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About the journal

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English Studies at NBU (ESNBU) is an entirely open access, double-blind peer reviewed academic journal published by the Department of English Studies, New Bulgarian University in one or two issues per year in print and online.

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English Studies at NBU invites contributions for Volume 2, Issue 1 to be published in April 2016. Manuscripts are accepted in English. Translations of published articles are generally not accepted.

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Subjects covered by this journal

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Submissions

Please email your submissions to englishstudies@nbu.bg.

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AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL FOR ELICITING KEY WORDS

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Abstract

The article reports research on the concept of key words as statistically significant items in a text or corpus. It reviews approaches to eliciting key words used in various software products for language analysis and the rationale for adopting them. Based on empirical data, a new method is proposed and tested on an exploratory corpus. The motivation and arguments for proposing the procedure are revealed, using comparisons between different languages. The adequacy of the results yielded by the different methods is tested via a mechanism developed with this research.

Key words: corpora, key words, chi-square, log likelihood, lemmas, lemmatization.

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In a rare monograph Phillips (1989:11) observed:

[A] distributional analysis of textual substance invoking no knowledge of the semantic content, the syntactic organisation or the lexical meaning of the text would reveal the existence of global patternings in the lexis of the text. [...] What the text is about may be specified by providing a semantic interpretation for the formally identified macrostructure.

Since then many researchers have been fascinated by the idea that the lexical structure of texts should be indicative of something bigger. In linguistic circles it is often hinted that corpus-extracted keywords were something that John Sinclair talked about at length, influenced by Phillips' thesis, but published nothing about. Several methods have been introduced of deriving items of key significance and this research purports to contribute to those.

Definitions

In a review of literature on key words, Stubbs (2010: 25) traces them back to Firth's "sociologically important words, which one might call focal or pivotal words". Then he refers to a range of German research, including Teubert's *politische Vexierwört*, which reflect layers of political meanings on the surface and below it. Finally, Stubbs mentions French *mots clés*, embracing Benveniste's concept of civilization. Stubbs' coveted goal – also revealed with the title of one of his books (Stubbs 1996) – are key words as indicators of cultural values in society. In this he continues a tradition established with William's list (1976/1983) of culturally significant items – "a vocabulary of culture and society". "Keywords are the tips of icebergs: pointers to complex lexical objects which represent the shared beliefs and values of a culture." (Stubbs 2010: 23).

Baker's definition (2004:350) forges a connection with discourses: "keywords will direct the researcher to important concepts in a text (in relation to other texts) that may help to highlight the existence of types of (embedded) discourse or ideology." While the term 'discourse' has multiple meanings, Baker (2006:2) uses it to refer to a 'system of statements which constructs an object'.

Sinclair (1996) collates cultural significance with textual role: "Keywords are words which are claimed to have a special status, either because they express important

evaluative social meanings, or because they play a special role in a text or text-type. From a linguistic point of view, they contribute to the long search for units of meaning”.

The creator of one of the most popular software products for linguistic analysis Wordsmith, (Scott 2001:48) describes keywords via their frequency: “The idea is quite simple: if a word is found to be much more frequent in one individual text than its frequency in a reference corpus would suggest, it is probably a “key word”.

In this definition the ambiguity transpires whether we search higher frequency within a text, or in a corpus. We believe there should be a difference between the two, but so far this issue remains unexplored in Corpus Linguistics.

For the purposes of this research, we choose to focus on statistically established words that have a predominance in a corpus. Whether they project cultural values, or textual properties remains to be checked for each particular case. We believe that the role statistically predominant words play is an effect, rather than a starting point in searching for key words.

Methods of eliciting key words

Scott and Tribble (2006: 57) base their approach to establishing key words on repetitive reference. If a proposition – as suggested by Kintsch and van Dijk (1978) – or a sentence – as suggested by Hoey (1991) – is referred to repetitively, then it should have more importance about the text as a whole. Then, Scott and Tribble select a unit to trace that is immediately obvious and straightforward to establish – the word form, without considering any grammatical or lexical suffixes added to it. In the belief that if a concept is referred to more frequently, then it must lead to the basic conceptual load in the text, they look for lexical repetitions. They then establish statistical procedures comparing the percentage of the entire text that this word presents to the percentage the same word presents in a big general corpus.

Further, some languages have inflections and each verb can occur in a number of inflected forms, as is the case with French, for instance. Languages which have cases contain a range of forms for the nouns and adjectives as well. Yet others agglutinate forms. Thus the frequencies depend heavily on the number of inflected forms. This is reflected in the respective frequencies, as Philip (2010:186) rightly observes:

“... the calculation of key words is dependent on frequency measures and repetition, yet these matters are not entirely unproblematic. In particular, a language with very few inflected forms has more recurrent forms than a fully inflected one, which in turn has fewer forms than agglutinative or infixing languages. While each word form attracts its own distinctive patterning, the dispersion of closely-related meanings over variant forms of a lemma may affect frequency measures and statistical calculations.”

Utka (2004) in his analysis of keywords in George Orwell’s 1984, lemmatises noun forms in the text, and calculates keywords based on the frequencies of lemmas, rather than individual word forms. Baker (2004) observes that carrying out such a strategy on his corpus of gay and lesbian narratives “would have enabled a more inclusive form of analysis as it most likely would have resulted in the lemma SESSION being key rather than just the word SESSIONS. However, a lemma-based analysis may not always be a useful strategy as particular word forms can contain specific collocations or senses which would be lost when combining word forms together.” Thus, working with un-lemmatised corpora seems to have established itself as the standard.

If lexical recurrence is to be interpreted, then serious statistical procedures need to prove that the numbers are not haphazard. Several have been evolved. This research puts forward a tentative suggestion for another one, while trying to check the outcome of existing ones.

The Chi square list compares the frequency of occurrence found experimentally with those expected on the basis of some theoretical model (Oakes 1998:24). In the case where there is no difference between the reference corpus and the target, the null hypothesis applies. The observed value is denoted with O, and the one in the reference corpus – E. The value of O - E is found and squared to give more weight to the cases where the mismatch between O and E is greatest. Thus, the formula is this:

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Chi-square can also serve as a measure of evenness of distribution. Equiprobable distributions are characterised by the same chi-square value.

Alternatively, Dunning's log likelihood measure shows if a word or phrase is overused or underused in a specialised corpus compared with a corpus of Standard English. The formula is this:

$$G^2 = 2 \sum x_{ij} (\log_4 x_{ij} - \log_e m_e)$$

where x_{ij} are the data cell frequencies, m_y are the model cell frequencies, \log_e represents the logarithm to the base e , and the summation is carried out over all the cells in the table (Oakes, 1998, p 42).

Kilgariff (1996), having compared the chi-square and log-likelihood (also known as G-square) measures, preferred the G-square. Dunning (1993) points out that most vocabulary items are rare, and thus words in the text are not normally distributed. The advantage of the G-square or log likelihood measure is that it does not assume the normal distribution.

In his on-line software for parsing a range of corpora, Davies (2004) uses the log-likelihood calculation for eliciting keywords. Instead of using a reference corpus for his comparison, however, he employs projections – an expected value based on what has occurred so far in the text.

A Proposal for eliciting key words

The proposal proceeds from observations that concepts which are central to a text are usually named with an extended lemma of the respective lexical item. This is particularly true of languages such as Bulgarian, where the articles are bound morphemes and form new items in the lemma. A study (Anonymous 2011) reveals that research articles contain a chain of words which include the singular and the plural form of a word. They are used for giving examples and present the operative items in the research. All the articles in the corpus contain such repetition chains, irrespective of the genre, topic or subject field. Examples are given in Table 1.

<i>Article 1</i>	<i>Article 2</i>	<i>Article 3</i>	<i>Article 4</i>
transition 70. transitions 70.	areas 39. area 25.	agreements 37. agreement 32.	systems 34. system 32.
shift 30. shifts 24. utterances 39. utterance 29.	neuron 13. neurons 39.	state 14. states 31. form 13. forms 12.	grammar 62. grammars 16. structures 20. structure 44.
<i>Article 5</i>	<i>Article 6</i>	<i>Article 7</i>	<i>Article 8</i>
indicator 9. indicators 9.	words 33. word 15.	universities 49. university 31.	symbols 38. symbol 13.

paragraph 10. paragraphs 6.	pairs 8. pair 12.		system 28. systems 20.
sentence 24. sentences 10.	contrast 10. contrasts 6.		machines 20. machine 32.
	stimulus stimuli		

Table 1. *Illustrative chains in research articles.*

At the same time, the central concepts in the articles are presented with repetition chains in which the term is repeated in different forms thus allowing the use of different types of reference - generic, specific, classificatory etc. Below is the concordance of the word *fact*, illustrating that the word occurs with the definite, indefinite and zero article:

*be taken as a **brute fact** wrpl*
*are a matter of **brute fact***
*by **brute fact** i understand kripke to mean*
*to explain beyond the **brute fact** of agreement of responses that*
***collective fact** as solution after concluding that*
*found in the **collective fact** of the agreements in judgment*
*to individuals to a **collective fact** that is observed as*
*same situation to the **collective fact** which is that members of*
*not simply describe the **individual fact** of jones's supposed conformity*
*get us from the **individual fact** that jones is behaving in*
*be found in the **individual fact** of those states of the*
*still is no **internal fact** of the matter to consider*
*apparently is no non-regressible **internal fact** about the purported rule-follower*

Similar patterns are established for items central to short stories and political speeches thus suggesting the conclusion that concepts central to a text appear in different forms of the word.

Even more visibility is provided through corpora of texts in Bulgarian due to the fact that verbs have an extended list of forms inflected for person, number, tense and aspect and nouns can be plural and singular, with the definite, indefinite or zero article.

In a corpus from the Hansards from the Bulgarian Parliament, the speeches of the Prime Minister contain the following list of cognate words:

Победа (victory)
Победените (the beaten)
Победил (I have won)
Победили (We have won)
Победите (the victories)
Победител (the victor)
Победители (the victors)

They are all from the same root in Bulgarian, some are verbs, others – nouns, in different forms. The availability of such a wide range of cognate words indicates a significant interest in the topic on the part of the speaker.

That is why we believe that the list of words of key significance in a text or corpus can be compiled exploring the words which appear with an extended lemma. The fact that the speaker included in his speech several different forms of a word should signal greater attention paid to a topic. Our examples lead us to believe that immediate candidates for inclusion in such analysis are the forms from the grammatical paradigm of a word – the plural and the singular forms of nouns, the inflected forms of the verbs, the case forms of nouns etc. Other members of the key word list would be cognate words – verbs formed from nominal roots and vice versa, as well as other lexical derivatives.

Method and procedure

To test the adequacy of the proposed method for deriving key words, a corpus is compiled. Four types of key word lists are derived from the corpus:

1. The typical chi-squared list derived automatically via the software Wordsmith tools (Scott 2012);
2. The typical log-likelihood list derived automatically via the software Wordsmith tools;
3. The frequency list for the corpus purged of the grammatical high-frequency words;
4. The list of words which appear in an extended lemma in the corpus.

The keywords derived via the four methods are compared to a list of topics contained in the corpus. If the elicitation techniques work properly, then the key words would be indicative of the ‘about-ness’ of the corpus. The more the coincidences between the key words from a particular list with the projected topics, the more trustworthy the elicitation procedure via which it has been derived will be considered.

The corpus was compiled from one of the websites dedicated to Winston Churchill¹. Churchill was chosen for this research as a well-known figure in political life. The list of topics against which the key words are tested is derived from the biography of Churchill published on the website. It is in Appendix 1. It can be expected that the speeches do not reflect every aspect from Churchill's biography that is why no complete coincidence can be expected. However, the greater the co-occurrence of topics in a key word list with the biographical list of topics, the more trustworthy the procedure for deriving the key words will be considered.

The reduced frequency list is a procedure frowned upon by some for its lack of mathematical sophistication. It consists in taking the frequency list of the corpus and removing the 'function' words. As function words we treat those which are deprived of notional content – rather than those which perform grammatical functions. The outcome is also of dubious value, inasmuch as it focusses on frequency only, while the chi-square and log likelihood include a comparison with an expected value and an estimate of haphazardness. It is included for comparative purposes.

Deriving a Key word List through words with extended lemmas is done manually, via the alphabetical list produced by the Wordsmith. The words of frequency higher than 0.1 % of the entire corpus are checked for occurrence of other forms from the grammatical paradigm, or for derivatives from the same root. The concordances are then checked whether they are consistent with each other in meaning. If they are not, they are excluded from the study. As the outcome is a lengthy list, the proceeds are distilled via an index derived through the following procedure: the decimal points of the percentage of each item are multiplied by the number of members of the lemma. For example, below we see the extended lemma and derivatives of the word AIR. The first number shows how many times the word occurs in the corpus, the second – where available – presents the percentage in the corpus, used in the calculation of key words:

AERODROMES	2,00	
AEROPLANE	2,00	
AEROPLANES	6,00	
AIR	191,00	0,14
AIRBORNE	5,00	
AIRCRAFT	19,00	0,01
AIRFIELDS	3,00	

¹ <http://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches>

AIRMEN	5,00
AIRPLANES	1,00

The group contains 9 members. Two of them present a statistically significant part of the corpus: AIR 0.14 and AIRCRAFT 0.01. The sum total is 0.15. Then 15 is multiplied by 9 to give the index of 135. In this way significance is given to the relative frequency of the item and to the number of repetitions. Then the words are classified according to their extended lemma index.

A visible drawback is that some words have a shorter grammatical paradigm than others by default.

General description of the corpus

The whole corpus includes 49 discrete texts, 138 898 running words – a relatively small corpus, yet suitable for key word analysis. The cut-off point for the chi-square test was set at 0.000001 – relatively low to allow more items into the procedure.

The texts present public speeches – at election events, for the media etc., and selected parliamentary speeches.

The key word lists derived via the four different methods are presented in Table 2. For comparative purposes, they are reduced to the first 60 items

	Log likelihood	Purged frequency	Chi square	Extended lemma
N	Key word	Key word	Key word	Key word
1	OUR	GREAT	CHEERS	Great 228
2	WE	WAR	ARMORED	Government 207
3	CHEERS	BRITISH	OUR	Nation 162
4	UPON	TIME	LAUGHTER	War 155
5	WAR	WORLD	PRECIPITANCY	Britain 145
6	GREAT	GOVERNMENT	BOERS	Air plane 135
7	HAVE	CHEERS	WE	Time 120
8	WHICH	SAY	UNDERRATE	Free 105
9	LAUGHTER	UNITED	UPON	German 100
10	UNITED	COUNTRY	WAR	Power 100
11	BRITISH	PEOPLE	NAZI	Force 95
12	STATES	STATES	NAZIDOM	France 95
13	ALL	YEARS	EXPEDITIONARY	Country 92
14	OF	HOUSE	DETERRENTS	Man 88
15	ARMY	MAKE	DEFENSES	Work 88
16	HEAR	POWER	GREAT	Speak 81
17	WILL	AIR	QUARRELED	Needs 80
18	EMPIRE	RIGHT	ARMIES	People 76

19	AIR	HEAR	EMPIRE	Strength 72
20	SHALL	FAR	TARIFF	Defence 66
21	NATIONS	ARMY	EXERTIONS	Hope 64
22	US	MEN	NATIONS	World 63
23	GERMAN	THINK	WEYGAND	Fight 60
24	COUNTRY	PARTY	BOLSHEVISTS	Know 60
25	FRANCE	LONG	DEFENSE	Day 52
26	NAZI	LAST	SOCIALISTIC	Army 48
27	NATION	WELL	MILLIONS	Use 48
28	WORLD	GERMAN	UNITED	Europe 48
29	OURSELVES	FRANCE	WILLKIE	Year 46
30	MILLIONS	TRADE	SKAGERRAK	Effect 45
31	AND	EUROPE	NATION	State 44
32	MUST	FORCE	ARMY	Foundation 42
33	GOVERNMENT	LAUGHTER	TYRANNY	Friends 42
34	INDIA	LET	PEOPLES	America 40
35	ARMIES	OWN	UNMEASURED	Sea 40
36	HON	SEE	STATES	Arms 40
37	PEACE	GENERAL	OURSELVES	Lose 40
38	ENEMY	MADE	HEAR	Minister 40
39	FORCE	NEVER	MAJESTY'S	Land 36
40	POWER	FREE	WHICH	Large 36
41	NOT	FRENCH	DOMINIONS	Differ 35
42	EUROPE	HON	HAVE	Secure 35
43	TARIFF	COME	HITLER	Lead 35
44	PEOPLES	BRITAIN	ENEMY	Mean 35
45	TRADE	GOOD	BRITISH	Increase 35
46	ARE	NEW	CONANT	Number 35
47	GERMANY	THREE	INDIA	India 32
48	THAT	LIKE	GERMAN	Million 32
49	DUTY	MAN	AIR	Peace 32
50	EVERY	PEACE	SHALL	Act 30
51	HITLER	NATIONS	FRANCE	Russia 30
52	GOLD	PART	EXCHEQUER	Attack 30
53	STRENGTH	PRESENT	MANKIND	General 30
54	FIGHTING	EMPIRE	COMRADESHIP	Belief 30
55	VICTORY	TAKE	TOIL	Pass 30
56	FRENCH	COURSE	WAVELL	Battle 28
57	THE	GERMANY	UTMOST	Decide 28
58	HAS	FORCES	BRAHMINS	Island 28
59	FORCES	KNOW	COUNTRY	Ship 28
60	BE	POSITION	MEASURELESS	Organise 27

Table 2. Top 60 keywords derived via chi-square, log-likelihood, extended lemma and reduced frequency list.

It is immediately obvious that the lists differ mainly in the position of key-ness occupied by the words. A significant number of words occur in the four types of Key Word Lists. They are presented below:

CHEERS	HAVE
OUR/ OURSELVES/ WE	HITLER
LAUGHTER	ENEMY
BOERS	BRITISH
UPON	TRADE
WAR	EUROPE
NAZI/NAZIDOM	HON
DEFENSES/ DEFENSE	PEACE
GREAT	GENERAL
ARMIES/ ARMY	INDIA
EMPIRE	GERMAN
TARIFF	AIR
NATIONS/ NATION	SHALL
MILLIONS	FRANCE
UNITED	COUNTRY
TYRANNY	MEASURELESS/UNMEASURED
PEOPLES	STRENGTH
STATES	FIGHTING
HEAR	FORCES
WHICH	

The small difference should be explained by the fact that the corpus is the same. This list clearly reflects topics that are typical of Churchill's career – World War 2, the British colonies, free trade, the air force, parliamentary vocabulary, as well as pronouns and connectors. The missing topics are those concerning the gold standard, the Russian threat, European arrangements after the war – more specialised and of smaller significance. It is also obvious that grammatical words – prepositions, modal verbs etc. – occur in all types of key word lists.

The words which occur exclusively in each of the key word lists are presented in Table 3.

LOG LIKELIHOOD	Chi square	Purged frequency	Extended lemma
ALL	ARMORED	SAY	Work 88
OF	PRECIPITANCY	HOUSE	Needs 80
WILL	BOERS	MAKE	Hope 64
US	UNDERRATE	RIGHT	Day 52
AND	EXPEDITIONARY	FAR	Use 48
MUST	DETERRENTS	MEN	Effect 45
NOT	QUARRELED	THINK	Foundation
ARE	WEYGAND	PARTY	42

THAT	BOLSHEVISTS	LONG	Friends 42
DUTY	SOCIALISTIC	LAST	America 40
GOLD	WILLKIE	WELL	Sea 40
VICTORY	SKAGERRAK	LET	Arms 40
THE	TYRANNY	OWN	Lose 40
HAS	STATES	SEE	Minister 40
BE	MAJESTY'S	GENERAL	Land 36
EVERY	DOMINIONS	MADE	Large 36
	CONANT	NEVER	Differ 35
	EXCHEQUER	COME	Secure 35
	MANKIND	GOOD	Lead 35
	COMRADESHIP	NEW	Mean 35
	TOIL	THREE	Increase 35
	WAVELL	LIKE	Number 35
	UTMOST	PART	Act 30
	BRAHMINS	PRESENT	Russia 30
		TAKE	Attack 30
		COURSE	Belief 30
		POSITION	Pass 30
			Battle 28
			Decide 28
			Island 28
			Ship 28
			Organise 27

Table 3. Words specific for each word list

The words in the log-likelihood key word list are predominantly function words plus the content words VICTORY, GOLD and DUTY, which signal the topics of the victory in WW2, reintroducing the gold standard, and removing duties for a range of goods.

The words in the chi squared list are items of low-frequency in the language – some have different spellings in the British and American varieties. A few personal names occur as well. In this list we can see the word DETERRENT, relating to the threat of Russia – a significant theme in Churchill's career. It may well be that Churchill introduced the idea that arming a nation can prevent others from attacking it. The words BOLSHEVISTS and SOCIALISTIC also relate to the topic of the Russian threat. TYRANNY appears to belong to the topic of the Russian influence on Eastern Europe when the respective concordance lines are consulted. It would suggest that the vocabulary of the socialist system is different from the standard corpus of the alternative political system.

The purged list contains predominantly words of general meaning. Some are related to Parliamentary practices, others – to the war, yet others are really haphazard in the range of topics. This type of list gives a very broad range of subjects related to

Churchill's career, but very few of them are genuinely typical. The overall inadequacy of this list emphasises the little significance of frequency over other factors usually considered in computing key words.

The extended lemmas list – like the purged frequency – has not been subjected to a comparison with a keyword list. That is why the list contains common words which cannot outnumber the frequency in a balanced corpus. Obviously the concern that words obtain key status because of their low frequency in a general corpus is not valid for this list. This means, however, that the indicative force of the items heavily depends on checking the respective concordances and collocates, rather than on the words in their own right. An undeniable fact is that the words do reflect highlights in Churchill's career and even though no comparisons have been made with another corpus, the list could be indicative of essential points in the corpus.

Analysis of the Key Word Lists

Scott (2015:253) notes that three types of keywords are often found: “proper nouns, keywords that human beings would recognise as key, and are indicators of the ‘aboutness’ of a particular text, and finally, high frequency words such as BECAUSE, SHALL or ALREADY, which may be indicators of style, rather than aboutness.”

In this study we establish a taxonomy based on our results, and it is slightly different from the one proposed by Scott. The four keyword lists contain six types of entries:

- parliamentary vocabulary (despite the fact that not all the speeches were made in Parliament);
- proper names – people's names and place names;
- general substitutes;
- markers of preferred modality, syntax and deixis;
- topic indicators;
- speech mannerisms.

The tables in Appendix 2 present an analysis of the keywords in the four lists arranging them in one of the six categories. Even though our list of categories is rather broad, there are items which still remain outside of the classification. Such is the word GREAT. On the one hand it occurs together with words such as EFFORT, in which case it would belong to the category of general substitutes, on the other - it is part of the name GREAT BRITAIN, where it is definitely part of a proper name. Such nouns are marked with a question.

Where a word is marked as a topic indicator, the numbers in the respective column also show which topics are signalled by the respective key word. They correspond to those in the list of highlights for this research (Appendix 1). Most of the key words are marked to signal more than one topic, because the respective concordances reveal different occurrences related to different topics. Effectively, this happens to be the case with most of the keywords. For example, WAR combines with SOUTH AFRICAN to indicate the topic Colonial Policies, with THE GREAT to denote WWI; with EUROPEAN – for WW II.

Inasmuch as the key words are expected to give indications concerning the world view of the speaker and the about-ness of the texts, the keyword list is best suited if it contains the greatest number of words from the fifth category – called here topic indicators. The highest number of topic-indicators is contained in the extended-lemmas list – 33 out of 60, secondly – in the chi-squared list – 28 out of 60, third comes the log likelihood list – 25 out of 60. Quite expectedly, the frequency list purged of function words contains the lowest number of topic indicators – only 14 out of 60.

The proper names are very indicative of the about-ness of the texts. I find them extremely pertinent to indicate significant landmarks in the careers of the researched person. The list of people Churchill associated with cannot do without Hitler. However, it is debatable whether Weygand deserves a higher key status than, say Kitchener, or Fisher. It is difficult to assess whether the key-status is determined by the fact that the name is unusual, or by its significance for the corpus.

The general substitutes are nouns of very broad semantic properties. They often name via a combination with other words. Some of the phrases can be indicators of significant topics, like the words we called ‘topic indicators’. That is why they reinforce the need to use key phrases rather than single key words. However, some combinations then may not live up to the key status.

The speech mannerisms are different from the famous catch phrases known for Churchill. Neither IRON, nor CURTAIN has a key status according to any of the classifications, despite the fact that 5 occurrences of the phrase are available in the corpus. At the same time, EFFORT is a key word and in combination with WAR. Together with synonymous phrases, such as PRODIGIOUS, NATION-WIDE, SUPREME etc., this appears a phrase widely used by Churchill.

This is where a water tight borderline is needed between cultural and statistically established key words. While IRON CURTAIN is a cultural key expression for Churchill, known and popularised as a land mark of his speech, a scrupulous statistical analysis never draws any attention to it. Instead, such an analysis claims that Churchill persistently referred to WAR EFFORT. Although IRON CURTAIN never achieved statistical significance, the phrase had an undoubted impact on society by virtue of its uniqueness, though not by a frequent use.

But the key words need not only relate to topics in Churchill's career. As can be seen – and this can be no surprise – not a word suggests about Churchill's terms as prisoner of war, or of his love for polo. This may be due to the selection made by the web site constructors. The availability of Parliamentary vocabulary, in its part, is indicative of Churchill's operation in parliament and cannot be overlooked when portraying him.

Conclusions

The key word lists included in this research are indeed indicative of highlights in Churchill's career. The most indicative is the list of extended lemmas and the least – the reduced frequency list.

The log-likelihood, although it is widely preferable for specialists, appears – on this occasion – too cluttered with function words and general substitutes. In view of having more notion words of specific meaning, evocative of topics, the chi-square leads to a greater number of indicative words.

The most evocative key word list is the extended lemma list. Linguistic software, such as Wordsmith, however, does not derive such a statistic. It may also be difficult to derive automatically, inasmuch as the decision which parts of the lemma need to be included, and which derivative words may need human involvement. Certainly, the option to merge entries is very helpful in the matter.

The research leads to the conclusions that the list of key words which projects items appearing in an extended lemma in a corpus indeed is indicative of at least as many topics as the typically derived chi square and log likelihood. More work needs to be done on the procedures for deriving it.

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Appendix 1

1. Army service
2. War correspondent
3. Polo-player
4. Freemason
5. Prisoner Of War
6. Proponent of Free trade
7. Colonial Policy Supporter
8. Navy Reform Proponent
9. Airplane Warfare Proponent
10. Labour legislation
11. Mental Deficiency Act 1913
12. The Russian threat
13. Irish Independence
14. Suffragettes
15. Handling strikes
16. Returning the golden standard
17. Anti-fascist action
18. Anti-abdication
19. Co-operation with America
20. Alliance with France
21. Engineering the Yalta agreement
22. Partisan of United States of Europe, sponsored by USA & UK

Appendix 2

The Chi-square list analysed

	Chi-square calculation				Topics covered
N	Key word	Freq.	%	Texts	
1	CHEERS	251	0.18	699	Parliamentary vocab
2	ARMORED	14	0.01	6	17
3	OUR	1,007	0.73	93,455	Preferred deixis
4	LAUGHTER	135	0.10	2,068	Parliamentary vocab
5	PRECIPITANCY	10	2		Mannerism
6	BOERS	13	13		7, 1
7	WE	1,724	1.24	300,833	Preferred deixis
8	UNDERRATE	13	16		12, 17
9	UPON	384	0.28	22,806	Mannerism
10	WAR	408	0.29	27,222	17
11	NAZI	61	0.04	754	17
12	NAZIDOM	5	0		17
13	EXPEDITIONARY	17	0.01	57	17, 8, 9
14	DETERRENTS	14	0.01	37	22, 12
15	DEFENSES	5	1		17, 12
16	GREAT	447	0.32	46,647	?
17	QUARRELED	4	0		Mannerism
18	ARMIES	57	0.04	998	17, 1, 12
19	EMPIRE	106	0.08	3,503	7
20	TARIFF	45	0.03	666	6
21	EXERTIONS	17	0.01	87	Mannerism
22	NATIONS	109	0.08	4,115	7,17, 12
23	WEYGAND	4	1		Proper name
24	BOLSHEVISTS	4	1		12
25	DEFENSE	24	0.02	203	17, 22, 12
26	SOCIALISTIC	7	12		12, 21
27	MILLIONS	80	0.06	2,638	Mannerism
28	UNITED	228	0.16	19,030	22
29	WILLKIE	3	0		Propername
30	SKAGERRAK	3	0		Placename
31	NATION	92	0.07	3,567	General substitute
32	ARMY	162	0.12	10,862	1, 17, 8, 9
33	TYRANNY	25	0.02	278	12, 17
34	PEOPLES	56	0.04	1,503	General substitute
35	UNMEASURED	7	16		Mannersim of speech
36	STATES	207	0.15	17,873	General substitute
37	OURSELVES	96	0.07	4,432	Preferred Deixis
38	HEAR	172	0.12	13,177	Parliamentary vocab
39	MAJESTY'S	32	0.02	535	Parliamentary vocab
40	WHICH	1,289	0.93	366,196	Syntactic Preferencs
41	DOMINIONS	18	0.01	164	7
42	HAVE	1,477	1.06	448,684	Modus
43	HITLER	46	0.03	1,171	17
44	ENEMY	75	0.05	3,057	17
45	BRITISH	287	0.21	35,530	Nationality name
46	CONANT	3	1		Proper name

47	INDIA	89	0.06	4,295	7
48	GERMAN	146	0.11	10,870	17
49	AIR	191	0.14	18,415	9
50	SHALL	197	0.14	19,817	Preferred modality
51	FRANCE	145	0.10	11,552	20, 22
52	EXCHEQUER	36	0.03	825	6, 16, 15
53	MANKIND	34	0.02	738	General substitute
54	COMRADESHIP	11	71		Mannerism
55	TOIL	16	0.01	176	Mannerism
56	WAVELL	5	12		Proper name
57	UTMOST	26	0.02	504	Mannerism
58	BRAHMINS	6	20		7
59	COUNTRY	218	0.16	27,959	General substitute
60	MEASURELESS	5	13		Mannerism

The loglikelihood

	Log likelihood				Topics covered
N	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	
1	OUR	1,007	0.72	93,455	Preferred deixis
2	WE	1,724	1.24	300,833	Preferred deixis
3	CHEERS	251	0.18	699	Parliamentary vocab
4	UPON	384	0.28	22,806	Mannerism
5	WAR	408	0.29	27,222	6, 7, 8, 9, 17
6	GREAT	447	0.32	46,647	?
7	HAVE	1,477	1.06	448,684	Preferred modality
8	WHICH	1,289	0.93	366,196	Preferred syntax
9	LAUGHTER	135	0.10	2,068	Parliamentary vocab
10	UNITED	228	0.16	19,030	19
11	BRITISH	287	0.21	35,530	Proper name
12	STATES	207	0.15	17,873	19
13	ALL	899	0.65	277,566	?
14	OF	5,755	4.14	3,049,564	?
15	ARMY	162	0.12	10,862	7, 8, 9, 17
16	HEAR	172	0.12	13,177	Parliamentary vocab
17	WILL	816	0.59	251,179	Preferred modality
18	EMPIRE	106	0.08	3,503	7
19	AIR	191	0.14	18,415	9
20	SHALL	197	0.14	19,817	Preferred modality
21	NATIONS	109	0.08	4,115	General substitute
22	US	388	0.28	80,226	Preferred deixis
23	GERMAN	146	0.11	10,870	17
24	COUNTRY	218	0.16	27,959	General substitute
25	FRANCE	145	0.10	11,552	17, 20, 22
26	NAZI	61	0.04	754	17
27	NATION	92	0.07	3,567	General substitute
28	WORLD	287	0.21	53,806	General substitute
29	OURSELVES	96	0.07	4,432	Preferred deixis
30	MILLIONS	80	0.06	2,638	?
31	AND	4,808	3.46	2,624,341	Preferred syntax
32	MUST	324	0.23	69,099	Preferred modality
33	GOVERNMENT	285	0.21	56,343	Parliamentary vocab
34	INDIA	89	0.06	4,295	6

35	ARMIES	57	0.04	998	1, 7, 8, 9, 17
36	HON	121	0.09	10,692	Parliamentary vocab
37	PEACE	111	0.08	8,707	7, 17, 22
38	ENEMY	75	0.05	3,057	7, 8, 9, 17
39	FORCE	140	0.10	15,475	8, 9
40	POWER	197	0.14	31,627	General substitute
41	NOT	1,052	0.76	431,075	Preferred modality
42	EUROPE	141	0.10	16,908	17, 20, 22
43	TARIFF	45	0.03	666	6
44	PEOPLES	56	0.04	1,503	7
45	TRADE	145	0.10	19,818	6
46	ARE	1,070	0.77	458,368	Modality
47	GERMANY	101	0.07	9,399	17
48	THAT	2,090	1.50	1,052,259	Syntax
49	DUTY	93	0.07	7,869	6, 17
50	EVERY	201	0.14	39,156	?
51	HITLER	46	0.03	1,171	17
52	GOLD	86	0.06	7,574	16
53	STRENGTH	83	0.06	6,957	General substitute
54	FIGHTING	75	0.05	5,528	8, 9, 17, 20
55	VICTORY	75	0.05	5,547	6, 17
56	FRENCH	122	0.09	16,879	20, 22
57	THE	9,754	7.02	6,055,105	?
58	HAS	648	0.47	252,703	?
59	FORCES	100	0.07	11,656	?
60	BE	1,356	0.98	651,535	

The reduced frequency list

	Purged frequency				Topics covered
N	Word	Freq.	%	Texts	
38	GREAT	447	0.32	46	?
41	WAR	408	0.29	39	1, 17
66	BRITISH	287	0.21	43	Place name
67	TIME	287	0.21	44	General substitute
68	WORLD	287	0.21	46	General substitute
69	GOVERNMENT	285	0.21	31	Parliamentary vocab
72	CHEERS	251	0.18	10	Parliamentary vocab
75	SAY	229	0.16	43	General substitute
77	UNITED	228	0.16	41	19
79	COUNTRY	218	0.16	36	General substitute
81	PEOPLE	208	0.15	39	General substitute
82	STATES	207	0.15	40	General substitute
83	YEARS	205	0.15	42	General substitute
85	HOUSE	200	0.14	30	Parliamentary vocab
86	MAKE	198	0.14	42	General substitute
87	POWER	197	0.14	40	?
89	AIR	191	0.14	26	9, 17
94	RIGHT	173	0.12	41	Parliamentary vocab
95	HEAR	172	0.12	13	Parliamentary vocab
96	FAR	168	0.12	38	?
98	ARMY	162	0.12	22	1, 17

99	MEN	162	0.12	40	General substitute
101	THINK	161	0.12	33	General substitute
104	PARTY	152	0.11	31	Parliamentary vocab
107	LONG	149	0.11	43	?
108	LAST	148	0.11	42	?
109	WELL	148	0.11	41	?
110	GERMAN	146	0.11	27	17
112	FRANCE	145	0.10	29	20
113	TRADE	145	0.10	18	6
119	EUROPE	141	0.10	29	22, 17
121	FORCE	140	0.10	31	8,9
123	LAUGHTER	135	0.10	13	Parliamentary vocab
124	LET	135	0.10	38	?
125	OWN	135	0.10	42	?
127	SEE	134	0.10	34	?
130	GENERAL	132	0.10	31	?
131	MADE	131	0.09	37	?
132	NEVER	131	0.09	41	?
134	FREE	130	0.09	32	6
140	FRENCH	122	0.09	25	20, 22
141	HON	121	0.09	10	Parliamentary vocab
142	COME	120	0.09	38	?
144	BRITAIN	116	0.08	36	Place name

The extended lemma

	Extended lemmas	Topics covered
N	Key word	
1	Great 228	?
2	Government 207	Parliamentary vocab
3	Nation 162	17, 6, 22, 20, 19
4	War 155	17
5	Britain 145	Place name
6	Air plane 135	9
7	Time 120	General substitute
8	Free 105	17, 6
9	German 100	17
10	Power 100	8,9, 17
11	Force 95	8, 9, 17
12	France 95	20, 11
13	Country 92	General substitute
14	Man 88	General substitute
15	Work 88	General substitute
16	Speak 81	Parliamentary vocab
17	Needs 80	General substitute
18	People 76	General substitute
19	Strength 72	8, 9, 17
20	Defence 66	8,9, 17, 20, 19,22
21	Hope 64	General substitute
22	World 63	General substitute
23	Fight 60	7,8, 17
24	Know 60	General substitute
25	Day 52	General substitute

26	Army 48	8, 9, 17
27	Use 48	General substitute
28	Europe 48	17, 20, 22, 19
29	Year 46	General substitute
30	Effect 45	General substitute
31	State 44	General substitute
32	Foundation 42	6,7, 19
33	Friends 42	Parliamentary vocab
34	America 40	22
35	Sea 40	8, 17
36	Arms 40	8,9, 17
37	Lose 40	6, 17, 20
38	Minister 40	Parliamentary vocab
39	Land 36	17
40	Large 36	General substitute
41	Differ 35	General substitute
42	Secure 35	17, 21, 6, 22
43	Lead 35	Parliamentary vocab
44	Mean 35	General substitute
45	Increase 35	6, 10, 8, 9, 22
46	Number 35	8,9, 17
47	India 32	7
48	Million 32	General substitute
49	Peace 32	17, 8,9
50	Act 30	17, 20, 19
51	Russia 30	17, 22, 12
52	Attack 30	17, 12, 19
53	General 30	15, 17, 20, 19
54	Belief 30	6, 7, 21, 22
55	Pass 30	Parliamentary vocab
56	Battle 28	17, 20
57	Decide 28	6, 15
58	Island 28	17, 7
59	Ship 28	17, 8, 19
60	Organise 27	19, 21, 22

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE DIFFERENCES IN THE READING PROFILES OF STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA AND THE ROLE OF DYSLEXIA ASSESSMENT FOR AN APPROPRIATE CHOICE OF TEACHING STRATEGY

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Abstract

The paper discusses how literacy teachers approach the differences in the reading profiles of their students with dyslexia, and the value of an available diagnosis of dyslexia in their choosing the most appropriate teaching methods. The research was carried out in the Greater London area in 2014. It involved interviews with six practitioners directly involved in teaching reading skills to pupils with dyslexia in various capacities. All of the participants demonstrated awareness of the wide range of difficulties on the dyslexia spectrum. This underlay their commitment to personalized teaching based on a detailed assessment of the pupils' weaknesses and strengths. Provided that such an assessment and special educational expert's recommendations for teaching were available to inform their approach, five out of the six interviewees, who were working only at a school level, did not find the availability of a diagnosis of dyslexia necessary. However, the participant with the most extensive expertise, occupying a leadership role in a borough's literacy support centre, strongly defended and insisted on the existence and the instructional necessity of the dyslexia category. The overall conclusion is that applying the most appropriate teaching strategies would depend on the availability of a detailed assessment, which poses the question how teachers who have no access to such information will be able to adjust their instruction to the needs of the particular student.

Key words: dyslexia, reading skills, differences, diagnosis, teaching

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Teaching children with dyslexia presents a number of difficulties, largely conditioned by the fact that dyslexia occurs along a continuum (Rose, 2009). Research has tried to explain the differences within the spectrum of dyslexia through the impact of certain biological, cognitive, environmental or personal factors (Frith, 1995). Besides, as Castles (2006: 49) points out, 'a complex process such as reading will be likely to fail in an equally complex range of ways'. Moreover, dyslexia is often co-morbid, occurring in combination with other developmental disorders such as dyspraxia or ADHD (Snowling, 2006). Besides having diverse causes, symptoms and manifestations, it is only one of the possible reading difficulties poor readers might have. For example, children may experience reading comprehension difficulties, which are related to higher-order language processes involving, among others, semantics and grammar (Snowling & Hulme, 2012). Therefore, a question bearing critical importance to practitioners is *how teachers should approach the differences within the dyslexia spectrum when teaching reading*.

Furthermore, recent studies on reading difficulties both in England and the USA, which inform approaches to dyslexia-friendly teaching, do not necessarily single out pupils with dyslexia and may involve other poor readers (Kelly & Philips, 2013). Also, some principles of successful interventions like focused phonics have been found to be beneficial not only for children with dyslexia, but for all beginner readers (Rose, 2009). As already pointed out, being on a continuum, dyslexia is not a 'have' or 'do-not-have' phenomenon. The absence of clear-cut boundaries is used by some authors like Elliott et al. (2008:476) drawing on Popper (1969) and Stanovich (1994) to suggest that dyslexia cannot be defined unambiguously and, as in their opinion it relies on a great number of unverified assumptions, it might be abandoned as a category of disability altogether. This is a very relevant point considering teachers' responsibility to address a variety of needs within the spectrum but also to cater for an equally complex range of reading difficulties outside it. A question that provoked the researcher's interest here is *whether the availability of a diagnosis of dyslexia facilitates teachers in choosing the most appropriate methods of teaching reading*.

Aims

The study aimed to determine how reading skills are taught to pupils with dyslexia in an English-speaking context. While the study looked for the answers to a number of research questions, the paper will discuss the findings related to two of them:

1. *How are the differences in the reading profiles of pupils with dyslexia approached?*
2. *Do practitioners think that the availability of a diagnosis of dyslexia affects their choice of strategies in teaching reading skills?*

Method

The study was qualitative and conducted within an interpretive framework (Cohen et al., 2000). The tool of data collection in the study was the semi-structured interview (Punch, 2009, Robson, 2004). The sampling was a convenience one. The study did not look for generalizability but rather to present the views of a diverse set of practitioners involved directly in teaching reading skills to pupils with dyslexia.

Participants

The six participants, referred to with pseudonyms here for confidentiality, were members of four different institutions in the Greater London area. Sandy (a special educational needs coordinator or SENCO, and a learning support assistant [LST]) and Nancy (a teaching assistant [TA] and an LST) worked at primary school 1. Aimee (a SENCO and a class teacher) and Gary (a class teacher) worked at primary school 2. Kristel had a leadership role in a borough's literacy support centre and worked as a Wave 3¹ LST in several schools. Grace worked in a special support centre attached to a secondary school where half of the children had autism co-occurring with dyslexia. All participants, except for Gary, had received some training in teaching children with dyslexia – ranging from in-school training to a post-graduate certification in dyslexia.

¹ In England, the needs of pupils who experience difficulty in acquiring literacy skills are met via three 'waves' of intervention. Wave 3 interventions are for children who have been identified as needing special educational needs support and are designed to achieve very specific targets. They are usually taught as one-to-one or small group programmes. (See: http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/primary_strategy/inclusion/wave3)

Findings

Differences in Reading Profiles

The study confirmed that the reading profiles of children with dyslexia presented a vast range of possibilities, or as put by an interviewee, '*a massive, massive range*'. The participants were aware that this variance was shaped by cognitive, psychological and environmental factors; that '*it is so much bound up with the whole person*' (Kristel).

Here are two examples illustrating the unique blends of pupils' characteristics:

Pupil 1 was depicted as incredibly articulate, imaginative, possessing wonderful language skills and massive vocabulary. She displayed a keen interest in words and stories and her being '*verbally at ease*' (Kristel) empowered her with confidence. These strengths were used to work on affixes and word structure, which acted as a springboard to advance her reading abilities.

Pupil 2 was described as the most '*extreme case*' Kristel had ever had because of his profound working memory difficulties. He was '*so out of the loop that none of this makes any sense to him*'. Even a multisensory approach and additional home practice did not seem to enhance his learning. His teacher voiced her concern: '*That sort of situation makes me quite anxious really in the end, because – what's gonna happen?*'.

And two examples of the impact that family support has on the learning outcomes:

Pupil 3 had wide general knowledge as his parents spent a lot of time and effort to plug the gaps he had with out-of-school activities, they had '*good conversations with him*' (Aimee), so his progress in reading was quite fast.

Pupil 4's education did not seem to be treated with priority by his family; they did not arrange any learning activities for him outside school, and as he did not understand some concepts just because they were '*outside of his experience*' (Aimee), his progress was extremely slow and tedious.

All but one of the cases the teachers described referred to what one teacher called '*the stereotype*' of dyslexia – phonological deficit combined with good comprehension skills. The differences within these cases were in the sphere of difficulties with short-term memory and visual/auditory processing speed. Some other examples were given of children who displayed a wider variety of literacy difficulties. Commenting on such a case, Aimee explained that '*we have to have at least average IQ to be diagnosed with dyslexia. There's got to be a weakness that's exception to the normal level of functioning*'. This comment made by a school's SENCO was surprising for the researcher as the discrepancy theory has been quite unanimously discarded in research papers and educational documents (e.g. Rose, 2009).

How did teachers approach the differences of each pupil's profile? Gary (the class teacher) and Nancy (TA/LSA) showed strong reliance and dependence on recommendations made by a statement of special educational needs, which, in England, at the time of the study was being replaced by an Education, Health and Care plan according to the new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years (DfE & DfH, 2014), or an assessment-based profile of the student. The other participants, who were often both assessors of pupils with dyslexia and designers of their programmes, demonstrated adherence to a pupil-centred approach where each individual's areas of difficulties were targeted:

I tend to decide what the children need... Making a programme for them individually... I tend to or try to tailor it to the child.

(Sandy)

...what's most suited to them.

(Grace)

An important remark made by all participants, independently on their professional role, was that an individual approach required taking into consideration both weakness (e.g. poor knowledge of specific sounds or sound blends) *and* strengths (e.g. good oral skills). Nancy insisted that if the students' '*particular strength*' was the visual channel, the weaker auditory pathway should not be overlooked. Another essential point made was that

part of the positive outcome *'was really about opportunities that they can show their true abilities..., rather than just being limited by their dyslexia'* (Grace).

To sum up, participants voiced concordantly that the differences in the profiles of pupils with dyslexia could be approached through personalized, pupil-centred teaching. For such type of teaching to be applied, they relied strongly on detailed assessment. The areas to be given special attention to were presented to them, in some cases, before the school year had started, but in most cases the pupil's referral and assessment occurred after the teacher had noticed significant difficulties in the student's acquiring a level of literacy expected at their age.

Diagnosis of Dyslexia

The findings revealed that an analysis of the student's profile was vital for an effective and targeted teaching. However, the participants repeatedly noted that some of the essential strategies for children with dyslexia suited other poor or beginner readers, too. Did, then, the availability of a dyslexia diagnosis matter in their choice of methods for teaching reading?

The research established that five of the six participants did not consider that having a diagnosis of dyslexia was necessary in order to choose an appropriate teaching method. Interestingly, their justification rested on two seemingly contrasting arguments:

- a) Because the strategies for poor readers were the same:

A child can have a diagnosis of dyslexia, but another child can have learning difficulties and have no diagnosis of dyslexia and they need to be taught in the same way.

(Sandy)

Not really, because I find it works for all of them, this sort of system. It's just overlearning.

(Nancy)

... targeting them with the same interventions that we would if we were targeting someone that we would consider to be dyslexic.

(Grace)

b) Because anyway individual programmes were followed:

In terms of what we put in, if they need it, we do it. I am not sure if it makes some massive difference to us because we try our best to meet the needs of every child.

(Aimee)

Just meeting their needs. It doesn't need that label on our side.

(Gary)

The distribution of the two opinions coincided with the teachers' belonging to the same school (Sandy and Nancy; Aimee and Gary). This may be indicative of the influence of school policy, but may also be accidental, which cannot be determined from such a small sample.

A deeper analysis of the group a) interviews, however, reveals that these participants do not associate the concept of 'sameness' with absolute identicalness. Grace clarified that the strategies are '*based on the same **principles***'. In a similar vein Sandy pointed out that '*They are going to use **some** of the same strategies*' [emphases added by the researcher]. A contribution to the understanding of the superficial contradiction between the two arguments was Kristel's explanation:

I don't rewrite the programme for every single child. There's an overlap in what I would use. So therefore some children are put on the same programme... That's in a way focusing on their individual needs... If you've got children who need phonological support, then there might be differing profiles but the same aspect of that profile needs to be supported.

The issue seemed to amount to overlapping difficulties, and hence overlapping strategies to meet those difficulties. That is, certain sets or combinations of the strategies discussed would be relevant to tackle reading difficulties both within the dyslexia continuum, and outside it.

A broader perspective finding a balance between the two positions emerged in the interview with Kristel. She recognized that often dyslexia-oriented strategies were good at helping other children and that '*it is about accessibility and about inclusion really*'. Still, she

pointed out that distinct approaches were needed when addressing word recognition difficulties and comprehension ones: *'on the whole, dyslexic children don't need to work on their wide language skills like semantic, pragmatic'*. Reciprocally, strategies addressed specifically at poor comprehenders, for example, would not normally be as appropriate for learners with dyslexia.

Kristel was the only teacher who saw the availability of a diagnosis as beneficial to teaching reading skills:

'I think, there is enough evidence to suggest that... there is a profile which has a cognitive issue behind it, which also has an impact on learning and access to curriculum. And I don't think that should be ignored. I think because it is not a medical condition, then someone thinks it's not really there and there is no evidence. Certainly, in my experience, there is evidence..... And if we don't say that certain children have a specific difficulty then we are letting them down.'

It is possible that the other participants have underestimated the existence of such a pattern. Nevertheless, their giving little value to the dyslexia diagnosis is not interpreted by the researcher as denying the necessity of guidance in choosing appropriate teaching approaches. On the contrary, participants who made such a statement seemed to be presuming that assessments, prescribing certain teaching approaches, would be available to all pupils with persisting literacy difficulties.

Discussion

How are the Differences in the Reading Profiles of Pupils with Dyslexia Approached?

When addressing this question, all the participants shared the view that the different reading profiles of pupils with dyslexia required *a personalized, pupil-centred approach* to teaching, in which both *strengths and weaknesses* were accounted for.

All participants acknowledged the existence of a considerable variance in the profiles of students with dyslexia. The examples of differences they had observed was compatible with research findings that dyslexia is 'not a homogeneous disorder' (Castles, 2006: 57), and 'although children with dyslexia have some common core difficulties they do not represent an identical discrete entity with identical profiles' (Reid, 2003: 150).

These differences are conditioned by a combination of factors (Hatcher, 2006, Snowling, 2006), out of which participants acknowledged cognitive and psychological features, and importantly, made a convincing point that environmental factors like parental commitment and value of literacy in the family can facilitate or hamper the reading progress of children with dyslexia. Such influences have been expounded on in research literature (Frith, 1995, 1999, Kelly & Philips, 2013), and this study provided one more reminder of their significance. The impact of co-morbidity, acknowledged in Snowling (2006), Rose (2009) and Singleton (2009), was particularly emphasized by one participant. Working with children on the autistic spectrum, Grace made an important point that a holistic approach was necessary to make sure that chosen strategies would address and benefit each co-occurring difficulty.

None of the interviewees, however, made any attempt to categorize pupils with dyslexia in terms of sub-types (phonological vs. surface). None of them gave an example of a case that could match the features of so-called surface dyslexia – a difficulty to read exceptional words but not regular ones (Coltheart, 2006). This finding supports the claim that a distinction between such sub-categories is inoperative (Vellutino & Fletcher, 2005, Peterson et al., 2013). The examples provided in the study corresponded to the stereotypical view of dyslexia, seen as located in the upper left quadrant of the Simple View of Reading graphic (poor decoding, good comprehension) (Hoover et al., 1990). Although Rose (2009) and Vellutino et al. (2004) point out that dyslexia may be accompanied by comprehension difficulties too, such cases were not reported by the participants. Also, cases of dyslexia where phonological awareness was not compromised, an exceptional case recognized in Snowling (2006), were not reported either.

In this study, the differences among pupils with dyslexia identified by the interviewees were related to their: 1. level of decoding skills (e.g. individual letters vs. morphemic structures); 2. short-term memory; 3. processing speed, 4. strength of visual vs. auditory channel. The first three areas are typically compromised in dyslexia, and the latter have been identified as areas of possible co-occurring difficulties (BDA, 2014a, Miller-Shaul, 2005). The fact that the differences lay within the areas most seriously compromised in dyslexia is quite indicative of the challenges that the spectrum imposes.

The unanimous response to this variance was the employment of *personalized teaching*. This is in agreement with Kelly & Philips (2013) who endorse taking into consideration the *individual profile* of the child rather than a certain sub-type of dyslexia. Reid (2003), too, advises that programmes should be designed to suit the individual and not the symptom. Personalized learning is not a new concept and has been understood as 'tailor[ing] education to the individual learner's needs, interest and aptitude so as to fulfil every young person's potential' (DfES, 2004). It is in line with the international and UK major educational documents requiring personalization, differentiation and inclusion (e.g. DfE, 2013, DfE & DfH, 2014).

When adopting a certain personalized teaching programme, BDA (2014a), Massey (2008) and Castles (2006) stress the importance of identifying the pattern of strengths and difficulties of pupils with dyslexia. An important observation made in the study was that if one sensory modality was stronger than the rest, its intensive engagement should not imply underestimating the weaker modalities. This remark is concordant with Walker's (2000) note that although teachers are advised to use the student's strongest channel for learning, such a strategy would be inefficient if the other modalities remain unemployed.

Another reason for identifying the strengths of pupils with dyslexia is put forward by Everatt et al. (2007). Their study finds that since some individuals with learning difficulties (LD) have phonological deficits like those with dyslexia, a demarcation between the two types is possible only after taking into account the whole difficulty/strength pattern. Children with dyslexia are often found to have strengths in the area of vocabulary, semantics and visual skills and that sets them apart from other LD (ibid). The authors suggest that knowledge about the whole pattern leads to an increased understanding of the pupil's compensatory strategies. The participants in the present study did report that vocabulary and semantic skills helped many pupils with dyslexia to 'take off' in their reading development.

All in all, the researcher found a consensus among the participants that an individual approach to differences within the dyslexia spectrum had to be employed and that strategies needed to be informed by a specialist's assessment and recommendations.

Such unanimity, however, was not observed in the responses related to the second research problem that is discussed in this article.

Do Practitioners Think that the Availability of a Diagnosis of Dyslexia Affects their Choice of Strategies in Teaching Reading Skills?

Five of the six teachers stated that the availability of a pupil's diagnosis of dyslexia was not essential for their practice. Two seemingly contradictory arguments were put forward – a) that all literacy difficulties were targeted on an individual basis, and b) that the strategies used to cater for the wide range of literacy needs were the 'same' or at least based on the 'same principles'. The proponents of the second argument gave examples with strategies reinforcing and supporting verbal memory and information processing (e.g. presenting information in chunks, over-learning and structure). Such a view in the critical literature is present in Elliot et al.'s (2008), who claim that as poor short-term or working memory and slower information processing are shared with other developmental conditions, a demarcation of dyslexia is not particularly helpful for teachers.

Intervention research, however, has found not only memory supporting techniques but also focused phonics embedded in rich language curriculum to be effective both for children with dyslexia and those at risk of developing literacy difficulties, and for all beginner readers (Brooks, 2007, Rose, 2009). According to BDA (2012), practitioners report that the implementation of dyslexia-friendly teaching has benefited other poor readers as well. The applicability of certain principles or strategies for all types of poor readers has been acknowledged in the dyslexia discourse (e.g. Farrell, 2006). As it was noted earlier, teaching practices have been informed by intervention studies, most of which, notably, have not specifically addressed dyslexia (Singleton, 2009). Furthermore, Elliot et al. (2008: 483), drawing on Stanovich (1991) and Vellutino et al. (2000) claim that there is 'no clear evidence that there exists a particular teaching approach that is more suitable for a dyslexic subgroup than for other poor readers'.

In this study, however, Kristel did not support such a point of view. She remarked that often different interventions were suitable for pupils with dyslexia, who usually need support with word recognition, and for other poor readers, who often need support with comprehension. Still, she acknowledged that reading difficulties in children with dyslexia formed patterns that could be attended to with overlapping sets of techniques and

methods. She was the only participant who asserted that a *diagnosis of dyslexia is important* for choosing the teaching strategies. The strong position of such a prominent and experienced literacy support expert needs to be taken in consideration in the current debate about the rationale of the concept of dyslexia and its practical value (e.g. see *The Dyslexia Debate* by J. Elliot & E. Grigorenko (2014)).

Conclusions

The study provides valuable insight into the practitioners' perception of the differences among pupils with dyslexia, the manner in which the latter inform their teaching approach, as well as of the necessity of having a diagnosis of dyslexia. All of the participants in the study were committed to personalized teaching based on a detailed assessment of the pupils' weaknesses and strengths. Provided that such an assessment was available to inform their approach, five out of the six interviewees did not find the availability of a diagnosis of dyslexia necessary. The fact that applying the most appropriate teaching strategies would depend on the availability of such a detailed assessment poses the question how teachers who have no access to such information will be able to adjust their instruction to the needs of the particular student. Primary school teachers have better chances of longer-term observation and interaction with their pupils, as well as an established procedure for referring the student for assessment. However, these opportunities are not as readily available to other practitioners, especially at university level. Information about the nature of the students' difficulties, learning style, strengths, interests, etc. may need to be obtained either from the learners' previous educational institutions, in a direct conversation with them and/or their parents, or through a consultation with a special educational needs expert.

The practitioners' considerations reported in this research could be of benefit to other teachers facing the highly demanding task of teaching reading to pupils with dyslexia in an English-speaking context. The link between teachers' choice and differences within the dyslexia spectrum made in this study has not been sufficiently explored in studies of a similar kind. Further research needs to shed more light on their relationship and on the rationale behind, and the usefulness of, identifying dyslexia as a separate category of specific learning difficulties.

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BULGARIAN REVIVAL CULTURE - AN AXIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE IN THE TEXTS OF JANUARIUS MACGAHAN AND STANISLAS ST. CLAIR

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Abstract

Analyzing the vocabulary and the stylistic techniques in the works of the two authors, dedicated to Bulgaria, the article aims to contribute to a change of the two seemingly contrasting attitudes in their Bulgarian reception. The first is the implicit attitude to MacGahan as a "dangerous" author whose work is not even published with its true title - "The Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria". The focus of the analysis are the passages that deal with the Bulgarian material culture and education, as well as their axiological charge. The second is the negative value-based perception of the Bulgaro-phobic texts of St. Clair, an author obviously considered ineligible for translating into Bulgarian. However, his work might be a valuable source of knowledge about the culture of the Bulgarian national revival, provided that our reception remains neutral and unaffected by his derogatory language.

Key words: translation equivalence, connotation, axiology, irony, value-oriented motivation

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MacGahan and St. Clair, the forgotten and the unfamiliar

It was during the quest for public support by the West in relation to the "Eastern Question", on the eve of the Bulgarian national liberation, that two Anglophone political writers - Januarius MacGahan and Stanislas St. Clair - published their texts, dedicated to Bulgaria. MacGahan published his reports in the "Daily News", issued later under the title "The Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria" (MacGahan, 1876; MacGahan, 1880). Seven years earlier, St. Clair had released "A residence in Bulgaria, or notes on the resources and administration of Turkey", co-authored by Charles Brophy (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869).

Albeit for entirely different reasons, most texts of both authors are difficult, almost prohibitive for reading by a recipient with a Bulgarian national consciousness. The purpose of MacGahan, which is the truth, fully justifies his monstrous naturalism; however, when being quoted by the Bulgarian writer Stefan Tsanev, the latter warns his readers "to skip a dozen pages and then read on 'if they are easily unsettled by nature'" (Tsanev, 2007, p. 302). It is also an indicative fact that MacGahan's reports were published in Bulgarian with their true title "The Turkish atrocities..." for the first (and last) time in 1880. As for St. Clair's descriptions of the Bulgarians and their way of life, they are so far-fetched and derogatory as to border on the absurd and grotesque. Whereas MacGahan has scarcely been published in Bulgarian, St. Clair has not been translated at all. Actually, a native speaker of Bulgarian would hardly engage in such an undertaking.

The contribution of MacGahan's ominous reports from the centres of the April uprising for triggering debates in the British Parliament as well as public support for the Bulgarian national cause has been widely acknowledged. But although the words on his tombstone read "Liberator of Bulgaria", analyses and comments on his texts are almost entirely absent in Bulgarian literature. Bulgarian letters are in debt to his memory not only because he described the atrocities of the oppressor; it also presents an overview, albeit brief, of the spiritual and material development of Bulgaria in this period. Below, I will attempt to analyze the axiological perspective of the vocabulary in his texts and in the translation of Stefan Stambolov.

The perspective from which Stanislas St. Clair presented Bulgaria in his study "A residence in Bulgaria, or notes on the resources and administration of Turkey" is quite different (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869). In present-day texts on the Internet, the author is labelled a "Bulgarophobe" and "monster" (internationalist, 2012), but to those who have read his work these epithets might sound too weak (Hristov, 2014a). After the Liberation, he organized the so-called "St. Clair's riot" in the Rhodopes, crushed by Captain Petko Kiriakov with Russian help. However, unlike MacGahan, St. Clair knew in detail many aspects of the everyday life, folklore, traditions and superstitions of the Bulgarian people. He had spent three years in a Bulgarian village, being the British consul in Varna. I will attempt to analyze the axiological thinking behind a part of his texts (not translated into Bulgarian), and assess the source value they may have for our cultural heritage - no matter how difficult an unbiased view could be on what he wrote about the Bulgarians.

MacGahan on Bulgaria

I will not dwell on the passages of his reports, describing the atrocities of Turkish bashibazouks (irregulars) in many Bulgarian towns. They dominate the reports in both volume and the suggestive power of the text; they are so shocking that publishing them as part of his historical "poem", Stefan Tsanev apologizes to the reader for having the "misfortune" to read them (Tsanev, 2006, p. 314). I will only mention in passing that characterising the Turks, MacGahan uses no contemptuous or derogatory vocabulary nor spiteful irony, which predominate in St. Clair's texts on Bulgarians. T. Stoicheva, in a study on the reception of the Bulgarian identity from the perspective of culturology, observes that MacGahan makes it a point that the language he uses "is neutralized and cleared by rhetorical layers and extrinsic surpluses, to be turned into an impeccable mediator" (Stoicheva, 2007, p. 91).

On the other hand, in the text of MacGahan there are several, albeit brief descriptions of the National Revival material and spiritual culture of the Bulgarian people, which clearly demonstrate his axiological attitude. They are among the few direct foreign accounts of the cultural heritage from the Pre-liberation period. It can be assumed that the undeniable thinking in terms of values in these texts can also justify a serious reassessment of our present-day approach to the national heritage, as well as of the language we use when presenting it to the world.

One of the most frequently quoted passages of MacGahan can be found in his report from Batak of 2 August (MacGahan, 1876, pp. 24-25). If we summarize, the correspondent of "Daily News" opposes a positive picture from Bulgaria against the existing public opinion about the country (and his own preliminary attitude) expressed by the phrase "mere savages". In his translation from Russian, St. Stambolov uses the Bulgarian derogatory "диваци" as an equivalent. However, some of the connotations or the source language are absent: in English they are in the semantic of the adjective "mere," which is difficult to render, as well as the indicative pronoun in "these Bulgarians". Perhaps the choice of Stambolov as a translator depended not only on the fact that he was not familiar with the text in English, but on his value-determined attitude as well; MacGahan's rhetorical technique may have seemed to him an unnecessary overstatement (MacGahan, 1880, p. 11).

We will look at some concepts from this well-known paragraph that characterize the Bulgarian attitude towards education, the National Revival architecture, as well as the brief description of our ethnicity. MacGahan is "astonished, as I believe most of my readers will be" by the "very flourishing condition" of the Bulgarian schools. In the Stambolov translation, the author's astonishment is emphasized by a question "What was my astonishment when..." ("Какво беше моето удивление, когато..."). We also have at our disposal later correspondence on the traditions of Bulgarian education by MacGahan, which, regrettably, were not included in the English edition of 1976.¹ Although we can only make conclusions on the basis of the translated text, MacGahan's vocabulary in his description of the schools in Sliven is equally value-oriented. The girls' school there is a "nice new wooden house" with "numerous and large windows," "large rooms and spacious halls," surrounded by "shady trees" ("нов хубав дървен дом", "многобройни и големи прозорци", "с големи стаи и обширни зали", "сенчести дървета"); the boy's school is "full of cheerful, bright children's faces" and the children regard "their occupation as a most honorable and noble one" ("пълно с весели, блестящи детски лица", "на занятието си, като на най-почтено и благородно") (Ibid, pp. 55-56).

¹ The original English text of these later reports is not available on the Internet. Therefore, I will back-translate Stambolov's text and give the Bulgarian passages in brackets. The vocabulary consists mostly of realia, which will favour equivalency in our case.

The connotation of MacGahan's epithets is completely different in the same report, when mentioning the "numerous difficulties caused by the authorities" (back-translated from Stambolov's "многочислените затруднения, създавани от властите"). In the author's English text it is not simply the authorities that cause difficulties but the "the perversity of Turkish authorities". Judging by the translator's general adherence to the equivalence of translation, this omission might be due to the mediation of the Russian "interlinear gloss".

In the same passage, the American journalist provides a description, even though very brief, of the buildings in the Bulgarian villages and the Bulgarians themselves. What was burnt down were "solid stone houses", not "several worthless small houses" (back-translated from Stambolov's "няколко малоценни къщици"). In this contrasting description, MacGahan actually uses "mud huts", an epithet used some years earlier by his antagonist St. Clair, which, as we will see below, is probably not mere coincidence. For the translator Stambolov, however, the equivalent translation here seems to be undesirable; the reason being his axiological, value-based attitude (Bulgarians do not live in huts, let alone mud huts). Stambolov translates more accurately the short characteristic of the Bulgarian people (back-translated: "hard-working, enterprising, honest, educated, and peaceful"; in MacGahan: "hard-working, industrious, honest, civilized, and peaceful people"). It is interesting whether his translation of "civilized" - "educated", is a result of the interlinear Russian translation, or "civilized" in the Bulgarian Revival discourse, which is equivalent to "educated" (MacGahan, 1876, p. 25; MacGahan, 1880, p. 11).

MacGahan uses similar contrastive and value-laden vocabulary in the detailed characterization of Rayna Knyaginya (Princess Rayna), whom he visited in prison and helped with her release, with E. Schuyler, then Consul-General of the USA in Constantinople. After the description of her appearance, the "slight, graceful form" (where the rendering is close to equivalent), the translation refers to the "enraged" and "bloodthirsty" soldiers, whose most "rude" ridicule she was forced to endure. MacGahan's characterization, however, is somewhat different: in his words the soldiers are not exactly "bloodthirsty"; they are rather "cowardly brutal soldiery".

However, for Stambolov, the national revolutionary, these epithets are probably not strong enough. On the one hand, MacGahan seeks to somewhat downplay the military aspect of the April Uprising (in order to put a stress on the unnecessary cruelty of its suppression); on the other hand, Stambolov, who is himself a participant in it, tends to think in heroic categories. MacGahan describes the villains (including the Ottoman administration) as pusillanimous, cowardly, devious and hypocritical. For Stambolov the enemies of the Bulgarians need characteristics that might present them as formidable adversaries as well. Perhaps that is why he restricts the translation of "vilest epithets and insults" (the words with which the soldiers scoff at Rayna) to "most rude" ridicule ("най-груби подигравки"). Meanings such as "mean, sneaky, nasty" rather than "rude" dominate in the connotation of "vile" (MacGahan, 1876, pp. 34-38; MacGahan 1880, pp. 16-17).

I will not analyse in detail the description of Rayna Popgeorgieva Futekova (Princess Rayna) made by J. MacGahan. I will only mention some of the epithets which themselves are evidence of his value-based attitude: "favourite of the people", "veritable marvel", "intelligence and beauty", "esteem and respect"; in the Bulgarian translation: "всеобща любимица", "истинско чудо", "ум и хубост", "общо уважение". The equivalence of translation is indisputable here - the axiological attitude of Stambolov and MacGahan fully coincide. To describe Rayna, the reporter of "Daily News" even uses the hyperbole "being of a superior order", which Stambolov translates "висше същество" (Ibid).

It is also interesting to note the hesitation of the author in designating a concept without a precise denotation in English; we can assume with high probability that this is actually "chitalishte", the traditional community cultural club in Bulgaria (see Христов, 2014b). MacGahan uses "a kind of a village literary club" and "literary society" to refer to the respective institution in Panagyurishte, which supported Raina financially for her education in the American College of Stara Zagora. Stambolov translates both as "книжовно дружество" ("literary society"). I attribute this rendering to the absence of denotation for "chitalishte" in Russia, respectively, the absence of a relevant term in the Russian language, which is interlinear for Stambolov's translation. Actually, it is not a genuine "literary society" that is envisaged here; this is clear from the necessary additional clarification: "a kind of" "literary club", and a "village" one (!) at that (MacGahan, 1876, pp. 36-38; MacGahan, 1880, pp. 16-17).

St. Clair on Bulgaria

It is difficult to determine the genre of the book "A residence in Bulgaria, or notes on the resources and administration of Turkey" by Stanislas St. Clair, co-authored by Charles Brophy, published in 1869 in London.² It is on the border between a detailed political analysis, a travelogue, and a religious and ethnological study. Its pathos is not only fiercely anti-Bulgarian: it is also directed against Russia and all Eastern Christianity; on the other hand, it is a passionate defence of the traditional values of the Muslim population in the Ottoman Empire as opposed to the corruption in its administration. In the European polemic about the fate of the Balkan peoples in the Ottoman Empire, the book was a response to the advocacy for their independence by W. Gladstone and authors such as the travellers Georgina Mackenzie and Adeline Irby (Mackenzie & Irby, 1983), whose travelogue "Travels in the Slavonic provinces of Turkey-in-Europe" had been published two years before "A residence in Bulgaria".

The work of St. Clair has not been translated into Bulgarian, so we can analyse the axiological attitude of his commentators, not of the translator. The style of the original text is pretentiously Victorian, full of rhetoric and tropes, as well as unconcealed malicious irony towards Bulgarians and Orthodox clergy. According to M. Kirova, the author's observations are based on an "ideological", imperially-colonial motivation and a teleological approach, in which the result determines the methodology (Кирова, 2014). I believe that we may also add the axiological, value motivation of St. Clair, for whom Russia and Orthodoxy are not only a political but a personal enemy as well. Being a Polish aristocrat by his maternal ancestry, Stanislas was disinherited after a war with Tsarist Russia; he refers to Bulgarians ironically as "the immaculate pets of Russia" (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 2).

St. Clair on the Bulgarians: implications of irony

Below we will adduce a few examples, which do not exhaust the pejorative connotation of St. Clair's narrative, part of which is referring to Bulgarians (and all

² I will quote the text of St. Clair and C. Brophy with reference to respective chapters (1, 2...) because of the available format on the Internet.

Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire) by the derogatory Arabism "rayah" (herd): he does not attempt to use an English equivalent. But we can briefly analyze the use of ironic tropes such as "the immaculate pets of Russia" that abound in his text. St. Clair comments on the relations between the Bulgarians from the village of Derekyoy (today Konstantinovo near Varna) and the Muslim Gypsies, temporarily practicing there "the universal gypsy trades of begging, basket-making, tinkering, and forging iron". "The Bulgarians said", St. Clair remarks, "that they added in an especial degree that of thieving, but this accusation is probably due in a great measure to the fact that two of a trade never agree." According to the author, in the spring, when the Bulgarians no longer have "pecuniary advantage" from their temporary neighbours, an "assembly of the notables" in the village decides that "it would be well to give them a hint to quit." The hint is "conveyed in the most delicate manner by burning their houses over their heads one night" (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 1).

It is apparent that the demonization of the Bulgarian population is a presupposed goal of the author, and the technique of irony discloses his psychological motivation. But an ignorant reader from the Empire of Queen Victoria would perceive other tropes in the text as an undeniable truth, especially the hyperbolization of the backwardness of the Bulgarians in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the author specifies that there is "not a single instance of mere hearsay", nor have they (the co-authors) "received the allegations of either Mussulman or Christian without inquiring into and satisfying themselves of their accuracy". (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, Preface).

The negative hyperbole is to be found in all aspects of St. Clair's depiction of the Bulgarian people - their appearance, language, folklore and superstitions, morality and lifestyle. Bulgarians look "strongly but heavily built", with "a walk like that of a bear, coarse and blunted-looking features, a heavy moustache (...), a beard shaven once a week, and little twinkling eyes, which, whilst always avoiding to meet your own, give a general appearance of animal cunning to the face". St Clair completes the description with an ironic remark about the love of "All-Mother-Russia" to these "offshoots". The use of the participle "blunted" is quite unusual in this context, probably aimed to emphasize his personal negative assessment among the prevailing clichés (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 2).

St. Clair on the Bulgarian language and religion: dialect and shamanism

With the confidence of a military captain, St. Clair declares that he is familiar with all the Slavonic dialects. He defines the Bulgarian language as a Slavonic dialect, and claims that the population in the Black Sea region speaks a "corrupt" dialect of the latter, reiterating that Bulgarian is "itself only a dialect" (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 1, 7). Judging from the transliteration in Latin, which he applies on a chant from the Bulgarian wedding ritual - "Pak jede i pije" ("And he eats and drinks": according to the author, this is "the constant chorus" even "in the songs about" Bulgarian "great heroes"!), St. Clair did indeed listen to the sound of the Bulgarian language. He also translates a lamentation over death, but without translating the exclamation "God! God!"; it is only transliterated "Boze! Boze" (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 5). Had he known the Bulgarian "Slavonic dialect", he would have understood this vocative exclamation as well, all the more so because it is the same in Russian, a language so close to his native Polish. In fact St. Clair denies any religious feeling, let alone Christian consciousness to the Bulgarians; therefore "God!" must remain just an interjection for the recipient of his text.

St. Clair mentions the songs and lamentations in the context of his comments on the Bulgarian "superstitions", to which he devotes two chapters of the book. Of course, he does not conceal his contemptuous attitude here either. Commenting for example on eight great "sins" (actually eight social taboos), he pays particular attention to the ban on bathing a child until the seventh year, or the prohibition to visit the village fountain after dusk. St. Clair sees a surviving pagan tradition here, as well as in many traditional church holidays, and rightly so. But his pathos is actually blaming the Bulgarians for their inability to adopt the dogmas of true Christianity. The main culprit for this, however, is the priest, the "Papas", who is the leading defender of superstitions and even the author of new taboos (e.g. the prohibition to give alms to non-Christians). Because of his own lack of faith, he even concludes "a compact of mutual aid and toleration" with the village witch (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 4). In St. Clair's perception, an Orthodox priest can belong to no other ethnicity but Greek. Even if he had known about the Bulgarian movement for church independence, which had already achieved the appointment of Bulgarian priests in many settlements, he would not have mentioned it for the world.

St. Clair on Bulgarian folklore: hesitation in the value perspective

The attentive reader will note that the language of St. Clair undergoes a noticeable change, when the author attempts a quite detailed description of folk beliefs: it becomes much more neutral. Actually his spite is transferred here towards the Orthodoxy. I will list only a few of the topics he examines by adducing many examples: the belief in various spirits, exorcism, treasure hunting as a magic ritual, witchcraft and vampirism. Leaving aside the ironic remark that what the Greek priest cannot cure is within the power of the Hodja or of St. Clair himself in the role of a paramedic, we have to admit the worth of his folkloristic observations. In addition to the above topics, the author also analyzes some very popular feasts from the church (people's) calendar such as Annunciation, St George's Day, St Demetrius's Day, Christmas, All Souls' Day, as well as beliefs associated with the mythical figure of Grandma March (Baba Marta). The popular Bulgarian name of All Souls' Day, "Zadushnitsa", is transliterated by the "Bulgarian dialect" "expert" St. Clair as "Dusz Nitza"; Baba Marta as "Baba Mart". (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 4, 5).

It would be reasonable to view the two chapters on traditional beliefs from an axiologically neutral perspective: despite their pejorative heading "Bulgarian superstitions", they are actually a valuable firsthand source for Bulgarian folklore. The Bulgarophobe St. Clair is a witness to the endangered national cultural heritage, and at that in a field that is difficult to interpret by means of a foreign language. He is himself aware of its value, because in the West it was systematically annihilated by the Church, which "banished the memories, of the ancient gods" (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 4). The axiological charge of St. Clair's text actually often changes its polarity here: the example above is not a glorification of the civilizational tradition of the West.

Despite the axiological "hesitation" in the text of these chapters, the main pathos of St. Clair remains debasing the image of the Bulgarian nation before the English recipient. Superstition, which the author equals to a lack of Christian faith, is the basis of the imagined moral degradation of the people:

Is the Bulgarian ill, he sends for the witch; has he lost some money, he sends for the witch; is he going to give a feast or to die, he sends for the witch; does he require a philtre, he sends for the witch; does he wish to get rid of an enemy, the witch is still his resource. (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 4).

In his work, St. Clair repeatedly uses the fictional poisoning as a main argument for the moral inferiority of Bulgarians, "a people with whom roguery is the rule, honesty the exception" (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 1). He can provide, however, only one example (albeit reiterated in several chapters): the gossip, told "as an interesting piece of information", about a certain woman, "Tranitza or Kaloushka, whom you see quietly chatting with her neighbours", "known ... to have poisoned her first husband in order to marry a second" (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapters 1, 5).

For St. Clair, the Christian "civiliser", living paganism is at the heart of yet other characteristics of "the Rayah" - the gluttony and especially the "avarice", so much hated by him. He is displeased by the allegedly unfair price for an overnight accommodation in a Bulgarian house:

The wine you have drunk, the chickens you have cooked, the bread you have eaten, the corn for your horse - all is counted up with an accuracy of mental arithmetic highly creditable to the financial abilities of the Christian peasant: if your host is not avaricious he only multiplies the sum total of the value by three. (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 2)

Describing Bulgarian funeral rites, he disdainfully comments on the custom of placing food on the graves: "In short the Bulgarian mind seems to be capable of conceiving the disembodied soul only as something possessing still grosser appetites than its fleshly covering (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 4). The negative hyperbolizing and the analogy with the "uncivilized" savages lead him to the conclusion that the pig is a sacred animal for the Bulgarians, "the animal sacred to the Rayahs" (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 4).

Had there been no other English language accounts of the Bulgarian lands at the time, St. Clair's "unbiased" analysis might have convinced many of the subjects of Her

Majesty that these areas were inhabited by semi-animals, to whom the Sublime Porte had granted undue rights. Regrettably, public opinion in Britain seems to have a tendency for assimilating radical views on "others": the attitude of Prime Minister W. Churchill might be looked upon as a recurrence of St. Clair's view in a later era.

It takes a considerable emotional effort on the part of the readers to free themselves from value-oriented thinking and look impartially upon the ethnographic data provided by St. Clair. It is, indeed, "in sharp dissonance with the romantic mythology of the patriarchal way of life, established for more than two centuries" (Kirova, 2014). In my opinion, his information about the Bulgarian national costumes and the household arrangements, for example, merit making this effort. The author describes them conscientiously and in detail, not failing, however, to maintain the pejorative connotation of his narrative:

The dress of the men admits of but little variety, being always sombre in colour, a circumstance which has given rise to the epithet of Kara (black) Giaour occasionally bestowed upon them by the Turks, who are fond of light tints in their costume... The women's dress is usually simple, except on feast days, when they display a perfectly bewildering amount of embroidery. (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 2)

The absence of any snub whatsoever is obvious in this last description. Perhaps the omnipresent derogatory attitude of the author towards Bulgaria is self-imposed to a certain degree: the reason being not only his personal hatred, but also a misunderstood duty to public opinion in the British Empire. So much so, that it seems impossible to conceive the existence of a people described by such vocabulary: "sordid and avaricious" (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 4), "brutish, obstinate, idle, superstitious, dirty, sans foi ni loi - in short, the degraded being" (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 26). The reception of this description is not necessarily unequivocal; on the contrary - as we shall see, it might have evoked a response opposite to the one sought by St. Clair. It would not be a compliment to the English reading public if it had taken these epithets at face value.

Conclusion

Is there a causative relationship between the works of St. Clair and MacGahan?

St. Clair cannot distinguish one Bulgarian village from another. They are all "a mass of cottages apparently thrown together without order or arrangement, built of mud and rudely thatched with reeds, upon which great stones are sometimes placed... to prevent the roof being carried away by the wind" (St. Clair & Brophy, 1869, chapter 1).

It is an interesting fact that in his depiction of Bulgarian houses, St. Clair uses the same terms which MacGahan later cited as a false picture imposed in Britain, "mud houses, or rather huts". Besides, "the Bulgarian cottages are distinguished by the entire absence of windows or of any substitute for them, the only media of light and ventilation being the large chimney and the chinks and crannies of the ill-joined door", so that on a moonless night, the villages are "dark and gloomy as the night" and a traveller will not even notice them (Ibid). The obsessively frequent analogy between Bulgarians and the savage tribes of Africa and America aims to expose the "otherness" of the Bulgarian people, which does not belong to the civilized world and is almost impossible to be cultivated. The same analogy, though only as a reference, is present in the text of MacGahan as well:

I have always heard them spoken of as mere savages, who were in reality not much more civilized than the American Indians; and I confess that I myself was not far from entertaining the same opinion not very long ago. (MacGahan, 1876, p.24)

The terminological coincidences above presuppose the high probability for MacGahan to have read the text of St. Clair. This can be one of the reasons for the pathos of the Bulgarophile MacGahan. He is everything that St. Clair is not: an ordinary citizen of a former colony, not an aristocrat; defender of the downtrodden rather than of imperial interests; writing without irony and without the pretentious style of the highly educated Englishman. In a sense, the contemptuous narrative of St. Clair might have contributed to the work of MacGahan - as a motivation to oppose an obviously exaggerated lie. Is this not the dialectic in the public function of the text: perhaps MacGahan's astounding reportage would not have existed without St. Clair?

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SYSTEMS AND ACCIDENTS IN 20TH CENTURY MAGICAL REALIST LITERATURE: SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN* AND SADEGH HEDAYAT'S *THE BLIND OWL* AS CRITIQUES OF MODERN NATION-MAKING EXPERIMENTS

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Abstract

This article compares two major 20th century magical realist novels - Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Sadegh Hedayat's *The Blind Owl* – as critiques of modern nation-making practices, in Nehruvian post-independence India and Iran under Reza Shah Pahlavi. The analysis centers the interplay of accidents and systems, in political constructions and contestations of modern self, history and knowledge. The works are assessed in terms of two aesthetic paradigms of modernity: Baudelaire's vision of modernity as traumatic deracination involving new creative possibilities and freedom, and Cocteau's vision of modernity as an Infernal Machine where a pre-recorded universe annihilates creative freedom. The political significance of these aesthetics are evaluated against the two distinctive nationalist narratives which the authors set out to contest in their respective novels. Both novels offer important critiques of violence. Yet both reveal a Proustian aesthetic of nostalgia, rejecting organized political action in the public sphere to celebrate imaginative introversion.

Key words: Magical Realism, modernity, Salman Rushdie, Sadegh Hedayat, India, Iran, nation-making, postmodernism

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This essay compares two major works of 20th century magical realist literature, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) and Sadegh Hedayat's *The Blind Owl* (1937), in terms of the perennial tension of systems and accidents. These novels each reinvented the national literatures of their respective countries. They also provided profound allegories of two major 20th century modernizing regimes in the non-Western world: Jawaharlal Nehru's post-independence Indian Republic (1947-64) and Iran under Reza Shah Pahlavi (1925-41). While India attempted a multi-party democratic and federal experiment with a mixed economy and non-aligned foreign policy, Iran undertook a rapid authoritarian and one-party modernization project with U.S. geopolitical Cold War support. While India attempted to integrate elements of its traditional heritage into the modernization process (notably cultural pluralism and the Gandhian ethic of reconciliation), Iran attempted (at this early stage) to follow the Ataturk ideal of a violent rupture with tradition to institute a French Revolutionary-inspired homogenous national identity. Yet, despite these differing cultural contexts and modernization dynamics, both regimes produced a comparable existential crisis of national identity. Hence, the articulation of an ontological vacuum in these two novels. In *Midnight's Children*, this is symbolized in the "hole in the center" of the European-educated grandfather who renounces Islam at the book's outset, and passes the hole down through subsequent generations (Rushdie, p. 266).

These two novels have significant points for comparison. Both express deep doubts about modernity from authors in exile (Hedayat's was political, while Rushdie's was voluntary). Both authors, having embraced the Left, became disillusioned with the nation-making process as such and sought a new post-modern path. The novels deal with doublings, the entropic disintegration of sublimated ideals into decaying corporeality and finitude, and the modern crisis of Islamic belief and community. Both are extended intergenerational autobiographies, based on the mystical synchronicity of recurrence. They each present a critique of totality and violence, a plea for pluralism, a mistrust of mass society, and a high aesthetic valuation of traditional life worlds. They deal similarly with ghosts, addiction, delirium, illness and the eclipse of rational consciousness. In a short essay, there is insufficient space to discuss all of these points. This article will limit analysis of these novels to representations of the self, knowledge and history.

Initially, it is necessary to explain how I intend to use “systems” and “accidents” as a framework for investigating these two magical realist novels.

By systems, I mean at once intellectual systems – the vast edifice of Enlightenment thought that dominated the 18th century in Kantian or Hegelian totalities – and the 20th century nation-making systems which attempted variants upon the French Revolutionary-inspired experiment of transcending the chaos of the past. This issue refers not only to the experience of colonialism and its unconsciously self-repeating aftermath, but also to what Hannah Arendt has called “the perplexities of the Rights of Man” (Arendt, p. 290-302). In their respective national contexts, both Hedayat and Rushdie deal at least indirectly with the loss of ontological security, the violence of the modern state, and the need for legally organized self-protection among the uprooted populations by the very states which uprooted them. It is a central feature of the Faustian bargain of modern nation-making politics.

By accidents, I refer to the unanticipated elements in the blind spot of classical sociological theory (in its aspirations to pure science) which have destroyed its best founded predictions and plans for a rational future order. Comte, Spencer, Marx and Durkheim envisioned society as a totality built upon a symmetrical and unitary system. Comte and Marx, particularly, envisioned a utopian end-product. Instead, this conceptual paradigm produced ethical disaster in the modern nation-making experiences of many countries. The most hauntingly violent examples include the modernizing practices of the Soviet Union and Mao’s China, where the Great Leap Forward 'killed 45 million in four years' (Independent, Oct 23, 2011). Both novels also deal with this dilemma in their scepticism over science and totality as categories for remaking traditional societies. Indeed, their scepticism tends to eclipse hope for anything beyond forms of subjective salvation.

Both Hedayat and Rushdie critique universal progress based upon a perceived totalizing modernity that occludes traditional meaning and belonging. Yet, because their very critiques of modernity are based upon aesthetic escapism, they fail to deal convincingly with modernity’s dangers. Neither the uncompromising nihilism of *The Blind Owl* nor the playful cynicism of *Midnight’s Children* help us to face the truth of the moment. The categories of capitalism, nationalism, and so forth, lose the dialectical

vitality invested in them by the traditional Left. They become the static and homogeneous other of romanticized everyday life. Their escapism, if taken seriously, features a utopian rejection of science, modernity and the nation, as such, as if merely by their dissolution a more magical and emancipated reality could gain ascendancy. However aesthetically compelling, it is unrealistic at the political level of everyday life. Although these are novels, precisely such a stance is routinely taken by Subaltern School-inspired scholars, deriving from a similar ideological worldview.

Finally, I am comparing the two novels based upon two modernist aesthetic paradigms. The first is that of Baudelaire: modernity is traumatic uprooting, disorder, and turmoil, out of which new perspectives and creative horizons nevertheless emerge. It is a vision of modernity with freedom, where the unmade future is achieved through action. Secondly, there is Cocteau's vision of the Infernal Machine. Its central tenet is the pre-recorded universe. Following the fatality of ancient Greek tragedy, every human action is predestined to participate in a cosmic pattern where mathematically certain self-destruction is repeated with eternal inevitability. For Cocteau, "the gods exist" and "they are the devil" (Cocteau, p. 5). It envisions modernity without freedom. All action is reducible to a pre-existing and unknowable archetype. Both of these novels, I find, fall into the category of Cocteau's Infernal Machine. As such, despite their high aesthetic achievement, they espouse cultural pessimism. Meaningful human agency is nullified in favour of meaningless inevitability.

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

Salman Rushdie's magical realist classic, *Midnight's Children* (1981), interrogates self, history and knowledge from a post-modern vantage point. The novel encompasses vast tracts of modern Indian history: from the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre to the Muslim League, and from the Partition riots to the post-independence Five Year Plans. It includes the Sino-Indian and Indo-Pak wars and the Emergency under Indira Gandhi. Saleem, the narrator, is born at midnight on 15 August 1947, the moment of India's national independence. His future is literally and metaphorically tied to India's future. A thousand and one children, born within the first hour of India's independence, are endowed with miraculous powers. Saleem's telepathic powers function as a relay station for the others. His attempt at collective organization finally

demonstrates the futility of purposefully mobilized public action, in the stifling sea of mass society. Only the unique and unrepeatable private moment, it turns out, has value.

Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is a history told phenomenologically, i.e. accidentally, from below. It relies upon memory, rooted in gossip, myths, legends, hallucination, mass media and popular culture. It recalls Saint Augustine's "Memory's Palace" in the *Confessions*, where memory (not physical cause) is the means to attaining the truth. The next step is the epistemic priority of belief over objective knowledge, or the "truth" as "sanctioned by time" over "literal truth" (Rushdie, p. 451). Scientific worldviews are here an accidental matter of conversion, or a psychological process, rather than an inevitably rule-governed or logical system. Rational universalism yields to incommensurable and differing worldviews. This alternative to objective truth resembles the Heideggerian notion of truth as occlusion. This is confirmed in Rushdie's text: "What's real and what's true aren't necessarily the same. True, for me, was ... something hidden ... a thing concealed just over the horizon" (Rushdie, p.103). These critiques of the modern paradigm of knowing and being are hidden in *Midnight's Children* behind carnivalesque visions of excess. The critiques consistently and clearly recur throughout the text. The everyday world of accidents and chance is idealized as a site of meaning, while history is an alien and hostile system imposed through echoes of colonial power (Rushdie, p. 131).

Rushdie's magical realism is built upon an interesting contradiction. In one respect, it reminds us of Alexandre Koyré's warning in *Reflections on the Lie* (1943). During military conflict, lying is treated as a weapon to defeat the enemy. This condition, Koyré argued, can permeate everyday life in modern societies: "what if war, an abnormal, episodic, transient condition, should come to be permanent and taken for granted?" (Koyré, p.18). Koyré warned of the totalitarian power to transform war's accidental reality into a permanent order of power. Rushdie's text voices this argument in portraying post-independence Pakistan: "In a country where truth is what it is instructed to be, reality quite literally ceases to exist, so that everything becomes possible except what we are told is the case" (Rushdie, p. 453).

In a second respect, Rushdie's text dismisses as a dream the very institutional basis for systematically preventing totalitarian ascendancy (i.e. division of power, etc.).

In Rushdie's dystopian narrative, the political ideal of freedom sought by the Indian national independence struggle is a mere myth, no more or less real than other imaginary realities that have populated Indian cultural history. Rushdie condemns post-independence India through Saleem's pronouncement: the "nearly thirty one year old myth of freedom is no longer what it was. New myths are needed" (Rushdie, p. 640). Rather than an extended struggle transpiring over generations, exemplified in civil rights, labor and women's emancipation movements, democratic emancipation is merely a fanciful bubble to be popped in favor of new dreams.

At a deeper level, the text targets modern secular history in nation-making. History is not the site of order and progress. It is a totalizing frame that coerces the lived reality of the local. Saleem is "handcuffed to history" (Rushdie, p. 3). The authentically lived reality, beneath the state-imposed system of History, is a heterogeneous chaos of the imagination. Rushdie's novel is built upon an ontology of accidents: "historical coincidences have littered" and "befouled" the narrator's "family existence in the world" (Rushdie, p. 28). His life is nothing but a "vast mountain of unreasonable occurrences" (Rushdie, p. 516). In the narrator's obsessive quest for "meaning", only accidents reveal his "reason for having been born" (Rushdie, p. 225).

At the root of *Midnight's Children's* contradiction is Rushdie's standing as one of the world's great literary cynics. Rushdie rejects belief while embracing mythology, in a fiction which embraces everything. In the many-sided manipulation of mythic surfaces, Rushdie advances a post-modern critique of nation-making as universal progress. The central charge is that it lacks "meaning". Rushdie's novel inaugurated the literary and intellectual articulation of disenchantment with Nehruvianism, a theme echoed by many subsequent Indian-English novelists.

The Nehruvian secular nationalist legacy is ontologically demoted in *Midnight's Children*. Existentially fragmented and phantasmal moments are the authentic Indian experience of modernity. The novel converged with a wider crisis in the Nehruvian consensus: firstly, similar condemnations of Indian nationalism in the Subaltern School, and a rightward shift in India's ruling elite towards neo-liberalism. The new intellectual tendency represented by Rushdie and the Subalterns, and manipulated by the right-wing elite upon India's political terrain, was to affirm the imaginative and existential value of community, i.e. caste and religion, over the secular category of civil citizenship.

The identity crisis of modern societies is central to *Midnight's Children*. Saleem is Anglo-Indian by birth, the bastard child of a departing Englishman and an Indian servant woman who died at childbirth. He is switched in his cradle with the child of a Kashmiri couple. A hybrid, cut off from all knowledge and contact with his origins, he undertakes a lifelong quest for the meaning of existence. This preoccupation with lost roots, i.e. an ontological politics, pervades the novel. Indeed, Rushdie wrote the novel to recover his lost Indian origins, while exiled in Britain (Guardian, July 26, 2008). Saleem's parents are obsessively "determined to put down roots", while the narrator himself has been "pulled up by his roots, only to be flung unceremoniously across the years" (Rushdie, p. 431/482). Time as an existential relation to the self is a pervasive theme. The characters, "seized by atavistic longings, and forgetting this new myth of freedom", revert "to their old ways, their old regionalist loyalties and prejudices." Rushdie depicts this in tandem with the erosion of the modern contract-based state-law complex: the "body politic began to crack" (Rushdie, p. 341). In *Midnight's Children*, India is a "nation of forgetters" (Rushdie, p. 43). Identity is what is at stake. The secular politics of interest is challenged by an ontological politics of identity.

Historically, India's nationalist historiographical tradition has constructed the primacy of secular interest based on the Nehruvian legacy. A comparison illuminates the ontological-identity perspective in *Midnight's Children*. Romila Thapar, for example, a foremost Indian historian, chose to study history at university shortly after Indian independence in 1947. Her decision reflected "the thoughts of most Indians at the time", revolving "around two intertwined themes ... the opportunity of constructing a free society (and) the need to know what our identity as a people was". Her quest for historical knowledge, therefore, had an activist orientation. Concerning "the issue of how a nation formulates its identity", Thapar endorses "the identity of the Indian citizen, over and above religious community and caste" (Thapar, p. xi-xii). This affirms the secular democratic nation-making goals and ideals embodied in India's independence struggle under Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Although Thapar concedes that "what has come is not the society we anticipated", she concludes that "hopefully, one day that society can emerge" (Thapar, p. xiii).

The systemic value underlying Thapar's endorsement of the historical discipline and secular interest is what Nehru called "the scientific temper". In this view, truth

corresponds to reality upon the basis of observational evidence and the logical correlation of facts through theory. For Nehru, the “scientific temper” transcended the mere instrumentality of science: “something more than its application is necessary. It is the scientific approach, the adventurous and yet critical temper of science, the search for truth and new knowledge, the refusal to accept anything without testing and trial, (and) the capacity to change previous conclusions in the face of new evidence” (Nehru, p. 570). A different and less hopeful perspective is articulated in *Midnight’s Children*. The ideal nation-making aims of the independence movement were mere illusions, both totalizing and harmful. Legends become “more useful than the facts” (Rushdie, p. 57). The “truth” is “memory’s truth”, which “creates its own reality”, and “no sane human being ever trusts someone else’s more than his own” (Rushdie, p. 292). At the national level, there are “as many versions of India as there are Indians” (Rushdie, p. 373). The ontology of accidents is affirmed, over the systemically conceived “scientific temper”, as the authentic India. There is salvation only in imaginative subjectivity.

In *Midnight’s Children*, the broader ideals of freedom and history are the chimeric offspring of colonialism. Science and secularism are parodied. They are identified with the “optimism virus”, i.e. modern Enlightenment confidence that – despite all difficulties – the political dreams of the Independence movement might emerge through prolonged struggle. Optimism is something of which, the narrator declares, we must be “cured” (Rushdie, p. 616). Rushdie’s protagonist declares the futility of politics, i.e. of organized collective efforts to steer the nation-making process in alignment with values and ideas – “Politics” is “at the best of times a bad dirty business. We should have avoided it ...” (Rushdie, p. 608). He declares the “futility of thought decision action” (Rushdie, p.102). The building of a nation-state was a trap which India should never have fallen into. Yet now it is too late to get out. The only remedy, *Midnight’s Children* suggests, is a retreat into the private worlds of fantasy.

The self, in *Midnight’s Children*, is a phantasmagoric explosion of imaginary identities. Plural in its range, it is elitist in its aspiration to find freedom beyond the public multitude (“the many-headed monster”). Saleem’s fictional autobiography derives from magical realism’s kaleidoscopic subjectivity as multiple ephemeral worlds, each qualitatively unique. He is a symbolic historian, in Baudelaire’s tradition of a “forest of symbols”. However, the hope for the esoterically unique traditional communities is

unlikely to prevail against destructive modern mass society. The privileged moment of “privacy” will be sucked into the “annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes” (Rushdie, p.647). *Midnight’s Children*, in this way, presents a lament for the vanishing of unique and irretrievable cultural universes, aristocratically sheltered and existentially unable to survive in modern mass society. The “mythological chaos of an unforgettable midnight” is contrasted with the “tattered hopes of the nation” (Rushdie, p. 616-617).

Being, in its incommensurability, is contrasted with history, i.e. unifying system. The “hundred daily pinpricks of family life” are required to “deflate the great ballooning fantasy of history” (Rushdie, p. 482). In his struggle to be free of national history, Saleem even erases the smaller history of embeddedness in family and community, and says: “Don’t try and fill my head with that history. I am who I am, that’s all there is” (Rushdie, p. 489). The narrator’s essential dilemma, ultimately, and reason for writing an autobiography, is that he is “disintegrating” and “falling apart” because his “poor body, singular, unlovely” is “buffeted by too much history” (Rushdie, p. 43). His “singular” body represents an affirmation of difference and uniqueness, i.e. authenticity, against the smooth homogeneity of History as the systemic universal.

Secondly, and relatedly, *Midnight’s Children* critiques modern knowledge in the name of the significance of a devalued unconscious. In a famously recurring passage, Rushdie completely reverses the Enlightenment paradigm of subject-centered knowledge. It is replaced with an ontology of accidents. The productive site of knowledge and significance is located in absence: “Most of what matters in our lives takes place in our absence.” This radical vision of human existence privileges constellations of contingency of which the person is barely aware, as a “few clues one stumbles across” (Rushdie, p. 17). The consequence, for the narrator, is that he is “the sort of person to whom things have been done” (Rushdie, p. 330). He is passive, without agency, a mere flotsam and jetsam upon life’s sea. He can neither understand nor control the main events shaping his existence.

On these grounds, Rushdie’s protagonist affirms the higher existential value of the local fragment, cut off from the dynamisms of the modern public sphere: “I am coming to the conclusion that privacy, the small individual lives of men, are preferable to all of this inflated macrocosmic activity” (Rushdie, p. 608). Here, “legends make

reality” (Rushdie, p. 57). In postmodern fashion, totality is rejected. The “urge to encapsulate the whole of reality” is derided (Rushdie, p. 97). There is no place, in the world of *Midnight’s Children*, for organized collective – let alone national - action as a mode of engagement between self and other. Nor is sociological analysis of cause and effect viable. The kernel of modern corruption in *Midnight’s Children* is the totalizing idea of history itself. Modern history and knowledge are a vicious circle undermining the integrity of being. This is ultimately an aesthetic revolt against the nationalist legacy of the French Revolution, which mobilized the population in order to subvert the hierarchic inheritance of the traditional past.

Beyond the elaborately contrived plot, Saleem’s conclusions are discernable – “abandon politics, give up all hopes for a utopian future, discard the masses-and-classes/capital-and-labour/us-and-them paradigms, adopt a grotesque narcissism, and renounce the logic of cause and effect” (Shakil, p. 218). In this way, Rushdie’s’ novel predates the “end of history” refrain.

Midnight’s Children ends upon a Proustian note. After descending into the inferno of Bombay’s Midnite-Confidential Club for the city’s young cosmopolitans, the narrator discovers a pickle. Its taste “brings him back to the past” (Rushdie, p.637). This strong mood of nostalgia is woven into the recurrent recognition of final annihilation. Time is the destroyer of all things: “What chews on bones refuses to pause... it’s only a matter of time” (Rushdie, p. 409). The central image is an eternally recurring ancient curse. This conforms perfectly to Cocteau’s *Infernal Machine*: “once again destiny, inevitability, the antithesis of choice had come to rule my life, once again a child was to be born of a father who was not his father” (Rushdie, p. 580). It is a world of predestined repetition where “every life, past present and future, is already recorded” (Rushdie, p.604).

Sadegh Hedayat’s *The Blind Owl*

Sadegh Hedayat’s *The Blind Owl* (1937) is foregrounded in the Iranian 1920s-30s nation-making experience. The Constitutional Revolution (1905-11) constitutes the background. Hedayat’s text allegorizes both the newly pluralistic Constitutional Revolutionary spirit, and the authoritarian post-1925 nationalist regime. It critiques the violent means of the post-1925 regime, inflicted in the name of a ‘higher’ ideal of

national homogenization and 'pure' modernity. Hedayat, espousing Iranian independence and freedom, was also a nationalist. *The Blind Owl* proposes a cautionary vision of the human condition where entropy reigns over the absolute, and suggests the non-existence of pure identity. Where state action links pure identity to sublimated violence in pursuit of higher ends, the mutual and banal destruction of all contending parties results, in all-too ordinary patterns of violence.

Hedayat was active in emergent 1930s Iranian civil society. He created a forum for public self-expression through his role in the Rab'a Avant Guardist, anti-monarchical and anti-Islamist movement. Targeted in 1936, Hedayat went into Indian exile to avoid arrest and write freely. He wrote *The Blind Owl* between 1937-9 in Bombay. He participated in the 1940s Tudeh Party, opposing Pahlavi oppression, Western imperialism and the snares of religious traditionalism. This may have been a revolt against his own northern Iranian aristocratic family, from whom he broke away.

The Blind Owl combines the Gothic and Magical Realist aesthetics. At its 18th century inception, Gothic distinguished a new spatial condensation of the feudal past (barbaric, supernatural and primitive) from the new 'modern' ideals of the international Enlightenment. The dichotomized 'inside'/'outside' was frequently re-established through force of violence (i.e. *Dracula*, 1897) related to tacit Hegelian historicism (i.e. all conflict is resolved into final scientific unity). *The Blind Owl* uses Gothic elements to fragment coherent subjectivity into multiple selves and examine fears about dissolution and transgression of boundaries, i.e. exposure to the emptiness at the border of the subject's identity. The self is a co-mingling of multiple fictions. The dualist system of modernity, still tacit in the Gothic, is broken into numberless accidents with a strange underlying synchronicity in *The Blind Owl*.

Magical Realism represented a shift into a multi-centered rather than dualistic imaginative terrain, focused upon everyday life pluralism. The broad narrative of history is broken into multiple and incongruent everyday fragments. Despite roots in the Gothic tradition, Magical Realism unravels the inside/out dichotomy in the manner of Gaston Bachelard's phenomenology of lived experience (a source of post-structuralism). It follows that violence ceases to be teleologically imbued with a heroic quality, achieving absolute resolution. Magical Realism underlines the contingency of

modernity, rather than affirming the 18th century promise of an all-unifying pattern applied to morals, politics and aesthetics.

The *Blind Owl* is split into two major sections, the first being “surrealist” and the second “realist” (Katouzian, p.63). Despite contradictions, these are two versions of one story through persistent mirroring of images and events – or possibly even “the same episode endlessly varied” (Katouzian, p. 67). The inbuilt impossibility of reducing either section to the other denies the possibility any realist or psychoanalytic foundation. The two exist in an absence of reconciliation, affording ontological primacy to neither. It is an Artaudian cry against 20th century ideological reductivism. Knowledge is shifted from a unified positivist paradigm, an explicit system, to a materialism built upon an ungraspable ontology of dreams.

The *Blind Owl* is an ethical critique of what Max Weber called “ethics of conviction” (an absolute end justifies violent means), in favour of “ethics of responsibility” (concern with everyday shortcomings turns attention to means and consequences). This ethics – as well as the general entropic vision of the universe - is consistent with Hedayat’s profound interest in Buddhism. He appealed for compassion extended to all living beings, i.e. “the stray dog” in “Three Drops of Blood” (1934).

Like Cocteau’s *Infernal Machine*, *The Blind Owl* evokes a pre-recorded universe: “For thousands of years people have been saying the same words, performing the same sexual act, vexing themselves with the same childish worries” (Hedayat, p. 84). The narrator, angst-ridden that nobody is ontologically privileged, constructs a Platonic fantasy of pure transcendence. His angel vision originates from “a unique unknown spring”. She is “a creature apart”, and “if her face were to come into contact with ordinary water it would fade” (Hedayat, p. 30). He therefore establishes himself as a superhuman being: “beneath the glance of a stranger, of an ordinary man, she would have withered and crumbled” (i.e. he is ontologically privileged as her chosen witness). Initially, the angel is merely eyes without a face: “frightening, magic eyes (which) express a bitter reproach to mankind” and have “looked upon terrible, transcendental things” (i.e. Judgment Day) (Hedayat, p. 26). In the final scene, the motif is repeated, but as the removed eyeball of the woman the narrator has murdered: “in the palm of my hand lay her eye, and I was drenched in blood” (Hedayat, p.143). The ineffably sublime, a heavenly system, is resolved into its accidental physical basis in the perversely grotesque.

The text suggests that no human being should undertake God's role on Judgment Day or forcibly implement Comte's Laws of History. The narrator has obtained the 'recognition' that he has craved throughout the novel (i.e. to confirm his ontological privilege), but at the cost of destroying the human object of his obsession. The absolute end of cosmic recognition has been subverted by the reprehensible means employed to attain it. The experience expresses a Buddhist insight about the violence of obsessive desire.

The Blind Owl's message concerns modesty. The narrator's arrogance – "All the bustle, noise and pretence that filled the lives of other people, the rabble people who, body and soul, are turned out of one mould, had become foreign and meaningless to me" – is counter posed to a realization that his identity is "a compound of incompatible elements" in a universal condition of "decomposition and gradual disintegration" (i.e. entropy, where more is lost than replaced). He attempts to deify this emptiness in the world – "to love the night" – to ontologically privilege his identity ("until now I had not known myself") (Hedayat, p.86-87). Yet practical everyday life demonstrates his interdependence with others: "How had that woman (the nurse), who was so utterly different from me, managed to occupy so large a zone of my life?" (Hedayat, p. 99). The pre-modern spiritual hierarchy of systemically arranged difference is unsustainable in the emerging Iranian mass society.

The Blind Owl thus presents a materialist view of human fate grounded in everyday life. The narrator is obsessed with the aristocratic category of being (i.e. fixed hierarchic identity) over doing: "all activity, all happiness on the part of other people, made me feel like vomiting" (Hedayat, p. 98). This scourge is industrial activity, as he is "choked by the smoke and steam from the others" (Hedayat, p. 67). The narrator has only "one state of being" (i.e. eternal value), while the "rabble" have "their definite periods" (i.e. secularized time) (Hedayat, p. 66-67).

The ghosts of The Blind Owl carry the "burden of collective memory (and act as) links to lost families and communities." A subversive temporal horizon, they unsettle "progressive, linear history" (Zamora & Wendy, p.497-98). The dispersal of Universal History (the claim of the Pahlavi regime) makes the transcendent subject (i.e. the absolute end) recede and leaves only the body or bodies (i.e. everyday people). The multiplying doublings of the self all point to a single secret act – the book's climactic murder scene. This is a warning about the social repression of the human unconscious

(habitus, patterns of community, belonging). The fundamental spectre of *The Blind Owl* is “the shadow,” for which the narrator tells his story in hopes of revealing himself to it. The spectre is beneath the reach of the symbolic (the intellectual power of naming), lying along the border separating opposing states of being, and hence contaminating pure identity. It is a “contagious darkness” (Hedayat, p. 116). In a subversion of the paradigm of positivist science, knowledge is never pure.

Hedayat – witness to the violence of Pahlavi state modernization - obsessively sought his authentic Iranian roots. The narrator’s house is surrounded by “ruins” and “squat mud-brick houses which mark the extreme limit of the city (and which) must have been built by some fool or madman heaven knows how long ago.” This description betrays a perception of primitivism preceding modernity and hostility to tradition which is characterized as foolish and mad – the very ideology driving Reza Shah’s modernizing state. Never the less, when the narrator shuts his eyes, he can “see every detail of their structure” and can “feel the weight of them pressing on (his) shoulders,” implying the profound degree to which the very traditions he despises are inscribed upon his innermost being (Hedayat, p. 22). There is a crushing awareness of the weight of past time imposed by his Iranian heritage, producing a split personality under the cultural dictatorship of the ruling modernist regime. Hedayat was preoccupied with the ontological vacuum, but in his iconoclasm, he refused to fill it with a concocted positive figure of authentic identity. Such violent identity claims emerged with the 1979 Islamist revolution. But Hedayat remained floating in existential limbo between the future and the past.

In this sense *The Blind Owl*, like *Midnight’s Children*, operates within the Proustian domain of exploring a terrain of memory that is inherently fragmented, unreliable and doomed to eventual disintegration. The metaphor of darkness pervades *The Blind Owl* with reference to hidden processes. A shadow machinery of the unconscious unites every character, and ultimately acts in the role of each. *The Blind Owl* represents a machine: the phantasmagorical underside of either the state, capitalism or the unconscious order of time itself. The characters are forced helplessly to proceed, rather as in Céline’s *Journey to the End of Night* (1932). The individual human will, to say nothing of organized collective human effort, is irrelevant to the outcome.

Conclusion

Cocteau's *Infernal Machine* concerned the naiveté of human beings in believing they have outwitted fate. All claims to absolute knowing, rooted in petty human reality, are doomed to a tragic and farcical crash. Both of these masterpieces of Magical Realism depict modernizing regimes, and indicate the limits of a nationalist politics in terms of assimilating difference. Between the Indian Nehruvian and Iranian Pahlavi experiences, we see highly different paradigms of nationalism. These works, in their emphasis upon difference, nevertheless suggest that there are some contexts for which nationalism, as such, has no solution but oppression.

In these works, the traditional self, embedded in community and invested with meaning by traditional knowledge, is engulfed in the disorder of state reorganization and market commodification. A commendable ethical critique of the totalizing claims of the modern state, linked to organized violence, is present in both books (i.e. the Buddha chapter in *Midnight's Children*). However, in embracing an aesthetic politics of pessimism and inaction, focused upon the lost beauty of traditional worlds, there is a failure to appreciate the potential power and positive meaning of citizenship. This empowering French Revolutionary legacy entails a mode of collective activism for transforming society in alignment with specific values and a systemic program for change. Thus, although the affirmation of pluralism in these two works is to be applauded, its basis in an artistic nostalgia for traditional worlds is a romantic dead end.

Ultimately, Hedayat's despair led to rejection of the world, opium addiction, and suicide in a Paris hotel in 1951. Today, his tomb at Cimetière du Père-Lachaise is a pilgrimage site for many Iranian modernist youth. On the other hand, the full reality of the democratic institutions that Rushdie had cynically dismissed as myths and dreams became manifest when he was targeted with a fatwa by the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. We should not confuse Rushdie's public views in the subsequent period with the vision of *Midnight's Children*. Religion is not always as playful and malleable as its depiction in *Midnight's Children*, in a "country that is a sort of dream" (Rushdie, p.159). In its fanatical forms, aided by the ideological and technical implements of modernity, it can pose a deadly threat to the artistic creativity of modernist innovators like Hedayat and Rushdie. Despite the *Infernal Machine* paradigm underlying these two novels, their authors opened up new creative vistas in the 20th century that altered the imaginative horizons of generations. They affirmed the Baudelaire paradigm of a creatively innovative and transformative, if traumatic and deracinating, modernity.

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IS THERE AN ILLOCUTIONARY ACT OF ASSERTION?

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Abstract

This contribution analyzes Cappelen's No-Assertion view arguing that, although appealing, the No-Assertion view is based on a questionable premise, namely, that assertions are sayings. Austin's notions of locution and saying are examined, in order to show that illocutionary acts concern aspects not covered by either of the previous two terms. Following a reconstructed definition of illocutionary act from Austin's writings, I suggest that assertion is an illocutionary act, in that it takes effect after it is taken up by a hearer. I further suggest that in this respect the game analogy fails with regard to assertion, since no rules of the constitutive kind or norms can intrinsically define this act. This proposal is based on the idea that illocutionary act analysis should dispose of any preoccupations with propositions. It argues that expressing propositions was not originally and should not be at the core of speech act theoretic problematic.

Key words: assertion, illocutionary act, proposition

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Austin's theory, despite its fragmentary nature, influenced research in pragmatics by its emphasis on the action character intrinsic to some cases of language use. Partly due to the incompleteness of Austin's notes, and partly due to the numerous alternative explanations of the nature of the phenomenon he was interested in (and the fact that subsequent attempts at elaborating a complete theory of speech acts came to be better known than the original theory, e.g. Searle's, 1969, 1979), the taxonomy of these speech acts still provokes heated debates. Although the terminology remains virtually unchanged, opinions vary about whether or not a particular phenomenon is an instance of a particular type. In the last decade or so, there have been numerous attempts at providing a satisfying account of asserting; normative accounts being the most popular (be it knowledge, belief or truth norms).

Exemplified typically by the utterance of a declarative sentence (used here in the syntactic sense), this particular act is puzzling, in that it can contain a proposition which can be informative (in the preferred sense of Brandom, 1983). Regardless of the perspective adopted by various accounts of assertion, the informative proposition appears to be at their core. Accounts of assertion typically involve propositions in their description: knowledge that p (Williamson, 2000), belief that p (Lackey, 2008), that p is true (Jäger, 1970). Even Stalnaker (1979, 1998) in his purely pragmatic approach states that assertion adds a certain content p to context. In Searle's view on speech acts assertion changes a lot, the most widely known description being the "undertaking to the effect that p is true" (Searle 1969). Jary (2010) in his combined approach of blending different perspectives (philosophical, linguistic and psychological) suggests an account of assertion which focuses on the role of the declarative mood in utterance interpretation, according to which assertions depict the proposition contained therein as 'relevant in its own right' (p.4).

In an article, Cappelen (2011) takes a No-Assertion view by arguing primarily against normative accounts of assertion. According to Cappelen, the difficulty of providing a correct characterization of assertion lies in the different explanations yielded by different theoretical needs. What remains stable is the expressing of the proposition which is liable to various contextual requirements and norms. Such a view is certainly appealing in more than one respect: it has the advantage of being based on a purely pragmatic theory of context providing the interpretative environment for utterances. It also accounts for those thorny cases in which either the belief usually

associated with asserting or other requirements (e.g. for knowledge) are suspended. I find Cappelen's objections to the norm accounts valid. However, I do not believe that these objections succeed in arguing the case in favor of the proposed No-Assertion view. In particular, the No-Assertion view is said to be based on Austin's notion of saying, which I find to be a very questionable premise. Further, the No-Assertion view stipulates that assertions are not illocutionary acts, since the act of expressing propositions paired with the contextually variable requirements is all that is needed to account for them. In this contribution I wish to argue that the very premise that assertions are sayings is a misinterpretation of Austin's theory. The No-Assertion view is based on notions and claims which are incorrectly attributed to Austin, whereas they are views proposed by Searle. The main focus of this article is not to correct an insignificant point in Cappelen's argumentation; it is to put forth the suggestion that there are substantial contributions in Austin's original ideas which are worth salvaging from the all-pervasive Searlean brand of what came to be known as Speech Act Theory. As a corollary, I further suggest that if we follow Austin's definitions of saying and illocutionary act, the conclusions of the No-Assertion view cannot be defended.

Focusing on propositions shifts the investigative effort to meaning (however broadly one wishes to construe the term) and away from illocutionary acts. In order to create an account of assertion, we need to be sure what class of phenomena assertion belongs to. Austin held assertion to be an illocutionary act. This view was not challenged throughout the subsequent developments on speech act theory, though Pagin (2004) comes close. If we maintain assertion to be an illocutionary act, we need to specify what an illocutionary act is. Further, the vast array of accounts of assertion is due to two often overlooked problems. The first problem is the ambiguity of the notion of assertion. Cappelen is aware of this problem. The difficulty for him is in the artificial nature of the term, coined for philosophical purposes, and the low frequency of use of the verb 'assert'. I would add the later illocutionary nuance to the term 'assertion' and the later sense of assertion as an umbrella term for all acts of the class of assertives (or representatives) following Searle's taxonomy. The second problem lies in the fact that researchers often use the term 'illocutionary acts' in a self-evident way, implying that we all somehow have exactly the same understanding of the phenomenon and its characteristics. The lack of a definition in Austin's lectures of illocutionary act as well as in subsequent developments of the theory of speech acts is the reason for the different

interpretations of the term by different researchers. I suggest a definition of illocutionary acts reconstituted from Austin (also Dörge, 2004 and Sbisà, 2007) and I posit that proposition-expressing cannot be included in the problematic of illocutionary acts.

No-Assertion view and Austinian sayings

Cappelen proposes an engaging argument against normative accounts of assertion. To this end he intends to provide a blueprint by arguing against the other three kinds of accounts - the commitment, effect and cause accounts - to defend what he terms a No-Assertion view. It is presented in the following way:

No-Assertion view: Sayings are governed by variable norms, come with variable commitments and have variable causes and effects. The term 'assertion' is a philosophical invention and it fails to pick out an act-type that we engage in and is not a category we need in order to explain any significant component of our linguistic practice. (Cappelen, 2011, p. 21)

The main components of the No-Assertion view are:

1. There are sayings.
2. Sayings are governed by various norms that are neither essential nor constitutive to the act of saying.
3. We do not play the assertion game.

What is not explicitly spelled out in this claim is the following premise: first, assertions are sayings.

I believe that it is trivially true that sayings come with variable commitments, causes and effects and are governed (however misleading the term may be) by variable norms. It is equally undisputed that there are sayings. I also tend to agree that we do not play the assertion game, but for different reasons which I shall come back to later. I only object to the implicit claim that what we call (the illocutionary act of) assertion is equal to what we call saying. This claim is explained by referring to Austin's notion of locutionary act together with a Gricean view of sayings. The act of saying is very important to any view on assertion marking as it does a shared common-ground notion between No- and Pro-Assertion views. Cappelen claims that regardless of the view one supports, one still needs the neutral notion of saying because even in Pro-Assertion views the performance of the act of saying is part of the performance of the illocutionary act (Cappelen, 2011, p. 24).

The locutionary act – the act of saying in the full sense – is introduced to help distinguish this act from the phenomenon dubbed by Austin as an illocutionary act (Austin, 1962, p. 94). Austin’s notion of locutionary act comprises three components: the phonetic act, the phatic act and the rhetic act¹. The phonetic act consists of the (physical) production of sounds. The phatic act consists in the production of sounds as a part of a language. The rhetic act consists in using these sounds with a certain sense and reference, in other words what is said in the full sense. The locutionary act is in a way the words that we utter. Unequivocally, Austin’s notion of locutionary act does not contain any reference to propositions. In fact, the entire doctrine of illocutionary acts (together with locutionary acts and perlocutionary acts) made a special point of avoiding propositions, since to concentrate on propositions would be to commit the declarative fallacy. In his pursuit of performativity, Austin has no use of propositions since they can only divert the analysis. The few mentions of proposition in the lectures include the following idea which firmly establishes the desire to escape the traditional proposition-centered preoccupations:

In conclusion, we see that in order to explain what can go wrong with statements we cannot just concentrate on the proposition involved (*whatever that is*) as has been done traditionally. (Austin, 1962, p. 52, emphasis mine)

What is more, it would appear that ‘proposition’ is not something which Austin would have used in his discussion, since the term does not seem suitable for his purpose. A case can be made to support the idea that Austin found fault with propositions, just as he did with concepts (see Rajagopalan, 2000, p. 379). Propositions were introduced to speech act theory by Searle (1968, 1969), with the $F(p)$ distinction, replacing the locutionary act by a propositional act, or the act of expressing a proposition. Searle presented this distinction as being common and found under many various forms in philosophy and that it contained an act of expressing propositions which is neutral as to its illocutionary force (1968, p. 420). Cappelen does not make any explicit reference to Searle. He only cites Austin’s description of the act of saying something in the full sense, but the following claim makes an almost casual slip to the act of expressing a proposition as introduced by Searle:

¹Austin was criticized mainly for the blurred boundaries between the locutionary and the illocutionary act on the one hand, and between the illocutionary and the perlocutionary act on the other hand. The present discussion does not attempt to vindicate the term ‘locutionary act’; it is only relevant in that it helps to show that proposition was not meant to play any role in the speech act doctrine.

With this as a starting point, think of an Austinian saying of p as very close, if not identical, to the act of expressing the proposition that p . (Cappelen, 2011, p. 23)

In this casual remark, Cappelen imputes to Austin the view that the locutionary act is an act of saying of p , which is later referred to in a footnote as expressing a proposition “in the thin Austinian sense” (footnote 2, p. 23) This description certainly does not correspond to Austin’s idea on what the act of saying is and it would not have been endorsed by him. Identifying sayings with acts of expressing propositions would exclude other sentences qualified as being acts of saying in the full sense such as “Get out!” and “Is it in Oxford or Cambridge?” These sentences do not express propositions in the way in which Cappelen describes the term. The notion of saying used by Cappelen is reminiscent of the sign of subscription in the use of Hare (1989) and Frege: the utterance of a sentence containing a complete proposition which is non-embedded and is not merely supposed, entertained, but minus the subscription, as no commitments are allowed in the No-Assertion view on sayings. Another requirement for the saying in Cappelen’s sense is to know the meaning of the sentence. Unless one knows the meaning of the sentence which one is uttering, one cannot count as having said it. The act of saying in Cappelen’s use is thus identical to the propositional act introduced by Searle.

Cappelen’s statement of the No-Assertion view (at least the first part of it) is trivially true for any utterance of any language: in order to speak and understand a language, contextual requirements coupled with the proposition expressed are enough. The core of the No-Assertion view is that the additional category of assertion (understood in the illocutionary sense) is unnecessary. Cappelen does not provide an explanation of what he takes illocutionary acts to be, which in a way weakens his arguments for the No-Assertion view. I will assume it must be what Austin meant by the notion of illocutionary act following the reference to Austin made in relation to locutionary act.

Austin’s illocutionary acts

The mere uttering of the words is not the doing which Austin had in mind. The entire speech act would normally consist of a locutionary act and of an illocutionary act. Since it is about the things we do in words, I will first explore what it is that illocutionary acts do.

Acts which interested Austin were the act of betting, christening ships and children, appointing, and ordering. The common denominator in all of these cases is that

upon their successful or felicitous performance, these acts alter our reality. In the case of betting, the participants are considered to be in a special contract which grants the winner the right to collect the stake. In the case of christening ships, the participants are to refer to it by its given name. In the case of appointing, the participants are to acknowledge the changed status of the appointee. A successful order creates an obligation to obey with all the sanctions that can carry. Therefore, by means of proposing a pre-theoretical summary of these observations, it seems to me that the following generalizations can be made:

1. Since these are acts, there must be an external manifestation which will allow us to judge whether they occurred;
2. These acts are not material in the sense that they do not involve any physical action (if we do not count the uttering of the words);
3. They alter the situation in which they occur; they have consequences which are non-natural (*qua* Grice) in the sense that sets them apart from the kind of consequence we have when we pull the trigger: pulling the trigger fires the gun, firing the gun kills the donkey (Austin, 1962, p. 111);
4. Being non-material and having non-natural consequences means that these acts need to have a target (or an audience) in order to come into existence.

Further, illocutionary acts are subject to different kinds of infelicities, or ways in which they could go wrong. There is a set of extra-linguistic features which have a role to play in the performance of these acts: in order to appoint somebody, I have to be the right person to do so; christening and marrying rely on the existence of an extra-linguistic institution, issuing a verdict is related to the institution of the court of law, etc. For acts such as apologizing, ordering and asserting, no extra-linguistic *institution* exists, so that it is often argued that those are purely communicative (linguistic) acts which rely on the institution of language (Strawson, 1964; Bach and Harnish, 1979; partly Searle, 1969). In the generalizations above, I referred to the way in which the act is perceived by calling it a manifestation for a reason: Austin did not want to restrict the trait of performativity to linguistic acts only. It is quite clear from his discussion that acts can be performed non-verbally or by a gesture (conventional or not). Regardless of the means of performing the act, the act itself possesses the following characteristics: it is conventional and it has a conventional effect. Since space limitations prevent me from expounding the entire explanation, I will briefly sketch what I mean by those terms. The

illocutionary act is conventional in the sense that it constitutes a social contract between the participants since it serves to regulate, re-define and influence social and interpersonal relations. This interpretation of the term 'conventional' stems from the requirement that in his or her performance of an illocutionary act the speaker must secure uptake – ensure that the utterance is understood to be the performance of that particular illocutionary act. Unless uptake is achieved, the illocutionary act is not successfully performed. Upon uptake, the act takes effect; the effect of the act is conventionally associated with the successful performance of the illocutionary act. The effect of the act is the essence of what those acts do as it exemplifies the change they operate on the (social) environment. The effect (or the change) itself is social in the sense that it is socially conditioned by the fact that participants abide by that effect. Similar definitions are provided by Dörge (2004) and also by Sbisà (2001) who notably argues that the effects of the illocutionary acts can be described using the terminology of deontic modality due to the conventional character of assigning and removing obligations (2001, p. 1797). Performing illocutionary acts is not merely speaking a language; it is acting on one's environment. One may even argue that performing illocutionary acts is not merely communicating (communicating would certainly comprise performing illocutionary acts, but also much more) and is certainly much more than a 'linguistic practice'.

Another misrepresentation of Austin's views by Cappelen can be seen in the following claim:

It is important to note that, according to Austin, all *illocutionary* acts (e.g. assertions) are *also* locutionary acts: whenever you make an assertion or ask a question, you are also performing a locutionary act, i.e. you say something. The various illocutionary speech acts are, so to speak, built on top of locutionary acts, or sayings. (Cappelen, 2011, p. 22, emphasis in the original)

It is certainly not the case that Austin held all illocutionary acts to be also locutionary acts: such a view could be imputed to Searle, or to Bach and Harnish's communicative acts. It is a very common misrepresentation of Austin's view and it is most probably due to a largely quoted remark:

To perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and *eo ipso* to perform an *illocutionary* act, as I propose to call it. (Austin, 1962, p. 98, emphasis in the original)

This remark is not intended to provide a description of what an illocutionary act is. To perform an illocutionary act is not to utter some words with a particular sense and reference in a language. This remark does not give any grounds for the generalization that all illocutionary acts are locutionary acts. However, given that other conditions are satisfied, it is generally the case that locutionary acts are used to perform illocutionary acts. It is impossible to say that locutionary acts are illocutionary acts because they pick out different realities that cannot be equated; the locutionary act consists in the words uttered with their sense and reference, whereas the illocutionary act is the particular social contract attempted by the speaker.

It is hardly this notion of illocutionary act that was meant by Cappelen, for a consideration of the illocutionary act of assertion would certainly not involve the act of expressing a proposition: illocutionary acts are not consequences of locutionary acts (Austin, 1962, p. 113). It can only be concluded that however Cappelen construes the term 'illocutionary act', it seems to be incompatible with Austin's notion of illocutionary act. The introduction of proposition in the discussion of illocutionary acts gave rise to a great many redefinitions of the notion of illocutionary act which took the notion away from the action-centered preoccupations. In Searle (1969) to perform an illocutionary act is to utter a meaningful sentence seriously and literally, which is the realization of underlying constitutive rules for the type of act being performed. In Bach and Harnish (1979) the communicative illocutionary act is to express a propositional attitude. Searle (1986) proposes that to perform an illocutionary act is to realize an intention to represent a particular intentional state with a particular propositional content².^[5] Curiously, if we take the term 'illocutionary act' in Cappelen's discussion to refer to the Searlean notion of illocutionary act, his claim that such an upgrade is unnecessary can be duly motivated since no rules or norms can be said to govern sayings in the sense of being constitutive of that behavior.

It may be a distorted representation of Austin's views on saying (locutionary act) and illocutionary act that they are at the base of the No-Assertion view. It is plausible that Searle's theory (and not Austin's) gave rise to the position expressed by the No-Assertion view. In order to place Cappelen's discussion in a relation with Austin's

² I do not know whether or not those authors would endorse the descriptions the way they are formulated here because those are reconstructions: no explicit definition of illocutionary act can be found in those works.

notions of both locutionary and illocutionary act, two possibilities can be pursued: either assertion is an illocutionary act in Austin's sense (that is, it is a social contract that implements a conventional effect), or assertion is not an illocutionary act (there is no non-natural change in the social environment produced by the utterance). Without Austin's notion of illocutionary act, speaking of assertion becomes speaking about something which is not.

Assertion and games

This subpart offers some ideas for a description of the illocutionary act of assertion. An important condition of adequacy would be that thinking of asserting as an illocutionary act does not include focusing on propositions. In fact, the cognitive dimension evoked in any proposition-centered view of asserting is so strong that it makes it pointless to consider what it is that asserting does, as long as there is a string of transmitted information.. Sbisà formulates this in the following terms:

Once a propositional content is specified, a truly minimal force indicator (indicative mood) is sufficient to yield assertion. No role is left to play to felicity conditions, to the corresponding possible infelicities, or to illocutionary effect in Austin's sense. Felicity conditions, as matters of pragmatic appropriateness, are viewed as inessential to the core of assertion, which is (like in Frege) the recognition of a proposition as true. So the assertion cannot be a real action – rather, it is a *cognitive gesture* (or its linguistic manifestation). Speaking of assertive speech acts or calling assertion a speech act become simply ways of speaking. (Sbisà, 2006, p. 166-167, emphasis mine)

This is especially true of Searle's notion of illocutionary acts and his description of assertion. Based on that description, the No-Assertion view is easily understood. In his exposition, Austin does not attempt a consideration of what the illocutionary act of assertion would be. His notes on the possible infelicities which may arise from the the act of assertion provide us with some directions about the extra-linguistic features involved. Although our linguistic competence is what accounts for our understanding linguistic utterances, those other features outside of language account for our understanding of the kind of illocutionary act performed. As a speaker of English, I understand the utterance "Take out the garbage" as an imperative sentence relating to me the action of taking the garbage. However, I take it as an order only if I admit the speaker's authority to order me to. Or, being a speaker of French, I understand the utterance of "Pourquoi ne l'as-tu pas empêché d'y aller?" as an interrogative sentence

meaning roughly 'why did you not prevent him from going there'. But due to the circumstances and the identity of the speaker I can take it to be a reproach or a question or I can take the speaker to be blaming me. In order to understand an utterance as being an assertion, says Pagin (2004, p. 834), it does not need to be marked for the social actors or participants involved in the exchange. In other words, what I understand when hearing the utterance "The grass is green" is that the grass is green and that regardless of the identity of the speaker. As I already pointed out, this is trivially true for any utterance: I understand the utterances "Take out the garbage" and "Pourquoi ne l'as-tu pas empêché d'y aller?" regardless of the identity of the speaker. What does change, however, with the circumstances and the identity of the speaker (and her relation to me, the hearer) is what those utterances can be used to do. I believe it is the same with declarative sentences (those that contain propositions in the sense discussed).

Following Austin's definition of illocutionary act, assertion would be an act which requires the uptake of a hearer upon which a conventional effect is implemented. Performing illocutionary acts binds the speaker and the hearer to a certain course of action; it engages the responsibility of the speaker. So I can only be taken to be asserting if I make it clear (the circumstances, the overall speech situation, the previous exchange and other contextual features help make that clear) to the hearer that I am engaging my responsibility for my uttering those words. This responsibility is at the heart of the conventional effect of asserting. Brandom (1983, p. 642) would call it justificatory responsibility. MacFarlane (2005, p. 334) suggests a threefold commitment to withdraw the assertion when it is proved untrue, to justify it if challenged, and to be held responsible if someone acts on it and it proves to have been untrue. However one wishes to formulate the responsibility, one thing should be borne in mind: the effect of the illocutionary act is defeasible (as Sbisà uses the term) and it does not constitute a norm or rule of any kind. The former trait is supposed to capture the fact that the conventional effect is a product of social agreement and that it can be made null and void (if the act is retracted, for example). The latter trait captures the insight that the effect of the illocutionary act is not a rule which regulates behavior. It redefines commitments and obligations and accounts for the way in which the hearers hold the speakers responsible. The effect is not supposed to be regulatory of the performance of the act of assertion; it is not meant as a restrictive rule that one should assert only if one can in fact justify the assertion, or if one is committed to it. This way of construing assertion does not rule out

asserting something one does not believe, or asserting something one knows is false, as the act would have the same effect of engaging the responsibility of the speaker. The act itself would not be cheating, nor would it break any rule or norm; what it would do is jeopardize the asserter's reliability: the social role we build up by engaging in illocutionary acts would be endangered.

In my view, it is a quite trivial observation that performing illocutionary acts is not like making a move in a game. The contractual character of illocutions make performing illocutionary acts like participating in a negotiation about the kind of change in the obligations, commitments, etc. the participants are willing to take upon themselves. No norms or rules govern that behavior and we do not accuse each other of cheating or breaking the rules of assertion, of order or of pronouncing somebody guilty.

The view of assertion being an illocutionary act in Austin's sense is fully compatible with situations of misunderstanding, as when the speaker merely suggested something, but the hearer takes him to have asserted it. It is fully compatible with cases where the speaker is not sincere (i.e. he or she does not have the corresponding belief) or where the speaker is aware that he or she is uttering a falsehood. Although comparing illocutionary acts to making moves in a language game has influenced many accounts of assertion, this is not the rule-regulated move that is meant. The game analogy fails for illocutionary acts (and for asserting) in that there are no rules that can make saying *p* count as something else (namely, an assertion) in the 'language game'. The game formula is another idea of Searle's early formulation of the theory of speech acts, where performing illocutionary acts was roughly '(saying) X counts as Y in context Z'. Constitutive rules that Searle introduced for illocutionary acts (Searle, 1969) determine new forms of behavior in that violating a constitutive rule becomes destructive of the action itself (Nicoloff, 1986, p. 560). If we take chess as an example, at the beginning of the game moving the pawn from e-2 to e-5 does not count as opening, it is not a valid opening move. If asserting is simply uttering seriously and literally a meaningful sentence which expresses a proposition in the sense explained above, then there is nothing that can be described as violating the assertion rule and without that talking of playing the assertion game becomes pointless, as Cappelen argues. However, since the game analogy fails, we cannot conclude that there is no assertion without taking into consideration the notion of illocutionary act.

Conclusion

The following question was the main preoccupation of this paper: Is there an illocutionary act of assertion? Answering that question presupposes that we have an idea about what illocutionary acts are. Indeed, as I have tried to show, the answer to that question would depend on how exactly we understand the notion of illocutionary act. Although the term is widely used in speech act theory, researchers do not explicitly define the way they understand the notion, either assuming that everybody understood what kind of phenomenon the notion is supposed name, or assuming the correct understanding of the notion of illocutionary act is secured by vaguely referring to Austin. To complicate matters, not only is the researcher's task made difficult by the fact that there is no explicit definition of illocutionary act in Austin's exposition of the theory, but also in subsequent developments of the theory of speech acts a fully explicit definition of illocutionary act is not found. Very often, misunderstanding can arise precisely because researchers have different or even incompatible conceptions of illocutionary act. Another misunderstanding arises from the fact that Searlean brand of theory came to be widely although mistakenly accepted as following, perfecting and systematizing Austin's insights on speech acts. This results in a frequent misattribution of Searle's views and additions to the theory to Austin, even though there is enough evidence that those views are in fact incompatible with Austin's ideas on illocutionary acts. I tried to show that this is what transpired in Cappelen's discussion of the No-Assertion view: both the notion of saying as being roughly the act of expressing a proposition and the supposed illocutionary upgrade can be traced to Searle's theory, not Austin's.

My suggestion is that if we apply Searle's notions, then the conclusions made by Cappelen are valid. If we follow Austin's definition of saying and illocutionary act, then Cappelen's conclusions do not apply. In Austin's sense, asserting would be a conventional (in the sense of social) contract which comes about if taken up by a hearer and which has a conventional effect. It may turn out that the illocutionary act of assertion is quite infrequent (which validates an observation of Cappelen's of the infrequency of assertion attributions). Thus, the frequency of issuances of declarative sentences containing propositions in the sense explained above is by no means an indicator of the illocutionary act performance. As it is, the doctrine of illocutionary acts devised by Austin is not meant to account for every bit of our linguistic production.

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SOME FACTORS WHICH MAY AFFECT THE ATTAINMENT OF IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND / FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This article is an attempt to shed some more light on certain factors, related to individual differences in the process of second/foreign language acquisition/learning, proven by previous research in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). These are factors which may affect the final attainment of adult learners' implicit and explicit knowledge of English as a second/foreign language and their proficiency. A study based on empirical data collected from a sample of 103 participants, through a battery of tests, aimed at tapping into the attainment of implicit or explicit knowledge of ESL/EFL, was conducted to explore certain factors such as: starting age of learning; length of exposure to English as a second/foreign language in a target language country; length of learning and type of input received, which have a statistically significant impact on attainment and on ESL/EFL proficiency. The results were analysed using SPSS software.

Key words: second language acquisition, implicit knowledge, implicit learning, explicit knowledge, explicit learning, attainment of L2 proficiency, contextual SLA factors.

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Naturalistic and instructed learning

In researching factors affecting the ultimate attainment of a second/foreign language, insufficient attention has been paid to the profound differences between naturalistic and instructed learning. Following Muñoz's definition (2008, p. 578), in this article, naturalistic learning or "learning through immersion", refers to learning a language in a country where it is used as native and learners are constantly exposed to the target language, which is the main tool for communication. On the other hand instructed learning or "formal learning in the classroom" refers to learning a foreign language through classroom instruction, wherein learners have limited exposure to the target language, dependent on the input they receive. However, very little research has acknowledged the significant differences between naturalistic and classroom learning environment or the differences (in quantity and quality) of the type of input learners receive (Rothman & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2010). The type of learning context related to the ultimate attainment of the L2 is often neglected. As Muñoz (2008) noted, "research findings from naturalistic learning contexts have been hastily generalized to formal (classroom) learning contexts". Based on observed differences, she claims that "the amount and quality of input have a significant bearing on the effects that age of initial learning has on second language learning" (p. 578).

It is a fact that the distinction between naturalistic L2 learning and foreign language instructed learning is usually ignored by the research on second language acquisition. The naturalistic second language learning, or learning through immersion in the L2 environment is most often taken into account, whereas the majority of people learning a second language, actually start learning it in a completely different context – in a foreign language learning classroom. Is it plausible then to generalise the findings of research on naturalistic, immersion learning context and impose them upon the learning process in a completely different context? Certain researchers, (Muñoz, 2008, among many) argue that there are hardly any substantial grounds for this.

Contrary to the naturalistic learning context, a typical foreign language learning situation in most countries around the world could be characterized as offering limited L2 instruction – a few weekly sessions of approximately 45-50 min each, depending on the type of school or institution; limited exposure to target language sources– mainly the teacher's input and recorded materials (CDs, tapes for listening comprehension tasks); different quantity and quality of the target language exposure . Many teachers do

not use the target language as the language of instructions or communication in the classroom. Moreover the majority of teachers themselves are non-native speakers, so there is a great variability in their own oral fluency and general proficiency, irrespectively of their efforts to provide some authentic language and materials. Also, the target language is not the language of communication between peers in the classroom and it is rarely or not spoken outside the classroom (Muñoz, 2008). All these facts mean that instructed L2 learners receive qualitatively different input, compared to that received in naturalistic immersion conditions (Rothman & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2010). Therefore, in light of the input received, it is probably unsurprising that developmental sequence and ultimate attainment will also differ.

Previous research has clearly shown that in naturalistic (immersion) conditions older children, adolescents, and adults generally show faster initial progress than younger children, specifically in the morphosyntactic aspect. However, research also shows that that the younger a learner is, the more native-like proficiency he/she finally attains, surpassing older learners at a later stage of development (Jonson & Newport, 1989; Bialistok & Hakuta, 1994; Birdsong & Molis, 2001; Birdsong, 2005). However, recent research has revealed that child L2 acquisition is very similar to adult L2 acquisition in developmental sequence and that although children's L2 acquisition normally results in better competence, it is not proven that children's L2 acquisition necessarily resembles L1 acquisition outcomes (Schwartz, 2003; Haznedar & Gavruseva, 2008). The fact is that the age of acquisition (A-o-A) is often confounded with other important variables, such as length of exposure to the target language or received input, which might be much more deterministic for L2 acquisition. Thus, A-o-A alone cannot explain the acquisition process or the ultimate attainment of L2 (Rothman & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2010).

Implicit and explicit knowledge of a foreign/second language

It is obvious from above that the conditions in which L2 learning takes place in a foreign language classroom do not resemble, even remotely, the naturalistic learning in an immersion environment. The former presupposes mostly explicit learning and acquisition of explicit knowledge of the target language which might or might not turn into implicit knowledge, depending on the length of learning and exposure to L2. On the other hand the latter presupposes implicit (L1 child-like) learning and acquisition of implicit knowledge of the target language, although this might be supplemented by explicit knowledge as a result

of education in formal environment. In order to contemplate further on the problem, the dichotomy implicit/explicit knowledge should be defined.

A plausible account of the dichotomy of implicit/explicit language knowledge is given by N. Ellis (2008), who compares child acquisition of L1 and adult acquisition of L2 as two completely different phenomena. Children acquire their mother tongue as a result of natural meaningful communication, in which process they “automatically acquire complex knowledge of the structure of their language” (N. Ellis, 2008, p. 1). They are unable to explain or describe this knowledge. This is what N. Ellis names *implicit knowledge*. L1 grammar is acquired implicitly and “is extracted from experience of usage rather than from explicit rules”. The exposure to naturalistic linguistic input is sufficient and there is no need for explicit instructions.

Adult learning of a second/foreign language, however, is completely different and although certain knowledge can be acquired implicitly from the communicative context, it is normally much more limited, compared to native speaker norms, and adult learners normally require additional resources of *explicit learning*, in order to attain accuracy in the target language. In this case, explicit learning is clearly in opposition to implicit learning, since it includes the conscious learning of the second/foreign language. This conscious learning might include attention to language form; learners noticing negative evidence and perception focused by explicit instructions. N. Ellis (2008) also mentions the voluntary use of pedagogical grammatical descriptions and analogical reasoning; the reflective induction of metalinguistic insights about language and consciously guided practice, which may eventually result in unconscious, automatized skills.

Cognitive neuroscience also treats implicit and explicit learning as distinctive processes. Human beings possess separate implicit and explicit memory systems which store knowledge *of* and *about* language in different areas of the brain. The dissociation between implicit and explicit memory, and implicit and explicit learning has been evidenced in patients with anterograde amnesia, who, as a result of brain damage, cannot consolidate new explicit memories, connected with new places or faces, but maintain implicit memories and are able to learn new perceptual and motor skills (Schacter, 1987; Squire & Kandel, 1999).

The dissociation between implicit and explicit learning was made by Reber (1976) who had people learn complex letter strings, generated by an artificial grammar. In the course of studying them for later recognition, the subjects unconsciously abstracted

knowledge of the underlying regularities and were later able to distinguish new strings which either followed or broke the rules of the underlying grammar. However, they were not able to explain their reasoning. After examining the phenomenon of implicit learning, Reber (1976) characterized it as “the process by which knowledge about the rule-governed complexities of the stimulus environment is acquired independently of conscious attempts to do so”. As R. Ellis (2008) summarized it, “implicit learning is acquisition of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment by a process which takes place naturally, simply, and without conscious operations”. Explicit learning, on the other hand, is a conscious process and, although not very precisely determined by Reber (1976), it is a process of learning ‘about’ a phenomenon by gathering information about it.

More recently the broader field of cognitive science has undergone a significant shift from a symbolic view of human cognition to a focus on the implicit inductive processes and the generalization of prior knowledge as schema, prototypes and conceptual categories, which activate the cognitive unconscious (N. Ellis, 2005). These aspects of cognition are simulated in connectionist models (Elman et al., 1996) which have had considerable influence on the understanding of language acquisition (Christiansen & Chater, 2001). Thanks to new modern technology, it has been proven that knowledge is not a static representation somewhere in the brain but a dynamic process “involving mutual influence of interrelated types of information which activate and inhibit each other over time” (N. Ellis, 2008).

An important contribution to the distinction between implicit and explicit learning was a collection of papers, edited by N. Ellis (1994). N. Ellis himself provided one of the most plausible analysis of this distinction by comparing certain things people can do, such as walking, recognizing when someone is sad or making utterances in one’s mother tongue, about whose nature of processing we know very little and which are learned implicitly, just like birds learn to fly; and other people’s abilities, such as multiplication, playing chess or using a computer programming language, which are definitely learned explicitly (N. Ellis, 1994, p. 1). This has led to several issues in the field of language learning, which need further research and clarification: what aspects of L2 can be learned implicitly; how necessary is explicit knowledge for the acquisition of L2; what is the relationship between implicit and explicit knowledge, to mention a few.

Following Schmidt's distinction, R. Ellis (2009) undertook a thorough investigation into the dichotomy implicit/explicit learning and implicit/explicit knowledge. He further assumed implicit/explicit learning and implicit/explicit knowledge to be "related but distinct concepts that need to be separated". The former concerns the processes involved whereas the latter – the product of learning. In practice, it is possible for learners to reflect on knowledge which has been acquired implicitly, without any metalinguistic awareness, and develop an explicit representation of it. The opposite process, incidental implicit learning of a linguistic feature while explicit learning is focused on another feature, is also possible. However, there have been different views on determining the type of learning which leads to a certain type of knowledge. Most researchers judge the type of learning by examining the product of learning, which might not be the best way to address this issue.

Method

The study is aimed at determining a relationship between learners' performance on measures of implicit language knowledge, explicit language knowledge and a proficiency test, and contextual factors such as: starting age of learning; length of learning ESL/EFL; length of exposure to the target language in an L1 country and type of input (mainly naturalistic or mainly instructed). The study also aims to explore the predominant type of acquired knowledge (implicit or explicit) by students who have been studying English as L2 mainly in their country (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Ghana) where English is used as a second formal language, based on their performance on a battery of tests; and to determine whether there is some significant difference between their results and the results of a group of students who had studied English as a foreign language mainly in instructed conditions in their home countries (China, Poland, Estonia, Bulgaria, Spain and France). The native speakers' scores on the same tests were used as a benchmark for comparison.

Participants

A total of 103 participants completed the battery of tests described below. The sample was made up of 83 learners of English from countries where it is used as a second formal language (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Ghana); 10 learners of English from countries where it is learned as a foreign language (China, Poland, Estonia, Bulgaria, Spain and France) and 10 native

speakers from London, UK. The participants from the first and second groups had self-reported an achievement on the IELTS test of band 6.5 or 7.

The first group of learners were enrolled on a Pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course at The British Institute of Technology & E-commerce, in preparation for enrolment on undergraduate and postgraduate courses there. Reported L1 included: Urdu (33), Bangladeshi (12), Sri Lankan (12), Tamil (7), Punjabi (7), Sinhala (6), Hindi (5), Shona (3), Pashto (2), Bengoli (2), and Zimbabwean (2). The majority of students (65) reported starting to learn English at a very young age (5-7) and claimed to have studied it for more than 10 years. 24 students started learning English at secondary school, aged 14-15; and only two students reported starting learning English as adults (18+).

The second group of participants included 10 learners who had been learning English as a foreign language in formal classroom conditions in their home country and were still learning. All of them were students enrolled on a Pre-sessional EAP course at Birkbeck, University of London. The majority of them (8) started learning EFL as teenagers, at the age of 13-15, and only 2 of them reported starting learning English before puberty (at the age of 5-7). However, subjects differed in terms of length of learning and length of exposure (living in the UK). Seven of them reported learning English for up to 5 years; two students claimed to have learned it for less than 3 years and one of them had been learning it for more than 10 years. Length of exposure varied from under 1 year (2), to up to 3 years (4), up to 5 years (3) and more than 5 years (1). Reported L1 included: Bulgarian (3); Chinese (2), Polish (2), Spanish (1), French (1) and Estonian (1). The ten native speakers who took the tests were my fellow-students at Birkbeck, enrolled on postgraduate degree courses.

Sampling

The tests were done by a random sample of students enrolled on a Pre-sessional EAP course of study at the British Institute of Technology and E-commerce and Birkbeck, University of London, where I used to teach. The participants were chosen through stratified random sampling, to ensure fair representativeness of the stratum of students who had studied English as a second formal language and the stratum of students who had not. Subjects were selected, based on their achievement of band 6.5-7 on the IELTS test. Sampling the population by using this particular technique was expected to demonstrate a plausible correlation between certain external factors and the test scores tapping into implicit knowledge of English as a second/foreign language.

Ten university students - native speakers, were used as a control group/benchmark for the purposes of test results comparison.

Materials and Procedure

All the materials used in the research were pilot-tested by 10 volunteers, advanced L2 learners, university students at Birkbeck, University of London and University of Westminster.

The battery of tests, following Marsden Study's model, consisted of:

- a Timed Grammaticality Judgement Test (TGJT) in which the participants were allocated approximately 10 seconds for each answer, tapping into implicit knowledge;
- an Untimed Grammaticality Judgement Test (UGJT) participants were allowed two times longer to answer, tapping into explicit knowledge;
- an Oral Imitation Test (OIT), tapping into implicit knowledge;
- a Metalinguistic Knowledge Test (MLT), tapping into explicit knowledge, and
- a Proficiency Test (PT).

The pen-and-paper test consisting of 68 sentences, evenly divided between grammatical (grammatically correct) and ungrammatical (grammatically incorrect), was aimed at testing 17 grammatical structures altogether, 4 sentences for every structure tested. The targeted grammatical structures were selected on the grounds of having been reported as problematic for learners, as appeared in ESL/EFL course books across a range of levels, thus representing both early and late acquired forms. They have been adapted from tests created by Pienemann (1989); Anderson, Matessa, & Lebiere, (1997) and Ellis et al. (2009).

A Background Questionnaire was used to collect information about the learners' background, such as starting age of learning ESL/EFL, length of learning ESL/EFL (measured in years of extensive learning) length of exposure to English as L1 (measured in years of residing and studying in the UK or any other English - speaking country), and predominant type of input received (whether it was mainly through naturalistic or mainly through instructed learning). A number of factors, self-reported in the Background questionnaire, were explored through descriptive statistics and compared for each group: starting age of learning (SAoL); length of learning (LoL); type of input (IT) (predominantly naturalistic or predominantly instructed); length of exposure (LoE) to the target language

in the UK (or another L1 country); other ways of learning (through internet, watching films or reading books in the target language), and age (A). Frequencies variable analysis was conducted for the external factors reported in the Background questionnaire, separated by country, for an easy comparison of the mean and the standard deviation of the tests results, influenced by these factors.

Results

The descriptive statistics, used to explore correlations between independent variables (external factors) and dependent variables (scores on the five tests) and their significance, demonstrated the following results:

Table 1. Correlations between variables and their significance

		TGJT	OIT	PT	UGJT	MLT
Starting age	Pearson Correlation	0.272**	0.490**	0.342**	0.276**	-0.097**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	4236	4236	4236	4236	4236
Length of Learning	Pearson Correlation	0.249**	0.260**	0.189**	0.213**	-0.080**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	4236	4236	4236	4236	4236
Length of Exposure	Pearson Correlation	0.379**	0.488**	0.420**	0.364**	-0.090**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	4236	4236	4236	4236	4236
Instruction type	Pearson Correlation	0.145**	0.262**	0.186**	0.123**	0.006
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.699
	N	4236	4236	4236	4236	4236
Other ways	Pearson Correlation	0.090**	0.188**	0.175**	0.062**	-0.199**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	4236	4236	4236	4236	4236
Age	Pearson Correlation	0.018	0.041**	0.053**	0.032*	-0.069**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.246	0.007	0.001	0.037	0.000
	N	4236	4236	4236	4236	4236

It can be seen that the most significant factors correlating to tests measuring implicit knowledge, Timed Grammaticality Judgement Test (TGJT) and Oral Imitation Test (OIT) are 1. Length of exposure to L2 where it is used as native (LoE), 2. Starting age of learning L2 (SAoL), 3. Length of learning L2 (LoL) and 4. Instruction type (IT).

Length of exposure to L2 where it is used as native (LoE). The effect size of correlation (LoE – TGJT) was found statistically significant ($r=0.38$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.14$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$ as well as (LoE – OIT): $r=0.49$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.24$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$).

Starting age of learning L2 (SAoL). Pearson's coefficient of the correlation (SAoL – OIT) has the same value as for the correlation (LoE – OIT): $r=0.49$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.24$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$. The correlation (SAoL – TGJT) is weaker but still statistically significant ($r=0.27$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.07$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$).

Length of learning L2 (LoL) and Instruction type (IT) showed similar values of correlation to OIT results ($r=0.26$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.07$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$) and even weaker for TGJT ($r=0.25$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.06$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$) and ($r=0.15$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.02$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$) respectively. The rest of the factors demonstrated much lower values of correlation.

The most significant factors correlating to tests measuring *explicit knowledge*, Untimed Grammaticality Judgement Test (UGJT) and Metalinguistic Knowledge Test (MLT) demonstrated weak correlation with UGJT results and even weaker significance of correlation with MLT. According to Pearson's coefficient of correlation with MLT results, the only factor which was found to be important is *Country of origin* ($r=0.49$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.24$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$).

The correlation with UGJT demonstrated significance of the same factors as for TGJT: LoE, SAoL and LoL ($r=0.36$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.13$, $p <0.001$, $N=103$; $r=0.28$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.08$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$ and $r=0.21$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.04$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$) respectively.

The most significant factors correlating to the test measuring proficiency (attainment of proficiency so far) are: *Length of exposure* ($r=0.42$ so $R\text{-sq} =0.18$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$) and *Starting age of learning* ($r=0.34$ so $R\text{-sq}=0.12$, $p<0.001$, $N=103$).

To double-check these results, factor analysis, using principal component analysis and component matrix, was also conducted to identify the most significant factors influencing subjects' performance on the battery of tests. It produced the results shown in Table 2 below. They are similar to the results for factors correlating to tests measuring implicit knowledge and proficiency test. Most variables load highly on four factors: *Length of exposure*, which explains over 73% of the variance; *Length of learning*, explaining about 64% of the variance; *Starting age*, which explains about 51% of the variance; and *Instruction type*, explaining about 33% of the variance.

The only difference in the factors responsible for the overall variance of results is that *Length of learning* (LoL) replaces *Starting age of learning* (SAoL) in the position of the second significant factor.

Table 2. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared			Rotation Sums of Squared		
	Initial Eigen values			Loadings			Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.040	33.670	33.670	4.040	33.670	33.670	3.804	31.699	31.699
2	2.178	18.149	51.819	2.178	18.149	51.819	1.885	15.706	47.405
3	1.524	12.702	64.520	1.524	12.702	64.520	1.633	13.612	61.018
4	1.112	9.270	73.790	1.112	9.270	73.790	1.533	12.773	73.790
5	0.821	6.845	80.636						
6	0.728	6.069	86.704						
7	0.544	4.536	91.240						
8	0.397	3.304	94.545						
9	0.288	2.399	96.944						
10	0.196	1.636	98.580						
11	0.164	1.369	99.949						
12	0.006	0.051	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

As a result of all the evidence shown in Table 1 and Table 2, it can be claimed that the targeted contextual factors do have a statistically significant relationship with learners' performance on tests to measure their implicit language knowledge, explicit language knowledge and their overall ESL /EFL proficiency, although it is not very strong. In summary, the most significant external factors with an impact on the test performance are: length of exposure, starting age of learning, length of learning, and type of instruction.

Figure 1 below demonstrates the results on the five tests, TGJT, OIT, PT, UGJT and MLT, clustered according to the subjects' country of origin. It can clearly be seen that the cluster of Country where English is spoken as a foreign language (CEFL) demonstrates higher scores on all the tests, compared to the cluster of Country where English is used as a second formal language (CEUSL). Nevertheless, some similarity, both in oral imitation test and metalinguistic knowledge test scores can also be noticed.

Native speakers' scores, on the other hand, are much higher, except for the MLT results, which are lower. This was confirmed by the Mean and Standard deviation values, calculated for all the tests according to the participants' country of origin, shown in Table 3 below. For native speakers the mean values are highest for all the tests (TGJT M=65.50, SD=0.71; OIT M=34.50, SD=0.71; PT M=93.50, SD=2.12; UGJT M=65.50, SD=0.71), except for the Metalinguistic test whose values are the lowest (MLT M=2.0, SD=0).

From the other two groups, the scores of the subjects studying English as a foreign language show a closer similarity to the scores of native speakers on all the tests (TGJT M=48.70, SD=11.87; OIT M=15.20, SD=6.71; PT M=61.30, SD=16.87; UGJT

M=50.9, SD=12.63), except for the metalinguistic test, whose values are the highest for the learners of English as a foreign language (MLT M=7.80, SD=3.33).

Compared to the previous two groups, the participants from countries where English is used as a second formal language achieved scores of closer similarity to the second group (countries where English is studied as a foreign language) rather than to the native speakers' ones (TGJT M=39.76, SD=7.47; OIT M=12.33, SD=2.26; PT M=38.13, SD=13.73; MLT M=5.36, SD=1.97; UGJT M=40.78, SD=7.49) on all tests without exception.

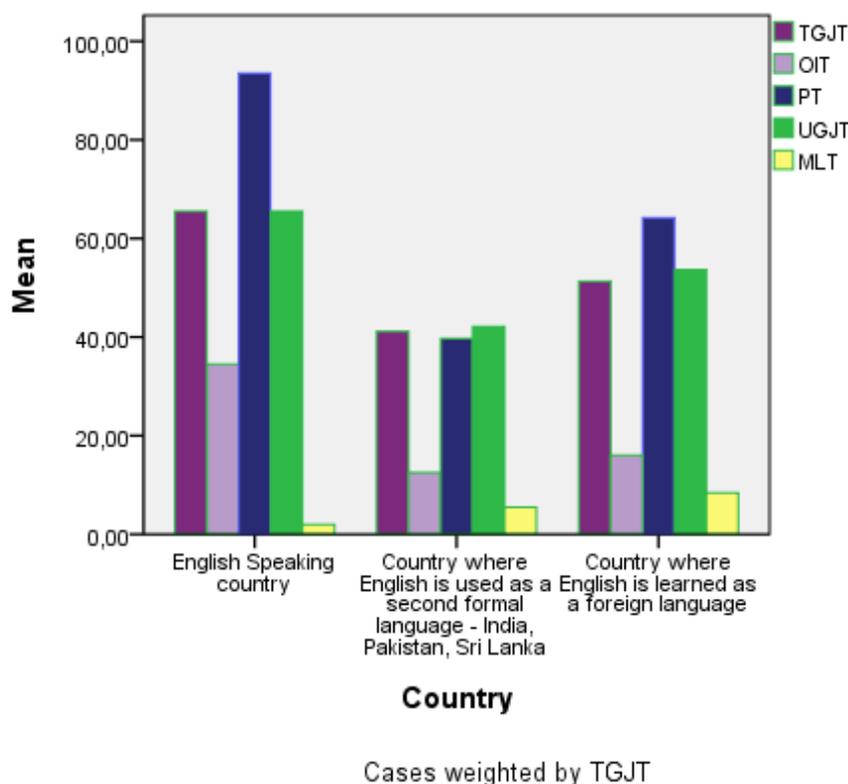


Figure 1. Results on the battery of tests according to the country of origin

The results from the analyses detected statistically significant correlations between the external factors of interest and the participants' results on the battery of tests, though not as strong as it was initially expected. This might be due to the lack of content validity of the battery of tests as participants did not receive any purposeful instruction (teaching) before being tested.

As the results indicated, the most significant factors which have an impact on learners' performance on tests measuring implicit/explicit knowledge and their level of proficiency tend to be the *Length of exposure to L2* in environments where it is used as native and the *Starting age of learning*, followed by *Length of learning* and *Type of input*, which were also found statistically significant. The Factor analysis test showed slightly

different results, which determined length of exposure and length of learning as the most important factors, followed closely by starting age of learning and type of input. In both cases, however, the expected significance of the type of input as one of the main factors influencing L2 learning and attainment in instructed conditions, was not confirmed. This might be due to the imperfection of the testing tools (the tests used in the research) or to the fact that most of the data collected were self-reported (the Background questionnaire).

Discussion

The results of the study confirmed that learners who perform better on tests measuring implicit knowledge also demonstrate higher levels of proficiency. This points to the fact that an L2 is best learned through acquiring implicit knowledge. This also confirmed my belief that learners who have been learning EFL through instructed (classroom) input would show results, similar to each other, regardless of their starting age of learning. It was demonstrated that subjects from countries where English is used as a second formal language cluster in a similar way to subjects from countries where English is learned as a foreign language, according to their performance on the battery of tests. What is more, the latter group demonstrated higher scores on all the tests, compared to the former. To my knowledge, no previous research has investigated or interpreted such a fact; therefore, its interpretation below is only a suggestion which should be studied further. My belief is that there are a few possibilities which would explain the results.

The first is that in countries where English is used as a second formal language there are many more external factors to be considered, such as social and educational background of learners. Students who come from richer and well-educated families receive better tuition in private schools and colleges and use English to communicate at school, at home and with friends, which is a marker of their social status. Learners from not so favourable backgrounds will probably have more limited exposure to L2 and use it less frequently. This might well explain the surprising fact that, despite the early starting age of learning, the final attainment of learners from such countries might differ considerably. Another possibility might be that, at certain stage, L2 learners fossilise and significantly reduce their further progress and development of the target language skills. A third plausible explanation might be the differences in the world versions of English (the variety of “Englishes”). Again, these are just suggestions, which should be confirmed by further research of empirical data.

As for the L2 learners in a foreign language instructed environment, the comparatively high results, demonstrated from the battery of tests, showed that, depending on the length of learning and length of exposure, subjects who have learned English as a foreign language, can actually attain considerably high levels of proficiency. Whether this is as a result of their mainly explicit knowledge, gradually turning into implicit knowledge, as a result of target language exposure; or it shows that the majority of the written tests actually measure explicit knowledge, is a question worth investigating. In both cases, it is a fact that for L2 learners, mostly exposed to instructed input, the length of learning is a factor of significant importance. This is in accordance with the previous research which claims that, in instructed conditions, the process of acquisition requires a substantially longer period of time (Muñoz, 2008). Nevertheless, this research, although it did not intend to, has confirmed well-known beliefs that length of exposure to L2 where it is used as native and starting age of learning are significant factors influencing learners' ultimate attainment in L2 proficiency.

Conclusions

Based on learners' attainment in the battery of tests and the data collected through the Background questionnaire, the study found *length of exposure* and *starting age of learning* to be the most significant factors which have an impact on students' attainment on implicit, explicit knowledge tests and their level of proficiency. It also found *length of learning* and *instruction type* statistically significant.

The main theoretical implications of the results are that the battery of tests and the Background questionnaire used in this study could not confirm that, in instructed conditions, factors such as length of learning and type of instruction have the most significant impact on learners' final attainment. Other, more explicit types of measuring tools might be necessary.

On a methodological level, the methods used to collect primary data might have had some effect on the findings of the research. The measuring tools (the battery of tests and the proficiency test) should further be improved in terms of validity. The background questionnaire appeared to be limited in scope and could not elicit significant information about the type of instruction received in formal (classroom) environment. In order to elicit sufficient data about students' learning experiences,

questions should be more detailed and followed by an individual interview. Other researchers might find the qualitative method more appropriate for investigating the impact of different external factors on learners' final attainment.

The results also indicated a correlation between the attainment on tests measuring implicit knowledge (TGJT and OIT) and learners' proficiency test results. Higher scores on the former correlated with a better level of proficiency. This means that implicit learning or acquisition of implicit knowledge could lead to a better ultimate proficiency attainment.

Cluster analysis found that participants who have learned English as a second formal language group similarly to those who have learned it as a foreign language, according to their performance on the tests. This confirms the fact that in both cases students learn the target L2 in instructed conditions, in which, as proved by previous empirical studies and by the current one, the starting age of learning is not the only or the most significant factor influencing their level of proficiency.

To summarise, studies of macro-contextual factors affecting L2 acquisition is worth researching further as they do have a significant impact on learners' attainment and proficiency level, as the current research has found. Research on SLA in instructed conditions deserves further attention and study as these are the conditions in which the majority of people around the globe learn a second language. Needless to say, the implications can be of significant benefit not only to the better understanding of the process of SLA, but also to teaching methodology and to the improvement of L2 learners' ultimate attainment.

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BULGARIAN POLEMICS ON AMERICAN GENERATIVISM (1950s-1970s): A PEEK THROUGH THE IRON CURTAIN

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Abstract

The paper discusses the attitude of Bulgarian linguistic circles towards American generative grammar at its birth and establishment in the period from the 1950s to the 1970s. Bulgarian treatment of generativism is analysed by following the two opposing lines in it: the hegemonic ideologically-biased rejection and its polemic support. An attempt is made to disregard the heat of discussions and rather focus on the underlying grounds of the criticism. The philosophical-ideological motivation of the polemics is considered, as well as the key topics of generative grammar, upheld by its proponents. In general, the analysis tends to the study of the processes of intellectual and cultural transfer in modern linguistics.

Key words: generativism, Bulgarian generativism, Marxist criticism of generative grammar, linguistic historiography, first Bulgarian generativists

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The ways in which American generativism has been commented in Bulgaria shows essential attitudes of Bulgarian linguistic tradition and development. Especially interesting is the interpretation of generativism at its birth and establishment (1950s - 1970s) in the USA and Western Europe, because in that period Bulgarian linguistics was isolated from the research in those countries due to ideological and geopolitical reasons. One of the tangible dimensions of the Iron Curtain metaphor, dividing the East and the West at that time, was the information blackout on the linguistic research achievements beyond it. Yet, there seemed to be cracks in the curtain enabling the penetration of new ideas, reverberating in Bulgarian linguistics in the form of in-depth, though not numerous, analyses. Despite the watchful ideological eye, Bulgarian linguistic criticism found ways to interpret the basic principles of American generativism and thus to facilitate an environment for its development in Bulgaria.

American generativism as a subject of polemics

Generally speaking, American generativism is a collective term for various grammar models, based on a general theoretical framework and on the representation of language information by means of logic and mathematics, such as rules, graphs, matrices, sets, etc. Generativism is also known for raising important issues, such as the nature of language, the relationship between language and cognition, the process of language acquisition, and the implementation of grammar models in computer systems. Most of all, generativism is associated with Noam Chomsky and his model of Transformational-generative Grammar in its various versions, as given in the early works of (Chomsky, 1957, 1965, 1975). Also, the term refers to a rich tradition of many of his supporters and opponents, working in this field. Although Bulgarian linguistic criticism of that period relates generativism mainly to the works of Chomsky, other authors, such as C. Fillmore and E. Bach, are cited, too.

The study is focused on the comments of the original American models in Bulgaria. Only those Bulgarian polemical critical studies have been considered that evaluate and discuss the basic principles of generativism. Though comments on generativism can be found also in some particular Bulgarian generative works of that time, they are not taken into consideration here because of their dependence on particular theses and research tasks. The aim is to find critical assessment, generalizations and historiographical, philosophical and methodological interpretations

of generativism as a theory. No claim to comprehensiveness is made as this is rather an attempt to outline the basic topics, factors and the general atmosphere in the criticism on early American generativism in the period from the 1950s to the 1970s as influenced by the shadow of the Iron Curtain.

It should be mentioned that generative criticism went hand in hand with research from the very beginning which is evidenced by the fact that the Bulgarian linguists, whose criticism is considered here, were also researchers. However, it is only their reviews of American generative ideas that are to be addressed in this paper. Thus, Bulgarian generativism, which is the methodological application of the American model to the Bulgarian language, is not considered here. It occurred in early 1960s through the pioneering syntactic research of Jordan Penčev and the computational applications of the models by Alexander Ljudskanov, Elena Paskaleva, Miroslav Yanakiev, Korneilia Ilieva, etc. Generative research on Bulgarian was also held in the USA in the 1970s by Robert Ewen and Rayna Moneva-Dolapčieva as reported by (Rudin, 2013, pp. 15-16). Later, generativism was further developed by numerous Bulgarian researchers and in the decades that followed a notable Bulgarian generative school was formed.

Silence as a general critical background

On the whole, Bulgarian criticism maintained considerable reserve towards American generativism until political reforms took place in 1989, in contrast to the intense discussion going on in the USA and Western Europe at that time.

In the ideal case, a base for the assessment of Chomsky's ideas in Bulgaria would have been the free access to his original works and to their published Bulgarian translations. If there had been freedom of speech, supportive criticism would have involved the presentation of the leading principles of the theory, while dismissive ones would have commented on the drawbacks. In either case, criticism would have been based mainly on linguistic, logical, philosophical, methodological, etc. argumentation.

As is well known, however, this was not the situation in Bulgaria after 1944. Silence on Western linguistic developments was imposed by complex political mechanisms. Restrictive administrative policies are documented by historians, such as (Živkova, 2006), analysed in regard to the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and other Bulgarian academic institutions. Especially strong was the philosophical focus on the

conformity of the new theories against “dialectical materialism”. Thus, the official enforcement of “the Marrism” – a doctrine of the Soviet scholar Nicholas Marr - was one of the earliest examples of ideologization of Bulgarian linguistic research, as noted in (Rusinov, 2000).

Principally, the Soviet example of tacit censorship was followed – the works of the linguists doing generative research were not cited and were at most mentioned only in passing and in a negative aspect, and longer studies following generative methodology were not considered promising for MA or PhD level research. Moreover, the publishing houses were only state-owned, limited in number and there were political censors in them. But the practice in Bulgaria surpassed Soviet censorship by not translating Chomsky’s works into Bulgarian¹, while they were published in Russian in the early 1960s and 1970s, a few years after the originals, and, what is more, accompanied by comments.

Polemic representation

In conditions of ideological censorship, the only way to express non-conforming opinion was the technique of polemics representation, occurring “in the course of social conflict and taking an opposing view to the hegemonic representation” (Augoustinos, Walker, & Donaghue, 2014, p. 45). Such polemics on generativism took place mainly in the form of censorship-approved critical comments or in responses to them. Moreover, polemics had to be framed by the hegemonic social paradigm of “dialectical materialism” and its axiomatic indispensable connection with linguistic theory (as well as with all humanitarian research). However unusual at first sight, polemic representation was tolerated, though within strict limits, by the totalitarian regime, as a means “to know the enemy” by sieving some Western ideas and representing them in particular ideological perspective.

Marxist considerations: Todor Pavlov and Dobrin Spasov

In view of Bulgarian Marxist philosophy, an ideologized approach to linguistics can be seen in the works of Todor Pavlov, a leading philosopher of that time in Bulgaria, a long-standing chairman of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1947-1962) and director of the Philosophy Institute of the Academy (1949-1952 and 1960-1977). One of

¹ Some of Chomsky’s linguistic and cognitive studies have only recently been translated into Bulgarian, see Chomsky, 2012.

the clichés for the assessment of Western linguistics as “idealistic reactionary philosophy²” is found in a paper preceding the flourish of generativism in the West (Pavlov, 1953). It was no accident that this paper was reissued in the anniversary collection (Pavlov, 1961), since it hinted at the “proper” attitude towards generativism, which had intermittently occurred and gained popularity in the West. Moreover, the collection was reviewed, even before it was printed, in the leading linguistic journal *Bălgarski ezik* [Bulgarian Language] by L. Andreičin, the Director of the Institute of Bulgarian Language (Andreičin, 1960).

Some of Pavlov’s papers in the collection were direct instructions for the ideologization of linguistic studies, such as *On the Relationship between Marxism and Linguistics* and *Subject and Tasks of Linguistics in General and Bulgarian Linguistics in particular*. His critical analyses tend to denounce mainly the theoretical works from the West for contradicting the philosophical principles of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Vladimir Lenin. Such politicized acceptance of the Marxist and Soviet sources over the others is established as a tendency for interpreting also the research of Noam Chomsky and his followers.

A similar stance was maintained in the works of the philosopher Dobrin Spasov, (1961), who claims that “the philosophers and linguists of the Marxist school, having deep theoretical grounds, sceptically view the bourgeois linguistic theories”. A more detailed Marxist criticism of the generative transformational grammar is found in (Spasov, 1977) where he characterizes Chomsky as a philosopher “burdened by modern logical formalism” and describes the analysis of oppositions in linguistics as contradicting “the guideline of Hegel and Lenin that language contains only the general” (Spasov, 1977, p. 117). Essentially, his criticism could be considered as defending functionalism in linguistics, were it not for his strong ideologization and Marxist-Leninist argumentation, obscuring the linguistic discussion.

As a whole, for decades the attitude toward Western linguistic models was based on ideological clichés such as, “formalistic deviations”, “(reactionary) formalism”, “bourgeois deviations”, “bourgeois influences”, “mechanistic transfer of foreign language models”, “subjectivity”, “etc. Similar qualifications, such as “extreme logicism” and “extreme formalism and psychologism”, are found in the official Grammar of

² All translations into English are my own.

Modern Bulgarian Standard Language, published by the Academy of Sciences (GMBSL, 1984, vol. 3, p. 9). The derogative phrase “bourgeois small-ware shop” (буржоазна кинкалерија) is mentioned in (Krapova, 2013, p. 6) as used in Penčev’s research.

It may be noted that the hegemonic critical thought might contain some consistent non-ideological arguments, which however remain somewhat hidden in the pathos of the dominant ideology. Instances of this are the not unreasonable arguments of Spasov about the philosophical eclecticism of the early Chomskyan generativism. Spasov shows a contradiction between Chomsky’s claim for rehabilitation of the philosophical rationalism in its Cartesian and Kantian form, on the one hand, and, on the other - his innateness hypothesis of language acquisition. The latter is considered by Spasov as innativism, rooted in the subjective idealism and the doctrine that the mind is born with ideas. However, Spasov’s opinion about such contradiction is debatable, as far as Cartesian philosophy is concerned. In Spasov’s opinion, generativism has “certain philosophical ambiguity, which allows Chomsky to present himself as a Cartesian, Leibnizian, Kantian, as well as mechanistic materialist of the modern physicalist type” (Spasov, 1978, p. 437). Certain eclecticism in Chomsky’s philosophy has also been noted in the research abroad, where ways of overcoming it have been sought along with preserving some of Chomsky’s logical and linguistic hypotheses, such as in (Pollard and Sag, 1987).

Direct responses to Spasov’s positions can be found in some polemic papers or book sections written by Miroslav Yanakiev and Jordan Penčev, which contain well argued presentations of the main postulates of generativism, related to the nature of language signs, language-speech and competence-performance dichotomies, the relationship between language and thought, and others. What can be noted about them, however, is that they lack comments on particular generative interpretations of language phenomena, which would have conferred a stronger beneficial effect on the reception of generativism.

Miroslav Yanakiev versus Dobrin Spasov

In the first place, we are going to discuss two texts by Yanakiev, in which he provides in-depth comments of some aspects of generativism in the form of polemics against Spasov’s statements. One of them is the paper *On the subject of linguistics and on some of its basic concepts* (Yanakiev, 1961), which is a direct response to Dobrin

Spasov's critical paper of *Some principal problems of the study of sign (semiotics) and linguistics* (Spasov, 1961). The discussion was hosted by *Ezik i literatura* [Language and Literature] journal. The other one is Yanakiev's book *Stylistics and Language Teaching*, where he starts a non-explicit discussion with Spasov's ideas from the book *Unity and diversity: Towards the Criticism of Modern Philosophical Pluralism* (Spasov, 1977), published in the same year.

Leaving aside the heat of the polemics, we are going to focus below on some particular aspects of generativism, commented by M. Yanakiev in these two texts.

Psychologism. Yanakiev (1961/2007, p. 87³) refers to the strong linguistic psychologism of the earliest generative model of (Chomsky, 1957), where linguistic theory claims to model the way sentences are generated in the brain. In Yanakiev's words, the theory "also reveals the way in which the human brain functions".

Distinction between generative and transformational models. It is remarkable that as early as 1977, Yanakiev drew a clear distinction between generative and transformational grammars. The common attitude in the West at that time was to consider them as 'generative-transformational grammar'. It was in the late 1980s and 1990s that this distinction was focused in American lexicon grammars and is still the subject of discussion (Borsley and Börjars, 2011, p. 1). Yanakiev touches on the essence of generative models and describes them as "generative because they are descriptions of mechanisms with output but no explicit input" (Yanakiev 1977, p. 67) – an aspect not related to transformational rules. It should be noted that this book dares to cite Chomsky directly, though following a transliteration of his name /naum homski/ (Наум Хомски) which was established in the Russian tradition by the translations of the 1960s and 1970s⁴ (Yanakiev 1977, p. 66). Chomsky is qualified as "the linguist whose works have been most widely discussed in linguistic circles recently" (Yanakiev 1977, p. 66).

Predecessors of generativism. Connections with earlier tradition have been explored by pointing out the similarity of generativism concepts with Wilhelm Wundt's theoretical views on sentence formation as "image segmentation" and "psychophysical parallelism" (Yanakiev, 1977, p. 67). This is an important observation since the school of Chomsky rarely seeks the roots of its ideas in earlier works.

³ Page numbers are given based on the 2007 edition.

⁴ Modern Russian Cyrillic transliterations tend to prefer /noam/ to /naum/, though some authors still use the former version.

Intuitive versus empirical grammar models. Yanakiev expresses disagreement with “self-observation in language modelling” as one of the basic principles of generativism and points out the advantages of empiricism. He claims that the lack of empirical data makes the criterion of “grammaticality”, which is leading in the Chomskyan generative model, very obscure. In Yanakiev’s words, Chomsky “completely gave up looking for the glottometric grounds of the language practice analysis” (Yanakiev, 1977, p. 103).

Jordan Penčev versus Dobrin Spasov

The other participant in the long-lasting dispute with Dobrin Spasov was Jordan Penčev, the pioneer of generative syntactic research in Bulgaria. Two of his papers, namely *On a philosophical critique of structural linguistics* (Penčev, 1978a) and *On some misunderstandings* (Penčev, 1978b), are considered here. They are in direct polemics with the above-mentioned book written by Spasov: *Unity and diversity: Towards the Criticism of Modern Philosophical Pluralism* (Spasov, 1977). Again, the discussion took place in the *Bulgarian language* journal, and Spasov wrote his response (Spasov, 1978) there, too. Some essential comments on generative topics are outlined below.

Semantics and generativism. Basically, Penčev opposes the criticism that Chomsky does not include semantics in his research. Penčev (1978a) interprets the Chomskyan understanding of meaning as inherent in the very notion of linguistic sign. He believes that the “interruption of connections between linguistic signs and mental phenomena” ascribed by Spasov to generativism, is incorrect and “cannot be claimed even by the most outspoken structuralist” (Penčev, p. 45). Penčev points out that one of the main issues of interest for Chomsky is ‘how sound and thought (meaning) are mapped’ and that “the very recognition of the existence of signs in language presupposes the connection with thought, i.e. the connection with thought is performed within the sign itself, and that is the reason why it is called sign” (Penčev, p. 45). In addition, Penčev disagrees that Chomsky limits semantics to lexical meaning and argues that he is rather diminishing “the sharp opposition between lexical and grammatical meaning” by defining them in “dictionary (or lexicon) as a definite set of various semantic features” (Penčev, p. 47)

Oppositions in the language system. In the same paper, Jordan Penčev clarifies the principal notion of “opposite relation” in structural and generative linguistics, tracing the first occurrence of the notion in Saussure and its further development by Chomsky. He points out that “linguistic categories – phonemes, grammar morphemes etc. – exist only in opposite relations, based on significant characteristics, a fact, accepted even by the staunchest opponents of structural linguistics” (Penčev, 1978a, p. 45).

Formalizing language rules. Furthermore, Penčev advocates the existence of language laws independently of communication “as a presupposition for establishing formal language rules”. He reminds that this is a well-known fact but what makes a difference in Chomsky’s interpretation is that the independence of language and communication motivates the existence of formal systems. Though Penčev does not explain the term “formalization” in detail, his argumentation gives us a reason to believe that he interprets it as a kind of “matematization” rather than the wide-spread inaccurate belief of it as “desemantisation” (Penčev, 1978a, p. 46).

Parts of the sentence in generativism. Penčev argues that Chomsky accepts sentence predication by “taking as universal the structure *subject + predicate* (although he defines these two notions formally)” (Penčev, 1978a, p. 46). In his opinion “generativists have not rejected subject semantics but have replaced it with another one”. The author believes that the drawbacks of the traditionally defined syntactic categories have been overcome by introducing “thematic relations”, such as agent, patient, etc.

Syntactic homonymy. The fact that generativism makes a first attempt at a systematic description of syntactic homonymy is stressed by Penčev. According to him, “syntacticians have the right and even the obligation to determine the alternative senses of syntactic homonymy” (Penčev, 1978a, p. 47).

Deep structure. The description of deep structure in Penčev (1978a) surpasses the polemics with Spasov and is in itself a very incisive analysis of this milestone concept of early transformational generativism. He develops a detailed presentation of the different interpretations of deep structure - as a syntactic or as a semantic construct. At the same time, Penčev, keeping track of the recent theory development, notes that Chomsky had already started to seek alternative solutions, such as initial phrase

markers – a term introduced to the theory not long before that in (Chomsky, 1975). In this way, the Bulgarian readers were kept informed about the newest developments of the theory, reading between the lines.

Philosophical grounds and syntactic rules. In the concluding part, (Penčev, 1978a) formulates a hypothesis that linguistic analysis is not necessarily related to conceptual ideas, peripheral to the general framework. It is precisely this idea that becomes a leading factor for the later developments of Western generativism from the late 1970s onwards. Such an approach made it possible to keep the formalization and the particular analysis of the early versions, while at the same time avoiding psychologism, embodied in the innateness hypothesis, or transformations. Penčev notes this tendency when it was just about to rise, thus predicting the development of a broader methodological view, which made possible the replacement of transformations by constraints, the analysis within a single level of representation and the formalization of lexicon in an integrated manner with combinatorial rules⁵.

Ideological context of the polemics

It is worth mentioning that both Yanakiev and Penčev in their polemics managed in general to keep away from an open ideological motivation of their theses. They focused on philosophical and linguistic argumentation, although their papers existed in an overall scientific context that was strongly ideological.

A sign of having in mind the hegemonic tendency is the use of arguments that were in line with it, though not explicitly claimed. For example, the above mentioned paper of Yanakiev (1961) concerns the materialistic character of Chomsky's generative theory. Yanakiev comments on the traditional idealistic concepts in very negative and emotional terms. Though not openly stated, it is a well-known fact that materialism rejects the Christian notion of the ideal nature of human mind and language, which underlined Latin grammar and was transferred to the European grammar tradition. Yanakiev sheds light on the materialist interpretation by referring to Friedrich Engels' concept of mechanical motion as being transferred to the understanding of the human mind as "a form of motion of matter" (Yanakiev, 1961, p. 88). In actual fact, Yanakiev is positing materialism and atheism as fundamental principles underlying American

⁵ A more detailed discussion on the variation of linguistic descriptions within a single framework is found in Venkova, 2015.

generativism. This argumentation is not incidental to the hegemonic atheistic paradigm in Bulgaria at that time, expressed very clearly in the academic Grammar of Modern Bulgarian Standard Language where the following quote from Marx's *Capital* is included: "Of primary importance here are the words of Marx that 'the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought'" (GMBSL 1984, Vol.3, p. 20). This statement plays a key role in the hegemonic doctrine and is also found in the works of Vladimir Lenin, translated into Bulgarian and widely used at that time (Lenin, 1915/2008). Therefore, from an ideological perspective, such anticlerical polemics of Yanakiev can be considered an attempt to supply one more argument in favour of Chomsky's theory, since criticizing Christianity was in trend with its persecution in Bulgaria at that time. Implicitly he considered this anti-Christian tendency to be common between Marxism and generativism, which is not openly said but was clear to the audience of that time, being Marxist-educated still from primary school. Nowadays such an argument seems absurd, but it has one unexpected consequence – it reveals the religious-philosophical outlook of early generativism. This aspect is not often discussed by Western criticism, though it is fundamental for any research.

The ideological background could also be felt in Spasov's response to Penčev where he observes "worrying philosophical implications" in Penčev's paper (Spasov, 1978, p. 438). The qualification "worrying" is not explicitly clarified there but to the then readers it was clear that it indicated a lack of concord with the hegemonic dialectical materialism. This qualification was noted with a delicate irony in Penčev's response (Penčev, 1978b).

Another sign of implicitly keeping in line with the hegemonic ideology which was strongly pro-Soviet can be seen in the inclusion of four quotes by Soviet linguists on one page of the same brief response paper (Penčev, 1978b). In general, this response hints at the fact that generative ideas are also supported in the USSR, which is a purely political counter-argument.

In addition, the ideological atmosphere is found outside the linguistic text in a number of non-explicit signs. One of them is the fact that other linguists did not dare to participate in such a discussion in the 1960s and 1970s, at least not openly. It has to be noted that both authors were internationally renowned: Yanakiev was a lecturer at

Moscow State University (1969-1984) and Penčev was a lecturer at the University of Washington in Seattle (1974-1977) and invited speaker at Ohio State University and Yale University, as noted in (Ivanov, 1993, p. 6; Lakova & Koeva, 2006, p. 7). Obviously, they had a special status in the Bulgarian linguistic community, being able to travel abroad and to express non-conforming opinions. Thus, some might say, they could afford stating positions not in trend with the hegemonic ideology and linguistic methodology. However, they could have chosen to write works safely following it, which might have brought them greater dividends at that time. However, they chose the more difficult path, which caused problems in various aspects of their careers. For example, their lecture courses were limited, e.g. Penčev was only invited to teach at Plovdiv University within Bulgaria. The publication of some of their works was banned, e.g. Yanakiev's *Stylistic Notes*, widely popular in manuscript at that time, was condemned as formalistic and was published posthumously, (cf. Bayramova, 1993, p. 34). Penčev's syntactic research was not included in the academic collection *A Handbook of Bulgarian Syntax* (Popov, 1979), a fact noted also by the German linguist Klaus Steinke (Steinke, 2006, p. 298). The uneasy choice to express non-conforming opinions, however, has made their papers still relevant today.

Conclusions

This paper has attempted to outline the initial polemic reflection of early American generativism in Bulgaria in the period between the 1950s and 1970s. It occurred in the conditions of the hegemonic dialectical materialism and Marxism-Leninism, imposed as a single philosophic-methodological base in humanities. Because of this, American generativism reached Bulgarian linguistics in the form of acute polemics, mainly regarding the philosophical grounds of linguistic theory. Still, the polemics provided useful information for the then reader, eager to learn what is going on in Western philosophy and linguistics.

Paradoxically, distance, no matter its reasons, had the advantage of making some problems that were not in the focus of generativist criticism in the West more noticeable. In addition, it should be noted that even critical comments on American generative ideas made some of their important aspects popular beyond the Iron Curtain.

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WHERE GOOGLE FAILS

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Abstract

The paper presents ongoing research in contrastive corpus linguistics with envisaged applications in machine translation (MT) and with focus on Google Translate (GT) performance in English-Bulgarian translation. Structural patterns, forms or expressions where automatic translation fails are identified and analysed in view of creating a GT-editing tool providing improved target language output. The paper presents the corpus and the corpus analysis method applied, including the identification of unacceptable string types, their structural analysis and categorization. For each failure type, pre- or post-GT editing transformations are proposed. A first outline is proposed of a GT-editing tool consisting of a pre-GT editor performing string identification, substitution or deletion operations, a post-GT editor with a set of more complex string transformation rules and an additional module transferring structural information.

Key words: machine translation, pre-editing, post-editing, Google Translate, bitext, computational linguistics, corpus linguistics

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Approaches to Machine Translation

In computational linguistics, translation is viewed as a particular type of paraphrase of a text written in Language A (LA, the source language), where the paraphrase is a text written in Language B (LB, the target language) and where “paraphrase” is defined as “a restatement of a text or passage giving the meaning in another form” (Cf. e.g. Teubert, 1997, p. 147).

The first attempts in the field were inspired by computer-assisted code breaking during the Second World War, the hypothesis being that machine translation is a task comparable to deciphering coded messages. Translation at this stage was *direct*, i.e. LB → LB – lexical substitutions without intermediate representations, and *local* – mainly simple reordering transformations in the immediate neighbourhood of a unit.

Probably the best example of direct translation is the Georgetown automatic translation system (GAT). The project started in the early 50es and the system was operational from 1964. GAT was used for the translation of specialised texts in the field of physics, from Russian into (something resembling) English. In the early 60es, GAT was replaced by its modern version – SYSTRAN, which latter was used in Google translation tools until 2007.

The development of formal grammars (initially mainly of the transformational type) allowed the transition from *local* to *global* approaches to translation, with representations and cross-language transformations on the level of the clause and sentence. Expectations, however, were unreasonably high; the 60es ended with general disappointment and the notorious ALPAC report which brought this early period of research to an end. In the early 70es, only three MT projects received government funding in the USA; not a single project in the field was funded in 1975. Even so, many government agencies continued to use MT systems of the 60s – simply because they had no alternative for the purpose of rapid translation.

The 80es saw a renewed interest in machine translation, this time with more modest output expectations and with the understanding that good MT performance does not necessarily exclude human intervention. Systems are evaluated in terms of two criteria:

1. whether the output quality is good enough to serve as raw text for human editing and
2. whether the development is justified in terms of price, speed or other factors (Cf. e.g. Slocum, 1985).

Approaches to MT in the 50es and 90es can be illustrated with two quotations from leading representatives in the field, Warren Weaver and John R. Searle. Although not the first to imagine automated translation, Warren Weaver won himself the reputation of father of both machine translation and computational linguistics with the ideas he put forward in a 1947 letter to Norbert Wiener:

“I have a text in front of me which is written in Russian, but I am going to pretend that it is really written in English and that it has been coded in some strange symbols. All I need to do is strip off the code in order to retrieve the information contained in the text.” (Arnold et al., 1994, p. 13).

John Searle’s no less famous Chinese Room Argument is a good illustration of late 20th century developments in the field:

“Imagine that I, a non-Chinese speaker, am locked in a room with a lot of Chinese symbols and boxes. I am given an instruction book in English for matching Chinese symbols with other Chinese symbols and for giving back bunches of Chinese symbols in response to bunches of Chinese symbols put into the room through a small window. (...) the symbols put in through the window are called questions. The symbols I give back are called answers (...). The boxes of symbols I have are called a database, and the instruction book in English is called a program. The people who give me questions and designed the instruction book are called the programmers, and I am called the computer. We imagine that I get so good at writing the program, that eventually my ‘answers’ to the ‘questions’ are indistinguishable from those of a native Chinese speaker. I pass the Turing test for understanding Chinese. But all the same, I don’t understand a word of Chinese and – this is the point of the parable – if I don’t understand Chinese on the basis of implementing the program for understanding Chinese, then neither does a digital computer solely on that basis because no digital computer has anything that I do not have.” (Searle, 1995, p. 546)

The major obstacle to the success of rule-based translation tasks is the first part – the formulation by a human /humans of a working set of instructions, of the “instruction book” type – because a set of working instructions would include: an algorithm for correct parsing and generation at the levels of morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics and taking into consideration context, world knowledge and the culture of the speaker/hearer. It would also require the resolution of different types of ambiguity, name recognition, anaphora resolution, in-depth understanding of the

meaning of the message. (Cf. Nakov, 2012, pp. 110-111). Hence the turn towards computer assisted translation (workbenches of the TRADOS type), statistical and example-based translation. The most prominent example of these latter is the modern, post-SYSTRAN, version of Google Translate.

Google Translate

Google's translation tool is a development initiated by Franz Josef Och (head of Google's machine translation group until 2014) – a switch from SYSTRAN (still used by Yahoo! Babel Fish) to example-based, statistical machine translation. This is how Och explained the switch:

“Most state-of-the-art commercial machine translation systems in use today have been developed using a rule-based approach and require a lot of work by linguists to define vocabularies and grammars. Several research systems, including ours, take a different approach: we feed the computer with billions of words of text, both monolingual text in the target language, and aligned text consisting of examples of human translations between the languages. We then apply statistical learning techniques to build a translation model.” (Quigley, 2010).

Och criticised the effectiveness of rule-based¹ algorithms², with their increasing complexity, and argued in favour of statistical approaches. Extrapolating from language teaching, we could say that Google switched from a language learning to a language acquisition approach to translation. In this approach, the larger the amount of text sifted, the more successful the result will be, as Och himself remarked:

“...Once the computer finds a pattern, it can use this pattern to translate similar texts in the future. When you repeat this process billions of times you end up with billions of patterns and one very smart computer program. For some languages however we have fewer translated documents available and therefore fewer patterns that our software has detected. This is why our translation quality will vary by language and language pair.” (Quigley, 2010).

A sound basis for a working MT system, according to Och, would be a bilingual corpus of at least 150 million words – and the more, the better. Not surprisingly, GT performs remarkably well for the six official UN languages and for languages with longer EU status, while providing much poorer results for Bulgarian.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule-based_machine_translation

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algorithm>

All automatic translation tools have their limitations, and GT is no exception. Some of the serious problems the GT research team themselves admit are: the (lack of) analysis of the category of Mood and, ever more dramatic, the difficulty to cope with the expression of habituality and progress, as marked by Romance perfect and imperfect tenses.³ The failure zones in the English-Bulgarian corpus used are more numerous, ranging from incorrect analysis of the source strings, generation of ungrammatical target strings, or both, and covering the levels of the lexicon, of morphology, syntax and semantics. The aim of the research is to determine the feasibility of achieving improved machine translation output by enhancing GT performance with an automatic pre- and post-GT editing tool. I view of this task, unacceptable strings are first identified, following which structural types are systematized and editing transformations are proposed.

The Corpus

The corpus used for the research is based on a Teach Yourself manual of English consisting of short graded dialogues in English and their Bulgarian translations (Stambolieva, 2016). It consists of 250 dialogues at levels L1 (Starter-A2), or approx. 4, 500 sentences, and 100 dialogues at level L2 (B1), approx. 5, 500 sentences.

For each of the two levels, the dialogues (D) are grouped into Units, with three subparts each, each dialogue set consisting of 10-15 paired sentences for the first level and 15-20 paired sentences for the second level, where each dialogue is provided with a (human) translation, aligned with the source at sentence level.

The bitext is turned into a tritext by aligning the human translations (HT) with GT-generated translations:

L(evel)1. 1-1-D(ialogue)3.

Source	HT	GT
1. What's this?	Какво е това?	Какво е това?
2. It's an Ili pika.	Това е Или пика.	Това е Или пика
3. Do you like it?	Харесва ли ти?	Харесва ли ти?
4. I do.	Да.	Аз правя.

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Translate#Limitations

<u>5. It's cute.</u>	Сладко е.	Това е сладък.
<u>6. Is it a mouse?</u>	Мишка ли е?	Дали това е мишка?
7. It isn't.	Не е.	Не е.
<u>8. Does it look like a mouse?</u>	На мишка ли прилича?	Изглежда ли като мишка?
9. The body, yes.	Тялото да.	Тялото, да.
<u>10. The face is like a teddy bear's.</u>	Лицето е като на мече.	Лицето е като мече е.
11. But the ears aren't.	Но ушите не са.	Но ушите не са.
12. They are like a rabbit's.	Те са като на заек.	Те са като на заек.
<u>13. It's a very rare animal.</u>	То е много рядко животно.	Това е много рядко животно.
<u>14. Where does it live?</u>	Къде живее?	Къде се живее?

Aligned sentences with clear HT-GT asymmetry are marked (as are the underlined 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14, above). GTs which are acceptable translations (8, 13, possibly 6 too) are treated as legitimate paraphrases of the HTs.

At this first stage of research a subcorpus of 30 dialogues at Beginner level are analysed for the purpose of identifying instances where Google fails and the structural types of failure. At a second stage of the research, the incorrectly generated target structures will be paired with transformation types.

Google Translate Fail Areas

Two major phenomena, looming large in natural language, lead to inaccurate translation: ambiguity and multi-word expressions. Ambiguity can be observed on both the lexical and the grammatical (above all morphological) level. In rule-based systems, where translation is preceded by source text analysis, ambiguity resolution is based on the analysis of context. The presentation which follows is a first step towards the study of typical problem areas in English-Bulgarian example-based translation; further, it presents a basis for the formulation of rules directed toward improved target string acceptability.

The Lexicon

Some multiple-word expressions, such as idioms or compounds, are listed in the lexicon of translation systems as separate items. Natural language further abounds in a number of set phrases, but also grammatical structures, for which word-for-word analysis is out of place. Complex lexemes can be compound nouns, syntactic fragments, even sentences. Additional difficulties stem from the fact that the building blocks of these lexemes need not be adjacent or otherwise fixed. Ivan Sag (Sag et al. 2002) identifies three categories of complex lexemes: a. fixed: *in short, by and large, every which way*; b. semi-fixed – with possible morphological variation: *car park/parks, kick/kicked the bucket*; c. flexible: phrasal verbs and light verb constructions: *pick [someone] up, make a mistake*, etc. Most flexible structures also allow for syntactic transformations, such as passivisation.

In statistical translation, problems are not simply related to identifying multiple-word expressions but also to resolving ambiguity between word combinations, collocations and different types of multiple-word expressions. These problems are well exemplified in the corpus in the following translation triples:

15. Be off to (I'm off to school) – GT: На разстояние съм от (училище)! НТ: Отивам на училище.
16. Take off that hat! – GT: Излитане, както шапка! НТ: Свали си шапката!
17. How do you do. – GT: Как го правиш? НТ: Приятно ми е.
18. How about your sister? – GT: Какво ще кажеш за сестра ти? НТ: Ами сестра ти?
19. Here's your change. – GT: Ето ти промяна. НТ: Заповядайте рестото.
20. Good night – GT: Добър вечер. НТ: Лека нощ.
21. I've got a date. – GT: Имам една дата. НТ: Отивам на среща.
22. He is six. – GT: Той е шест. НТ: Той е на шест.
23. You look your age. – Изглеждаш Вашата възраст.

The GT output in the above examples is rather surprising, as the translations offered reflect neither greater frequency of occurrence of the proposed sense of the input string in English (as can be observed in the British National Corpus), nor any probability of occurrence of the Bulgarian output string worth registering. A pre-GT

editor for the MWEs should contain, in the simplest case, lists of expressions, with translation equivalents. The pre-GT editor will substitute target language strings for the source language ones:

17a. [How do you do, Mr. Jones. *source string*] → [Как сте, Mr. Jones. *pre-editor output*] →
[Как сте, Г-н Джоунс. *GT output*]

A slightly more sophisticated pre-editor, with context sensitive rules and access to a semantically annotated lexicon, would output „е на шест“ for the source string “is six” of 22. above in the context of a preceding [+Human] NP – pronoun, noun or anthroponym.

The Morphological Level

Aspect. Translators from Bulgarian to English and back, and their editors, point to Aspect as a major pitfall. Aspect is, again, the category where systems for automatic translation seem to offer the least help – Cf. the translation equivalents provided by Google Translate for a few English sentences:

24. He sang the song. → Той изпя песента. (Perfective Aspect, Aorist)

25. He sang for an hour. → ?То пееше за един час. (Imperfective Aspect, Imperfect Tense)

26. They ate the sandwich. → *Те яде сандвич. (Imperfective Aspect, Aorist/Present?)

27. Did you eat the sandwich? → *Знаете ли, яде сандвич? (???)

The problem with the translation of Aspect in English-Bulgarian translation is that while Bulgarian aspect is an equipollent lexico-grammatical category covering the entire verbal system and unambiguously defined in the lexicon (the semantic basis of the opposition being the presence or absence of a bound ([+Bound] / [-Bound]) in the topological structure of a situation), few – if any – of the defining features of the Slavonic category can be said to be applicable to the English data. The grammatical system of English does incorporate an opposition of an aspectual type – the so-called "Progressive Aspect". This, however, is a privative opposition between an unmarked form and a marked form expressing non-boundedness, plus a large number of other components of meaning, of non-topological nature – such as limited duration, irritation and other nuances of emotional colouring, increasing or decreasing activity, etc. The

non-progressive form in the English "aspectual" opposition is unmarked with respect to boundedness. In other words, the English non-progressive verb cannot unambiguously define a situation as eventive or not. Seeing that, on average, English non-progressive forms occur approximately 20 times oftener than progressive ones in an English narrative text, this means that *English verbs are, largely, unmarked for boundedness*.

Henk Verkuyl (1972, 1993 and following publications) demonstrated that in non-Aspect languages such as English, events are construed, i.e. boundedness obtains at VP and sentence level as a result of the combination of verbs belonging to particular verb classes with quantified or unquantified complement or subject NPs. About the same time and independently of Verkuyl, Danchev, & Alexieva (1974) in their English-Serbo-Croatian and English-Bulgarian contrastive studies, respectively, arrived at similar results, namely: aspect markers in English occupy a large stretch of the discourse. While Ridjanovic (1969) concentrated on the articulated/non-articled noun phrases as major markers of Aspect, Danchev & Alexieva, processing a large parallel corpus (20 000 file-cards of English Simple Past Tense sentences and their Bulgarian equivalents) arrived at a much greater variety of contextual markers. The authors ranked these as follows: adverbial phrases, verb semantics, subject phrase semantics, object quantification.

The analysis of the corpus points to the following major Perfective Aspect contextual markers in the English sentences:

Adverbial modifiers of time:

- *when* - upon concordancing, found to present, in about all cases, an instance of the relative adverbial, introducing a time clause;
- *then, now, now that, before, as (=when), eventually, finally, in+year (e.g. in 1984), at lunch, to begin with, the moment +subject+V.*

Coordination:

Coordinative links between event clauses: conjunctions and commas.

Lexical meaning of the verbs:

- communication verbs in the simple past tense, esp. *admitted, announced, insisted, lied, mumbled, prompted, said, thought (to myself), urged;*
- phrasal verbs: *drove away, went away, sat down, etc.*

- process verbs in the simple past tense.

The following were found to be the major Imperfective Aspect markers in the corpus:

Adverbial modifiers:

- temporal adverbials, e.g. *still, sometimes, repeatedly, when (=whenever, closely followed by would), as (= while)*

- *for*-phrases: e.g. *for a few minutes*;

- *do nothing but*, e.g. *We did nothing but quarrel*.

- adverbial modifiers of time containing NPs with attributes pointing to iterative situations, e.g. *every day, every summer*.

The lexical meaning of the verb:

- link verbs, e.g. *was, seemed, grew*;

- extended state verbs, e.g. *know, hope, love, remember*;

Subject phrase semantics:

- Subjects semantically characterised as [-Animate], and esp. 'inalienable property' subjects, e.g. *the symmetrical limbs, her expression*, etc. are typical clauses with Imperfect Aspect readings.

The major contextual markers of aspect were systematised in Stambolieva (2012). Most of them can be integrated into a GT editing tool consisting of a pre-translation editor and a post-editor, with information transfer from the former to the latter.

Grammatical Homonymy. One of the major sources of NLP difficulty, or failure, is homonymy. Grammatical homonymy is a particularly important obstacle to the automatic processing of English.

The following cases of analysis failure in the bicorpus are due to incorrect resolution of grammatical homonymy in the source language:

1/ 's is a possessive case marker, but can also be a contracted form of the 3rd p. sg. form of the auxiliary or link verb *to be*. *That* could be either a demonstrative pronoun or a sentential conjunction (complementizer). The following GT outputs demonstrate that 1.

the same values are by default attributed to all occurrences of the forms and 2. very low probability strings appear in the Bulgarian output:

26. Excuse me, that's my magazine. → GT: Извинете ме, че това е моето списание.

HT: Извинете, това е моето списание.

27. Peter, please give me that pen. → GT: Моля да ми дадете, че писалка. HT:

Питър, подайте ми писалката, ако обичате.

28. It's my father's, actually → GT: Това е баща ми е, всъщност. HT: Всъщност е на

баща ми.

In a rule-based approach, the analysis of the input string would be unproblematic. In 27: *that* can only be a determiner, since a complementizer is followed by a clause. In 28: the contracted form of the auxiliary or link verb must be followed by either a non-finite verbal form or a noun phrase/adjectival phrase/adverbial phrase/prepositional phrase; further, it is not followed by a comma. In this occurrence, 's can only be a marker for the Genitive and can very easily be detected as such, and translated, by a pre-processor.

2/ Definitions and examples of *to be* as an existential full verb can be found almost exclusively in dictionaries. In actual text, the forms of this verb are instances of either the auxiliary or the link verb, and a non-contracted form followed by a punctuation mark normally occurs in short answers only. Because such short answers are not present in the structure of Bulgarian, the best target string in such cases is, simply, *Да*.

29. Are you Bulgarian? – I am. → GT: (...) – Аз съм. HT: - Да.

Search for these strings and the substitution of short positive or negative answers with *да* or *не*, respectively, can be another pre-processing task.

2/ English *to do* occurs most frequently as an auxiliary in questions, negative forms, short answers and emphatic structures. There is also a semi-auxiliary (or light verb) and a full verb. Only the latter could be translated with the Bulgarian full verbs *правя*. It is therefore surprising to find *правя* as the exclusive translation equivalent of *do* in the corpus – Cf. example 30 below (where the translation of *do* is not the only problem!):

30. What does one wall say to the other? → GT: Какво прави една от стените

се каже на другия? HT: Какво казва едната стена на другата?

The translation can be improved by pre-GT *do*-deletion, post-GT editing of the Bulgarian text, or – best – both. *Do*-deletion gives a slightly improved output, which is easier to edit:

30a. What one wall say to the other? → Какво едната стена се каже на другия?

3/ *One* is, of course, a numeral, but also a pronoun. The ambiguity of the string does not seem to have hit the processor, which is odd: a simple BNC search demonstrated that the probability of its occurrence as a pronoun is, if not greater, at least the same as that of the numeral.

31. -- A blue one or a green one? – A green one → GT: -- А синьо един или зелена един? – А зелен един. НТ: Синя или зелена? -- Зелена.

In any rule-based system, the above string would be unambiguously analysed as a NP. Numerals are not heads of phrases containing determiners and attribute adjectives. A simple rule stating that if *one* appears at the end of a phrase, it is most probably a pronoun, would be sufficient to resolve the ambiguity of the input string. This, paired with the information that *един/една* etc. are seldom pronouns in Bulgarian, would do away with the second word in the output string. A least effort solution, in this case too, would be (*one*-) deletion at the pre-GT editing stage plus simple post-GT editing:

31a. A blue or a green? → А син или зелен?

4/ Bulgarian has both full pronouns and short pronominal forms (clitics). There are possessive clitic pronouns for all three persons and numbers. Only one form appears in the output offered by GT, however: the short reflexive pronoun *си*. It is difficult to believe that these results are example-based:

32. Where are your wives? → GT: Къде са жените си? НТ: Къде са жените Ви?

33. These are your keys. → Това са ключовете си. НТ: Това са ключовете Ви.

34. There's a fly in my soup. → Има една муха в супата си. НТ: Има муха в супата ми.

The translation can be improved with a rule-based Bulgarian post-editor.

5/ The comment for the clitic examples fully applies to the translations of English *it*, which in all its manifestations – as substitute for [-Human] nouns, as an impersonal

subject or a dummy subject, is invariably translated with the Bulgarian demonstrative pronoun *това*:

35. It is not there. → GT: Това не е там. HT: Не е там.

36. It's here. → GT: Това е тук. HT: Тук е.

37. It's on the fourth floor. → GT: Това е на четвъртия етаж. HT: На четвъртия етаж е.

38. It is in the hotel. → GT: Това е в хотела. HT: В хотела е.

39. It is rainy and cloudy. → GT: Това е облачно и дъждовно. HT: Облачно и дъждовно е.

The simple transformational rule applied by the human translator is based on the fact that, first, Bulgarian does not have dummy or impersonal subjects (hence the *It* position is erased), second, that a Bulgarian sentence cannot begin with a clitic form (including verbal forms) (hence the link verb is removed from its position in the English sentence) and third, that sentences are not made up of string of words but of phrases (and therefore the verbal clitic does not appear after the first word but after the first phrase). In the above cases, post-GT editing would be best, for *It*-deletion does not result in improved GT-output:

35a. Is not there → Не е ли там.

39a. Is rainy and cloudy. → Дали дъждовно и облачно.

6/ English adjectives and nouns for nationalities coincide in form, which is not the case in Bulgarian. The following Bulgarian string from the bi-corpus was clearly not directly drawn from a corpus of parallel text. It is based on a higher frequency of occurrence of the adjectives, disregarding context.

40. Are you Italian? → GT: Италианската ли сте? HT: Италианка ли сте?

The context-sensitive rule here would be that *Italian* in the immediate context of the personal pronouns *I, you, he, she* or *we* is to be translated in Bulgarian as *италианец* / *италианка*. Sticking to our proposal for a GT+ analysis, post-GT editing of the Bulgarian text would be easiest.

7/ Finally, the following GT outputs are, I must admit, difficult to account for:

41. Don't you have a bag? → GT: Не трябва да имате една торба. НТ: Нямах ли чанта?

42. You haven't got a driving license? → GT: Вие не сте ли шофьорска книжка? НТ: Нямате шофьорска книжка?

Ungrammaticality of the target string. Along with the numerous instances of ungrammaticality due to the incorrect analysis of the input string, several cases of unacceptable output strings are the result of a combination of insufficient corpus length and lack of rules:

1/ The plural forms of Bulgarian masculine nouns change under quantification – Cf. *много сандвичИ* (many sandwiches) – *няколко сандвичА* (several sandwiches). This rule is simple enough to formulate, but requires POS tagging and analysis. Lacking that, GT yields strings like 45. and 46. below.

43. Fifteen sandwiches → GT: Петнайсет сандвичи. НТ: Петнайсет сандвича.

44. How many sandwiches? → GT: Колко сандвичи? НТ: Колко сандвича?

2/ Definiteness receives only one marker in the Bulgarian noun phrase – and in this respect the two languages are similar. GT correctly outputs possessive pronouns marked for definiteness (even though English possessive pronouns are inherently definite and do not need the marker) but nevertheless outputs ungrammatical structures with double marking of the category.

45. our room keys → GT: нашите ключовете. НТ: нашите ключове.

46. (I give him) his coat and hat → GT: неговото палтото и шапката. НТ: палтото и шапката (му)/ неговото палто и шапка.

3/ Bulgarian, unlike English, has Vocative case. Nouns marked for the Vocative appear in clear syntactic positions, usually at the head of the phrase, and punctuation sets them apart from the rest of the clause. Not a single Vocative was presented as output by GT for our corpus.

47. - Yes, mother. → GT: - Да, майка. НТ: - Да, майко.

Note that the three cases of ungrammaticality presented in this section do not lead to unintelligibility and can be resolved with a set of relatively simple post-GT editing rules.

Poor Syntax

1/ Lack of agreement. Achieving correct Gender/Number agreement with an example-based translator would require a very large and varied corpus. Clearly, such a corpus is not yet available in Google, which results in the generation of the following types of ungrammatical output strings:

a. Lack of agreement within the Noun Phrase:

48. What a nice piano! → GT: Каква хубава пиано! НТ: Какво хубаво пиано!

49. What instrument do you play? → GT: Какво инструмент да играеш? НТ: На какъв инструмент свириш?

b. Lack of agreement between the nominal part of the predicate and the subject:

50. It's not very hot. → GT: Това не е много горещ. НТ: Не е много горещо.

51. It's cheap. → GT: Това е евтин. НТ: Евтино е.

52. It's elegant but rather expensive. → GT: Това е елегантен, но доста скъпи. НТ: Елегантна е, но доста скъпа.

53. She is cute. → GT: Тя е сладък. НТ: Тя е сладка.

54. That bag is heavy. → GT: Тази чанта е тежък. НТ: Тази чанта е тежка.

55. Because the world is round. → GT: Защото светът е кръгла. НТ: Защото светът е кръгъл.

c. Lack of agreement between the verb-predicate and the subject:

56. They may have a phone. → GT: Може би те има телефон. НТ: Те може да имат телефон.

d. Between the main clause (modal verb) and a subordinate:

57. You can easily get lost here. → GT: Можете лесно да се загубиш тук. НТ: Можете лесно да се изгубите тук.

58. Can you show me the way? → GT: Можеш ли да ми покаже пътя? НТ: Можете ли да ми покажете пътя?

59. He can't call her. → GT: Той не може да ѝ се обадя. НТ: Той не може да ѝ се обади.

The ungrammaticality problems of 43-59 can be resolved with the help of a post-GT editor.

2/ Poor syntax of interrogative sentences.

a. Tag questions

Tag questions are quite easy to identify. For them, the simple rule should be to substitute all tags, positive and negative alike, with *нали?* at the pre-GT stage. This simple operation could considerably improve on GT outputs:

60. (It's rather cold,) isn't it? → GT: не е тя? → НТ: нали?

b. Yes/No questions

For Yes/No questions, we have identified three types of ungrammatical outputs.

Inappropriate *дали*-insertion and missing interrogative particle *ли* :

61. Is she a new student? → GT: Дали тя нов ученик? НТ: Тя нова ученичка ли е?

62. Are these your parents? → GT: Дали тези Вашите родители? НТ: Това родителите Ви ли са?

Note that, for some reason, the GT output containing *дали* does not include finite verbal forms. The transformation necessary in these instances will include *дали*-deletion and the insertion of *ли*, followed by a form of *to be* after the NPs, or auxiliary-deletion at the pre-GT stage, followed by simpler post-editing.

The interrogative particle is, again, missing in cases where *дали* is not inserted – which is odd, seeing that it is the major signal for interrogation in Bulgarian grammar:

63. Are schools in England like Bulgarian schools? → GT: Има училища в Англия като българските училища? НТ: Училищата в Англия като българските ли са?

64. Is it far from here? → GT: Далеч от тук е? НТ: Далече ли е оттук?

Clearly, one of the important functions of the post-editor would be the restructuring of strings signalled by a question mark.

Incorrect analysis of *that*:

Finally, the systematic interpretation of English *that* as a complementizer results in the following output strings (which, along with being ungrammatical, are also unintelligible):

65. Is that your father? → GT: Е, че баща ти? НТ: Това баща ти ли е?

66. Is that the sun or the moon? → GT: Е, че слънцето или луната? НТ: Това слънцето ли е или луната?

67. Is that your daughter, Mr. N? → GT: Е, че дъщеря Ви? НТ: Това дъщеря Ви ли е, г-н Н.?

A post-GT rule of sentence-initial „Е, че“ substitution with „Това“ plus final „ли е“ insertion could be a possible solution.

3/ Non-causatives analysed as causatives.

The structural asymmetry between English and Bulgarian is very marked in the area of diathesis, but it is nevertheless surprising that a default ergative reading should surface in the translation.

68. She doesn't cook. → GT: Тя не се готви. НТ: Тя не готви.

In this case, more complex automatic editing would be necessary, involving both a pre-GT analysis of the immediate context (to eliminate the ergative reading) and the transfer of this information to the post-editor.

Conclusions

The alignment of the English-Bulgarian bicorpus with the output of Google Translate demonstrated that, while Google is beyond doubt a very useful tool, it can also output inaccurate, ungrammatical, occasionally even unintelligible target strings. The analysis of this negative output allowed the identification of several substructures where analysis, generation, or both, systematically fail. Main lexical and structural problem types were identified and editing procedures were proposed. A first outline was proposed for a GT-editing tool consisting of a pre-GT editor performing string identification, substitution or deletion operations, a post-GT editor with a set of more complex string transformation rules and an information transfer module between the two.

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