the juxtaposition of two entirely opposite notions of femininity – the one, woman as a mere recipient of spirits’ energy and messages¹ and the other, woman’s surrendering to surreal experience only to

¹ “She was a pure vessel, cool, waiting dreamily” (Byatt 1992, 191).

re-emerge as an authoritative guide who uncovers in Arthur Hallam an immature boy underneath the image of the Victorian most worshipped and mythologized intellectual, or witnesses the emotional breakdown of the aged Alfred Tennyson.

Further on, Byatt explores the instability of gender roles by reconsidering the ghost-like presence of Tennyson and his sister Emily in "In Memoriam." The entranced Sophy watches the weakened poet laureate as he clumsily tries to button his night shirt and at the same time relive his own poem through the words, "the spirit does mean but the breath" (1992, 268) whereby he intentionally invokes the original Latin meaning of the word "spiritus" (breath) only to make death transient. In other words, he uses language to overpower death in such a way that he dissolves the imminence of death into a mere breath while words are unexpectedly transformed into the feeling of eternal *predatory* intimacy which anticipates the pressing weight and discomfort of Hallam's presence in his texts.

... the truth was that both he and Arthur had seeped into his poem, had become parts of its fabric, a matter-moulded kind of *half-life* he sometimes thought it was, something not independent, but not part of each, not a handclasp, but a kind of vigorous parasite, like mistle-toe on dying oaks with its milky berries and its mysterious evergreen leaves (268).

Sophy's final awakening from the trance is preceded by Hallam's desperate attempt to "feed off her life, ... invading the very fibre of her nerves with his death" (274) which, just like the previous passage, represents an utterly deromanticised image of death dominated by the parasitic relationship of the dead towards the memory of the living. Furthermore, a literal decomposing of Hallam's body and the emotional pain of Tennyson which Byatt evokes through intensely realistic and tactile images, as well as her insistence on a faithful representation of the smells of not only death but also life, as in a description of Emily Tennyson Jesse's dog who frequently imposes his presence during séances by releasing "a series of popping little farts, and a rich, decaying smell" (286), make death and life equally real, or unreal.

The interplay of textual, transcendental and physical reality develops as Byatt disperses fragments of "In Memoriam" throughout the chapter, thus reconstructing the relationship between Hallam and Tennyson in the context of not only Tennyson's physical and spiritual suffering, but also his struggle with the uncontrollable sensuous metaphoricality and femininity of his language. It turns out that, regardless of Tennyson's efforts to use language to comprehend the essence of death as a purely spiritual condition, he cannot subdue the materiality of words which mindlessly surrender to the bliss of touch. As the aged poet remembers young Hallam, words of "In Memoriam" conjure up images of male hands in fervent expectation of touch. This transformation of words into palpable images of male hands on the verge of touching is also seen from the perspective of Tennyson's sister and Hallam's former fiancée, Emily Jesse. It is through Emily's participation in séances that the reader can see how this expectation of touch is relocated from the forbidden sphere of the body to the socially acceptable sphere of unhindered artistic exchange where Hallam's and Tennyson's souls are truly *joined* in ecstatic blissful intimacy.

Byatt moves Emily from her marginal textual position and reinvents her out of a glaring absence from biographies and poems so as to enable her to close off her past with Hallam and gain control over her life as Captain Jesse's wife. During séances Emily adopts the role of an interpreter or decoder of all texts with which Hallam tries to communicate with her, but she is also determined in rejecting him as her half-angel and the forced widowhood and the mourning which inextricably tied them together. Nevertheless, she is never raised to the pedestal as an unfulfilled artist and an ignored genius, which Byatt explains in her *On Histories and Stories* (2001): "I found myself troubled about Emily Tennyson herself – she had a dry wit, in what letters of hers I had read, and a rhapsodic note I was less happy with" (105). In addition to that, "there was something unsavoury about Mrs Jesse, as well, of course, as something pure and tragic. . . ., she was like a weathered, watching head between gargoyles on a church roof" (Byatt 1992, 183).

To enable both Emily and her brother to face and exorcise the haunting presence of Hallam in their memory/texts, Byatt rereads Victorian views of femininity and masculinity through the subcultural phenomenon of séance by installing and dismantling gender-based binary oppositions and hierarchies and, consequently, unveiling the fluidity and artificiality of these socially constructed categories. Liminality as a psychological and cultural space in which séances thrive seems to be the natural habitat for femininity as a social construct. Julia Kristeva argues that women as marginal beings within the phallogocentric symbolic order come to represent the necessary frontier between man and chaos. However, their marginality entitles that they occupy both sides of the frontier, plunging mindlessly in the darkness outside or receding into the safe inside, because of which "they share in the disconcerting properties of *all* frontiers" (Moi 1985/2002, 166). Byatt's mediums, who are both passive recipients and manipulative guides and interpreters of the messages from the realm of eternal darkness, embrace liminality as a mode of living as it allows them to seep through the pores of established social frontiers and thus undermine the foundations of the very ideology which begot them.

4. Texts as ghosts

So far séance has been discussed as a metaphor which both generates and reconciles the clash of spirituality and materiality, draws attention to its own innate sensuousness and functions as a liminal social space in which Victorian gender norms are defied. In other words, séance has been largely treated as a subject *matter* of the novella which in itself questions the nature of *matter* and spirit.

In the final part of this paper I intend to look at séance as a metaphor of a particular form, both in the sense of genre and narrative technique employed by the author. Namely, "The Conjugal Angel" may, in many aspects, be classified under the postmodern literary genre of "historiographic metafiction" as it was defined by Linda Hutcheon because it maintains the difference between its formal auto-representation and its historical context, thereby openly problematising the very possibility of historical knowledge, offering no reconciliation but, quite the contrary, nurturing contradiction (1988/2005, 106). This interaction of historiography and fiction raises several important issues, i.e. the nature of identity and subjectivity, reference and representation, intertextuality of the past and ideological implications of writing about history (117).

When applied to Byatt's novella, these postulates of postmodernism prove to be densely woven into the very fabric of the text. As far as the issue of subjectivity is concerned, Byatt's narrator is seemingly traditional and omniscient, whereas the text actually allows for multiple points of view so that even ghosts and texts from the past address, sometimes even harass, the reader directly, and in doing so demonstrate the instability of the traditional concept of the narrator. Moreover, all *séance* attendees are equally anxious to interpret the voices coming from the other side of reality while the messages of the ghostly visitants exist only in the form and meaning rendered by more than often manipulative mediums. The question of reference or the tendency of the language of texts to refer to a prior textualisation and not to an empirically real object is more than prominent in "The Conjugal Angel." Not only that, instead of *real* objects, the reader is referred to spectres and voices, but the most reliable referent to which the texts-as-characters point is a web of other texts subtly conjured through *séances*. Intertextuality, as an immanent feature of both fiction and history, is in Byatt's case the *medium* through which the reader is expected to identify the spectres of other texts, while at the same time remaining keenly aware of the author's playful interventions and casually dispersed borrowings. Lastly, the ideological implications inherent to historical fiction are openly problematised in the sense that Byatt does not bluntly invalidate Victorian views of sexuality, gender norms, science, and spiritualism, but she subtly subverts socially imposed dichotomies in order to unveil their inadequacy and point towards manifold unheard voices and alternative cultural practices. She, nevertheless, does not enclose her story within the borders of a newly established hierarchy, but simply articulates ideological nature of all historical writing, including her own.

Having thus elucidated the affinity between Byatt's novella and historiographic metafiction as a genre, I would like to point out another affinity which emerges out of the very narrative structure and technique of the story. Structurally, "The Conjugal Angel" is devised as a series of uncanny visions and spiritualist *séances*, all of which are enacted through the textual exchange between the medium, attendees and the spirits of the dead in the form of automatic writing or chanting of poems and parts of the Bible. Texts, not people, seem to traverse unhindered between the two versions of reality, unaccompanied by their authors, only carelessly stitched to other invented texts, both fictional and non-fictional, pointing not to the extra-textual reality but seductively offering themselves as the only truly living, palpable matter. Remembering and mourning Hallam is for Tennyson an act of taming and rewriting "In Memoriam" which lets "the ghostly ancestors, Dante, Theocritus, Milton and the lost Keats, sing out again." Their "language was their afterlife. He saw it as a spinning circular cage in which he was a trapped bird, a cage like a globe, rimmed with the bright lines of the horizons of dawn and dusk. ... The world was a terrible lump of which his poem was a shining simulacrum." Rethinking the laureate's poem in a Donne-like way as "a heavy globe, spinning onwards in space, studded with everything there was, mountains and dust, tides and trees" (1992, 269), Byatt initiates a process of genuine textual appropriation and re-evaluation of the past through Sophy's vision of Tennyson, which corresponds to acute historical consciousness and self-reflexivity inherent to historiographic metafiction.

This might also be considered as an act of "textual haunting" (2002, ix) by and within the novella itself, to borrow the phrase from Julian Wolfreys. As he says, the text is not necessarily haunted

by its author or the historical moment of its production, but “the text itself ... haunts and ... is haunted by the traces which come together in this structure we call textual, which is phantomatic or phantasmatic in nature while, paradoxically, having an undeniably real or material effect, if not presence” (2002, xiii). Likewise, the participants of spiritualist rituals fervently welcome apparitions and stories of the departed in order to *hear* and *see* and *feel* that death and past exist only as specific meanings of life and present. It is in these aspects that *séance* becomes a metaphor for the writing and reading of historiographic metafiction because it incarnates the textual, emotional and ideological encounter of the past and the present. The encounter is not merely nostalgic; quite the contrary, it generates a host of counter arguments and quotes which forever change our understanding/reading/writing of the present and past.

5. Towards a conclusion ...

Byatt’s reading and writing of the Victorian past through spiritualist *séances* seems to be a delightful blend of the past and the present. On the one hand, her approach to the domain of the occult enables her to remain faithful to the postulates of the realist novel by accentuating numerous details which recreate the physical reality of the afterlife but also invoke recognizable offensive smells of the living. Furthermore, the novella ends with the unexpected return of Liliás’s husband from the dead whereby Byatt determinedly transfers us from the heavenly sphere to our own selves through a voluptuous evocation of the smells and touches of renewed life. Although such an ending offers the closure inherent to the realist novel, if only in a formal sense, the reader cannot but view this unexpected reversion to tradition as an attempt of the author to position her story at what might be termed a narrative threshold or limen. In doing so she allows it both to withdraw into the safety of tradition and surrender to the inviting openness of postmodernity, thus experimenting with what she terms “degrees of ‘realism’ or vision” (Byatt 1993, 167).

Byatt’s exploration of *séance* as a metaphor of the textual and social unconscious concurs to a great extent with her eternal homage to T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis and her unwillingness to subscribe wholeheartedly among the supporters of postmodern literary theory. At the same time her “indecisiveness” leaves her enough space for an endless casual flirt with deconstruction, feminism and poststructuralism so that the reader is continuously impressed by her hidden skills of “theorizing.” The reader is often intimidated by the gravity of her literary quest and an unspoken, though relentless, expectation to recognize all of the fine layers of her filigree-like metaphorical writing. However, even if he fails to trace back most of her textual references, he is bound to be rewarded with a renewed sense of faith which is carefully woven into the very fabric of her writing. As Michael Levenson claims in an article of evocative title, “The Religion of Fiction,” Byatt constantly revisits the issue of belief in all her novels, though not as a religious missionary, but rather as a person who truly appreciates the necessity and beauty of believing.

... Her point is not to confirm religious truth, but to enlarge the religious sense, which locates value not in the infinite but in the yearning for the infinite, not in God but in the search for God. In a more clever analog, Byatt has drawn a connection between the “afterlife” of the Bible and the “afterlife” of the nineteenth century novel. We live in the

shadow of both. But the task, as she sees it, is not to get out from under the shadow into the white modern light. It is to respect and to love our old shadowy needs, to keep faith with faith, and with realist fiction (1993).

Levenson's words touch upon the true essence of Byatt's literary sensibility as they define her not as a Victorian nostalgist who chooses to stay forever in a darkened room for séances, but as an author who feels an organic connection between the Victorian age and late 20th century. Respecting and loving our old shadowy needs is precisely what Byatt does by constantly invigorating séance as a key metaphor of our transition from "an undissociated paradise to our modern dissociated world" (Byatt 1993, 5).

Further on, she recognizes all too well the sense of spiritual emptiness of the late nineteenth century in the "spiritual swamp" of the late twentieth century when "The Conjugal Angel" is written. In a time when believing in any totalising story, however beautiful, is considered utterly old-fashioned, Byatt wants to bring to life images of Victorian reality when both body and soul are tortured with desire for moments of faith and inner peace. Byatt's own organic connection with the Victorian past is nurtured through "a good and greedy reading" (Byatt 1993, 149) and it is this textual saturation or, should I say, textual craving that miraculously resurrects the past before the bedazzled reader.

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III.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE TEACHING**

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As They Wrote It – Students’ Projects

Summary

With the reformed curriculum introduced in Serbia, students have a more active role during their studies. Projects may help make students more ‘visible’ in the learning/teaching process by both providing a broader basis and catering to different interests of students. They also enable teachers to continuously follow and assess the work and achievements of students, thus taking the ‘burden’ off the final exam.

Bearing that in mind, we organized a three-fold project for the third-year students at the English Department in Niš. The students could choose among writing for a magazine, acting in a drama club or translating a brochure. The paper will present the work in two projects: making a magazine for English students, and compiling a bilingual brochure for prospective students. The focus of this paper is on the students’ choice of topics included in the brochure/magazine, the stages in their work, as well as various challenges encountered during their individual and team work.

Key words: project-based instruction, higher education, magazine project, brochure project, language-related problems, language-unrelated problems, assessment.

Kot so napisali – študentski projekti

Povzetek

V Srbiji je reforma učnega načrta uvedla bolj aktivno vlogo študentov v času študija. Projekti naj bi študentom dajali večjo prepoznavnost v učnem procesu, učiteljem pa omogočali stalno spremljanje in ocenjevanje študentskega dela in njihovih dosežkov ter tako razbremenili končne izpite.

S tem ciljem smo organizirali tridelni projekt za študente tretjega letnika na Oddelku za angleščino na Univerzi v Nišu. Študenti so lahko izbirali med pisanjem za časopis, igranjem v dramskem krožku ali prevajanjem brošure. V članku bova predstavili delo v dveh projektih: ustvarjanje časopisa za študente angleščine in pripravljanje dvojezične brošure za bodoče študente. V žarišču pozornosti bodo: izbor tem za časopis oziroma brošuro, potek dela in različni izzivi, s katerimi so se študenti soočili v individualnem ali timskem delu.

Ključne besede: projektni pouk, visokošolski študij, project: revija, project: brošura, jezikovne težave, nejezikovne težave, ocenjevanje.

As They Wrote It – Students’ Projects

1. Project-Based Instruction

Project-based instruction is an authentic instructional model or strategy in which students plan, implement, and evaluate projects that have real-world applications beyond the classroom (Blank, 1997; Dickinson *et al.*, 1998; Harwell, 1997). In the last 20 years many educators “have turned to content-based instruction and project work to promote meaningful student engagement with language and consistent learning” (Stoller 1997, 2). Such practice breaks the routine and contributes to “vibrant learning environments that require active student involvement, stimulate high-level thinking skills, and give students responsibility for their own learning” (Stoller 1997, 2). Enumerating the benefits of successful project-based learning, Allen and Stoller (2005) point out that it:

- focuses on real-world subject matter that can sustain the interest of students
- requires student collaboration and, at the same time, some degree of student autonomy and independence
- can accommodate a purposeful and explicit focus on form and other aspects of language
- is process and product oriented, with an emphasis on integrated skills and end-of-project reflection.

The end result is often authenticity of experience, improved language and content knowledge, increased metacognitive awareness, enhanced critical thinking and decision-making abilities, intensity of motivation and engagement, improved social skills, and a familiarity with target language resources.

Thus, learning based on projects has been described as an approach which puts the student in the centre of the teaching/learning process, within the framework of experiential learning (Eyring 2001, Beckett and Miller 2006). Project-based instructional strategies “have their roots in the constructivist approach evolved from the work of psychologists and educators such as Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, Jean Piaget and John Dewey” (Railsback 2002, 6).

Despite many definitions of project-based learning, there is still neither a solid theory or model nor much research done in the field of EFL/ESL, so the positive voices have been based on teachers’ anecdotal reports of the successful incorporation of project work into language classrooms with young, adolescent, and adult learners, as well as classrooms with general, vocational, academic and specific language aims. (Beckett and Miller 2006, 20)

While Stoller (2006) believes that the theoretical framework can be based on the research in wider fields of L2 and FL teaching/learning (motivation, the development of expertise, the role of input and output in language learning, and the value of learner centeredness in classroom instruction), Beckett (2006a) advocates taking a functional perspective to language learning which includes project-based instruction since

language learning is the acquisition of linguistic as well as sociocultural knowledge... This view is a useful theoretical framework... because... it treats language as a focus of study as well as a medium of studying. (Becket 2006a, 58).

However, despite these theoretical and methodological problems, project-based instruction continues to intrigue teachers, challenging both their own and their students' creativity. For that reason a group of instructors at the English Department of the Faculty of Philosophy, Niš decided to include project work into their English language 3 courses as a logical step after the introduction of continuous assessment.

2. English Language 3

English language 3 used to be a third-year two-semester course, consisting of lecture classes (held by the professor) and three sub-courses: grammar, translation, essay (run by lectors). At the beginning of the course, students were supposed to have reached the B2+ level of CEFR and were expected to reach the C1 level by the end of the academic year. The 2007/08 generation of third-year students was the last to attend this course in the old curriculum; from 2008/09 on the course will be replaced with two one-semester courses of equally complex structure: *Modern English Language 5* and *Modern English Language 6*.

In an attempt to introduce and test other ways of teaching and learning, the instructors of this last group offered students the options of participating in one of three projects: a magazine project, brochure project, or a drama club. In this way, the instructors wanted students to have a more visible engagement and a more active role during the teaching/learning process. All three projects were semi-structured and productive:¹ the instructors offered the general outlook of the projects, which the students further developed, and as the result of this work, the students made end-products – a magazine in English, a bilingual brochure for freshmen, and a theatrical production in English. The participation was obligatory, but which of the three projects students would join was their choice. The projects were organized as additional activities carried out outside regular classes as a way “to bridge the gap between language study and language use”, as Fried-Booth (1997, 7) would say. The projects were announced by the professor in October 2007; they were prepared by the lectors in early November, first meetings were held at the end of November, and the final products were expected by the end of May 2008.

The projects were planned following the ten-step outline given by Stoller (1997), which, however, was adapted to the demands of these projects. According to Stoller, the ten steps are: 1) agreeing on a theme for the project; 2) determining the final outcome; 3) structuring the project; 4) the instructor preparing students for the demands of information gathering; 5) students gathering information; 6) the instructor preparing students for compiling and analyzing data; 7) students compiling and analyzing data; 8) the instructor preparing students for the language demands of the final activity; 9) students presenting the final product; and 10) students evaluating the project. However, since the students involved in these projects possessed a high level of linguistic competence, steps 4 and 6 – the instructor's linguistic preparation of students – were restructured and made assignments on the students' part. Originally, only step 8 – linguistic preparation before presenting the final products to the

¹ For the classification of projects according to the respective participation of the teacher and students into structured, semi-structured, and unstructured, see Henry 1994; for the classification of projects according to end-products into production, performance, and organizational projects, see Stoller 1997.

public – was to be organized in accord with Stoller’s model and expected to include the instructors’ intervention.

This paper will present two written projects: the newspaper project and the brochure project, since the work of the drama club was rather specific in comparison with these two.

3. Presentation of the Projects

3.1 ENGZINE

Newspaper projects are often used in classes and reported on in the literature on project-based instruction (Tal and Rishpi 1998; Chan 2001; Foss et al. 2007). These projects are popular for many reasons: they are easy to organise, they allow students to express their varied interests, they are motivating for students to learn something about the topic or to share their knowledge with others, and they include the presentation of final products to the public. Besides, the literature reveals that this writing assignment contributes to developing various – and not solely language – skills. Thus, Foss et al. (2007) emphasize, quoting Schmetzer, that “reading and creating newspapers can [...] offer advanced-level students the chance to extend their reading and writing skills beyond typical exercises and into real-world literary scenarios, while also providing a chance to develop post-literacy skills” (Foss et al. (2007, 9). Also, in regular writing classes, there is

[a] massive neglect in the area of students anticipating readers’ needs because ... the teacher is the only reader whose response actually counts, there is simply no call for a reflective discussion which considers how readers might react. (Johnston 1987, 48)

Thus, this kind of projects allows practicing writing for an audience other than the teacher. Furthermore, a newspaper project enables students to explore schematic knowledge: a knowledge of genres, general world knowledge, socio-cultural knowledge and topic knowledge, and how a genre constrains writers (Harmer 2004). All these reasons contributed also to our including a newspaper project in our courses.

ENGZINE (as the students themselves named it) was the English Department third-year students’ magazine for students. Originally, the students had to write two articles on the topic which they chose individually or in pairs; the articles were to be published in two issues: one due in April and the other in May. The length of the articles was not specified in advance – the instructor left it to the students to determine, bearing in mind that students differ in their interests, motivation, skills and language needs. Thirty students chose to do this project; a few did so reluctantly – because this activity was obligatory, these students’ accomplishment was not quite satisfactory. (However, as Fried-Booth (1997) says, this is not uncommon in projects in general.)

The objectives of the project were: exploring the genre of magazine articles; going through all the stages of writing an article (from research to publication); developing a sense of what the process of writing includes (especially writing several drafts, editing, paying attention to cohesion and coherence, grammatical correctness...); writing for a broad audience; working in pairs/groups; developing the skill of peer-response and review; producing computer-processed texts (primarily through the use of Microsoft Word).

The instructor set the general outline of the project with the deadlines to meet and the students were expected to contribute to scheduling, organizing and performing the tasks in the meantime. It was planned that the instructor would be more involved in preparing Issue 1, which was organized in two phases: phase I was to consist of a number of workshops in which all the students would take part, and phase II, which coincided with Step 8 of Stoller's model, would have the form of teacher-student conferences in order to polish the final versions of the articles for publishing (the final linguistic preparation before the articles reach the public). In contrast, during the work on Issue 2 the students were expected to be more independent, having the previous experience to rely on (Egushi and Egushi (2006) experience proves that this is possible). This work was to be performed in small teams (four to five students), carried out at a time and in a manner convenient for the students, (with fewer workshops including the attendance of all participants); and only in the final stage (Stoller's step 8) would the emphasis be on teacher-writer conferences. Organized in this way, Issue 2 was to be completed within a month.

However, during the course of the project the original plan had to be changed. One of the reasons was the students' inability to meet the deadlines. Confronted with a lack of time (which does happen in projects – Foss et al. (2007) also report this as a problem), preoccupied with duties for other courses and the April exam term, students lost their initial enthusiasm. Faced with these problems (and some others that will be discussed below), the instructor decided to free students of the duty to prepare Issue 2 and respect the students' wish to bring the ongoing work to completion. This decision also resulted from the conference with the instructors of the other two projects, who agreed that the workload of the students working on Issue 1 approximately equalled the workload of the students in the brochure project and drama club.

The other reason why the instructor decided to change the original plan was influenced by the fact that, after a series of four workshops, group work was not as productive and efficient as it had been at the beginning of the project (this problem will also be discussed below). Therefore, the instructor decided to assume a more active role and work with the authors of individual articles in a series of sessions (instead of having just one such conference, as previously planned). This considerably increased the instructor's workload, but it was necessary to do to help the students bring the project to its satisfactory end.

Thus, the work on the magazine project underwent significant changes, but in the end it did produce the expected outcomes: the students did learn first-hand about the genre of magazine articles; they did go through all the stages of writing an article; in the process they did learn that writing in general, as well as writing a magazine article in particular, consisted of different stages which included writing, rewriting and editing different drafts, constantly bearing in mind the potential reader and balancing the demands of the genre, the authors' purpose and linguistic appropriateness; the students did practice peer-review, though these reviews were as successful as expected; and they did have some experience in mastering the text-processing standards using Microsoft Word.

That the students experienced the project in the way that the objectives defined it and that they recognized the same outcomes as the instructor became evident from the feedback questionnaire.

Originally, this was supposed to be an interim questionnaire given to students in April to express their feelings and opinions at the end of the work on Issue 1 of ENGZINE; however, since Issue 2 was not prepared, this questionnaire turned out to be final.

The questionnaire consisted of 11 open-ended questions (see: Appendix 1), because the instructor, organizing this kind of activity for the first time, wanted to get (as much as possible) honest, detailed answers to serve as a guide for future work. The questionnaire was filled in by 15 out of 30 students.

In the feedback sheet, the students expressed their satisfaction with the project, they emphasized that all their expectations were met although most of the students had expected the task to be easier and take less time. They particularly valued the workshops and peer review and the cooperativeness of other teammates who were all joined together for a common cause. They praised the idea of having a project since it was real refreshment (though a few students thought it should be an optional activity) and also enjoyed working with the instructor.² The major criticism was a lack of time, just as in the project carried out by Foss et al. (2007).

Summing up our experience with this project, we can say – judging from the final product, the outcomes of the project, and the students' feedback – that the ENGZINE project generally served its purpose.

3.2 Survival Guide Brochure

The Survival Guide project started with a very general idea of a brochure for the English Department students and the instructor expected the students to shape and organise it. This turned out to be a sound expectation because the students were more than eager to provide starting points. Since many of the students were not from Niš, they had easy time remembering their first encounter with the Faculty, as well as all the information they had needed but had not been provided with. Further, the students were supposed to cooperate and do independent research in order to organize and present the information in a manner best suited to the target audience – future students.

The main goal of the project was to prepare an electronic and paper edition in time for the entrance exam of the would-be students at the English Department. Another objective was to make our present-day students, as well as freshmen, acquainted with the academia-related terminology and the new concepts that are entering our educational system (such as credits, Student Parliament, accreditation etc.).

The number of the students who applied for the project was 45, and that was an important factor in organizing the workshops and group work. The students explored different sources and were grouped according to those sources, while they were further sub-grouped according to the topics

² It is interesting that throughout the feedback sheet, students kept using the word **professional**, whether they described their own aspirations, their team-mates activities or the instructor's. This would probably result from the fact that they really felt like professional journalists writing for a wide audience.

they found important for the future brochure (the process is described in more detail below). The workshops were held on a monthly basis with very specific tasks for the students, and roughly followed Stoller's ten phases (Stoller 1997). First, the students had to choose which information they wanted to include in the brochure. In order to do that, we organized a small survey – each of the groups had to explore the web sites of different universities and filter through general information on studying, as well as the information on language departments. One group was assigned to explore British sites, another American sites, and the last one sites in Serbia and the region. The most important aim of this phase of the project was to acquaint the students with the terminology, but also with the organization of information, and differences that exist between the British and American educational systems as compared to our own.

The next step was to clearly define the target audience, which would consequently resolve the matter of the style and tone of the brochure. Since future students were seen as the target audience, some of the students were more in favour of informal and 'chatty' tone, while others were more in favour of formal style, which they deemed more appropriate for the university setting. However, they were not completely independent in making this decision, as the sources they used were of various styles and, consequently, influenced the style of the translation. In the end, the students decided to use 'mid-formal' style and satisfy the demands of a wide audience, sometimes slightly altering the style of the original texts.

After searching through the sites and brochures of other universities, the students had to decide on the contents and submit both source texts and translations. These included texts on the credit system, accreditation process in Serbia and abroad, English department entrance exam, documents needed to enrol, etc. Also, they had to compile a glossary of the academia-related terminology and use it to appropriately translate the material. Once they finished drafts, they made them available to all the colleagues using the possibilities of Google Groups (administered by the instructor), where they could post their texts for others to read (or download) and peer-review.

The next step was to trim and tailor the information according to the comments made by the peers and the instructor. The students had to pinpoint not only grammatical inconsistencies but also the appropriateness of style and clarity of the translations done by other students. Another task for the students while forming the second draft was to collaborate with the colleagues who worked on the similar (or same) topics within their own groups (e.g. each of the subgroups had to separately devise the contents of the future brochure and then to negotiate the final version with other subgroups).

Organised in this way, the brochure project met all the objectives: the students went through the whole process of translation outside the classroom context; they took full responsibility for the brochure by selecting and organising the material; they tailored the material to suit the audience; they follow their peers' comments and suggestions; and finally, they enriched their vocabulary with academia-related terminology and improved their IT skills (on-line glossaries, file sharing, etc.).

At the end of the project the students had their say by filling in the feedback questionnaire. The feedback form consisted of a number of open-ended questions and one section in the form of a scale (see Appendix 2). Out of 45 participants in the project, 29 gave their feedback on the project. What the feedback showed was that the students were mostly satisfied with the organization of the project, and almost all students found it useful. They had various expectations (ranging from improving skills and learning something new, to doing something with purpose, to expecting a bonus for their final mark), and the students pointed out that all their expectations were met. Only a few students had no particular expectations and stated they would not like to participate in other translation projects. As for the difficulties during the project, it is interesting that working with the members of different subgroups provoked different emotions: while a third of the students pointed out that they had had problems when working with colleagues from other subgroups, another third stressed that they had learned a lot about the team work in this phase of the project (how to adjust to others, how to cooperate, and how to be patient with their colleagues).

In the end, everybody was proud when the web issue of the brochure appeared on the faculty website in early July – just in time for a new year of freshmen to enrol.

4. Discussion

Although the work on the projects was painstaking (since the projects were an additional as well as a time-consuming activity), it was at the same time a great pleasure. The students expressed great interest and enthusiasm, they looked forward to sharing ideas with other team-mates, they took peer-review sections very seriously because they felt that they were part of something bigger and that the contribution of each improves the quality of the final product, etc. What particularly amazed the instructors were features – either of the students' personality or their linguistic competence – that would otherwise pass unnoticed. For example, the work on the ENGZINE project provided evidence of some students' masterly command of certain specialist registers (the articles on cars and fashion), their subtle sense of humour (the film review article), ambition in mastering a topic from different angles (the article about the 'old' and 'Bologna' programs), perseverance in accomplishing tasks on one's own despite difficulties, etc. Also, in the brochure project, some students (who had not been 'visible' during regular classes) took initiative, suggested different solutions, and were eager to help others. However, the work also entailed some expected as well as unexpected problems. These will be discussed in two sub-sections since, due to the different nature of the two projects, there were few characteristics they had in common.

4.1 ENGZINE

Among the problematic issues related to the ENGZINE project, the most prominent ones were: peer-reviewing sessions and developing language-unrelated and basic language skills.

The peer-reviewing workshops in which students read, reviewed and discussed each other's drafts were a novel and interesting experience for the students, and they enjoyed it. The comments that the writers received after a fruitful discussion considerably contributed to better quality of

the articles. For example, the reviewers suggested changing the intended audience to make the article more meaningful and purposeful – instead of addressing third-year students, who were already familiar with the topic, the article should be aimed at freshmen (the *Leaning tips and tricks* article); changing the style and tone – seasoning the article with humour (the article on the earpiece); transforming the form of the article – transforming an interview into a report (the *American Corner* article), etc.

However, this productive phase lasted only as long as the reviewers could rely on their experience as readers and could focus on the content; after three sessions the work came to a standstill and the reviewers either marked the articles as ‘great’ or focused on minor issues (which were not always necessarily wrong). This was the stage when the students/ reviewers had to employ specific knowledge related to the structure of articles (topic sentence, cohesion and coherence) or to exhibit a high level of language competence (detecting faulty collocations, wrong choice of word and traditionally problematic grammatical areas such as: articles, prepositions, present perfect, indirect questions, sequence of tenses). Seeing no progress in further work conducted through workshops, the instructor decided to restructure this phase of the project and organise work in the form of teacher-writer conferences.

To be fair, it must be admitted that problems with peer-reading and peer-reviewing are generally quite common and noted in the literature. Min (2008) notices that students, unaccustomed to peer-review, seem to “[lack] knowledge of what to attend to [and give] vague or unhelpful feedback” (285–6). Therefore, she recommends devising training sessions consisting of a number of classes where students will be trained to assume the role of the intended audience and give an objective account of another student’s work. She herself has organised a training session for her own students, and after the experiment she reports that trained students are able

to generate more specific and relevant written feedback on global features of their peers’ compositions ... and that most of peer comments were incorporated into subsequent revision and contributed to enhanced revision quality. (Min 2008, 288)

She has also devised a guidance sheet for students to help them while doing peer-review, which, at the same time, can be used as help for self-evaluation and self-review.³

This project also gave the students an opportunity to develop some other – not language-related – skills (such as: problem solving, decision making, selection of material...), which usually cannot be exercised in teacher-directed instruction. As for the basic language skills (apart from writing), there is little evidence as to when and how they were used – particularly speaking. It was noticed that in workshops the students preferred to speak in Serbian (or, rather, ‘Serbish’ – a combination of Serbian and English). Although Egushi and Egushi (2006) consider the use of L1 in monolingual classes a factor which minimizes the well-known potential of project-based learning, the ENGZINE instructor tolerated this for several reasons: first, almost all courses at the English Department are done in English, so the students probably wanted to behave

³ Another device which can be used to guide students in the process of reading their own (and other students’) work is a poster with a set of questions displayed in the classroom (Johnston 1987).

differently in this extra-curricular activity; second, the atmosphere in workshops was relaxed, so they probably adopted this habit as a way of relaxed behaviour; and finally, it is reasonable to suppose that the students felt more confident when speaking in their mother-tongue in order to comment on their peers' work and to express all shades of meaning in a face-saving way.

As for writing skills, it is difficult to say how productive the work on the project was for the students. Originally, it was expected that the work on the article for Issue 2 would give indirect evidence of the progress made, but, as we have seen, the change in the organisation of the project made this evidence unavailable. As a useful tool to monitor students' work, Beckett and Slater (2005) and Stoller (2006) suggest introducing "project framework", which helps students

[engage] in setting explicit goals; [chart] plans for meeting goals; and [monitor] language content and skills learning. The use of the project framework is reported to result in students' heightened consciousness about a new way of learning language, increased motivation and a greater appreciation for project work. (Stoller 2006, 34).

Unfortunately, since this record of students' work was not introduced on time, it could not be used to provide valuable information about the ways in which students' writing skills had developed.

In retrospect, we can conclude that all the problems that the participants of the ENGZINE project encountered arose from the lack of experience with project work, which in turn resulted in inadequate preparation.

4.2 Survival Guide Brochure

In the Survival Guide project students experienced some problems similar to the ones in the ENGZINE project (problems with peer-reviewing) but also some which were unique (problems with cooperation within groups and problems with IT literacy).

Just as in the ENGZINE project, the only visible decline in the whole work on the brochure was the peer-reviewing sessions, where students had to make comments and give suggestions on the translation done by their peers in terms of the appropriateness of the source text, accuracy of translation, relevance of the information and the like. The students usually did not come prepared to these workshops and only had general comments, such as: "it's good", "it's maybe too long" but had no direct and concrete remarks. At the same time, they were more interested in hearing the instructor's point of view and her comments on the work – not only about the appropriateness of the chosen material, but also about grammatical accuracy, style and layout. This experience proves once again that students have to be prepared for peer-reading before being assigned the task.

Another challenge that awaited the students, which did not appear among the students on the ENGZINE project, was group work, since the tasks were usually assigned to groups of three to four students. While the initial groups (composed of the students who socialise outside the faculty) worked and cooperated well (they had their own dynamics of work sharing, respected the choices made by every member, etc.), the final regrouping of the students created problems.

This problem was not apparent during the workshops but it figured high on the challenges list in the feedback. So, although team-work was not a problem *per se*, cooperation among the students who were not friends was. The positive outcome was, however, that after the project the students were aware that cooperation asked for more skill than they had previously thought.

One unforeseen problem was the students' lack of computer skills, which cropped up during the project since the whole work had been designed for electronic use. Students had to deal with browsers, tables, different file formats and conversion from one format into another as well as using Google Groups to exchange their material. In practice, only those more tech-savvy made a more regular use of Google Groups, while the majority was more in favour of printed copies of drafts and texts. However, it is worth noting that although the students did not use the possibilities of file sharing and commenting on Google Groups, they were positive about the tool. The feedback even showed that some students were more satisfied with their own computer skills after they had done the work in the project.

In the end, judging from the work on the Survival Guide project, we can only emphasise that, aside from some common problems which may arise during working on a project – such as students' lack of knowledge about peer-reviewing – instructors should be prepared to deal with other, language-unrelated problems, such as cooperation among participants and lack of computer skills.

5. Assessment

Finally, the greatest and most serious challenge for the instructors during the projects was assessing students' work. They certainly had created certain impressions about each student, but they felt, being novices to the area, that they would be more confident when assessing the students' work if they could develop a more objective marking system.

The reviewed literature was not helpful since the authors generally do not refer to assessment criteria. Foss et al. (2007) mention marking their students' work and assigning credits, but they do not give details. Slater, Becker and Auderhaar (2006) think that “project work needs to be evaluated holistically through sound research-based assessment models... appropriate for age and context as well as transparent for teachers, students, and parents” (Slater, Becker, and Auderhaar 2006, 257), but they refer to the use of project work in content-based teaching. In their opinion, providing students with formative assessment guidelines (part of Project Diary) can be a valuable tool to the students to guide the formative assessment of their own learning of [content, language and skills development]. This use, in turn, offers the teachers a perspective other than their own to enhance the reliability of their summative evaluation and therefore helps to make the assessment of the curricular goals of content, language and skill through projects more transparent for students and parents alike. (Slater, Becker and Auderhaar 2006, 245–6)

However, since the instructors did not introduce the diary on time, it could not be used in this case. After weeks of conversation and discussion, the instructors finally decided to apply analytic scoring since it was always more useful than holistic scoring for beginner teachers (Hughes, 1989). They decided to divide students' work into three different segments.

Thus, the maximum of 20 points for the ENGZINE project was assigned in the following manner:

- research (interviews, searching the net, newspaper and magazine articles, books...) – 6 pts;
- writing the article (clear idea of the purpose and audience of the article, number of drafts, innovation and creativity in rewriting, Instructor's help, ...) – 6 pts;
- workshop activities (attending workshops, involvement in the work, helping peers, exhibiting creativity and cooperativeness, commitment to the project and the team-mates...) – 8 pts.

On the other hand, the work on the Survival Guide Brochure was graded according to:

- choice and amount of the text for translation – 6 pts;
- translating (the number of the drafts that the students had to make, including the accuracy of the work and the inclusion of the suggestions the peers had made) – 6 pts;
- active participation in workshops (discussion, giving suggestions to the colleagues, sharing one's point of view, taking initiative, completing all the assigned tasks on time) – 8 pts.

This kind of assessment presented a few challenges especially for the Survival Guide project instructor since all translation work was done through team or pair work and it was difficult to assess individual achievement. Therefore, the active participation in workshop discussions and peer reading seemed to gain an overriding influence.

After the instructors divided the marks in this way, the students got the final marks, which basically coincided with the impressions the instructors initially had. This mark was added to the average, cumulative score of traditional tests (grammar, English-Serbian translation, Serbian-English translation, essay, dictation and oral) and generally increased the final average mark by 1. However, a portion of the English language chair, who did not really have a good insight into the students' effort, energy, creativity and time dedicated to the projects, objected to such high marks since they believed that the marks did not reflect these students' actual command of English. These objections bring us back to the question of the role of project-based instruction in EFL/ESL and, we would add, to our willingness and ability to change our deeply-rooted habits.

6. Conclusion

In the end, after a year of work on these semi-structured, productive projects, we can say that this work was a refreshing activity welcomed by both students and instructors for having a beneficial effect on the teaching/learning process. However, all the participants agreed that the work on the projects would have been more productive had this activity been incorporated in regular classes.

What these projects also showed was that the students on higher levels of language competence were perfectly capable of doing the linguistic preparation for the forthcoming steps on their own, though in the reviewed literature it is recommended that the instructor should ensure means for the constant monitoring of that work. One of the recommended ways to do this is by introducing the project diary, which will contain a record of students' work, offer students

the material to reflect on the previous steps and raise students' awareness of the role of this kind of learning, while at the same time it will help the instructor monitor, comment on and assess students' work.

When we refer to the problems encountered during the work, we can notice that we had to deal with both language-related and language-unrelated problems. The most important of these for the students was their lack of knowledge, training – and confidence to successfully perform peer-reading and peer-reviewing. Our projects proved once again that students should be prepared for this activity (through training sessions, guidance sheets, etc.) and taught how to develop the 'skill' of peer-reviewing. Other significant problems were students' reluctance to cooperate with the team-mates they usually do not socialize with and their lack of technological savvy to efficiently fulfil the assigned tasks. Since language teachers are usually focused on linguistic issues in their work, it is worth noting that teachers should be prepared to deal with these problems as well. Finally, the greatest problem for the instructors was how to assess the students' achievement in this loosely-structured activity. The suggested solution is far from perfect and it is certain that this area will attract the attention of practitioners in the future.

In the end, there is the question of whether project-based instruction is welcome in the local EFL environment or not. Without the answer to this question, individual initiative, motivation and ambition will remain fruitless. Since these projects met with a mixed reaction from the local educational environment, we feel that the answer has to be given not only by the educational institution in question but also by the country's policy- and decision-making bodies – even more so if the country is – just as Serbia is – at the outset of the 'Bologna-oriented' reform and has to take a number of measures which will place the student in the centre of the educational process.

Note:

The final products of these projects can be seen on:

<http://www.filfak.ni.ac.yu/nina/eng/index.html> - English version of the Survival guide brochure,

<http://www.filfak.ni.ac.yu/nina/srp/index.html> - Serbian version of the Survival guide brochure, and

<http://www.filfak.ni.ac.yu/ljilja/index.html> - ENGZINE.

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Appendix 1

ENGZINE project

Feedback Questionnaire

1. Why did you join this project (and not one of the other two)?
2. What were your expectations concerning the project at the beginning?
3. Which of your expectations have been met? Which have not?
4. How did you choose the topic for your article? Why?
5. What did you learn in the process of writing the article: a) about the topic of your article?
b) about writing a newspaper article?
6. How do you find the cooperation with your partner(s) (if you have any)?
7. How do you find the group work of all the members? Did you profit from the peer-reading sessions? Do you think that other mates have been honest and constructive in their approach? Any episodes to illustrate?
8. How do you find the work with the project coordinator? a) Any objections?
b) Any good points?
9. What do you think of this kind of extra-curricular activity (which can - & will - affect your regular mark – in a positive way)?
10. Any suggestions, comments or complains about the project(s) – anything that haven't been addressed in this questionnaire?
11. Any ideas for your ISSUE 2 article?

For more detailed answers, you can use the back of this sheet! Thnx!!!!

Appendix 2

Survival Guide Brochure

Feedback Questionnaire

1. Why did you choose this project over the other two?					
.....					
2. What did you expect?					
.....					
3. Were your expectations met?					
.....					
4. Rate the following from 1 to 5: 1 being the lowest, 5 the highest					
a) the organization of workshops	1	2	3	4	5
b) the usefulness of the project	1	2	3	4	5
c) the amount of the workload	1	2	3	4	5
d) the challenge of the team work	1	2	3	4	5
e) the work of the coordinator	1	2	3	4	5
5. Would you participate in other translation projects? Yes / No					
a) if yes – why yes?.....					
.....					
b) if no – why not?.....					
.....					
6. What have you learned during the project?					
.....					
.....					
7. How do you find the group work within the first grouping (that you chose) and the re-grouping.? Have other team members been constructive in their approach?					
.....					
.....					
8. What should be changed if future projects are organized?					
.....					
.....					
9. What was the biggest challenge?					
.....					
.....					
10. Anything else you would like to comment on?					
.....					

Thank you for your time and effort – keep up the good work 😊

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Shifting Attitudes toward Teaching Culture within the Framework of English as an International Language

Summary

This study deals with the cultural dimensions of EIL, which are analysed based on the following domains: (a) subjects' attitudes toward teaching about specific cultures (native and non-native); and (b) subjects' attitudes toward teaching about culture in general. In essence, a view of culture based on native cultures can emerge from three different approaches: it may promote British culture only, it may focus on both the UK and the US, or it may incorporate other English native cultures. Likewise, a more international viewpoint can also be offered from three perspectives: it may refer to ESL contexts only, it may present both ESL and EFL communities – including the local culture – or it may introduce international aspects not specific to any culture. However, the analysis of data in this study indicates that the subjects' attitudes toward teaching culture do not usually correspond to just one of these perspectives; rather, teachers display a manifold set of beliefs which may at times be closer or more distant to an international approach to teaching culture.

Key words: English as an international language, language attitudes, cross-cultural communication, language pedagogy

Spreminjajoči pogledi na pouk kulture v okviru angleščine kot mednarodnega jezika

Povzetek

Ta študija predstavlja kulturološke dimenzije angleščine kot mednarodnega jezika (EIL), ki jih analiziram s stališča (a) odnosov učiteljev do pouka določenih kultur (rojenih in tujih govorcev) in (b) odnosov učiteljev do pouka kulture na splošno. Dejansko izhaja pogled na kulturo, ki temelji na kulturah rojenih govorcev iz treh različnih pristopov: lahko promovira le britansko kulturo, lahko se osredinja tako na britansko kot ameriško kulturo, ali pa vključuje druge kulture rojenih govorcev angleščine. Podobno lahko tudi bolj mednarodno usmerjen pogled na kulturo razlagamo s treh vidikov: z vidika angleščine kot drugega jezika, z vidika angleščine kot drugega in tujega jezika, ki vključuje tudi lokalno kulturo, oziroma z mednarodnega vidika, ki ni specifičen za nobeno kulturo. Analiza podatkov, ki jih predstavlja ta študija, kaže na to, da odnos učiteljev do pouka kulture ne temelji na samo enem vidiku; učitelji imajo običajno različna stališča, ki so včasih bližja, včasih pa bolj oddaljena od mednarodnega pristopa k pouku kulture.

Ključne besede: angleščina kot mednarodni jezik, jezikovni pogledi, medkulturna komunikacija, jezikovna pedagogika.

Shifting Attitudes toward Teaching Culture within the Framework of English as an International Language

1. Introduction

English as an international language (EIL) can be defined as the language used by native and non-native speakers for communication in international interactions – business, advertisements, sports, news, travel, diplomacy, entertainment. In other words, EIL aims at mutual intelligibility and appropriate language use involving nationals of different countries – non-native speakers interacting with native speakers, non-native speakers interacting with other non-native speakers, and native speakers interacting with native speakers. Essentially, the concept of EIL focuses on cross-cultural, cross-linguistic interactions (Campbell et al. 1983).

Tomlinson (2004, 5) has recently called attention to the limited participation of users of EFL in the discussion of EIL:

Ironically, so far the main proponents of teaching a variety of international English have been native speaker (or at least native speaker like) applied linguists. Not many are teachers and not many are users of English as a foreign language. They have provided expert insights into the characteristics and exponents of international English and are conducting the rigorous research that will soon provide us with very useful objective descriptions of the English used in international communication. But the danger is that an expert syllabus could be imposed on learners without any input from them and without a methodology to bring it to useful life.

Significantly, some native and non-native applied linguists and teachers have been surveying the discourse of learning and teaching EIL in EFL countries: McKay (2003) has examined the teaching of EIL in the Chilean context; Kubota (2002) and Yamaguchi (2002) have studied the effects of globalization in the learning and teaching of English in Japan; Matsuda (2002; 2003) has argued for incorporating World Englishes in ELT practices in Japan; Sifakis and Sougari (2003) have pursued a similar approach to investigate pedagogical, ethical and methodological considerations of the international status of English, particularly in the Greek context.

Moreover, Seidlhofer (2004; Jenkins et al. 2001) and Jenkins (1998; Jenkins et al. 2001), among others, have been doing linguistic research on global English in general and on Euro-English as a variety of English as a European lingua franca in particular. However, most studies which refer to English in a European country are usually concerned with one or more of the following areas: (a) Anglicisms or English expressions in European languages, e.g. in Dutch (Ridder 1995), in German (Hilgendorf 1996), and in Finnish (Hyrkestedt and Kalaja 1998); (b) the status, role and use of English, e.g. in Sweden (Davidson 1995), in Malta (Davidson 1996), in Italy (Pulcini 1997), in France (Truchot 1997), in Greece (Oikonomiçlis 2003), and in Finland (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003); and (c) ELT and English teacher training, e.g. in the Netherlands (Van Essen 1997), in Macedonia (Dimova 2003) and in Germany (Hilgendorf 2005).

However, a central issue that needs to be discussed in any debate about EIL is the language users' attitudes toward the language and the current developments related to its spread and global

roles. In a presentation at the IATEFL Conference in Liverpool in 2004, Henry Widdowson stated that nowadays English as a lingua franca (ELF) is a matter of attitudes. Rather than just a linguistic issue, ELF is a pedagogical matter which involves significant changes in people's attitudes. Thus, no examination of English as a global language would be complete without a thorough analysis of teachers' attitudes toward EIL.

2. EIL as cross-cultural communication

Though using the term English as a global language (EGL), Gnutzmann (1999, 158) provides a definition of EIL based on the situations of language use, which can be applied to the concept of international English. For him, EGL means "English used as a medium of communication in all sorts of communication contexts and for many different purposes for instance, in written academic discourse or by a Frenchman talking to a Greek waiter ordering a pizza in an Italian restaurant in Norway". Gnutzmann states that intercultural competence refers to and implies (166):

- awareness of the culture-specific dependency of thought and behaviour;
- knowledge of general parameters according to which cultures can be distinguished (e.g. religion, role of the sexes);
- rejection of ethnocentrism: one's own system of cultural norms is not considered appropriate to be applied to the evaluation of other cultures;
- interpersonal sensitivity: the ability to understand a person in their own right;
- cognitive flexibility: openness to new ideas and beliefs;
- behavioural flexibility: the ability to change one's behaviour patterns.

One of the major concerns in the discussion of cross-cultural communication is the idea of adaptation. Baxter (1991, 67) states that "communicating internationally means actively seeking a common ground, and this entails *adapting* one's way of speaking English". He adds that "adaptation is not an easy process, requiring in the speaker a variety of communicative skills and an awareness of what is entailed in cross-cultural communication".

However, Smith (1987, 3) remarks that using English in cross-cultural contexts "does not change the interactor's cultural assumptions and expectations about what is and is not appropriate language behaviour in particular situations". As a result, Smith proposes that a negotiation of meaning should be done when involving the following senses:

- (1) *a sense of self*: factors such as race, gender, nationality, age, socioeconomic status, belief system and values, ethnic/religious/political background, etc. help define one's identity, which is not changed when one is using English (discourse patterns from the first language do not carry over entirely into the second language);
- (2) *a sense of the other*: in the use of English, one needs to know something about the discourse strategies of the prospective other (using a common linguistic medium – English – does not mean that the discourse strategies are shared);
- (3) *a sense of the relationship between the self and the other*: the degree or affiliation of distance between sender and receiver;

- (4) *a sense of the setting/social situation*: English is used differently in London, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Tokyo or Toronto, so the geographic setting and the social situation should be taken into account;
- (5) *a sense of the goal or objective*: having a clear understanding of the goal/objective is essential if we are to negotiate meaning successfully across cultures.

3. Teaching English as an international language

Modiano (2001a) identifies two major areas in the teaching of English as an international language (TEIL) and their scope: language varieties and culture. Modiano believes that when teachers only emphasize American and British English and cultures, students tend to perceive other varieties and cultures as less valued. Such an approach to teaching “presents English as the property of a specified faction of the native-speaker contingency” (340). In his opinion, teaching and learning English based on an international frame of reference is superior “when compared to the conventional integration-orientated practices associated with the learning of culture-specific varieties such as British English” (2001b, 162), what he calls a “nation-state centred view” (2001a, 340).

Modiano (2001b, 161–2) also states that EFL students hardly need to be aware of culture-specific language and that practitioners who support this kind of teaching are in fact pursuing a political agenda. Modiano underlines the role of culture in TEIL when he states that:

...with English, because it has lingua franca status, because there are a number of nation-states which have large populations speaking the tongue, and because the cross-cultural dimension of English among foreign-language speakers can effectively exclude the native speaker as well as the cultural distinctiveness which the native speaker represents, it is illogical to talk of the learning of English as a foreign language as an activity which is enriched through interjecting a cultural studies dimension defined as the history, society, culture, and institutions of the British. The cultural framework for English is global and as such is no longer situated in the legacy of one distinct culture.

In order to promote cultural equality, “a multiplicity of teaching practices, and a view of the language as belonging to a broad range of peoples and cultures, is the best that language instructors can do” (2001a, 340). Modiano maintains that “the ideologies which underpin globalization and the vision of cultural pluralism are more in tune with a lingua franca perspective as opposed to ELT platforms based on culture-specific varieties” (2001b, 159). In other words, EIL can ‘neutralize’ the negative impact that the spread of the language can have on the learner’s culture. Although Modiano can sometimes sound quite provocative, it is undeniable that he tries to tackle the essential issues related to learning and teaching EIL.

Several other authors have reported on significant changes to be introduced in teaching the language. If we are to accept English as an international language of communication and incorporate these characteristics into the classroom, educators in the field of English language teaching will have to take on some new responsibilities. Trifonovitch (1981) points out some aspects that need to be emphasised in the classroom. First, as speakers of English will be contacting a variety of cultures – native and non-native – teachers should not concentrate on the cultures of the native speakers. Second, it is important that the learners of EIL understand their own culture and develop an awareness toward accepting other cultures in order to understand the other’s

point of view. Also, the EIL learner should listen to as many varieties of English as possible. Finally, he/she should be able to notice and accept different styles of spoken and written English, because they exhibit the cultural background of the speaker/writer.

More recently, Gnutzmann (1999, 165) declared that “cultural topics relating to countries where English is spoken as a native language, particularly the United Kingdom and the United States, have to be complemented by topics dealing with other parts of the world in order to do justice to the global use of English in classroom teaching”. Besides widening the scope of topics geographically, Gnutzmann (1999, 166) thinks that a “stronger orientation toward social, economic, scientific and technological topics with an international or global dimension would seem an appropriate measure in view of the global dimension of English”, a change which could probably happen “at the expense of target culture-specific topics”. Baxter (1991, 67) seems to share the same viewpoint when he says that “teaching materials should be drawn from all the various English-using communities, not only L1 communities, so as to introduce students to the different manners of speaking English and to build an attitudinal base of acceptance”.

In essence, the main premise of this study is that the analysis of teachers’ attitudes toward the cultural dimension of EIL is crucial to assessing how EIL is being dealt with in a country where English is used as a foreign language.

4. The study

4.1 Research question

The research question – *What are the teachers’ attitudes toward the cultural dimensions of EIL?* – was formulated based on cultural issues such as having contact with a variety of cultures (not just cultures of the English-speaking world), developing an understanding of the student’s own culture, and developing sensitivity and awareness toward understanding other cultures.

4.2 Methods of data collection and analysis

This study uses two methods of data collection in surveys: questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The choice of using both quantitative and qualitative methods aimed at enriching data and attempting to balance the weaknesses of any one method. Each interview lasted one hour on average and was conducted in Portuguese. Basically, they aimed at supplementing the findings of the questionnaires. It was hoped that these face-to-face interviews could provide more detailed and richer data and reliable means to validate the questionnaire data.

4.3 The subjects in the study

The subjects in the questionnaire (13 teacher trainers and 13 ESP teachers) and interviews (5 teacher trainers and 7 ESP teachers who had previously answered the questionnaire and had volunteered for the interview) were part of four educational institutions, two universities – University of Evora (UE) and University of Lisbon (UL) – and two polytechnic institutes

– School of Tourism and Hotel Management of Estoril (ST) and School of Education of the Polytechnic Institute of Beja (SE).

5. Data analysis

The cultural dimensions of EIL are analysed based on the following domains: (a) subjects' attitudes toward teaching about specific cultures (native and non-native); (b) subjects' attitudes toward teaching about culture in general; and (c) probable influences on subjects' attitudes toward teaching about native and non-native cultures in English classes.

The subjects' answers are explained depending on how close they were to viewing the cultural aspects of learning English as either intrinsically oriented toward native communities – particularly the UK – or incorporating a more international perspective which takes into account native as well as non-native societies. Essentially, a view of culture based on native cultures can emerge from three different approaches: it may promote British culture only, it may focus on both the UK and the US, or it may incorporate other native cultures. Likewise, a more international viewpoint can also be offered from three perspectives: it may refer to English as a Second Language contexts only, it may present both ESL and English as a Foreign Language communities – including the local culture – or it may introduce international aspects not specific to any culture.

However, the analysis of data in this study indicates that the subjects' attitudes toward teaching culture do not usually correspond to just one of these perspectives; rather, teachers display a manifold set of beliefs which may at times be closer or more distant to an international approach to teaching culture.

On reflection, teachers clearly identified British and American cultures as the most important cultures to be incorporated into English language classes. Moreover, most subjects regarded other native cultures as essential aspects to be considered. However, what might be seen as an approach to culture which emphasizes native countries should be re-examined due to the importance subjects gave to learning about international cultural aspects not specific to any country. Nonetheless, teachers placed very little importance on learning about ESL and EFL cultures.

To sum up, even as subjects favoured British and American cultures as the most important in ELT, they also acknowledged the importance of referring to Portuguese culture and international cultural aspects not specific to any country. The subjects' attitude toward the cultural dimensions of EIL seems to combine a native culture centred angle with one that highlights a global attitude to culture.

5.1 Teaching about specific cultures

Teachers were asked in the questionnaire and interviews to indicate the level of importance in how they viewed learning about different cultures (British, American, other native cultures, ESL cultures, EFL cultures, Portuguese culture) and international aspects not specific to any country. In the questionnaire, teachers reacted to seven statements in a Likert-scale. Moreover, they were

also asked if they would have different approaches to teaching culture depending on the type of students they taught (teacher trainees or ESP students).

Some teachers characterized the teaching of culture as “important”, “fundamental” and “absolutely essential”. In one teacher’s opinion (SE03¹) “teaching a language is transmitting cultural aspects”.

While some teachers shared the opinion that culture should be a means and not an end and that cultural aspects should be chosen according to their influence on language, one teacher had a different opinion:

UL04: *The teaching of English should touch on other cultural aspects whatever they might be even when not related to the language.*

However, two teachers believed that teaching culture is not a relevant issue in their classes:

UE04: *There’s some room for that but not much (...) there’s not enough time. At the end of the day, ESP classes focus mostly on grammar.*

UE02: *I don’t think it’s that relevant. If our aim is the international use of the language, then it’s not so important to study individual cultures of every English speaking country.*

The analysis of quantitative data shows that teachers hold an overall positive attitude toward learning/teaching about some specific cultures. First of all, the vast majority of teachers (96.1%) believe that it is *very important/important* to study about British culture. In addition, studying about American culture is seen by 92.3% of the teachers as *very important/important*. Next, 76.0% said that it is *very important/important* to learn about Portuguese culture. Learning/teaching about international cultural aspects not specific to any country is *very important/important* for 73.1% of the teachers. Most teachers (72%) also hold the view that it is *very important/important* to learn/teach about ENL countries. Remarkably, most teachers do not attach much importance to studying about ESL and EFL cultures as just 40% stated that it is *very important/important* to study about ESL countries and even fewer teachers (only 16.7%) said it is *very important/important* to learn/teach about EFL countries (see Table 1 for the overall percentages for each statement and response).

	British culture	American culture	Other ENL cultures (Canada, South Africa, Australia,...)	ESL cultures (Nigeria, India, Hong Kong,...)	EFL cultures (France, Japan, Russia,...)	International cultural aspects not specific to any country	Portuguese culture
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very important	69.2%	65.4%	28.0%	12.0%	4.2%	42.3%	32.0%
Important	26.9%	26.9%	44.0%	28.0%	12.5%	30.8%	44.0%
Neither important nor unimportant	3.8%	3.8%	24.0%	36.0%	29.2%	23.1%	20.0%
Unimportant		3.8%	4.0%	20.0%	12.5%	3.8%	
Very unimportant				4.0%	41.7%		4.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1. Overall percentages for each statement and response (teachers).

¹ SE = School of Education of Beja; UL = University of Lisbon; UE = University of Evora; ST = School of Tourism of Estoril

These results make it clear that in the teachers' opinion British and American cultures play a very important role in the language class:

ST02: *As we're teaching English, our references will always be the US and England.*

One teacher explained his choice for presenting British and American cultures in his teacher training classes:

UE01: *I do it with these students because I think that a lot of textbooks that they'll be using with their future students also rely a lot on information about Britain and America.*

In addition, two ESP teachers displayed a culturally centred viewpoint which emphasizes British culture only:

ST01: *It's important that we say something about British culture because if the language is seen as a bridge then there are some cultural aspects that can also be seen as a bridge so it's important that we know something about the British.*

ST03: *What I did was to make them more sensible to British history. (...) I believe it's important that we know about the origin.*

Surprisingly, two other subjects explained why they do not incorporate British or American culture in their classes, either emphasizing the international scope of English or denying a view of culture based on nationalities:

UE02: *If the aim is to learn an international language then we cannot be limited to one or two or three cultures, we'd have to study them all.*

UE03: *This doesn't exist! This is a myth! What is American culture? What state are we talking about? Are we talking about an underground New York culture or are we talking about Florida? (...) We understand people by their lifestyle not their citizenship. (...) I don't believe there's a native British culture either.*

Furthermore, one subject believed that stereotypical facts should be avoided and general cultural aspects emphasized:

UL02: *What you find in materials, like the British like tea, they eat this, that, well, that kind of thing seems to be to me stereotypical and really untrue for the most part. (...) Getting into what's happening where, when, how, why would be more relevant than having fragmented stale presentations of facts.*

Another subject valued international cultural aspects in her approach to teaching culture in ESP classes:

UE03: *Sometimes I use materials from international meetings and conferences, how the Greek, the Turkish, the Indians react when they face the same situation, their cultural behaviour.*

Some teachers underscored that, since English is not tied to any one culture, the major aspect in language learning should be cross-cultural awareness:

SE02: *I'm not really worried about issues relating to one culture in particular, native or non-native, I'm interested in issues concerning the contemporary world.*

Other teachers emphasized Portuguese culture, international cultural aspects and other native cultures. Including Portuguese culture in the English language class was viewed as an effective means for comparing and contrasting the different cultures:

SE02: *Many times it comes as a contrast. We usually depart from a foreign context, English speaking or non-English speaking, and then later on we compare and contrast it with the students' own experience in terms of Portuguese culture.*

Although some teachers stressed the need to establish links between the native English and Portuguese cultures, one native English teacher believed he would not be the right person to do so:

UE01: *Not being Portuguese, I wouldn't try to teach them their own culture.*

Moreover, in his opinion, the culture to be studied should be related to the language used in class:

UE01: *It would sound a little artificial to learn about Portuguese culture through the medium of English.*

As far as teaching native cultures other than British and American is concerned, one subject expressed his concern to relate culture and language teaching:

UE01: *From a general education perspective (...) it's good to learn about other cultures whether it be English speaking cultures or not. Obviously, if it's an English speaking culture than it's already an input into the language straight away, it's an obvious thing to use as a vehicle for language teaching.*

On the other hand, some teachers observed that they would not prepare classes specifically on native cultures:

UE02: *I don't actually value the teaching of culture as culture per se. But I'm aware that through certain materials I end up transmitting some cultural aspects from several English speaking countries. (...) But I never choose materials with that in mind.*

However, results showed that teachers do not see much relevance in presenting ESL or EFL cultures. In spite of that, one of the subjects mentioned her work in an African Studies course and the relevance of presenting ESL varieties in these classes in particular and in EFL classes in general:

UL02: *One of my courses is English for African Studies and so I'm concentrating on African types of English and the students have to understand the sociocultural reality of different African countries. (...) It's good for [EFL students] to look at Bollywood films and see how other people speak the language.*

Nevertheless, other subjects did not consider the inclusion of ESL or EFL cultures in their English classes for a number of reasons. One subject wondered if the English class should be the right one to expose students to other cultures:

SE03: *Would the English class be the most adequate for that? Perhaps all classes are responsible for it, perhaps the Portuguese language class could also include global culture. I don't see why it should be in the English class.*

Another teacher referred to limitations of time and relevance:

UL08: *We can't attempt to teach too much, [we should] concentrate on the main thing (...) I do question their importance in the Portuguese context.*

Finally, a subject believed that contacting ESL and EFL cultures are likely to happen outside school:

ST02: *If I'm told that I have to include cultural aspects from every country that uses English as a language of communication, this is a never-ending task, it's impossible! (...) I think it has to do with the student's own discovery. (...) What I might do is to say 'Listen, we're talking about these cases but don't forget that you'll be working with people from different cultures so you've got to have open minds to that. And all the rest you'll learn through hands-on experience'.*

5.1.1 Teaching culture in ESP or teacher training classes

Teachers were also asked if they thought studying cultural aspects depended on the students and aims of the course (ESP students or teacher trainees). Data analysis showed that nine teachers said there were no differences when teaching cultural aspects to ESP students or teacher trainees, while seventeen teachers said there were some differences depending on the group of students they had.

A. There are no differences in the two groups of students

Some teachers emphasized the idea that learning cultural aspects does not depend on the kind of students:

UL09: *You can't be competent in a language without knowing the culture in depth.*

UL03: *Any EFL student should develop cross-cultural communication or awareness.*

UL08: *Cultural aspects are always important as they help to understand more about the language.*

B. Learning culture depends on the students

Some teachers identified two major reasons for distinguishing cultural aspects depending on the students. First, different learning goals mean different content as far as culture is concerned:

UE05: *Cultural aspects should always be present though the kind of student will define the scope of their studies.*

UE06: *We should distinguish general cultural aspects which could be shared by both kinds of students and other specific means which are related to certain topic areas in different professional activities.*

Second, due to the relevance of cultural aspects to certain professions, it may be possible that teacher trainees might need greater exposure to culture:

SE01: *In some specific and technical courses these cultural aspects might be secondary.*

SE03: *Cultural aspects should be dealt with in more depth if we're talking about future teachers of English.*

UL05: *Future teachers of English should have a greater knowledge [of cultural aspects].*

5.2 Importance of teaching about cultures in general

The following section analyses quantitative data regarding teachers' attitudes toward teaching culture in general. Subjects showed their attitude toward learning about cultures in general by reacting to two statements in a Likert-scale: (a) it is important to know that different cultures use English differently; and (b) it is important to learn about the cultural patterns of English speaking as well as non-English speaking peoples.

96% of the teachers *strongly agree/agree* that it is important to know that different cultures use English differently and 76.9% *strongly agree/agree* that it is important to learn about the cultural patterns of English speaking as well as non-English speaking peoples (see Table 2 for the overall percentages for each statement and response).

	(a) It is important to know that different cultures use English differently		(b) It is important to learn about the cultural patterns of English speaking as well as non-English speaking peoples	
	Count	%	Count	%
Strongly agree	12	48.0	9	34.6
Agree	12	48.0	11	42.3
Neither agree nor disagree	1	4.0	6	23.1
Missing system	1	3.8		
Total	26	100.0	26	100.0

Table 2. Overall percentages for each statement and response (teachers).

All in all, subjects reacted more positively to the statement which does not mention non-native cultures. In other words, subjects distinguish an approach to dealing with non-native cultures on the whole from one which relates to particular cultures.

5.3 Influences on teachers' attitudes toward native and non-native cultures

This section analyses data from teachers' interviews when subjects commented on some probable influences on their attitudes toward teaching native and non-native cultures in English classes. It is believed that the analysis of the subjects' English learning experiences can help describe their present attitudes.

Teachers pointed out some possible influences on their attitudes toward native and non-native cultures (American culture, British culture, other native cultures, ESL cultures and EFL cultures) based on how these cultures were presented (a) in classes when they were learning English, (b) by their English teachers, and (c) in the materials they used to learn English.

Based on teachers' remarks, data were divided into two categories: (a) influences on their attitudes toward American and British cultures; and (b) influences on their attitudes toward other native and non-native cultures.

A. Influences on teachers' attitudes toward American and British cultures

Although some teachers remarked that there was an emphasis on British culture, a few subjects recalled having classes or teachers who briefly presented American culture. Some subjects mentioned having studied American culture in primary school – “*because the teacher was American*” (ST01) – and at university.

B. Influences on teachers' attitudes toward other native and non-native cultures

Few subjects referred to classes or teachers in their English language education who made extensive references to native and non-native cultures other than British and American. One subject mentioned some brief references to cultural aspects of Australia and New Zealand, while another subject observed that in some of the classes that talked about Great Britain there were some references to Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

One subject recalled a native teacher at university who used short stories written by African authors. Similarly, another subject told of the same kind of experience:

UE02: *In literature classes (...) I studied South-African writers, Canadian writers, (...) that's when I got in touch with different realities of the English speaking world. But it came from literature not language classes.*

Some teachers recalled having classes and teachers who focused on British culture and, to a lesser extent, American culture. Moreover, few remarks were made about classes or teachers who presented cultural aspects of other native and non-native cultures.

In sum, from teachers' data, subjects were more able to remember contacting with British culture and, though not as frequently, American culture. It seems to be fair to say that the subjects' educational background – learning the language or learning to teach the language – was centred on the most influential cultures in ELT, with a clear emphasis on British civilization.

6. Overall discussion and conclusion

This study aimed at identifying teachers' attitudes toward the cultural dimensions of EIL based on data analysed from questionnaires and interviews which considered the following features: subjects' attitudes toward learning about specific cultures (native and non-native); subjects' attitudes toward learning about culture in general; and influences on teachers' attitudes toward native and non-native cultures.

On reflection, teachers viewed learning culture in ELT very positively. However, if, on the one hand, they regarded British culture, American culture, international cultural aspects not specific to any country, and other English native cultures as important, they did not have the same opinion about ESL and EFL cultures. Most teachers regarded ESL and EFL cultures as quite unimportant. Apparently, they have not assimilated the importance of non-native cultures

although several applied linguists have observed that teaching materials should focus on native as well as non-native communities. Furthermore, when asked about teaching culture in general, that is, without naming specific cultures such as British, American, ESL or EFL, they reacted more positively toward the statement which did not refer to non-native cultures.

Moreover, they pointed out British culture as the most important culture in ELT, followed by American culture. However, teachers also referred to the importance of international cultural aspects in language classes. This may indicate that besides appreciating British and American cultures, teachers are also interested in approaching English as an international language, which seems to reinforce Gnutzmann's (1999) opinion that rather than focusing on target culture-specific topics, a stronger orientation toward international topics should be more appropriate in teaching English as an international language.

There seems to be no consensus among teachers on how to approach culture in ELT. Most of them believed that the choice of cultural materials in language classes depended on the kind of students they taught (e.g. teacher trainees or ESP students). However, about one third of the teachers affirmed that there would be no differences between their students and their approach to dealing with culture would be the same.

A fundamental aim of this study is to make space for the voices of the Expanding Circle. The EIL debate has been led by researchers in the Inner and Outer Circles. However, this does not represent the reality of English use in the world today. The future of the English language does not depend only on what happens in the native countries of the Inner Circle or in the communities of the Outer Circle where English has acquired an official status.

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IV.

TRANSLATION STUDIES

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Towards a Methodological Approach for Frame Identification and Analysis in Translation

Summary

Frame analysis is a relatively new methodological approach which shows how people understand activities or situations. It originated in sociology and its application to translation has not been considered practically or theoretically yet, though the advantages may be manifold. Consisting of two main parts, this paper presents a methodology for frame identification and analysis, and suggests this be applied to the translation of pragmatic texts. The first part presents the concepts of frame and frame analysis as they appear in literature and as they are interpreted in this paper for translation purposes. The second part focuses on the exemplification of a methodological framework which includes the integration of frames into the translation process. It is shown that by using frames, translators can obtain the cognitive image of the text, create various versions of the source text in the target language, and use translation strategies consistently and transparently.

Key words: frame analysis, information universe, translation process, translation methodology

Metodološki pristop k okvirni identifikaciji in analizi pri prevajanju

Povzetek

Okvirna analiza kot razmeroma nov metodološki pristop pojasnjuje, kako ljudje umevajo dejavnosti in razmere. Izvira iz sociologije, njena vloga pri prevajanju pa doslej še ni bila praktično ali teoretično obdelana kljub njenim mnogoterim prednostim. Članek v prvem delu predstavi koncepte okvira in okvirne analize v luči obstoječe literature in jih nato aplicira na potrebe prevajanja. V drugem delu pa s primeri podkrepi metodološki pristop v smislu vključevanja okvirov v proces prevajanja. Raziskava dokaže, da si lahko prevajalci s pomočjo okvirov ustvarijo kognitivno sliko besedila, predstavljajo različne oblike izhodiščnega besedila v ciljnem jeziku ter dosledno in nazorno uporabljajo prevajalske strategije.

Ključne besede: okvirna analiza, univerzalna informacija, proces prevajanja, prevodna metodologija

Towards a Methodological Approach for Frame Identification and Analysis in Translation

1. Introduction

According to recent claims and desiderata in translation studies, the more translators know about the structure and the dynamics of discourse, the more readily and accurately they can translate both the content and the spirit of a text (Nida 1997, 42). Similarly, international research projects highlight directions of research which aim at helping translators make reasonable and consistent decisions as to the relevance and reliability of source text features in the target text (Gerzymisch-Arbogast 2005, 7). In line with such voices and based on a deficit analysis whose results were published recently (Dejica 2009), I have created a model for source text analysis (Dejica 2006, 103–10) which analyses the Information Universe (IU) constituents, i.e., information carriers in texts, from various perspectives: atomistic, hol-atomistic, and holistic (Gerzymisch-Arbogast 2006). Its main aim is to facilitate text understanding and, implicitly, translation.

In my interpretation of the text perspectives (Dejica 2008, 77–91), the atomistic perspective implies identification and analysis of salient individual IU constituents in texts, whereas the hol-atomistic perspective implies the analysis of all possible relations at text level between IU constituents, such as cognitive, semantic, lexico-grammatical and syntactic. Finally, the holistic analysis implies identification, establishment and analysis of various possible cultural or generic relations above text level, which are established between such constituents and other relevant constituents from different IUs.

The current paper deals with the presentation of one type of analysis suggested to be performed from a hol-atomistic perspective during the translation process, i.e. the analysis of cognitive relations, which can be represented in texts in the form of information frames. In the first part, the concepts of frame and frame analysis are presented as they appear in the literature and as they are seen in this paper. In the second part, a suggested methodology for frame identification, analysis and application to translation is illustrated. The methodology is explained and exemplified on a pragmatic, i.e., non-literary, text. The last part resumes the consideration of the advantages of using the model.

2. The concept of frame

Very broadly, the term “cognition” is used to define the act of knowing, or knowledge. Sociologists and psychologists have shown that people organize and store their knowledge of the world as fixed data structures, one such form being the *frame* (Goffman 1974, Charniak 1976, König 2007).

The concept of frame is basically synonymous to Goffman (1974), who was the pioneer in frame identification and analysis from a sociological perspective. The excerpt below illustrates Goffman's (1974) idea of frame as it appears in *Frame Analysis – An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, his well-acclaimed and, at the same time, very controversial book (Lemert 1997, xii):

It has been argued that a strip of activity will be perceived by its participants in terms of the rules or premises of a primary framework, whether social or natural, and that activity so perceived provides the model for two basic kinds of transformation - keying and fabrication. It has also been argued that these frameworks are not merely a matter of mind but correspond in some sense to the way in which an aspect of the activity itself is organized - especially activity directly involving social agents. Organizational premises are involved, and these are something cognition somehow arrives at, not something cognition creates or generates. Given their understanding of what it is that is going on, individuals fit their actions to this understanding and ordinarily find that the ongoing world supports this fitting. These organizational premises - sustained both in the mind and in activity - I call the frame of the activity. (Goffman 1974, 247)

In the same vein, Charniak (1976) defines frame as

A static data structure about one stereotyped topic, such as shopping at the supermarket, taking a bath, or piggy banks. Each frame is primarily made up of many statements about the frame topic, called "frame statements" (henceforth abbreviated to FS). These statements are expressed in a suitable semantic representation, although I will simply express them in ordinary English in this paper. (Charniak 1976, 42)

In more basic terms and more recently, König (2007) provides his own interpretation of frames based on Goffman's definition. Thus, according to him,

Frames are basic cognitive structures which guide the perception and representation of reality. On the whole, frames are not consciously manufactured but are unconsciously adopted in the course of communicative processes. On a very banal level, frames structure which parts of reality become noticed. (König 2007)

König's definition is accompanied by an exemplification of a frame in a real life situation, quoted below:

For example, a group of persons lined up in an orderly fashion at the side of a road might evoke the frame "bus queue" in a passer-by. This particular frame structures perception in the way that attention is paid to the orderly arrangement of people in a line, which is one indicator of the "bus queue frame" and might have actually triggered it. The frame also directs attention to other latent frame elements, such as a bus stop sign. At the same time, it deflects attention from clothing style, body shape, or communications among the presumed prospective bus passengers. (König 2007)

To put it broadly, from these definitions and exemplifications, frames can be considered as data or information structures which gather typical individuals, actions and activities, i.e. constituents in general, in a situation. Basically, examples of frames could be limitless, e.g., *university-frame*, *car-frame*, *computer frame*, etc.

These frames are static representations showing *what* constituents are associated, i.e., a *university frame* may consist of *students*, *lecturers*, *classes*, *learning material*, etc. As for *how* these constituents are associated, frames are seen as being made up as recognizable structures of relevancies. *What* and *how* constituents are associated in a frame is accounted for cognitively, based on contextual factors and on each individual's knowledge background.

In the last decades, frame analysis has evolved as a discipline in its own rights, being mostly used

in communication studies. The evolution of *frame analysis* is explained by Lemert (1997), who admits that at first,

Sociologists never quite knew what to make of *Frame Analysis* (1974) and other later works implicated in Goffman's own linguistic turn, while it is precisely *Frame Analysis* and *Forms of Talk* (1981) that drew the most attention outside the field. (Lemert 1997, XV)

To my knowledge, its application to translation and its integration into translation studies, 'outside the field' as Lemert (1997) puts it, have not been yet considered practically or methodologically. It is my belief that both translators and translation scholars could benefit from the exploration of this inter-disciplinary, yet virgin ground.

Since frame identification is usually based on intuitive grounds and on general background knowledge, and since recognizable structures of relevancies could be accounted for differently by different translators, I consider that in relation to translation, frame identification and its subsequent analysis should be reconsidered so that translators may approach them objectively and consensually. The suggested approach to frame identification and analysis presented here combines pragmatic identification of information and hol-atomistic analysis (Dejica 2008, 77–91). It is meant to offer translators a clear cognitive image of the text in the form of an information frame, which can be used to serve various translation purposes. The suggested approach consists of a series of steps which are integrated into a translation process and exemplified in Part 3 of this article.

In relation to translation, I consider that every text displays two different types of frames: a generic frame, conceptual in nature, and an information frame, which is the materialization in the text of the conceptual frame.

Every translator, if more or less experienced, has what I call his/her own generic image of the text to be translated. The generic image consists of a series of genre specificities (Bhatia 1993, Swales 1993), i.e., textual structure and organization, thematic progression, word order, modes, content, etc. These generic or genre specificities are not seen or made explicit by the writer, but known by the translator from his/her experience or training. For example, in the case of a project proposal, the generic frame is formed of the project aims, historical development of the organization, sustainability of the project, budget, etc. The budget section is richer in figures than the development section (which means less or no text to be translated), and so on. I call this image the *generic frame* of the text. It is conceptual in nature and setting it up and visualizing it takes place before the actual reading of the text, usually from the background information the translation might (or should) have on particular genres, or from preliminary discussions with the client.

The *information frame* or *information universe frame* is in my conception a materialization in the text of the generic frame; it is a static representation which presents a situation, process, product, etc., and which consists of various Information Universe constituents (Dejica 2006, 103–10), which are as different as are texts. Hence the multitude of information frames which can be identified and analysed for each different text. If usually the generic frame of a text is only one for each genre (it may display variations in the case of sub-genres), its materialization is different in different texts. In other words, the project proposal as a genre usually has the

same structure, degree of specificity, etc., but different informational content, i.e. it may refer to ways of improving the environment, saving energy, preserving nature, etc., materialized in an information frame specific for each proposal.

3. Frames and translation: a methodology

Translation is seen here as “an activity which transfers into a target text – with a specific purpose in mind – the writer’s intention expressed in a source text” (Dejica 2009a, 131). I use ‘transfer’ with a double connotation: that found in Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997) and Hatim and Munday (2004) to imply that I see translation as process, and that found in Nida and Taber (1969) and Gerzymisch-Arbogast (2005) to refer to the second phase of the translation process, i.e., that of transfer, where the ‘material’ analysed in the reception phase is transferred into the mind of the translator and compared for translation purposes. Reception, transfer and reproduction are the three phases of translation on which the following suggested methodology for approaching cognitive relations, and implicitly information frames, is based. The approach to frame identification and analysis for the translation of pragmatic texts suggested here is thus a multi-phase process which combines pragmatic identification of information and hol-atomistic analysis, and which consists of a series of phases and steps. For exemplification and analysis, I will use the Ptolemy Project text (below), a sample of a pragmatic text taken from an extended project description:

Project Ptolemy Objectives

The project aims to develop techniques supporting heterogeneous modelling, including both formal “meta-models” and a software laboratory for experimenting with heterogeneous modelling. In this context, it will explore methods based on dataflow and process networks, discrete-event systems, synchronous/reactive languages, finite-state machines, and communicating sequential processes. It will make contributions ranging from fundamental semantics to synthesis of embedded software and custom hardware.

(Ptolemy Project, <http://ptolemy.berkeley.edu/objectives.htm>, May 25, 2006)

- *Phase 1. Reception.* The first translation phase, synonymous to text understanding, implies the following sequence of steps:

Step 1. Establishment of the generic frame of the text

As explained before, the generic frame is conceptual in nature and consists of all the knowledge a translator has on a particular genre. The specialized educational background and the practical experience of the translator are essential in establishing this conceptual frame. In this respect, familiarity with results of empirical studies on genre specificities can definitely be a plus, even though such studies are relatively few and their results are not standardized. The application of genre analysis to translation is also a relatively new inter-disciplinary approach, which is recommended by many voices (Trosborg 2000).

Step 2. Identification of the Information Universe constituents.

All the constituents expressed in the source text form what I call the *Information Universe* of the

text (Dejica 2006, 103–10). I use the term ‘universe’ as in the natural sciences, where it stands for the sum of everything that exists in the cosmos. Just as in science, in this approach, universe stands for the sum of all the information that exists in a text. The IU constituents are carriers of information which structurally can be divided into a two-part information system, which in my approach is formed of Themes and Rhemes.

For the identification of Themes and Rhemes, I suggest the use of a pragmatic Theme-Rheme (PTR) model. As the name implies, the model uses pragmatic parameters for the identification of information constituents, i.e. Themes and Rhemes, such as shared background knowledge of the sender and receiver, scope of attention, etc. The model and its application are described in detail in a series of publications (Dejica 2006, 2008, 2009a) and resuming them here would exceed the aim and length of the paper. For the sake of the subsequent presentation, I present here only the results of the analysis, in the form of identified Themes and Rhemes:

1. Theme – given information: *the project*
2. Rhemes – new information: (i.e. the objectives proper): *development of techniques supporting heterogeneous modelling, including both formal “meta-models” and a software laboratory for experimenting with heterogeneous modelling; exploration of methods based on dataflow and process networks, discrete-event systems, synchronous/reactive languages, finite-state machines, and communicating sequential processes; making contributions ranging from fundamental semantics to synthesis of embedded software and custom hardware.*

Step 3. Hol-atomistic analysis of the Information Universe constituents.

By visualizing the identified IU constituents, the translator draws hol-atomistic cognitive relations between the rhematic information constituents and materializes them in the form of a frame, which in the selected example is a *computer frame*. The *computer frame* is not named explicitly in the text but is deduced from the sum of all the rhematic information in the IU: *heterogeneous modelling, dataflow, process networks, discrete-event systems, synchronous/reactive languages, finite-state machines, communicating sequential processes, embedded software, and custom hardware.*

Step 4. Narrowing the Hol-atomistic analysis.

This step could be performed as part of Step 3, but for reasons of clarity I treat it separately; during this step, the translator basically narrows the analysis by drawing structural cognitive relations between the elements of the previously identified IU frame (IUF) with the aim of finding possible secondary meaning categories within the frame. Such possible secondary meaning categories, subordinated to a main IU frame, can be classified into secondary frames or sub-frames (SF). In the Ptolemy Project example, there are two such SFs, i.e., the hardware and software components of the computer frame: *hardware frame (networks, systems, machines) and software frame (modelling, dataflow, languages, processes, software).*

Step 5. Resuming the Hol-atomistic analysis.

Once the main IUF and its possible SFs are identified, the translator resumes the process (Steps 3 and 4) so as to identify other possible IUFs and SFs. This is a very useful step since smaller

frames, usually not identified at first sight, may be discovered and established as well. Usually short texts can display two or three information frames. In the analysed example, one more IUF can be identified, i.e. a *research-frame*, from the sum of the processes used to put the computer-frame into practice: *techniques, modelling, laboratory, experimenting, and exploration*.

Step 6. Visualizing the identified information frames.

In this last step of Phase 1, once all the possible IUFs and SFs have been identified (Steps 3-5), the translator draws superordinate and subordinate relations between them and completes thus the cognitive image of the text to be translated. In the Project Ptolemy example, the Information Universe frames together with the sub-frames can be represented as a network of relations as follows:

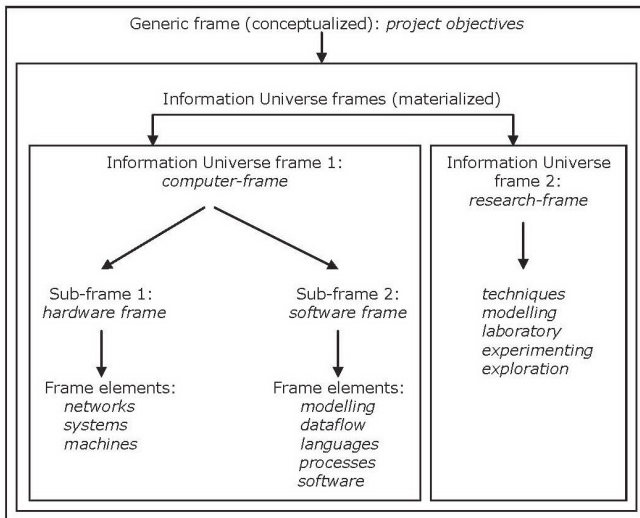


Fig. 1. Visualisation of structural cognitive relations between the Information Universe constituents (source text).

- *Phase 2. Transfer.* In the second translation phase, based on the previous analysis, the translator decides upon a final Information Universe frame which will be used for creating the target text in Phase 3.

Step 7. Establishing the Information Universe frame in the target text.

This is a decisive step in the translation process. When establishing the IU frame to be used in the creation of the target text, the translator must take into account the translation situation which may consist of a series of factors, such as the writer’s intention, the translation purpose, the target audience, the target language peculiarities, and the client’s requirement. Sometimes, some of these factors can be established prior to starting the process upon preliminary discussions with the client. If the client does not have any specific requirements, based on the other factors, the translator can now decide whether the target text will be source- or target-language oriented, i.e., whether it will preserve the flavour of the original or whether it will be adapted to the target language specificities.

Step 8. Building the final frame using translation strategies.

Once the translator has reached a decision and the translation situation is clear, s/he builds the final frame using the most adequate translation strategies (Leppihalme 1997, Newmark 1988, Delisle 1999, Chesterman 2008). For exemplification purposes and assuming that the target language is Romanian, based on the source-text frame visualized in Step 6, the following two possible target-text frames can be obtained to suit two different translation situations:

a. Translation situation 1: source-language oriented text

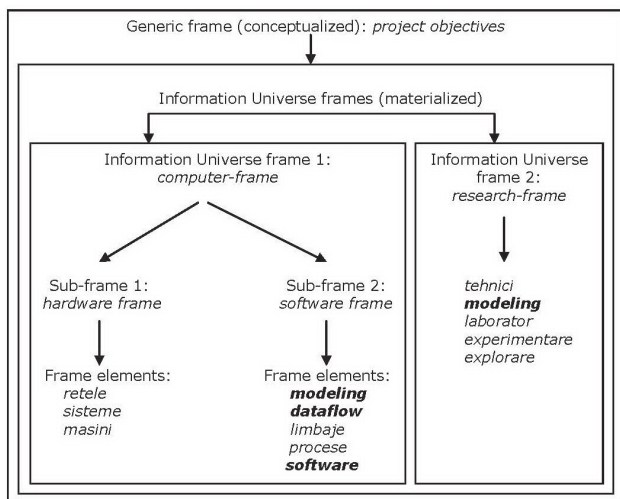


Fig. 2. Visualisation of structural cognitive relations between the information universe constituents in the target text (source-language oriented; language pair: English-Romanian).

b. Translation situation 2: target-language oriented text

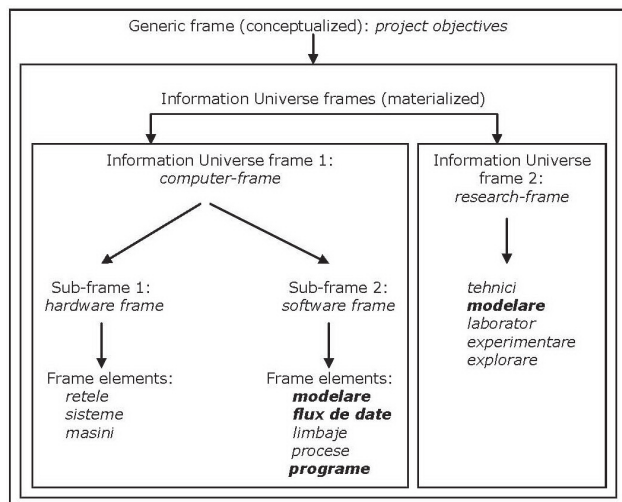


Fig. 3. Visualisation of structural cognitive relations between the information universe constituents in the target text (target-language oriented; language pair: English-Romanian).

In the two translation situations presented above, different translation strategies were used to render the same frame constituents from English into Romanian. In the first situation, to create a source-language oriented text, one which preserves the flavour of the original, borrowing, loan (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995) or foreignization (Venuti 1998) were the predominant strategies used; in the second one, to create a target-language oriented text, practically a text where the frame constituents would be identical to those normally used in the target language by a native speaker/writer, domestication (Venuti 1998) or calque (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995) were considered to be the most appropriate translation strategies. In Figs. 2 and 3 above, the application of these strategies is highlighted with bold characters.

- *Phase 3. Reproduction.* In the last phase of the translation process the target text is created.

Step 9. Translation

The translator translates now the text using the final frame established in Step 8. This is relatively a rather easy step, but one which should be used in conjunction with other analyses of the source text, i.e., atomistic, hol-atomistic and holistic (Dejica 2008, 77–91).

4. Conclusion

Applying information frames to translation is not sufficient as a key to felicitous translation. Their application should be used in conjunction with the other suggested analyses, i.e. semantic, lexico-grammatical, syntactic, cultural and generic, meant to be performed from the three different atomistic, hol-atomistic and holistic perspectives.

Some more words of caution are in order. In practice, due to this rather complex methodological approach, identifying, analysing and re-creating information frames may be sometimes considered to slow down the translation process and eventually may prove not to be cost-effective. Moreover, their application would not be suitable for extensive texts, for the very same reasons.

However, information frames may prove extremely helpful in the case of short problematic texts, highly specialised texts, or those rich in terminological content. In this case, their contribution to translation is undeniable: applied from a hol-atomistic perspective, information frames are extremely helpful for visualizing cognitive relations in texts, which ultimately leads to text understanding. Other major advantages of using information frames for the translation of pragmatic texts include but are not limited to the possibility of (1) creating source- or target-oriented versions of the original text, all different, yet all ‘correct’ depending on the translation situation, (2) using translation strategies consistently and transparently throughout the entire text, and (3) applying them to any other language pairs, either for professional or didactic purposes.

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