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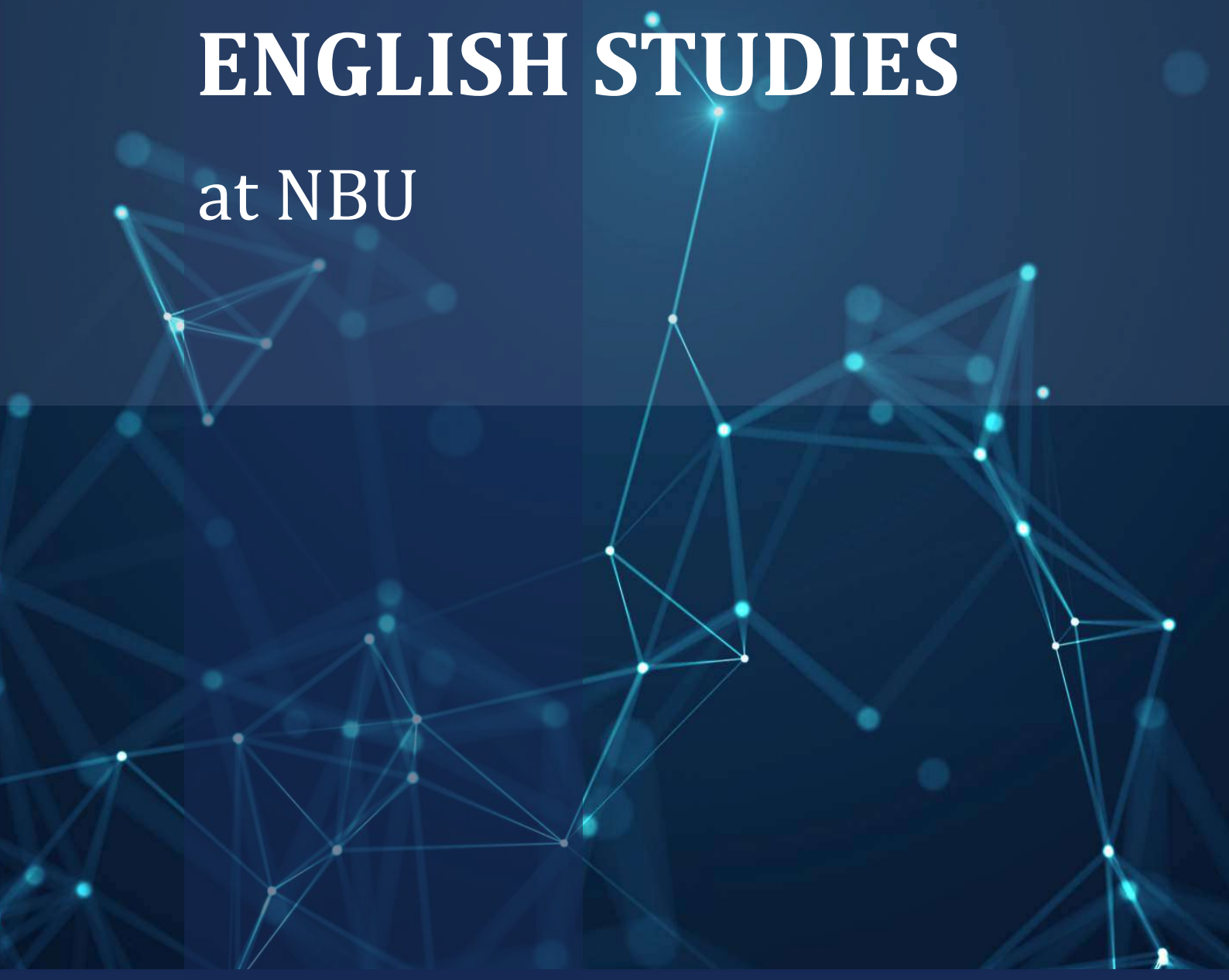

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EDITORS' MESSAGE

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New Year, Old Alphabets, New Hopes

We are delighted to introduce this Issue 2, Volume 7 of *English Studies at NBU*! It features articles on linguistics, literature, and language policy offering a good read in the holiday season.

As always, our considerable appreciation goes to all our colleagues whose generous contributions of time and effort have made this issue of ESNBU possible.

Let us hope that next year people will be taking Greek alphabet crash courses for reasons other than learning a new name of a "variant of concern."

Stay safe in the New Year!

Greetings!

Going on … our metrics now include the scite_ API. Scite Inc. is a platform for discovering and evaluating scientific articles via Smart Citations which allow users to see how a publication has been cited by providing the context of the citation and a classification describing whether it provides 'supporting' or 'contrasting' evidence for the cited claim, or just 'mentioning' the source. It also features the *scite Index* for journals and institutions which measures how supported publications from a journal or an institution are, and is calculated using the following formula (for 2-year, 5-year, or a lifetime period):

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See how ESNBU is performing.

And keep those manuscripts coming!

Cheers and Happy 2022!

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EXPRESSING LESSER RELEVANCE IN ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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Abstract

While marking importance and relevance in academic discourse has been a widely researched topic, markers of lesser significance have so far been understudied. The article therefore focuses on some of the discoursal means of expressing lesser importance in conference presentations. The corpus of the study comprises recordings of 20 presentations in English at international linguistics conferences by speakers of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The approach follows Deroey & Taverniers's (2012) study of lecture discourse, whereby depending on the way lesser importance is expressed the markers are grouped under five categories. Their methodology is checked against the data provided by the transcriptions of the conference recordings to ascertain the extent to which it is applicable to other spoken academic genres. The ultimate objective is to provide steppingstones for interpreting information and distinguishing between what is important and relevant and less so in conference presentations, as well as for identifying presenters' motivation for employing this type of metadiscourse.

Keywords: metadiscourse, lesser relevance markers, conference presentations

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The metadiscursive feature of relevance marking allows conference presenters to organize academic discourse in terms of importance and to express the evaluative stance of the speaker regarding the propositional and interpersonal content of their communication. In this way, they guide the listener into unpacking correctly the information in their talk, providing signposts as to what is more and what is less significant. Relevance marking is thus an important aspect of spoken discourse, which often has to be construed instantly on the spot.

Discourse signals are intended to help the listener predict the nature of upcoming ideas and information, and a participant who is unable to recognize these signals will be faced with additional cognitive processing demands, having to deduce both the intrinsic meaning of propositions and make inferences about the relations between them. Linguistic devices for expressing lesser relevance in discourse can also "be used to indicate a desire to close a topic, to yield a turn, or to mitigate potential face threats" (Deroey & Taverniers, 2012, p. 2085). Therefore, these devices should be treated both as modal and interpersonal.

In the general case, a conference presentation audience consists of specialists in (often) quite a narrow field, but they may also include MA students, as well as doctoral students. At the same time, the language of an ever-increasing number of academic conference presentations is English and more and more non-native speakers are presenting their research in a language which is not their native tongue. The latter creates even more difficulties for both presenters and audiences, including such that involve the use of relevance markers.

Background

However important their function is, markers of lesser relevance in discourse have not been extensively researched. Usually, their study forms part of investigations that focus not specifically on markers of relevance but encompass overall discourse in more general terms. For instance, Caffi (1999) explored downgrading as a mitigating device in doctor-patient and psychotherapeutic spoken interaction in Italian, where different kinds of mitigators and mitigation strategies were used. According to her, "mitigation works in a multi-layered and multi-dimensional way, simultaneously affecting a plurality of

linguistic levels and interactional dimensions" (1999, p. 883). She proposes a tripartite classification of mitigating devices based on the three components of the utterance on which downgrading can operate: the proposition, the illocution, and the utterance source, namely bushes, hedges, and shields.

Mauranen (2004) studied the epistemic and strategic uses of hedging grounded on data excerpted from the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English. In their study of everyday conversations following Sperber & Wilson's (1991) Relevance Theory, Jucker et al. consider vagueness as an interaction strategy and explore the different communicative tasks in which vague expressions are employed, whereby they "may serve as focusing devices, directing the hearer's attention to the most relevant information" (2003, p. 1765).

Basing their study on previous research by Biber, Conrad & Cortes (2004), Nesi & Basturkmen (2006) attempt to categorize lexical bundles in 160 university lectures and highlight their discourse-signalling role. One of their conclusions is that the lexical bundle *a little bit* is used to help maintain face, to downplay the task imposition, or to mitigate a potential threat to the audience's negative face.

In his study of discourse markers Fraser (2009) proposes four types of pragmatic markers: basic, commentary, discourse markers and discourse management markers and examines the three uses of the latter, while Lin (2010) explores the intensifying and softening function of pragmatic force modifiers: "From the textual perspective, the intensifying and softening effects indicate a piece of information playing either a superordinate or subordinate role and hence give rise to a logical relation between the preceding and the following utterances." (Lin, 2010, p. 1177).

More recent studies on metadiscourse markers of mitigation are most frequently based on Hyland's definition of metadiscourse as "the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community" (Hyland, 2005, p. 37). However, Hyland also notes that metadiscourse is an open-ended set of language items, where not all of them perform metadiscourse roles. Hyland and Tse propose three key principles of metadiscourse, namely:

1. that metadiscourse is distinct from propositional aspects of discourse;
2. that the term 'metadiscourse' refers to those aspects of the text that embody writer-reader interactions;
3. that metadiscourse distinguishes relations which are external to the text from those that are internal. (Hyland & Tse, 2004, p. 159)

In terms of the first point which is of relevance for the present research, Hyland & Tse (2004, p. 161) clarify that: "we blur the unhelpful distinction between 'primary' propositional discourse and 'secondary' metadiscourse and seek to recover the link between the ways writers intrude into their texts to organize and comment on it so that it is appropriate for a particular rhetorical context".

In view of the above, we shall argue here that markers of lesser relevance in presentations may have some of the functions of hedges, but, apart from that demonstrate also references to the nature of the proposition with regard to the specific audience and the genre.

Markers of lesser importance in conference presentations has so far been a topic that has not been often the focus of academic research. Indeed, even studies on conference presentations in general have not been abundant. Most focus on written academic genre (Hood & Forey 2005; Campagna 2009, among many others), where there is a bulk of studies contrasting academic writing in English and another language (cf. Huemer, Lejot & Deroey, 2019, for an overview of literature). Hyland's (2017) article, for instance, presents a large number of publications focused on the notion of "metadiscourse". Relatively more existent studies focus on the genre of academic lectures (Formentelli, 2017; Cassens & Wegener, 2018; Zare & Keivanloo-Shahrestanaki, 2017, to name just some more recent ones).

Unfortunately, the text and context of conference presentations has been the focus of just a handful of studies (cf. Ventola, Shalom, & Thompson, 2002, Hood & Forey 2005; Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005; Mariotti 2012). The fact that spoken academic genre has been an under-researched field may be attributed to its (falsely) perceived less importance as well as to the difficulties in accessing and processing oral discourse samples. The difficulties in question are related to the necessity to ask presenters for

permissions to record their contributions and the amount of time required for transcribing and processing, especially considering all kinds of background noises that create further complications. However, with the recent ongoing rise of the number of conferences conducted online, whose recordings can be freely accessed, some of these issues have been resolved. The present study also makes use of data excerpted from such sources.

The genre of conference presentation

It is undeniable that the conference presentation is one of the main spoken genres that a researcher is required to master at the beginning of their career since academic conferences provide the primary fora for expounding theories and showcasing research results. Perfecting the text and context of conference presentations will facilitate the swift and effective entry of a novice researcher, whether a native or a non-native speaker of English, into the respective discourse community. According to Mauranen (2001), the initiation of novice academics is effectuated more through the spoken varieties of the academic genre, since a great bulk of academic interaction predominantly occurs in an oral form, e.g., seminars, lectures, among others.

Conference presentation discourse poses a cognitive challenge since it is dense, compressed and contingent on real time construal and decoding of meaning, and thus more difficult to unpack than written academic discourse. In this hard decoding procedure, the capability to discern the relevant and less relevant chunks of information is exceedingly important. In addition, the language of international academic conferences is predominantly English, so what is needed is not only familiarity with the context of conference presentations, but also the linguistic form it adopts.

If we apply the widely embraced definition of genre by Swales (1990) as a communicative event characterized by a specific communicative function which occurs in a socio-cultural context, then the genre of the academic conference presentation can be said to be a type of research genre, originating within an academic discourse community. It carries information meant to be imparted to a specialist audience with considerable shared expertise. The conference presentation is performed live within a limited time whereby presenters have to convey not only facts and figures but also

perform the rhetorical function of persuading the audience to accept the arguments put forth. In addition, the successful completion of the communicative act presupposes the adoption of successful interpersonal strategies and the establishment of rapport between presenter and audience.

Although the research conference presentation as a genre can be said to have "the communicative purpose of reporting research to a peer audience verbally", the features of the communicative process of delivering a presentation are hard to define precisely due to the large diversity of relative rhetorical and discursive aspects: the process is often multimodal and "appropriates other discourses and genres" (Campagna, 2009, p. 375). Mariotti (2012, p. 76) compares the genre characteristics of academic conference presentations to university lectures, finding similarities in the surface linguistic structure, in the possibility for interaction with the audience and in the potential face threats for the producers of discourse, and differences in the academic skills: in lectures it is expected for the speaker to be prepared to answer questions at any time, to elucidate or paraphrase basic notions; in conference presentations questions are usually posed by members of the audience at the end and rarely on key concepts and terminology clarification. Besides, unlike questions posed during or after lectures (which are mainly of clarifying character), the Q&A sessions following conference presentations could be very confrontative (see Vassileva, 2005; Vassileva, 2009 for an analysis of the rhetoric of conference discussion sessions).

On the other hand, Ventola (1999) operates with the term 'semiotic spanning' to account for "how texts relate to each other by spanning semiotically, i.e., linking up with various kinds of existing and experienced texts (and other semiotic modalities) and creating new semiosis through these links" (p. 102). Analysing conference presentations and discussions, she concludes that neither the notion of cohesion, nor the notion of coherence can explain what really happens in conferencing. The genre and register model, on their part, "do not seem to capture all the aspects of this kind of linking" (Ventola, 1999, p. 111) since, for example, the presentation and the following discussion are supposed to be treated as separate genres, but they are indubitably semiotically linked.

Differences are also observed in the communicative purpose of both genres. The university lecture is longer, usually part of a course, and is intended for students who, as a rule, do not have the same level of subject knowledge, nor the same set of skills to interpret this knowledge as the lecturer herself does; therefore, the material taught is presented in separate chunks, which need to be connected and interpreted logically and coherently associated with topics that have already been discussed within the same lecture course (or other courses). The communicative purpose of the academic conference presentation genre is to impart or share knowledge or skills mainly with an expert audience, which entails that speaker and audience share similar insight of the presentation topic. It is also a single occurrence, of shorter duration and not part of a cycle. Conference presentations are usually related to a general, pre-defined topic, and the audience has certain expectations as to the content of each individual presentation. If these expectations are flouted by a presenter, there is a danger of a communication breakdown or, at least of the presenter being ignored.

According to Mariotti (2012, p. 77), the variation in the communicative purpose of both genres gives rise to different functions of the same surface structure elements, namely discourse markers, used as guiding the audience in a topic they are knowledgeable about in conference presentations and performing the didactic function of clarifying the meaningful interrelations between notions to students who are yet to become experts in university lectures.

In the terms of Ede and Lunsford (1984) who view audience as known (audience addressed) and as a fictional creation (audience invoked), audience representation in lectures seems to be closer to 'audience addressed', as lecturers usually get to know their students or at least have clear expectations of their background knowledge and experience. In spite of real-time, face-to-face communication conference presentation audiences tend to be more 'audience invoked', since the presenter can only make assumptions about the level of expertise of the listeners. Lunsford & Ede revisit their primary dichotomy later on (1996, 2009) in view of the drastic changes new technologies posed on academic communication, and expanded their model to spoken communication as well by introducing a new version of the "rhetorical triangle," the set of relationships among text, author, and audience out of which meaning grows" (Lunsford & Ede, 2009,

p. 8). In spite of the new challenges of the multiplicity of channels, participants and reciprocity of communication, the authors still maintain, quoting their study from 1984, that "a productive way to conceive of audience "is as an overdetermined or unusually rich concept, one which may perhaps be best specified through the analysis of precise, concrete situations" (1984, p. 168)" (2009, p. 7).

The genre of the academic conference presentation is such a concrete situation that it demonstrates a high degree of variation: firstly, in the type of presentation, which can take a different shape: a workshop, a seminar, a parallel paper or a plenary presentation. Secondly, the conference presentation can be based on research that has already been published in an academic article or an academic book or it can focus on a topic that is still at the stage of being researched. Thirdly, the audience can also range in numbers - large/small, and in expertise – experts/novice researchers/mixed.

Nevertheless, academic conference presentations have common discourse characteristics, displaying hybridity in their genre:

> In most instances, for example, the oral performance is strongly associated with the development of a parallel written text. As such, a spoken conference presentation is likely to be a highly reflective text with many features that correspond to written research writing. On the other hand, there is an immediacy of audience in time and in place. This suggests a pressure in the other direction, towards a more interactive text, as the writer shapes the message in ways intended to connect with the immediate context. (Hood & Forey, 2005, p. 292)

Whatever the diversity that can be found in academic conference presentations, they can be said to "reproduce, although with some variations, the Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion (IMRDC) pattern observed in research articles" (Mariotti, 2012, p. 67). After considering some of the most outstanding features of conferencing as compared to lecturing, the two probably most important and influential spoken academic genres, we shall move on to the sample study of means of expressing lesser relevance in presentations.

Aims of the study

The present study focuses on some discoursal means of expressing lesser importance. One of the aims is to elicit clues for interpreting information and distinguishing between what is important and relevant and less so in the delivery of

conference presentations. The second aim is to discuss some theoretical issues regarding the status of these devices as discourse markers, namely whether they should be classified under the umbrella term of 'hedging', or as possessing functions beyond the traditional understanding of that term.

Methodology

Corpus

The corpus of the study comprises the transcripts of 20 video-recorded and uploaded on the Internet academic conference presentations given at international linguistics conferences by speakers of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds with a total duration of approximately 20 hours. The presentations were of different length: some were plenaries of up to 1.5 hours, while others were regular talks of about 20 mins. Due to materials availability constraints, no distinction is made in the present study between native and non-native speakers. Besides, we believe that such a distinction is hardly viable at present, since English-medium international conferences are attended by both native and non-native speakers and in addition, there are a number of non-native scholars who are based in English-speaking countries or research institutions. Also, only verbal discourse is taken into account, since visual, prosodic and non-verbal aspects of discourse will be the object of further study.

Methods

The methodology of the study of how lesser importance is expressed in academic conference presentation draws on the model of Deroey & Taverniers' (2012) five types of marking lesser relevance in lectures with regard to the way they indicate lesser importance. All examples in this section are by Deroey & Taverniers.

The first group is **Message status**. The purpose of those markers is to either draw the line between more or less important information or to designate a chunk of discourse as having a negative value. Examples of such use are the following sentences: *….that kind of detail does**n't matter***; *…it is totally **irrelevant** for what I am going to tell you.*

Next is **Topic treatment.** These devices mark aspects or topics that are not covered, or such that have merited little time. Examples are: *I'm going to **skip** the … equation, I do**n't** propose to **go into** any great depth.*

The third group of markers are those that signal **Lecturer knowledge**, comprising instances when the speakers impart that their knowledge is insufficient or incomplete, as in: *I do**n't know** if any of you have seen The Child Thief. I **forget** what is the average survival…*

Assessment is the fourth function that is proposed, pertaining to lectures. These are markers signalling that something will not be assessed during exams or does not need to be studied, as in the following examples: *….it wo**n't** come up on an **exam** paper. …please **forget** the titles and the dates 'cause they are absolute no use to you...*

And finally, the fifth group is **Attention and note-taking directives**. Resorting to such markers, the speaker overtly and unequivocally instructs the audience to disregard what follows. Examples include: *…do**n't worry** about the details…, I'll be giving you a handout…. so you do**n't** need to **write** these **down**.*

As Deroey & Taverniers (2012, p. 2088) rightly point out, the categories delineated above are not so definitive and may overlap. This ensues from the fact that, apart from clear instances of markers that invariably express lesser relevance (such as *not important*, *not significant*, etc.), in most cases it is achieved either covertly or summatively. The interpretation of markers as having the pragmatic function of expressing lesser relevance is also dependent on their place, their behaviour and the presence of other markers in the immediate environment, as well as on the characteristics of the genre, including its communicative purpose against which the continuum of relevance/less relevance can be assessed.

Hypotheses

Owing to the communicative purpose of conference presentations, namely, to introduce new research and findings to (mostly) expert audience, sometimes even more knowledgeable than the presenters themselves, it is only to be expected that markers of lesser importance (henceforth MLIs) would be used to downplay statements that would be considered too imposing or imperative (assertive) in their affirmation by the specialist audience, or, alternatively, would be with a low degree of significance for the expression of the intended content.

In terms of the first option, it might be expected that the presenter's viewpoint would be displayed through the medium of hedging devices whose function is to highlight lesser relevance or undermine the significance of the results or achievements of the study reported. This is in keeping with the study by Heino et al. (2002), whereby in their corpus of conference presentations they found that more resort is made to markers of lesser importance (hedges and approximators) than to markers of importance (emphatics). However, this corpus consisted of only three presentations of 20 mins in length each. Moreover, in the classification of discourse markers the authors did not devote a special place to markers of lesser relevance outside the scope of hedging devices per se.

The present study focuses on the second type of markers that indicate the presentation of superfluous information, deviations that mark the discourse as irrelevant, or demonstrate speakers' insecurity concerning their background knowledge.

Results and discussion

General observations

We shall start the discussion of the results with an overview of the employment of MLIs in the corpus and their distribution in terms of the five categories described above.

The table below shows the absolute number of occurrences of the five categories of MLIs in the corpus:

Table 1

Markers of lesser importance – statistical results

Categories	Number of occurrences
Message status	0
Topic treatment	12
Lecturer knowledge	8
Assessment	0
Attention and note-taking directives	0

The simple statistics presented in the table demonstrates clearly the very low degree of occurrence of MLIs, namely only 20 in 20 hours of recordings, which would roughly mean 1 per hour. Besides, in 50% of the talks there are no occurrences, while

three of the five categories (*Message status, Attention and note-taking directives*, and *Assessment*) are not observed in the presentations at all. As the table shows, there is prevalence of MLIs in the category of *Topic treatment* while MLIs referring to *Lecturer knowledge* are present only to a certain degree.

There is a strong tendency in the corpus towards the use of markers of importance – an observation that was made in the process of transcription but will not be discussed here in more detail. We assume that the low degree of occurrence of MLIs is due to several reasons stemming primarily from the nature of the genre. The lack of the category 'Message status' could be attributed to the speakers' desire to focus on the most important points and avoid the inclusion of superfluous information, thus averting cognitive processing load. Besides, time constraints lead to the necessity to avoid deviations and concentrate instead on personal or team achievements and novelty. Presenting new information is also expected to meet the discourse community expectations when English is used as a *lingua franca*, namely, to adhere to linearity in the development of the argumentation (for details on linearity in academic writing in English see Clyne, 1987).

The absence of the MLIs categories 'Attention and note-taking directives' and 'Assessment' is directly related to the nature of the audience, as these devices are intended to navigate students (non-experts) in the flow of speech of a lecture and help them distinguish between relevant and less relevant information in terms of content, as well as in terms of future significance for their assessment. The audiences of conference presentations are expected to be both experts in the field and expert listeners who are fully capable of identifying the important points in a talk without this kind of explicit guidance. Moreover, depending on the specific interests of the individual participants, there may be variations in their focus of attention that should not be dictated by the speaker, since this may be felt as imposing and even arrogant. Needless to say, the category of 'Assessment' is totally irrelevant in a conference environment.

MLIs in 'Topic treatment'

Several reasons were identified for the use of Topic treatment MLIs in the corpus. Firstly, to point at limitations of topic treatment in the presentation:

Ex. 1. So, first of all I'd like **to precise** that this is about a media buzz, so **it is not** a linguistic study of some very old and important phenomena, **it's just** a media buzz that occurred in 2017.

In Example 1 the speaker specifies the scope of the presentation by saying what 'it is not' in order to pre-empt possible expectations on the part of the audience, at the same time downplaying the nature of the research ('it's just'). This is an insurance strategy against possible criticism, but it may also be applied in cases where the previously announced title of the talk may seem too demanding or general and imprecise. The presence of inaccurate titles in conference programmes is usually due to another specific feature of conferencing, namely that such events are announced well in advance and prospective participants often tend to submit titles and abstracts based on unfinished or planned work, while the resulting presentation may turn out to diverge from the speakers' original intentions. This is another difference from lectures where such a strategy is generally unnecessary since lectures are usually parts of a planned sequence of talks and improvisations are unlikely to occur.

Secondly, MLIs in this category are used in order to clarify the focus of the presentation:

Ex. 2. This is a paper on French inclusive writing, **it is essentially trying to cover the questions but not answering and saying we are for, or we are against**, when we finish you vote.

Here the speaker states clearly what the intention of the presentation is, namely, only to raise but not to answer questions, thus capturing the attention of the listeners and involving them in the process of argumentation ('when we finish you vote'). The very repetition of the first-person plural 'we' and the direct address 'you' reflect a high degree of audience involvement desired by the presenter - a strategy frequently observed in conference language but hardly used in written academic texts (for a detailed analysis of the use of personal pronouns in conference language see Vassileva, 2006). At the same time, this strategy may be observed in lectures to attract students' attention and keep them interested. However, it may also happen that the lecturers eventually answer the questions themselves, which turns them into rhetorical questions.

Thirdly, MLIs are employed in order to mark a deviation from the main topic:

Ex. 3. And I think we will, **even though it is not the main talk**, see examples of this in the next minutes.

In this example the speaker explicitly states that she is going to deviate from the linear development of the topic which is expected by the audience in a presentation in English. In some cases, the speaker would resort to including digressions to present results that may seem marginal for the particular topic but prove to be fruitful for future research. Thus, depending on the reactions from the audience, the presenter may decide to pursue the issue(s) further, or to drop them off. Along these lines, conferences could serve as litmus tests for scholars to establish whether they are on the right track with their studies and in line with current research in their field.

Such deviations are hardly expected in writing since they would not conform to the established conventions and may even be a reason for rejecting the publication of an article, for instance. In lectures, on the other hand, digressions could even be necessary for the elucidation of certain points that have apparently remained unclear to the students.

MLIs in 'Lecturer knowledge'

Such MLIs in the corpus point to admitting lack of or insufficient lecturer knowledge. Firstly, speakers may admit lack of general or theoretical knowledge:

Ex. 4. I have to begin with a confession. **I know nothing about the Bible**, the Christian Bible.

Here the speaker declares in a straightforward way their lack of familiarity with a book that is largely considered to be a must not only within the Christian communities of the world. Startling as it may be for the audience, this 'confession' made at the very beginning of the presentation not only attracts attention, but also insures the speaker against possible criticism.

Such openings would be unthinkable in both written academic English and in lectures - in the first case due to the existing conventions, in the second - because a lecturer standing in front of students would hardly admit to a knowledge gap.

Secondly, presenters may concede lack of factual knowledge:

Ex. 5. On a tweet tweeted a few days ago by, **well, I assume** a girl, but **actually I don't know, for all I know it could be anybody**.

Ex. 6. He published that in Prague, probably he didn't want it to be read round here, but **I don't know**.

In the above examples, the speakers first make certain assumptions of whether something may be the case in the real world and outside the particular text of the presentation, and then eventually admit that they actually "do not know" whether it is true or not. Although this strategy may be treated as an insurance strategy, it seems more likely that the speakers simply make short remarks about information that is not of crucial importance for their argumentation. Again, as in Example 4, and for the same reasons, such acknowledgements of failure to be acquainted with facts is impossible to appear in either written academic texts or in lectures.

Conclusions

Contrary to our expectations, conference presenters very seldom mark their discourse as irrelevant. This seems to be primarily due to the variables in the communicative situation: purpose, audience, speaker roles, etc., leading to different distribution of discourse functions. When compared to lectures, conference presentations differ practically along all these parameters. In terms of purpose, while lectures aim at imparting knowledge to students who are novices in the field, presentations introduce newly acquired knowledge. While the lecturer and the students possess different levels of expertise and are therefore of unequal status, speakers at conferences share the same or similar level of subject field competence with their audiences. Besides, while the audience of the lecture is known or predictable, the conference audience is much less so in terms of specific specialization, as well as sociolinguistic factors such as age, gender, experience and, probably most importantly, cultural and professional background. Another factor is time constraints and the near impossibility to change the content or make corrections on the spot depending on reactions from the listeners, while a lecture would allow for certain modifications that can be compensated for later in the course.

Turning now to the classification used as a starting point in this study, the category of 'Assessment' is not referred to due to the characteristics of the genre and the nature of the audience. 'Message status' is also missing in order to avoid unnecessary information and keep the content presentation succinct. This is also directly related to the time constraints mentioned above, as well as to the necessity to stick to conventions and thus meet the expectations of the audience. 'Attention and note-taking directives' are not given also due to the nature of the audience and the specificities of the genre.

'Topic treatment' MLIs are primarily used to point out study limitations and study focus – strategies related to ensuring against possible criticism. As the examples demonstrate, although such strategies are typical of academic writing in the form of hedging, the discoursal devices used in presentations are very different and would be unthinkable in writing. However, they may be expected in lectures. Practically the same is valid for admitting 'Lack of lecturer's knowledge', which is another insurance strategy.

Thus, as the results of the present sample study show, it appears that conference presentation discourse is quite different from that of academic lectures in terms of employment of MLIs both in terms of quantity and in terms of quality. In fact, apart from the (over)use of markers of importance, estimating relevance is left to the audience since the latter is considered to have enough expertise to be able to distinguish between essential and non-essential information. The analysis also demonstrates that almost all features of the use of MLIs in conference presentations are genre-specific and are predominantly dictated by the nature of the communicative situation, and especially by the nature of the audience. Some of these features have also been observed in lectures, but none of them - in academic writing. As has been shown, the conference presentation and the lecture entail different sets of academic skills which are expected to materialize, among others, also in the choice of discourse markers.

From a theoretical viewpoint, the results demonstrate that the already traditional category of hedging which has been in the focus of most of the research on MLIs is not sufficient to account for all aspects and functions of these discourse markers in spoken academic discourse. While hedging is unanimously accepted to express interpersonal relations, MLIs also demonstrate references to the nature of the proposition in view of the particular audience and genre. Therefore, in conformity with the ideas expressed by

Hyland & Tse (2004, p. 175), we believe that MLIs should be treated as a fuzzy, fluid category combining the features of hedging devices (interpersonal) and expressions of modality (ideational) functions in terms of Halliday & Matthiessen (2004).

The small-scale study presented could provide a basis for future research along several lines. A qualitative and quantitative comparison of markers of relevance versus markers of lesser relevance in conference presentations merits investigation. It would be beneficial to research similarities and differences between different languages and various subject areas in order to elicit differences among subject-specific and language-specific academic discourse communities and the consequences of these characteristics for cross-cultural academic communication. Another line of research could focus on investigating the possible differences in the use of MLIs by native and non-native speakers of English. And last but not least, future research can be directed towards a study of whether there are more specific features in the employment of MLIs in online conferencing considering their constantly increasing number and the implications of the medium for both presenters' and audiences' behaviour and their interaction.

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IMPLICIT ARGUMENTS IN UGANDAN ENGLISH

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Abstract

In standard British/American English, some transitive verbs, which are ontologically specified for objects, may be used with the objects not overtly expressed (for example, *leave*), while other transitive verbs do not permit this syntactic behavior (for example, *vacate*). The former have been referred to as verbs that allow implicit arguments. This study shows that while verbs such as *vacate* do not ideally allow implicit arguments in standard British/American English, this is permitted in Ugandan English (a non-native variety), thereby highlighting structural asymmetries between British/American English and Ugandan English, owing mainly to substrate influence and analogization. The current study highlights those structural asymmetries and ultimately uncovers some characteristic features in the structural nativization process of English in Uganda, thereby contributing to the growing larger discourse meant to fill the gaps that had characterized World Englishes scholarship, where thorough delineations of Ugandan English have been virtually absent.

Keywords: implicit arguments, Ugandan English, structural nativization, L2 English, substrate influence, analogization

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In natural languages, some transitive verbs, which are ontologically specified for objects, may be used with the objects not overtly expressed, without rendering the sentence ungrammatical, e.g. *leave* in Standard British/American English, while other transitive verbs do not permit this syntactic behavior, e.g. *vacate* (Fillmore, 1986; Iten et al., 2005). The former have been referred to as verbs that allow implicit arguments (Pethö & Kardos, 2010).The present study is set out to investigate the occurrence of sentences such as (1) in an L2 variety of English, i.e. Ugandan English (henceforth UgE), yet such sentences are said to be ungrammatical in L1 varieties such as British English (BrE) or American English (AmE) (Fillmore, 1986; Iten et al., 2005, Siemund, 2014)[1], thereby shedding more light on the structural nativization of English in Uganda in light of Schneider's (2007) model on the trajectorial development of World Englishes.

(1) (a) Did you lock?

(b) She has vacated.

Crucially, Iten et al. (2005, p. 2) state that the sentences in (1a) and (1b) are "quite bad". However, they contend that L2 speakers could easily use a sentence like "*Phyllis locked* to assert successfully that Phyllis locked the salient door" (p. 10), although they insist that "this would still be ungrammatical speech" (p. 10). Needless to echo that the production of such sentences and their acceptability by L2 speakers of English is a manifestation of structural nativization and thus an integral part of phase 3 in the evolution of New Englishes according to Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model.

A generous nomenclature has developed as regards how to refer to the phenomenon of leaving out an argument that is ontologically specified in the lexical entries of verbs without rendering the sentence ungrammatical (2). Some scholars use, for example, "implicit arguments" (e.g. Pethö & Kardos, 2010) or "omitted arguments" (e.g. Ruppenhofer & Michaelis, 2014), while Fillmore (1986) uses "null complements". While there might be merits and demerits of using a given terminology, the present study uses "implicit arguments" simply as a descriptive term.

(2) (a) He ate.

(b) Don't even try.

[1] The labels British English (BrE) and American English (AmE) are used to refer to standard British English and standard American English.

(c) She has arrived.

(d) She has left.

Note that even though this study uses the term "implicit arguments" as a descriptive term, it subscribes to the view of transitivity as laid down by Hopper & Thompson (1980), whereby transitivity can be viewed in terms of degrees or scales, i.e. some constructions show high transitivity while others show reduced transitivity. Thus, from this perspective, while a verb such as *age* in its inchoative/intransitive use, with the meaning 'become old' (e.g. *He has aged a lot*.), is strictly monadic (i.e. it does not require or even imply a postverbal argument), the verb *eat* (e.g. *I have eaten*.) is dyadic, since it requires or implies a patient, i.e. a postverbal argument (cf. Levin & Hovav-Rappaport, 1995, p. 89). Hence, even though the OED lists the verb *eat* as both transitive and intransitive, what is seen as its intransitive use, or precisely "surface-intransitive" use (Fillmore, 1986, p. 96), could be equated to what Hopper and Thompson (1980, p. 254) regard as reduced transitivity, parallel to their use of *leave* in, e.g. *Susan left.* Crucially, Fillmore (1986, p. 99) and Iten et al. (2005, p. 1) include *leave*, in the sense used by Hopper & Thompson (1980, p. 254) above, among transitive verbs that allow implicit arguments.

Just like non-reflexive/reciprocal transitive verbs (e.g. *vacate, reach)*, reflexive/reciprocal verbs belong to two categories in BrE/AmE: (i) those that allow their postverbal arguments (i.e. reflexive/reciprocal objects) to be left out without rendering the sentence ungrammatical, e.g. *divorce, kiss, marry* (reciprocal); *dress, bathe, exercise* (reflexive); (ii) those that do not allow their postverbal arguments (reflexive/reciprocal objects) to be left out without rendering the sentence ungrammatical, e.g. *resemble*, *love, help* (reciprocal); *clothe, pride, content, ingratiate, commit, disguise* (reflexive) (Huddleston, 2002, p. 302; Gillon, 2007, p. 8; Siemund, 2014). Hence, in the current study, the two categories are considered, since, ontologically, both are specified for postverbal arguments and, while some can be used without overtly expressing their postverbal arguments, others do not allow this in BrE/AmE.

As mentioned above, not all transitive verbs allow postverbal implicit arguments. Hence, according to Fillmore (1986) and Iten et al. (2005), the very synonyms (or near-

synonyms) of the verbs in (2) require their objects to be overtly expressed. Thus all the sentences in (3) are illicit:

(3) (a) * He devoured.
(b) * Don't even attempt.
(c) * She has reached.
(d) * She has vacated.

Semantic nuances between the synonymous verbs are said to be responsible for the (non-)omissibility of the postverbal arguments (Fillmore, 1986; Velasco & Muñoz, 2002; Ruda, 2017). Hence, each synonymous verb has its own selection restrictions, which allow it to accommodate an implicit argument or not. Crucially, this grammatical property can only become relevant if contextual variables permit it. Thus, the discoursal and situational contexts, as well as encyclopedic information, come into play in order to allow the occurrence of an implicit argument with a verb whose selection restrictions license omissibility (cf. Németh, 2000; Németh & Bikok, 2010).

Two broad categories of implicit arguments have been suggested (Fillmore, 1986), that is, definite and indefinite implicit arguments and these have been adopted in studies on implicit arguments (e.g. Glass, 2014; Ruda, 2017). Let us consider (4):

(4) (a) Jane is cooking.
(b) Jane is waiting.

The sentence in (4a), treated by Fillmore (1986, p. 96) as an indefinite implicit argument, is felicitous as the recoverability of the missing object is achieved via enrichment thanks to encyclopedic information, i.e. we know that usually people cook food. By contrast, (4b), which Fillmore (1986, p. 96) regards as a definite implicit argument, can only be legitimate, if any of the following possibilities comes into play: first, if there is a specific discourse referent mentioned earlier, whereby the implicit argument has an anaphoric relationship with the antecedent. Hence, the recoverability here is premised on anaphoricity, for example, involving the antecedent *I have to send the book now,* so that the missing object of *wait* is construed as *the book* or the act of *sending the book*. Second, the felicity of (4b) could also be due to the fact that the recoverability rests on cataphoricity, whereby the following sentence specifies what *Jane is waiting for*. In addition, the third option that accounts for the felicity of (4b) is that the recoverability could also be premised on the context, i.e. a contextual referent could be in mind, e.g. Jane

is at a bus stop or in front of a vaccination center, so that the interlocutor should be able to tell what Jane is waiting for based on the context, i.e. waiting for the bus or for vaccination, respectively.

While the literature above argues that the verbs in (3) preclude the occurrence of implicit arguments in L1 English, there is some evidence that there are instances where the verbs in question have been used with implicit arguments by L1 English speakers, as shown in the following examples (5):

(5) (a) I'm awfully sorry but in the morning we have to *vacate.* (BNC)

(b) I say bugger the diet and go full sugar full fat and *devour.* (COCA)

For Iten et al. (2005: 13), even though such examples have been heard among L1 English speakers, they are "nonetheless ungrammatical". Conversely, for Glass (2014) (as shown in (6) below) and Ruda (2014), such sentences are discourse-specific to a given community of practice or a given register, where assumptions about the missing referents are shared among interlocutors, since they share a common ground. For example, waiters can easily use *devour* without its object while talking about a patron's way of eating in a restaurant, since this use foregrounds the most salient information.

(6) (a) He *devoured.* Then we ordered a molten cake.

(b) […] and they *vacated* at the end of the lease.

(c) I *attempted* and failed miserably…

It might thus be right to indeed assume that such usage is restricted to a given community of practice in L1 English. A search in the *British National Corpus* (BNC), for example, shows just two entries for the verb *vacate(s/d)* used with postverbal implicit arguments, i.e. a 0.02 normalized frequency per one million words.

Implicit arguments in L2 English

Implicit arguments in L2 English have not yet received thorough delineations. However, there has been sporadic mention of the occurrence of implicit arguments in L2 varieties of English where L1 varieties prohibit it. Jowitt (2019, p. 89) mentions the verbs *disappoint, enjoy* and *mention* as verbs that occur with implicit arguments in Nigerian English, while Schneider (2007, p. 170) mentions *reach* and *waive* in Indian English

(IndE). For Ghanaian English, Blench (2016, p. 19) lists *greet, reach* and *resemble*, while Huber & Dako (2004, p. 855) mention *afford*. It is, however, worthwhile to point out that, although Jowitt (2019, p. 89) claims that the use of *disappoint* with an implicit argument (as in *She always likes to disappoint*) is idiosyncratic to Nigerian English, this usage is also found in both BrE and AmE, as shown in example (7):

(7) His latest novel does not disappoint. (OALD)[2]

Moreover, a quick search in the *Global Web-based English* (GloWbE) corpus shows 472 entries for BrE and only 31 entries for Nigerian English. Similarly, while *enjoy* (in the sense of 'have a good time') is not used in BrE with an implicit argument, AmE uses it in such a manner (cf. Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Buregeya (2019, p. 91-93), first of all, echoes Hocking's (1974) admonition to East Africans not to use the verbs *reach, enjoy, afford, discuss* or *get* without their overt postverbal arguments. To these, Buregeya (2019) adds 13 verbs that Kenyans use in this way and provides examples, some of which are given in (8):

(8) (a) […] I really *appreciate*.
(b) A creoloid has native speakers while a pidgin does not *have.*
(c) Please *ignore* if you have already *taken*.

While Buregeya (2019), following Hocking (1974), includes *discuss* on the list of the verbs that preclude postverbal implicit arguments in L1 English, the OED and LDOCE provide the following sentences (9), in which there is the occurrence of implicit arguments:[3]

(9) (a) Small groups allow people to interact, *discuss* and ask questions […] (LDOCE)
(b) While they were *discussing*, he forgot to whistle […] (OED)
(c) Shame-based intellectuals love to *discuss* and complexify. (OED)

Thus, the difference between BrE and KenE with respect to the use of *discuss* with implicit arguments might be an issue of frequency rather than total preclusion in BrE.

[2] OALD = Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary
[3] LDOCE = Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

As far as UgE is concerned, similar mention of the use of implicit arguments with verbs that do not allow them in L1 varieties has been made by Fisher (2000, p. 60) and Isingoma (2014, p. 52), who provide the following examples ((10) and (11)), respectively:

(10) (a) Those who cannot *afford* should find another school.
(b) Have you done the work? Yes, we have *done.*

(11) We closed the factory *basing* on a number of irregularities […]

In L1 English, *afford* (10a) requires an overt object, while the reply in (10b) should be realized as either a full sentence, which would require the object to be overtly expressed (i.e. *Yes, I have done it/the work*), or as a reduced reply, which would require the removal of the lexical verb (i.e. *Yes, I have*), or simply as *Yes*. As for (11), L1 English would use *based*, or *basing ourselves*, or *basing our decision* (see discussion in Section 4).

As pointed out earlier, many of the cases of implicit arguments in L2 varieties are just mentioned in passing and appear to be based on impressionistic judgments without a solid empirical basis and, above all, usually without explicatory analyses – a gap that this study sets out to fill.

Data and methodology

In 2018, the written component of the ICE-Uganda was released. However, though well balanced, the corpus is very small, with barely 400,000 words[4] and thus provides only a few cases of implicit arguments. As Mukherjee (2009, p. 131-2) puts it, small corpora such as this do not provide enough data for an analysis of lexico-grammatical phenomena. Unsurprisingly, many of the verbs under investigation (see list below) either are absent from the corpus or are used in a few sentences with overt postverbal arguments. For example, the verbs *resemble* and *vacate* yield only three incidents each in the ICE-Uganda and it is therefore not surprising that none of them has implicit arguments.

[4] See https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/engling/researchUG3.html.

Due to the problem of data sparseness, posed by small corpora, Mukherjee (2009, p. 132) reasons that while Internet data may be problematic with regard to teasing out the actual authors, "web-derived corpora with texts from online text archives" may provide a viable alternative. For that matter, similar to Mukherjee (2009), this study uses web-based data (12,000,000 words) that was collected by Isingoma and Meierkord (2019) and has been called Web-UG. As Isingoma & Meierkord (2019) put it, Web-UG was compiled using Sketch Engine's WebBootCat (Kilgarriff et al., 2014) and procedures applied by Davies and Fuchs (2015) in their compilation of GloWbE. The retrieval of Ugandan websites was done using highly frequent 3-grams as seeds, while unauthentic websites (i.e. those that were not Ugandan), e.g. mirror sites of Google, were excluded, and data was downloaded between May and July 2017 (Isingoma & Meierkord, 2019: 311). While this is a less controlled and arguably rudimentary corpus translating into what the compilers have dubbed as "a quick and dirty" corpus, it is, nevertheless, "reflective of recent UgE" (Isingoma & Meierkord, 2019, p. 311). Consequently, the corpus is not tagged or parsed, but it is searchable, since it is possible to investigate an unannotated corpus, using concordancing software (Esimaje & Hunston, 2019).

The verbs used in this study belong to the category of verbs that do not allow postverbal implicit arguments in BrE/AmE (cf. Fillmore, 1986; Iten et al., 2005; Siemund 2014). The verbs were selected randomly from the three works, provided they belonged to the two broad categories under consideration, namely: reflexive/reciprocal verbs and non-reflexive/reciprocal verbs. The dichotomy "definite vs. indefinite implicit arguments" was not explicitly investigated, although the 2 categories are indeed present in the sentences under consideration. The following verbs were searched in the corpora: *vacate*, *pledge*, *vow*, *lock*, *resemble*, *discover*, *afford*, *base, reach, oppose*, *devour, peruse, await, pride*, *commit*, *disguise*, *appreciate*. The verbs were searched in Web-UG, using AntConc (cf. Anthony, 2014). Each verb under consideration was typed in the search box in a lemmatized manner. Cases with implicit arguments (as well as those with overtly expressed arguments) were identified manually.

Results and Discussion

From the data in Web-UG, a mixed attestation of the verbs under consideration was established as regards their occurrence with implicit arguments, as shown in the following table:

Table 1

Occurrence of implicit arguments in Web-UG

Verb	**Attestation/Normalized Frequency (1 million words)**	**Verb**	**Attestation/Normalized Frequency (1 million words)**
afford	19 (1.54)	oppose	06 (0.48)
appreciate	16 (1.30)	peruse	09 (0.73)
await	08 (0.65)	pledge	03 (0.24)
base	129 (10.48)	pride	13 (1.05)
commit	55 (4.47)	reach	03 (0.24)
devour	04 (0.33)	resemble	03 (0.24)
discover	13 (1.05)	vacate	16 (1.30)
disguise	30 (2.43)	vow	04 (0.32)
lock	01 (0.08)		

For some verbs, the number of occurrences is relatively high (e.g. *commit, disguise, vacate, afford*), while for others there is a relatively low attestation (e.g. *vow, discover, lock*). Prima facie, two main reasons may be considered in order to account for this: first, although this corpus is bigger than the ICE-Uganda, it is still a comparatively small corpus. For example, the verb *resemble* is used with implicit arguments only 3 times, thereby representing a 0.24 normalized frequency per one million words, and there is no single occurrence of the verb used with the L1 English obligatory reciprocal pronoun *each other/one another* in the corpus. Hence, the 3 entries depict 100% of the occurrence of the reciprocal verb used in UgE without its postverbal argument (see Figure 1 below and discussion thereof). In other words, there are simply few discourse situations depicting the use of *resemble* as a reciprocal verb in the corpus. If we compare the normalized frequency of *resemble* in Web-UG (12,000,000 words) and that in the 100 million-word BNC, we realize that the BNC has 29 entries of *resemble(d) each other/one another*, with

the normalized frequency of 0.29, just slightly above Web-UG's 0.24 frequency in the use of *resemble* without the reciprocal pronoun. Thus, the 0.24 (Web-UG) and 0.29 (BNC) frequencies depict the parallel general usage of *resemble* without the reciprocal pronoun in UgE and with the reciprocal pronoun in BrE. The second point is that, as Isingoma and Meierkord (2019, p. 318) observe, Ugandans are usually torn between exonormativity and the actual daily linguistic practices in the country. Therefore, overly prudent Ugandans will try their level best to write carefully in a bid to avoid Ugandanisms, even though the forces of substrate influence and other L2 learning processes such as analogization may still affect how they speak. Under such circumstances, one can assume that for such a category of Ugandans, where there are occurrences of implicit arguments with some of the verbs under consideration, that may be an artefact of what Ruda (2017) and Glass (2014) have termed discourse-specific idiosyncrasies of given communities of practice.

The picture presented in Table 1 can be enriched by the graph below (concomitantly with the raw dada in the Appendix). The graph juxtaposes the occurrence of implicit arguments with the occurrence of overtly expressed arguments with the selected verbs in Web-UG:

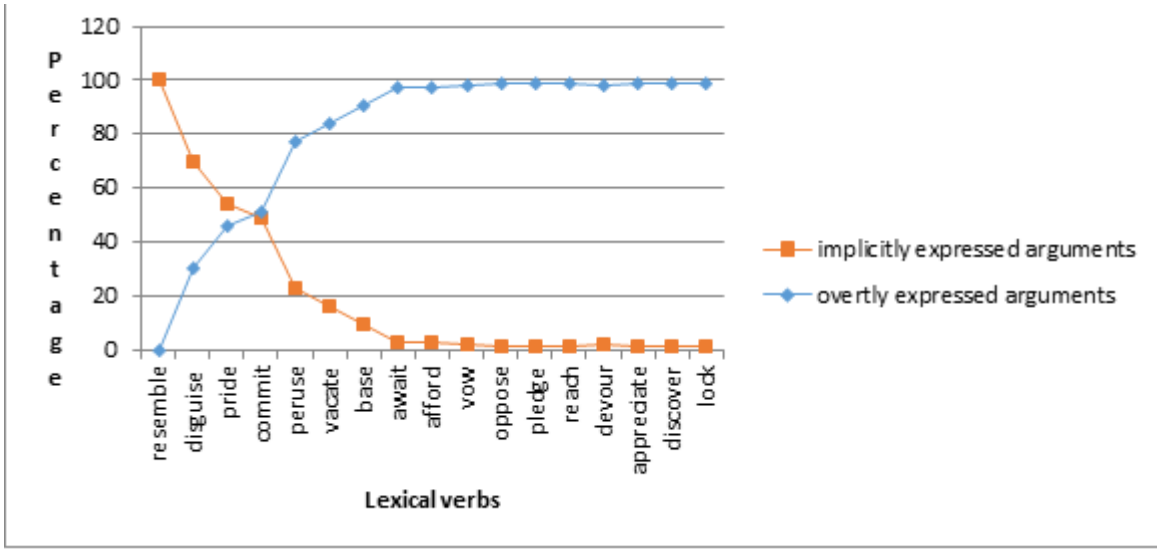

Figure 1. Overt vs. implicit arguments in Web-UG

As has already emerged from Table 1, *resemble,* in its reciprocal use, occurs with implicit arguments in all the 3 hits (100%), which leaves no occurrence with overtly expressed reciprocal pronouns. It is followed by *disguise*, for which 62.50% of the

occurrences are implicit argument uses out of the 48 hits reflecting its occurrence with both overtly and implicitly expressed arguments. Following on are verbs such as *pride* (54.16%), *commit* (48.67%), *peruse* (22.50%), *vacate* (15.84%) and *base* (9.46%). A pattern seems to suggest itself with reflexive/reciprocal verbs showing more preference for implicit arguments in UgE. This is statistically significant with a p.value of 0.0002. However, some non-reflexive/reciprocal verbs such as *peruse* and *vacate* also show high incidences of occurring with implicit arguments in UgE comparably with the BrE use of verbs such as *concur* with implicit arguments, where 68 out of the 250 hits of the verb's usage in the BNC (i.e. 27.2%) involve implicit arguments. However, many of the non-reflexive/reciprocal verbs have relatively low incidences of occurrence with implicit arguments, e.g. *pledge* (5.65%), *afford* (2.56%), while *devour* and *oppose* have 1.99% and 1.47%, respectively. Others have much lower incidences. Contextual and discoursal situations may be responsible for the varied incidences and evidence from the BNC also paints a somewhat similar picture, in that while *concur* has up to 27.2% of implicit arguments in BrE, *promise* has only 3.66% out of the total 5,953 hits where it is used.

The verb *base*, in many of the sentences in the corpus (i.e. Web-UG), is used with the *-ing* form, as in (12).

(12) God rejected his plea *basing* on the fact that this particular…

In (12), BrE/AmE would use the participial form *based* or the *-ing* form + an obligatory reflexive pronoun or a full NP, which acts as the direct object. That is, (12) would, for example, be realized as (13) in BrE/AmE:

(13) (a) God rejected his plea *based* on the fact that this particular…
(b) God rejected his plea *basing himself* on the fact that this particular…
(c) God rejected his plea *basing his decision* on the fact that this particular…

One might argue that possibly the UgE usage in (12) is also participial with the only difference being that UgE uses the present participle (*basing*), while BrE/AmE uses the past participle (*based*). However, there is evidence where UgE uses the verb in a non-particpial form, as exemplified in (14) from Web-UG, and this use appears to be the basis for the use of *basing* in (12):

(14) (a) What did you *base* on to feature these artists?
(b) Many of us actually *base* on people.
(c) I want to *base* on the code of conduct.
(d) He did not *base* on the past to target a […]
(e) […] farmers should *base* on the quality of piglets.
(f) The district would *base* on the work plan.

It thus seems clear that the UgE usage of the verb *base* is a case of an implicit argument in parallel with verbs such as *reach* or *commit*.

According to Huddleston (2002, p. 302), the verb *resemble* in its reciprocal use cannot be used without overtly indicating the reciprocal pronoun *each other/one another*. By contrast, the 0.24 normalized frequency per one million words of occurrences in Web-UG (amounting to 100% of all the incidents) show that *resemble* can be used in its reciprocal meaning with the reciprocal pronoun omitted. Similarly, according to Siemund (2014, p. 52), verbs such as *pride, ingratiate, content* are only useable reflexively and verbs such as *commit* and *manifest* have the obligatory reflexive use if they mean 'pledge' and 'appear', respectively. The results from Web-UG show a high incidence of occurrence (at varying degrees) of *disguise* (69.76%), *pride* (54.16%), *commit* (48.67%) in UgE with the obligatory reflexive pronoun argument left out.

It is important to note that although Siemund (2014, p. 52) insists that *commit* in the sense of 'pledge' requires an obligatory reflexive pronoun, the OED shows that it can be used without the pronoun in this sense. Moreover, a simple search of *commit(s)* used without a reflexive pronoun in GloWbE gives 88 entries in BrE. This suggests that *commit* seems to have joined the category of reflexive verbs that allow their reflexive pronouns to be omitted without rendering the sentence illicit (e.g. *wash, exercise*) in BrE. This is not surprising as speakers of BrE/AmE have used analogical leveling to regularize many grammatical patterns in their language (cf. Isingoma, 2018, p. 395). In fact, the examples provided by the OED showing the use of *commit* with an implicit reflexive object are as recent as 1982, as opposed to the examples where a reflexive object is overt, which date back to 1839. In addition, the OED indicates that this meaning was only added in June 2002 (at that time in a draft form). It is not clear, however, whether the presence of *commit* in Web-UG with an implicit reflexive object is a result of Ugandans mirroring BrE/AmE speakers or it is a result of their own innovation based on leveling or substrate influence (as will be seen shortly). In a similar vein, the OED lists *pride* as a verb that can be used without its reflexive object as in *My brother, I pride in your courage* (OED, 2009:

s.v. pride, v., Anna M. Wilson Days Mohammed 39). However, unlike *commit*, which yields many hits in GloWbE, *pride* has only three in the British and one in the US section; this compares with ten hits in the Kenyan and nine in the Indian section. Going by this, one might assume that it is more of an L2 feature, despite the fact that the OED shows examples that date back to the 14th century. Crucially, the OED quotations, the instances in GloWbE or even the COHA[5] (where there are just a handful of entries) and the Ugandan data could also mean that while *pride* might have been used more widely with an implicit argument in BrE/AmE in the past, this use has declined in contemporary L1 English but it remains acceptable in UgE.

As already pointed out earlier, analogization is likely to play an important role in the occurrence of both non-reflexive/reciprocal verbs (e.g. *vacate, reach*) and reflexive/reciprocal verbs (*e.g. commit, resemble*) without their obligatory objects, since there are a number of verbs in BrE/AmE that are used without overtly indicating the postverbal arguments, as either full NPs or (reflexive/reciprocal) pronouns. We could adopt Haspelmath's (2007, p. 2010) dictum about reciprocal verbs which are no longer used with the reciprocal objects such as *kiss*. Haspelmath (2007) states that the non-overt expression of the reciprocal pronoun is realized due to frequent use and the resultant holistic storage of the verb in the mental lexicon. This analysis may be extrapolated to reflexive verbs listed above. Thus, this use makes both L1 and L2 speakers (in relation to the verb *commit*) and L2 speakers (in relation to e.g. the verb *disguise*) level the usage of these verbs in analogy with verbs such as *adjust* (*oneself*), *hide* (*oneself*) for which omitting the reflexive object is grammatical.

While analogization may be at work here, substrate influence also favours the use of such verbs without overtly expressing their objects. For example, the equivalents of the verbs *afford, reach* and *peruse* in five commonly used Ugandan L1s below (cf. Namyalo et al., 2016) are realized as shown in Table 2 and can be used with postverbal implicit arguments:[6]

Table 2

L1s' equivalents for afford, reach, peruse

[5] The Corpus provides records from the year 1810.

[6] Luganda, Runyankole and Rutooro are Bantu languages, while Acholi is a Western Nilotic language and Lugbara is a Central Sudanic language.

English	Luganda	Runyankole	Rutooro	Acholi	Lugbara
afford	-sobola	-sobora	-sobora	twero	eco
reach	-tuuka	-hika	-taaha	oo	can
peruse	-soma	-soma	-soma	kwan	la

All the L1 verbs can be used with postverbal implicit arguments. For example, the following sentences are licit in Luganda (15) and Acholi (16):[7]

(15) (a) Monika y-a-tuuk-a eka bulungi
Monica 3s-PAST-reach-FV home well
'Monica reached home well.'

(b) Monika y-a-tuuk-a bulungi
Monica 3s-PAST-reach-FV well
'Monica reached well.'

(16) (a) Monika o-oo gang maber
Monica 3s-reach.PAST home well
'Monica reached home well.'

(b) Monika o-oo maber
Monica 3s-reach.PAST well
'Monica reached well.'

One important thing that we need to note here is that the L1 verbs in the table above not only mean *afford, reach* or *peruse*, but also they mean *manage, arrive* and *read*, respectively. In other words, while English has synonyms that behave differently as regards their syntax, the L1s do not have this kind of varied syntax since instead of two verbs with subtle semantic differences, there is only one general verb. The synonyms in English behave differently because of the semantic nuances between them (Fillmore, 1986; Velasco & Muñoz, 2002; Isingoma, 2020). For example, as regards semantic nuances between synonyms, Isingoma (2020) shows that while *attempt* and *try* are indeed synonymous, in that both mean 'to make an effort to do something' (OALD), they differ denotationally as *attempt* involves an additional denotational specification on the

[7] For the Acholi verb, the past tense is tonally realized.

referent, i.e. the theme of *attempt* is usually difficult. This additional semantics is not specified when *try* is used. What we observe with respect to *attempt* vs. *try* is intralinguistic synonymy. In a situation where we have equivalent meanings in two different languages, we are effectively dealing with synonymy as well but this time round it is interlinguistic synonymy (cf. Edmonds & Hirst, 2002). Hence, the intralinguistic behavior for the English synonyms may extrapolate to interlinguistic synonymy, thereby allowing for syntactic variability between the languages under consideration. Thus, while *peruse* has the denotational specification of 'read in a careful way' (cf. OALD), its equivalent in Acholi (*kwan*), for example, does not have that specification, since it more precisely means *read*. Thus Acholi *kwan* behaves syntactically like English *read* and not like *peruse*. Relevantly, while the syntax of *kwan* thus transfers easily in the L2 English use of *read* for these speakers, the (near-)synonym *peruse* results in analogical levelling if speakers transfer their L1 syntax. As is clear, *read* is more common than *peruse*, and levelling will tend to follow the syntactic behavior of the more common verb. From the foregoing, one may surmise that an L2 speaker of English may have recourse to both forces at the same time, i.e. substrate influence and analogization, since the results will be the same, i.e. using a verb such as *peruse*, *afford,* or *reach* with a postverbal implicit argument, as observed in the Ugandan corpus. Evidently, how and to what extent the two forces interact is an interesting area but for the current purpose is outside the scope of this study.

Two of the languages above, which are non-Bantu (i.e. Acholi and Lugbara) use non-reflexive verbs as the equivalents of the English reflexive verbs, i.e. Lugbara uses *oyo so* 'make a promise' for *commit oneself*, *oja wura* 'change colour' for *disguise oneself* and *ma afuri* 'have pride' for *pride oneself*. A similar situation holds for Acholi, where *oporo* 'pretend', *cike* 'promise' and *tye ki awaka* 'have pride' are used for *disguise oneself, commit oneself* and *pride oneself*, respectively. For the Bantu languages (i.e. Luganda, Runyankole and Rutooro), reciprocalization and reflexivization are coded by means of a morpheme on the verb complex, resulting in one word. For example, in Rutooro *disguise oneself* is realized as *-efoora,* with the grapheme 'e' encoding reflexivity. But the equivalent of *commit oneself* is realized non-reflexively in Rutooro, i.e. *-raganiza* 'promise'. Similar patterns hold for Runyankole and Luganda. Hence, the use of non-reflexive equivalents in L1s and morphological reflexives/reciprocals (as opposed to the periphrastic English reflexives/reciprocals) favour the use of reflexive/reciprocal verbs without overtly

expressing the reflexive/reciprocal pronouns in UgE. However, the proviso here, as mentioned above, is establishing to what extent analogization or substrate influence contributes to the peculiar use of verbs with implicit arguments in UgE and to what degree they interact to influence the UgE usage. For now, we can only content ourselves with the fact that they play some role in the state of affairs described above.

Conclusion

As seen in this exposition, implicit arguments are used in UgE with verbs that are said to prohibit them in BrE/AmE. This points to the structural divergences that set apart UgE from BrE/AmE and therefore provides more evidence of the structural nativization of English in Uganda. However, UgE shares this phenomenon with other L2 varieties of English (e.g. KenE), although the extent of usage and array of the verbs involved are different. While Buregeya (2019, p. 92) states that the use of implicit arguments in KenE seems to be possible with every verb that requires an obligatory postverbal argument in BrE/AmE, in UgE this is not the case. Some verbs or some uses of verbs do not allow implicit arguments in UgE. The verb *eat,* for example, cannot be used anaphorically outside replies to polar questions, e.g. in UgE **Jane ate* cannot be a reply to *Where is my cake*?, as is the case in BrE/AmE (cf. Fillmore, 1986). Similarly, a sentence like **The clothes were wet, so I dried* (cf. Huddleston, 2002) is not allowed in UgE. In the L1s under consideration here, the equivalents of these sentences are not allowable either. While the L1s allow a wide range of verbs to be used with implicit arguments, not all the verbs in those languages allow implicit arguments in every situation (see Isingoma, 2020 for an analysis of implicit arguments in Rutooro). Hence, while the use of implicit arguments is pervasive in UgE compared to BrE/AmE, it does not involve all verbs or all uses of a given verb.

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Appendix

Occurrence with overt vs. implicit arguments

Verb	Verb type	Overt arguments	Implicit arguments	Total	Proportion of occurrence with implicit arguments in percentage
resemble	Reflexive/reciprocal	00	03	03	100
disguise	Reflexive/reciprocal	13	30	43	69.76
pride	Reflexive/reciprocal	11	13	24	54.16
commit	Reflexive/reciprocal	58	55	113	48.67
peruse	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	31	09	40	22.50
vacate	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	85	16	101	15.84
base	Reflexive/reciprocal	1208	129	1337	09.64
await	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	287	08	295	2.71
afford	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	721	19	740	2.56
vow	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	192	04	196	2.04
oppose	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	402	06	408	1.47
pledge	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	227	03	230	1.30
reach[8]	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	242	03	245	1,22
devour	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	197	04	201	1.99
appreciate	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	1348	16	1364	1,17
discover	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	1175	13	1188	1.09
lock	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	100	01	101	0.99

[8] Only frequencies relating to the meaning 'arrive at a place' were considered in the count. This is premised on the fact that a given sense of a verb may allow implicit arguments, while other senses may not (Fillmore, 1986, p. 100)

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SINCE/BECAUSE ALTERNATION: INSIGHTS FROM CLAUSE STRUCTURES IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH

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Abstract

The choice between *since* and *because* allows language users to provide rationality which is part of the cognitive functions of language. Different conditions have been shown to explicate this alternation, with little attention paid to the clausal weight. The present paper shows how expression of rationality is alternated between choosing a *since* or *because*, since both have the semantic capacity to do so, in certain contexts. The study uses a simple measurement method to show the extent to which clausal weight relates to this alternation. Relying on corpus data from a well-known variety representing Nigerian English, the present study shows that the choice between *since* and *because* is related to a number of factors such as the type of text producing the usages. With 1074 usages showing such interchangeable usages extracted from academic and media text types in written Nigerian English, it is shown that, at least in the variety under examination, the choice of *since* over *because* as a rationality expresser is scarce, and that overall pattern can be predicted on the basis of certain contexts including clausal weight and ordering pattern. The scarcity of *since* as a rationality expresser is perhaps a reflection of interference from the local languages, which do not have semantic equivalents.

Key words: since/because alternation, syntactic alternation, rationality clauses, clause structure, structural variability

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One of the infinite flexibilities of languages, including all its varieties, is its creative aptitude to provide language users with syntactic choices such that language users can say the same thing with different usages. Some of these syntactic choices are a clear cut syntactically driven alternation (for example, genitive alternation in John's book vs. Book of John, and prepositional placement in *we rely on this information* versus *this information we rely on*) while some are a clear cut semantically driven creative alternation, one of which is the expression of rationality with a choice of since or because. The alternation between *since* and *because* is not as clearly cut as genitive alternation or prepositional placement or particle placement. In (1), the alternation of since/because is syntactically compatible but not semantically so. This is because *since* expresses just the fact, which is a matter of *time,* whereas *because* appears to have expressed a matter of *reason*. Consider that (1) provides rationality, which cannot be expressed with because, as in 'Because I was eight I have been playing golf'.

(1) Since I was eight I have been playing golf.

(2) Sadly, the Police have failed to discharge the onus of disproving this suspicion, since none of the cases has been conclusively investigated, years and months after

(3) After the Farnborough unveiling, aviation experts promptly adjudged the 81 routes as unrealistic because many existing airlines with large fleets fly to Nigeria which is one of the most lucrative destinations for airlines.

Whereas in (2) and (3), *because* and *since* are interchangeable such that meaning and structure are not impeded. Unlike (1), both (2) and (3) cognitively express argumentation structure where since and because serve as signifier of premise from which conclusion is made. The argumentative structure infused in the meaning of the dependent and independent clauses means that the basic meaning of *since* and *because* in (2) and (3) is that of rationality. As can be deducted, the alternation of since/because usage thus becomes a matter of creativity, structure, meaning and cognition which deserves much more attention than it has received when compared to less complex alternations such as genitive, preposition, and particle placement. Also, it becomes more important to find out the structural patterning and scenarios characterising the since/because rationality alternation because same/similar variables explaining usage choice in these clear-cut alternations have been found behaving differently in new varieties of English from those of established varieties.

Given that there is little or no serious empirical investigation into this alternation of since/because rationality from new varieties of English, the present study thus aims at providing the basic threshold of data and investigation, showing how speakers/users of new varieties alternate with use the of since and because in expressing rationality. A corpus material of 1.1. million length were queried, resulting into 1074 interchangeable usages that are quantitatively ad qualitatively analysed against eight variables representing (1) genre/text type (academic versus media writing), (2) length of clause I (3) length of clause II (4) structural ordering; main + dependent versus dependent + main order (5) expression of causality or conditionality (6) sentence length (7) dependent clause length, and (8) main clause length. A variationist/distributional analysis smoothly blended with perspectives from cognitive usage-based and usage grammar show that there is some systematicity involved, and clearly provide specific contexts when and why certain usages are more likely to occur. Among many findings academic text type is expected to be more characterised with the choice of *because* while media text type is expected to be characterised more with the choice of *since.*

Since and because alternation and contexts of usages

The questions of syntactic alternation, together with different interplays of variables and cognition on different usage choices continued to be addressed in the literature. The alternation between since and because clauses have been studied in the light of causal adverbial clauses, together with different other semantic categories of clauses that constrained the expression of causality, conditionality, and rationality (Altenberg 1984; Kanetani 2007, 2019; Diessel 2005, 2008; Couper-Kuhlen & Kortmann, 2000). More specifically, different sorts of evidence of usage choices instantiating the relation between cognition, grammatical usage, and meaning making have been put forward. According to Goldberg (1995), usages can be syntactically distinct and semantically synonymous. Evidence from dative alternation, genitive alternation, participle placement, and many others have indeed shown the relation, working and variability of syntactically distinct but semantically synonymous usages.

If according to Kachru (2019), the distinctiveness and peculiarities of different varieties of English, especially those divided along the inner circle ones (i.e. American,

British, Canadian) and outer circle ones (for example, Nigerian, Indian, Singaporean, Ghanaian) continued to be established, then one must expect different workings of the systems operating syntactic alternations in different varieties. More specifically, Akinlotan (2017, 2018) have shown how usage patterns in Nigerian variety of English differ from that of British and American varieties with which it shared formal properties. More recently, Akinlotan (2020) shows how contextual usages of cognitively driven BE-relativisation differ in Nigerian and Canadian varieties of English. One of such alternations, which is yet to receive serious attention in new varieties of English, is the usage choice between *since* and *because* expressing causality, conditionality, and reasonability. Kanetani (2006, 2019) argues that usage involving because can be distinguished into two types: those that express causality and those that express conditionality.

According to Sawada (2004), in constructing *because* usage, native speakers of established varieties of English such as British and American, prefer *it is because* usage. Sawada asserts that this choice is preferred because it strengthens the exclusivity of the reason being provided for the action being reported. According to Sawada, preferring such usage implies that the speaker intends to cancel out any other possibility of a reason for the action being reported. In the literature, it is generally agreed that usage choices between *since* and *because*, and expression of causation and rationality/conditionality is related to a number of variables representing syntactic, semantic, pragmatic cognitive and discourse perspectives. More specifically, Kanetani (2019), Diessel (2005, 2008), Hetterle (2015), Diesel & Hetterle (2011), Dancygier 1998, Dancygier & Sweetser (2000) have found that causal relations and reasoning processes, both of which are clearly possible by *since* and *because* usages, are related to communicative function and the relative position of the main clause.

More so, it is expected that such alternation between *since* and *because* in expressing causation and rationality/conditionality will be related to the processing theory of constituency and order by Hawkins (1994, 2004), together with the principle of end-weight (Wasow, 2002)**,** both of which argue that syntactic choices, such as the position of a syntactic unit, greatly influence how reader/hearer process them. Dancygier & Sweetser (2000) examined the competition between since and between, showing how a number of variables relating to cognitive and discourse perspective

influence use, form, meaning and interpretation. Similarly, Diessel & Hetterte (2011) conducted a cross-linguistic investigation into the structure, meaning and use of causal clauses. They showed that communicative function, positioning of the dependent clause, and the meaning of the clause influence usage choices. For instance, it is found that clausal clauses predominantly followed main clauses. Also, Diessel (2001, 2005) found that meaning of the adverbial clause affects the ordering of main and dependent clauses.

Corpus extraction and preliminary description

Data were drawn from the Nigerian component of the International Corpus of English (ICE) and from additional text types matching those in ICE. For instance, academic and media texts from ICE-Nigeria were supplemented by collecting more academic and media texts that followed the guidelines used in ICE. Journal articles written were collected from journals, while media texts such as editorials and news writings were collected from local Nigerian newspapers such as the Vanguard, the Guardian, and the Punch. The additional text types collected reached a million word-length, which is about the size of each regional component in ICE. Then usages consisting of all uses of *since* and *because* were first extracted using AntCon. Initial extraction consists of all of such usages that border around causality, rationality or conditionality is expressed. The data were then manually read again to retain only instances where *since* and *because* are used to express rationality. Consider (4) and (5).

(4) Similarly, Mandela never saw borders in Africa *since* the whole continent won freedom for him and his country.

(5) *Since* an idol is not a mere mortal like the rest of us, they also brought along the necessary items for appeasing dedidu, who was at his best dispensing political favours

For examples, 4-7 express rationality and conditional while 8-9 do not. A test of substitution is applied. I substituted every instance of since with because, and vice versa, checking for syntactic and semantic compatibility such as ensuring that they allow smooth reading expressing rationality, conditionality or causality. In (4-7) since and because can be well interchanged. Although since has two basic inherent meanings involving reason and time (i.e. since = + reason (+) + time), it is often used in the sense of because, which can have some sense of time infused into its reason (i.e. because = +

reason* (x since): which means that the expression of time by because is often implicit unlike that of since). In (4) *since* clearly expresses reason and time, where (5) expresses only reason. However, *because* can perfectly fit into both usages. Same permutation is possible in (6) and (7), in which *since* can perfectly fit into *because* without interference into the meaning processing. In (7), *because of* can be interchanged with *since there is a.*

(6) The publicity will be done at the community level but national medium are included *because* it is important that all Nigerians are aware of the amnesty policy, appreciate the message of peace, and collectively participate in the peace process.

(7) Amnesty should be pursued pari-passu with effective anti-bunkering measures *because of the* close correlation between illegal oil bunkering and armed conflict in the Niger Delta region

This test of substitution thus implies that only a careful reading can allow extraction of such since/because alternation, and that a careful attention is paid to the expressibility of reason, such that a basic question of why can be answered by a use of *since* or *because.* Hence only instances such as (4-7) were used for the analyses contained here. In the next stage involving annotation, a total of 1074 instances which qualify as since/because alternation were then annotated on the basis of eight variables representing (1) weight/length of the since/because clause, which is also the dependent clause (2) weight/length of the main clause (3) genre/text type - academic versus media writing (4) the weight/length of the entire sentence consisting of the dependent and main clauses, (5) length of the clause in the first position, which can be dependent or main, (6) length of the clause in the second position, (7) type of meaning being expressed which is classified as being causality or not causality, and (8) ordering of the clause structure (i.e. main + dependent or dependent + main ordering).

For instance, in (8), the clause in the first position is *The resignation was forced,* which is a main clause while the clause in the second position is *because the people showed interest in what happened at their parliament,* a dependent clause. The length of these clauses in terms of position they occur is also accounted for. For example, the length of the clause in first position or clause I (i.e. the resignation was forced) is three-word-length, while that of clause II (because the people showed interest in what

happened at their parliament) is seven-word-length. Akinlotan (2017, 2018) has shown that complexity, which can be measured in different dimensions such as weight, length, or structural node, is significantly related to usage choices in syntactic alternation in new varieties of English, and especially in Nigerian variety of English. These findings also support the findings by Hawkins (1994), Wasow (2002), and Rosenbach (2005) that weight/complexity/length is very much related to syntactic choices and usages. More so, Dessel (2001, 2005, 2008) has shown that ordering and differential positioning of dependent and main clauses within the sentence structure is significantly related to the type of meaning being expressed as well as the structural complexity in the dependent/main clause and the complexity in the entire sentence structure.

(8) The resignation was forced because the people showed interest in what happened at their parliament.

The word-length of every clause is accounted for, leaving out preposition, conjunctions, articles/determiners, and non content words. For instance, the weight of the dependent clause *because the people showed interest in what happened at their parliament* in (8) is 7 while the length of the main clause *the resignation was forced* is 3, and the total length of the sentence thus sums up as 10. Also, each usage is classified as expressing causality or non-causality. I followed the binary distinction used by Kanetani (2007, 2019) and Dancygier & Sweetser (2000) where clear distinctions were made between since/because usages that express causality and those that do not. Such usage that do not express causality might express other conditions such as contrast, conditionality, time, and rationality which does not necessarily bring about a cause-effect relationship.

Following this line of thought, all the usages are then classified into causal and non-causal usages. Another important variable accounted for is that of genre/text type. Akinlotan (2017, 2018) has repeatedly shown the importance of text type/genre in understanding structural patterning and usage choices in new varieties of English, especially in Nigerian variety of English. Following this finding, it is also expected that the variable representing genre/text type will explain the variability and usage choices involved in the use of since/because for the expression of reason. Table 1 shows the overview distribution of sample used for the analyses. As can be seen in Table 1, *since* and *because* are evenly distributed across the academic and media text type.

Table 1

An overview distribution of since/because usages

	since		***because***		***Total***	
	N	***%***	***N***	***%***	***N***	***%***
Academic text type	267	49	274	51	541	100
Media text type	262	49	271	51	533	100
Total	529	49	545	51	1074	100

As it will be shown in the next section, the distributions were then analysed in terms of the eight variables representing length of the since/because clause, length of the main clause, length of clause in the first and second position, length of the entire sentence, expression of causality, and genre. Results of the distributional analyses, together with qualitative interrogation, are presented in the following section. A test statistic chi square test of independence is used to test out the relationship between the usage choice and the variables under studied.

A simple distributional analysis

In this section the results of the annotation and preliminary analyses are presented and further discussed in the light of the expectations in the literature and contexts of emerging patterns. As can be seen in Table 2 the distribution of the alternation in terms of how each variable independently influence usage choice is provided. Such explanation is important because it helps to understand how, and the extent to which, variability is related to these different determinants. The distribution of length between long, medium and short is conceptually operationalised by dividing the longest length by 3. For instance, the longest main/dependent clause length found in the data is that of 29 word-length, which when divided by 3 gives a score of 9.6.

Hence, the short length is between 0 to 10, medium length between 11 to 20, and long length is 21 word-length and above. In the same vein, the longest length of the sentence structure (i.e. main + dependent clause sum up) is that of a 38-word length sentence, which when divided by 3, gives 12.6 word-length, such that short sentence has 0-13 word-length, medium sentence 14-26, and 27 word-length sentence structure refers to the long sentence types. Using independent procedure in such classification ensures objectivity.

Table 2

A bivariate table showing distribution between since and because

	since		**because**		**Total**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
TEXT TYPE						
Academic	267	49	274	51	541	100
Media	262	49	271	51	533	100
CLAUSAL I						
Short	342	45	413	55	755	100
Medium	165	57	125	43	290	100
Long	22	76	7	24	29	100
CLAUSAL II						
Short	335	44	422	56	757	100
Medium	179	61	114	39	293	100
Long	15	63	9	37	24	100
DEPENDENT CLAUSE						
Short	347	45	431	55	778	100
Medium	167	61	109	39	276	100
Long	15	75	5	25	20	100
MAIN CLAUSE						
Short	330	45	404	55	734	100
Medium	138	51	130	49	268	100
Long	61	85	11	15	72	100
SENTENCE						
Short	115	32	240	68	355	100
Medium	356	56	282	44	638	100
Long	58	72	23	28	81	100
MEANING TYPE						
Causality	164	55	159	49	323	100
Non-causality	365	49	386	51	751	100
ORDERING PATTERN						
main + dependent (md)	276	81	68	19	344	100
dependent + main (dm)	253	35	477	65	730	100
TOTAL	**529**	**49**	**545**	**51**	**1074**	**100**

In order to test out the independent behaviour of each variable in terms of influencing a usage choice between *since* and *because,* a series of chi square test of independence was carried for each variable. Chi square test of independence allows to see whether choosing a since or because usage is related to each of these variables. A chi square test shows that text type/genre is not significantly related to since/because alternation. The relation between choosing since/because and text type that produces the usage was insignificant, $X2$ (1, N = 1074) = 0.004, p=0.95. As can be seen in Table 2,

the choices between since and because are equally distributed, which shows that the distinction between academic and media text types is not sufficient to provide explanation for the variability in the two usages.

This result might not be so surprising given that Akinlotan (2017) has shown media and academic writings to be close representative of standard Nigerian English, in which certain syntactic characteristics are demonstrated. In other words, the distinction between academic or media text type in our data is not able to explain the variability or usage choice pattern. This result follows Akinlotan & Housen (2017) where genre/text type has been found out weighted by syntactic determinant in explaining structural variability in Nigerian variety of English. The strong influence of genre/text type as a determinant of usage choice has been emphasised in the literature, though this result further shows that such strength is dependent on the linguistic variable being studied.

Another variable not statistically significant in influencing usage choice is the expression of meaning contained in the alternation. The relation between expression of meaning and usage choice is insignificant, $X2$ (2, N = 1074) = 0.426, p=0.514. As can be seen in Table 2, expression of causality and non-causality does not show a pattern with which choices between the two usages can be predicted. Of course, such finding might reflect the need, in further studies, to tease apart the binary classification such that usages expressing non-causality can be further classified. Nevertheless, since the literature agrees that expression of causality is inherent semantic characteristic of such alternation, one would have expected some tendencies pointing towards such expectation. In other words, the finding might as well be a reflection of different usages of since/because alternation in our variety, given transfer of interference from similar usages that exist in local co-existing languages of Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa.

Kanetani (2007, 2019) and Dancygier & Sweetser (2000) have shown that since/because alternation expresses a variety of meaning including expression of causality, conditionality, and rationality, although they have not sought out the relation between the alternation and expression of meaning. Kanetani (2019) and Goldberg (1995) have noted that syntactically different usages do indeed express synonymous meaning, which according to Kanetani (2019) can help us predict the two usages. For

instance, (9-12) express alternation of meaning. As can be interpreted (10) and (11) which are interchangeable uses of since and because express the same intent of meaning, which is the expression of causality.

(9) Since most of the people that adopt this mode of transport are traders, they pack more goods than the old and rickety boats can carry.

(10) Police authorities should be conscious of this: investigation should not take too much time since the suspect has admitted that he is, indeed, the assailant in the video footage and the truth that is self-evident therein

(11) There is no doubt that Abiola's death left a void that nobody has been able to fill — not because there is lack of trying,

(12) If Nigeria can now boldly stake a claim to being a democracy, it is because some people paid the price.

In (10) the admittance of guilt by the suspect meant investigation should lead to prosecution quickly, and in (11) the death of Abiola led to death of sports sponsorship. Whereas (9) and (12) do not express causality but meaning-intent focusing on rationality and conditionality. Although distinctions relating to meaning and pragmatics can be shown, the test statistic shows relationship between distribution and contexts under examination.

Clausal type and since/because alternation

As can be seen in Table 2, all the variables representing length of clause I and II, dependent and main clauses, and sentence length provide insights into the operations involved in the two usage choices. Also, chi square test of independence further affirm that these variables are statistically significant, and can indeed explain how the choices between since and because usages work. The relation between since/because alternation and these variables are positive; length of Clause I (X^2 (2, N= 1074) = 19.719, p=0.000); length of clause II (X^2 (2, N = 1074) = 25.686, p=0.000);dependent clause length (X^2 (2, N = 1074) = 26.025, p=0.000); main clause length (X^2 (2, N = 1074) = 42.193, p=0); sentence length (X^2 (2, N = 1074) = 67.497, p=0);and ordering (X^2 (2, N = 1074) =194.306, p= 0). As Table 2 shows, since-usage is preferred to because-usage when Clause I is more likely to be longer, and because-usage preferred to since-usage when Clause I is more likely to be short.

Given that since/because Clause I is providing explanation for action in Clause II, then it suggests that writers in our data chose since-usage when there are more information/explanation to be provided on the action in Clause II. In other words, when less information/explanation is being provided by the writer then because-usage is preferred. This finding relates to Hawkins' (1994) information structure, which can also allow to propose that the explicit inherent duality of meaning of time and reason in *since* means that bilinguals, who are under serious interference from competing equivalence in local languages, are likely to choose since-usage in order to explicitly express *time* and *reason,* usages that might be different from usages in established varieties. More so, the distribution in Clause II further affirm this pattern. In other words, irrespective of the position of because-usage, it is more likely to be structured shorter than since-usage. In (13) and (14), because-clause is placed in second and first positions, and both are shorter when compared to (15) and (16).

(13) In the US, it has become an epidemic because of the proliferation of guns in that society.

(14) Because lawmakers abuse their powers of appropriation, they lose the moral nerves to check the failings of the executive branch.

(15) Since there is high demand for USD which makes Naira to chase USD international trade, CBN should make USD to pursue Naira

(16) Going by the worsening electricity supply situation in the country, whatever measures could be applied to bring about change by way of improved supply is desirable especially since Nigerians had expected to see improved performance under the DISCOs regime so far to no avail.

In (15), there is a relative clause *which makes Naira to chase USD international trade* which is frequently not combined with because-clause in our data. The relative clause shows the tendency by the writer to respond to the explicit demand of *since* to provide more information and explanation that fit into the time and reason property of the since-usage. This cognitive tendency is perhaps reinforced by the usage of since-clause in local Nigerian languages where reason-only alternation between since and because is rare. In another dimension I further investigated the relationship between the

weight of the since/because bearing clause (i.e. the dependent clause) and the weight of the other clause (i.e. the independent clause). Relatedly, Table 2 shows that the overall length of the sentence can as well provide some explanations into the usage choices; because-sentence is more likely to be simpler/shorter than since-sentence. This pattern is a resultant effect already shown in the relation between clause positioning and length, and the tendency for since to express *time* and *reason* rather than *reason* only in because-usage.

As can be seen in Table 2, the tendencies for because-usage to be simpler than since-usage are again demonstrated in which since-dependent-clause (for example, 'since he could not pay the loan', in *since he could not pay the loan, his company was taken over*) and since-independent-clause (for example, *his company was taken over*) are more complex than both because-dependent-clause and because-independent clause. As can be seen, because-dependent clause (for example, 'because he overslept' in *because he overslept, Shade missed the test*) and because-independent clause (i.e. Shade missed the test) are repeatedly shorter (55%) than since-dependent and independent clauses which are repeatedly medium and long lengths (61% and 75%, and 51% and 85% respectively.

Meanwhile the patterning becomes clearer when we examine the distributional pattern in ordering, a variable which also shows significant relation between since/because usage choice and the positioning/movement of dependent and independent clause. Table 2 shows that since-usage is more likely to have an MD structure, while because-usage is more likely to have DM structure. In other words, independent clause is more likely to be placed before since-dependent clause, whereas because-dependent clause is more likely to be placed before the independent clause. Given that both since-dependent and main-independent clauses are usually longer than both because-dependent and because-independent clauses, the movement of these clauses then appears a more systemic matter for rationality expression using *because*.

A cognitive explanation of a natural logic order in which premise should precede conclusion appears to underlie the DM structure in because-usage. A linear natural order in argumentation means that conclusion follows premise, and that if the premise is true, then the conclusion becomes explicit, inferable, and thus requires less scrutiny. Also, because is explicitly a tip-off to argument structure, just as since is explicitly a tip-off for *time-in-reason*.

(17) Because the people hate the policies of the President, they voted him out

(18) Since the people hate the policies of the President, they voted him out

(19) They voted the President out, since the people hate his policies

(20) They voted the President out, because the people hate his policies

Premise is placed before the conclusion in (17) and (18) while the conclusion is placed before the premise in (19) and (20). The argument, which is *the people hate the policies,* is a more of a matter *reason* than a matter of *time in reason* because *how long* the people have hated the policies of the President is less of importance, which implies that (17), which is a because-usage, is a better fit than (18) for such purpose. Furthermore, placing the premise before the conclusion provides a platform for cognitive interaction between the writer/speaker and the reader/hearer. In (17) and (18) the reader/hearer is able to predict a positive or negative conclusion on the basis of the premise stated. Such interaction is possible irrespective of whether *since* or *because* is used, although because-cognitive interaction will only seek out *reason in conclusion* while since-cognitive interaction will only seek out *time and reason in conclusion*.

Text type and alternation

According to the syntactic patterns found in Table 2, there is no enough distinction between academic and media writing to show that a certain usage is more preferred in a certain text over the other. Although the influence of genre/text type is not statistically significant as it were in the univariate analyses presented in Table 2, a different dimension involving bivariate analysis, together with a conceptualisation of genre/text type as a usage (Nikiforidou 2016; Hoffmann & Bergs, 2018). Following this line of thought that genre/text type that is a usage, just as since/because usage, then the extent to which usage choices between since- and because- usage are related to academic-text type and media-text type usage can be become clearer. As can be seen in Table 3, which provides a more detailed and insightful relationship between genre/text type and the alternation, there is clearly a positive relationship between genre/text type and usage choices between since-usage and because-usage.

Table 3

Alternation by genre, weight, causality, and ordering pattern

	since		because		total	
academic						
short	49	33	101	67	150	100
medium	194	55	156	45	350	100
long	24	59	17	*41*	41	100
causality	64	42	91	*58*	155	100
Non-causality	203	*54*	183	46	379	100
Main +dependent	139	*82*	31	18	170	100
Dependent+ main	128	35	243	*65*	364	100
media						
short	66	32	139	68	205	100
medium	162	56	126	44	288	100
long	34	*85*	6	15	40	100
causality	100	*60*	68	40	168	100
Non-causality	162	44	203	*56*	365	100
Main +dependent	138	37	234	*63*	372	100
Dependent+ main	124	*77*	37	23	161	100

A chi square test statistic examining the relation between media/academic sentence length, media/academic meaning type, and media/academic ordering pattern and how these variables relate to choices between since/because usage, shows that there positive relationships. The relation between since/because alternation and these variables are positive; text type sentence length (X2 (5, N = 1074) = 73.2, p=0.000); text type meaning type (X2 (3, N = 1074) = 16.2, p=0.001); and text type structural ordering (X2 (3, N = 1074) = 176, p=0.000). As can be seen in Table 3, a complex/long-structured since-usage is more likely to be realised in a media text type than in an academic text type (85% vs. 59% respectively). On the other hand, a complex/long-structured because-usage is more likely to be realised in an academic text type than in a media text type (45% vs. 15% respectively). Having earlier asserted that since-usage has a semantic tendency to be longer than because-usage, then it is reasonable to assume that the tendency for academic texts to prefer brevity correlates with preference for because-usage.

Furthermore, it can be seen that media writing is more likely to produce causality

since-usage than academic writing (60% vs. 42% respectively), whereas academic writing is more likely to produce causality because-usage than media writing (58% vs. 40% respectively). If we follow the line of thoughts in Hoffmann and Bergs (2018) and conceptualise genre/text type a separate usage, then the FORM-side of media writing ensures that there a mental MEANING-side mapping that answers the questions of WHAT:TIME; WHAT:WHY, and so on. The tendency for media/journalistic writing to ensure a FORM: MEANING mapping explains media writing's high preference for since-usage expressing causality. In addition, as can be seen in Table 3, because-usage expressing non-causality is more likely to be realised in media writing than in academic writing (56% vs. 46% respectively). In other words, media writing automatically deselects causal because-usage, while academic writing prefers this usage.

Another clear distinction made between media and academic writing shows that certain text type prefers certain structural ordering. As can be seen in Table 3, academic text prefers to order since-usage as a main + dependent structure, whereas media writing prefers to order the same usage as dependent + main structure (82% vs. 37% respectively). On the other hand, media writing is more likely to order because-usage as a main + dependent structure, while academic writing is more likely to order the same usage as a dependent + main structure (63% vs. 18% respectively). In other words, in academic writing when a since-usage is chosen, the dependent clause (i.e. the since-clause) is more likely to be placed in a second position, which is the opposite for choice of *because*.

(21) Focused interview of Muslim scholars and Imam's were conducted, to find out if the Muslims are generally pro-violence or pro-terrors, since concepts like extremists, fanatics, fundamentalists, separatists and Islamic militants are often used in describing the terrorists.

(22) Because the government is aware of this, it has to explain its case in enlightenment campaigns in euphemistic and optimistic terms, which other knowledgeable people outside the government may not share.

The above (21-22) usages are examples showing preferred ordering patterns from academic writing, in which because-clause in because usage is often placed in the first position while since-clause in since-usage is often placed in the second

position. On the other hand, media writing does not seem to favour these ordering patterns. In other words, there will be some movement in the positions of clauses in (21) and (22), such that since-clause in since-usage is placed in the first position, and because-clause in because-usage placed in the second position. Of course such movement and positioning is underlined by number a syntactic, pragmatic, discourse, and cognitive factors. For example, Kanteni (2019) and Diessel (2005, 2008) have provided some explanation pointing towards the tendency by writer/speaker to place first that (reason or conclusion) which needs more focus. As can be seen in Table 3, this tendency to focalise that constituent of the narrative (i.e. reason + conclusion or conclusion + reason; cause + effect or effect + cause) is demonstrated in both academic and media writing, albeit the choice of usage to do so is significantly different between the text types.

Concluding remarks and a semantic schema for *since*

The present study has shown that alternation in the since/because rationality usage involves operations that are characterised with a combination of syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, discourse and cognitive factors all working simultaneously. The fact that only a small number of usage of since/because usage can actually interchange suggests that the kind of rationality alternation studied herein is less a matter of deliberate choice than it is for genitive alternation, preposition placement or particle placement. Unlike *because* which has only one meaning (i.e. the expression of reason), *since* has two meanings, the first being expression of *reason* and the other being the expression of *time.* In other words, unlike *because* which only equates *+ reason, since* has capacity in itself to alternate between three usages.

(a) Since = (+ time) + (+ reason)

(b) Since = (+ time) - reason

(c) Since = (+ reason) - time, which = because x (+ reason)

Also, the present study has proposed a methodological test of substitution, which allows for the identification of all the variants of since- and because- usage expressing alternation in rationality. In other words, alternation in rationality usage is beyond structural composition, such that variants such as *it is because, because of, because x NP* are not syntactically but semantically equivalents of *since*, which is not morphologically

variable enough to allow for such usage as *it is since,* and *since of.*

In addition to providing basic understanding on the nature and working of since/because alternation in new varieties of English, the study has clearly shown that the alternation is not conditioned by the semantic and pragmatic outputs of the usage. The study did not find a positive relation between meaning type (i.e. usages expressing causality or non-causality) and structural choice (i.e. since versus because). In other words, it is found that since- and because- usage freely alternate in expressing cause-effect actions and non-cause-effect actions which include conditionality. In (23), *because lives are routinely violated by criminals masquerading as herdsmen* simply proffer a premise explicating the conclusion placed in the main clause *security is virtually non-existent.* Whereas in (24) there is a cause (i.e. the resignation of Professor Attahiru Jega as INEC Chairman) and effect (vacancy in the leadership of INEC).

(23) Security is virtually non-existent because lives are routinely violated by criminals masquerading as herdsmen.

(24) Since Prof. Attahiru Jega made good his promise not to continue with the job when his tenure expired in June, the position of the chairman of the electoral body has been vacant.

It is surprising that a semantically driven alternation is not found to be conditioned by the types of meaning being expressed. Unlike expression of causality/non-causality, the study found that since-because alternation is conditioned by (1) weight/length/structural complexity, a variable operationalised in different dimensions, structural ordering (i.e. main + dependent versus dependent + main order), and (3) genre/text type (i.e. structural patterns between academic and media writing). As can be seen in Table 3, and throughout the analyses which blend concepts from corpus-based and cognitive usage grammar, it is shown that text type/genre, in consideration of weight and structural order, might be the strongest variable that allows penetration into cognitive operation underlying the alternation of since/because rationality. Although the analyses presented here combined quantitative and qualitative measures, more data and analyses involving regression analyses might present a different scenario.

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THE STATUS OF ENGLISH IN MOROCCO: LESSONS FROM SPONTANEOUS DEBATES IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

Morocco, a multilingual country with historical and geo-political legacies, has opened a hot debate on languages recently. Within this debate, this article investigates spontaneous comments in social media on languages in Morocco, especially adopting English as a first foreign language. It aims to bring this topic to the surface and thus discuss it in the light of research on language attitudes and language awareness. To do so, it analyses the reactions to texts about the declarations by the Minister of Higher Education shared in social networks and sites. The data consisting of 2,018 comments is classified according to 12 frequent patterns whose frequencies are calculated. The findings show that most of Moroccans have positive attitudes towards English while some show opposing reactions towards French. These participants hold ambivalent opinions about the rest of languages used in Morocco; however, they tend to insist on Morocco having a clear language policy which, seemingly, prioritises the mother tongues, Arabic and Amazigh. The discussions show that some investigated reactions are mitigated as they may be illusionary.

Key words: social media, language attitudes, policy, Morocco

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French and English are the two main foreign languages taught in Morocco in addition to the two official languages, Arabic and Amazigh. They are also used as mediums of instruction in many disciplines. The replacement of French with English has been a hot debate in Morocco over the last decade. For historical reasons, this topic has become a sensitive issue as France, through the Francophonie, tries to maintain its economic and cultural interests in Africa in general and in Morocco in particular. Recently, due to different political, economic, and social factors, a debate questioning the status of each language in Morocco came to the surface.

Specifically, this debate on the status of English in Morocco got hotter in the last decade after Minister Daoudi's various declarations. During his term in the office, the Minister of Higher Education, Lahcen Daoudi (2012-2016) never failed to call for the use of English in technology and scientific research in Morocco. He mainly declared in different official meetings that "English is the language of technology and scientific research *par excellence*". Later when he was addressing students in Ibnou Zohr University in Agadir, he declared that "a student who does not master English should dig his / her own grave". He even issued a circular in which he requires publishing in English as a prerequisite for doctorate viva and reasonable knowledge of English for recruitment in higher education. These calls from officials and policy makers were widely reported by the media and interpreted by their readers as a call for making of English a first foreign language. Social network sites (SNSs), especially online newspapers and websites such as Morocco World News and Hespress, made of such declarations platforms for generating long discussions about the feasibility of this project and reviving the discussions of languages in Morocco. Such social networks represent alternative options for people to express their opinions and put pressure on policy makers (Anderson, 2008). Within this framework, this study aims to analyse the comments generated in different SNSs as reactions to the Minister's declarations. It mainly examines the extent to which people are aware of the implications of adopting English as a first foreign language in Morocco. Since people are not asked to give their opinions through any type of survey, it is important to study people's spontaneous comments on the adoption of English language as the first foreign language (instead of French as some understood it!). Generally, the study explores these comments to understand the attitudes of Moroccans towards language issues in Morocco and mainly to discuss them. It addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of people towards adopting English as a first foreign language in Morocco?
2. What are their attitudes towards the languages in use in Morocco?

Theoretical background

This study is informed by two main frameworks that help with the answer to the research questions, namely the language policy as set by the official documents and the previous research on the attitudes of the Moroccans towards the languages in use in Morocco. The official documents and the official discourse have always insisted on the teaching of both the mother tongues and the foreign languages. The National Charter of Education and Training (COSEF, 1999) set the main guidelines of the Moroccan language policy. Lever 9, or Articles 110 to 118 in this Charter, gives cues of a language policy that boost the mastery of Arabic, encourage learning foreign languages, and call for opening to Amazigh. It urges policy makers to facilitate access to foreign languages at an early age to equip learners with necessary language skills. Later the same calls occurred in subsequent reforms such as the Emergency Plan (MoE, 2008) which provides an action plan with a timeline and a budget of implementation. Similarly, the Strategic Vision 2015-2030 (Higher Council, 2015) and the Framework Law 51.17 (Law 51.17, 2019) reiterate the earlier hopes and claims; however, the Amazigh status changed in the meantime as it gained the status of an official language in the 2011 Constitution. The optimal objective of the official documents cited thus far is to: "ensure that students at the end of high school master the Arabic language, communicate in the Amazigh language, know at least two foreign languages" as reported in the Strategic Vision 2015-2030 (Higher Council, 2015, p. 17) and reiterated in the 51.17 Law (Law 51.17, 2019 in Article 32). Recently, the New Model of Development (New Model of Development, 2021) did the same with an addition of suggesting and naming English as a foreign in vocational training institutions.

Officials and different decision makers have stressed the importance of English to the Moroccan education system. As mentioned above, the Minister of Higher Education, Lahcen Daoudi, not only raised the importance of English to technological and scientific research to Moroccan researchers but also took actions to reinforce its implementation. The current Minister, Said Amzazi, has taken actions, too. He started discussions with the US Ambassador to Morocco to strengthen English in Moroccan schools and universities

(Hatim, 2020). He also launched in collaboration with British Council a project of 43-episode radio programme that helps Moroccan learners study English (Bigo, 2021). Another strong action that boosts the presence of English and the Anglo-Saxon education orientation is the appointment of Driss Ouaouicha, a PhD holder from an American university and a former Dean, vice-President, and President of Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane which has adopted English as a medium of instruction since its creation in 1995, as a Minister Delegate to the current Minister, Said Amzazi, in charge of Higher Education and Scientific Research. This appointment has given a boost to the implementation of a four-year Bachelor programme to replace the three-year Licence system adopted by Morocco in 2003 to align with the Bologna Process. In this new Bachelor, English is taught for four semesters to all university students in lieu of the Licence system which abolished English in the tertiary level and maintained the dominance of French (Bouziane, 2013).

In parallel with the official calls, the civil society voiced the same stance. The Rabat Center for Political and Strategic Studies issued a report which called for replacing French with English in the Moroccan system of education (Arbaoui, 2015). Similar initiatives have been taken by both official and non-official organisations as documented in a blog titled, *Morocco and the English Language Debate* (2018). The continuous calls by politicians to urge Moroccans to learn English to use it for international communication and scientific research have created an endless debate that started in the offline and has continued in the online world (Baker, 2013). This article analyses the online debate that followed Daoudi's declarations.

The main theory that informs this study is the one of attitudes. Language attitudes' theory is associated with people's reactions towards language policy. According to Ajzen (2005): "[a]n attitude is a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution or event." (p. 3). The same author adds that "attitude is a hypothetical construct that, being inaccessible to direct observation, must be inferred from measurable responses" (ibid.). Thus, attitudes are interactions which reflect emotions, beliefs or/and thoughts that one does, says, acts or reacts on what others do or say. In the process of forming attitudes, it is very important to distinguish between three components of an attitude (McKenzie, 2010). The cognitive which encompasses individual's thoughts and beliefs about the world, and this might include stereotypes and prejudices; the affective which includes emotional responses towards language and it is always associated with

kinds of verbalized or nonverbalized feelings (Eiser, 2001); and the conative which means readiness and predisposition to behave in a particular way. This study tries to infer attitudes from spontaneous reactions, triggered by the self, to an issue that interests their writers and their communities (ethnic group, family, children, relatives…).

Within the framework of attitudes, previous literature has highlighted the important status of English in Morocco. An empirical study by Bouziane (2021) documents the Moroccan university learners' enthusiasm to learn English and how they consider it a vector of their own and their country's development. She compares the views of the students who receive their education in English as a medium of instruction from private and public institutions (n = 462). She has found that both groups believe in the contribution of English to the development of Morocco in the areas of economic growth, academic success, scientific research and R&D, international communication, mobility, and employability. However, unlike their public peers, the students in the private sector view English as an asset in their employability together with French. Similarly, other studies have shown that the Moroccan students hold positive attitudes towards English (Sadiqi, 1988; Bouzidi, 1989; Anderson, 2013; Buckner, 2011; Et-tahiri, 2019; Bouziane, 2020a). Such attitudes should be cautiously considered. Generally, the Moroccan students' attitudes are based on instrumental motives towards the learning of foreign languages, particularly English. The position of English at the international scene, its role in having access to updated online and print resources, attracting foreign direct investments and tourists, getting more job opportunities and promotion in jobs, and mobility are among the reasons put forward by these students in the surveys of the above-cited studies. They all show their willing to learn other languages; however, Buckner (2011) argues that the upper-class learn English to maintain their prestige while the lower-class do so to escape their low level in other languages and to seek positions as teachers of English. Importantly, the learning of foreign languages in Morocco is more determined by factors related to intrinsic motivation and social class (Buckner, 2011; Bouziane, 2020a, 2020b) than to the language policy put in place by the decision makers (Bouziane, 2020a). All these factors that contribute to the Moroccans' attitudes towards languages, and specifically towards English, are tackled in this article through their reactions to the calls of reinforcing English in the Moroccan education system. The methodology of research explains more.

Research methodology

This study adopts netnography as a strategy of research. According to Kozinets (2019), this strategy "adapts the method of ethnography and other qualitative research practices to the cultural experiences that encompass and are reflected within the traces, networks, and systems of social media" (p. 19). Accordingly, this study tries to study the attitudes towards languages in the Moroccans' interactions in social media. Naturally, ethics are observed in this study despite their complexities in online materials. Martin & Christin (2016) have discussed whether the online materials are public or private. They conclude that "In instances where group membership is large, easy to join and widely understood to be monitored, then there is a strong argument that information provided therein is essentially public in nature." (p. 86). The sites used for data collection have the characteristics raised by these authors. Although the Australian Statement on Ethical Conduct on Human Research (NHMRC, 2018) makes it clear that consent is required when using content from the internet, a different view limits the boundaries as to when to consider this content to be private: "The discussion on the blurred boundaries between public and private data highlighted the increasing demand by ethics boards to require consent for the use of quotes and narratives published by users online." (Maddox, 2021, p. 40). Neither quotes nor narratives are used in this study and no participant's identity is disclosed.

To study spontaneous online comments, some SNSs were identified as potential spaces in which the Moroccans are likely to discuss the Minister's declarations such as *Hespress*, *Morocco World News* (English and Arabic versions), YouTube and other less popular websites. Both Hespress and Morocco World News are two Moroccan online newspapers which contain all the components of an online newspaper such as news, culture, society, business, economy, health, opinions, and sports. The identified online websites gave people from different walks of life opportunities to express, discuss and exchange views on the issue of language. The Minister's declarations were discussed in 55 publications of different genres such as news reports, essays, assignments, analytical articles, interviews, and videos. These media publications generated 2,018 comments which were collected for this study. The data was systematically collected five days after the publication of an article or a video in the identified sites. However, it should be noted that the contents of the 55 publications are not included in the data of this study.

Data analysis

Although netnography is widely used for big data analysis and mostly for business purposes (see for example Kozinets & Gambetti, 2021), this strategy informs this study too. However, unlike the big data analyses which use software programmes for automated data processing, the use of a software programme in this study was impractical. The interactions came out in different scripts and languages: Standard Arabic, *Darija* (Moroccan dialect), French, English, Darija written in Latin scripts, code-switching comments, or those in text messaging. Thus, they were categorised manually following these steps: (1) after reading part of the data, some patterns revealing attitudes towards languages occurred, (2) these patterns were coded and classified and as new patterns occurred, they were added to the list (3) then the frequency of each pattern was calculated and put in a graph. The comments are classified in twelve recurrent views expressed in the ongoing debate regardless of the emotional state of the people who participated in the discussion. The following list was identified:

1. English is the language of technological progress and scientific research.
2. English is an international language (lingua franca).
3. French is an outdated language.
4. Morocco should have adopted English years ago.
5. Morocco should adopt Arabic and English.
6. Morocco should adopt Amazigh and English.
7. Morocco should keep French and English.
8. French is the language of the coloniser
9. The Francophone lobby is strong in Morocco.
10. Morocco should have a clear language policy.
11. Decision makers do not take reform in education seriously.
12. Out-of- topic or irrelevant comments

The categories used in the analysis of the data are crucial to the discussion of the findings of this research. They are used for two purposes. The first is purely methodological; they show the recurrent patterns that are expressed in these comments and help with their grouping. The second is to work out attitudes from the frequencies of the expressed patterns.

Findings

As mentioned above, this study aims to analyse the attitudes of the Moroccans towards adopting English as a first foreign language and, by the same token, their attitudes towards languages in use in Morocco as revealed in their interactions in the SNSs. The comments show that most commentators hold positive attitudes towards English as the following figure shows:

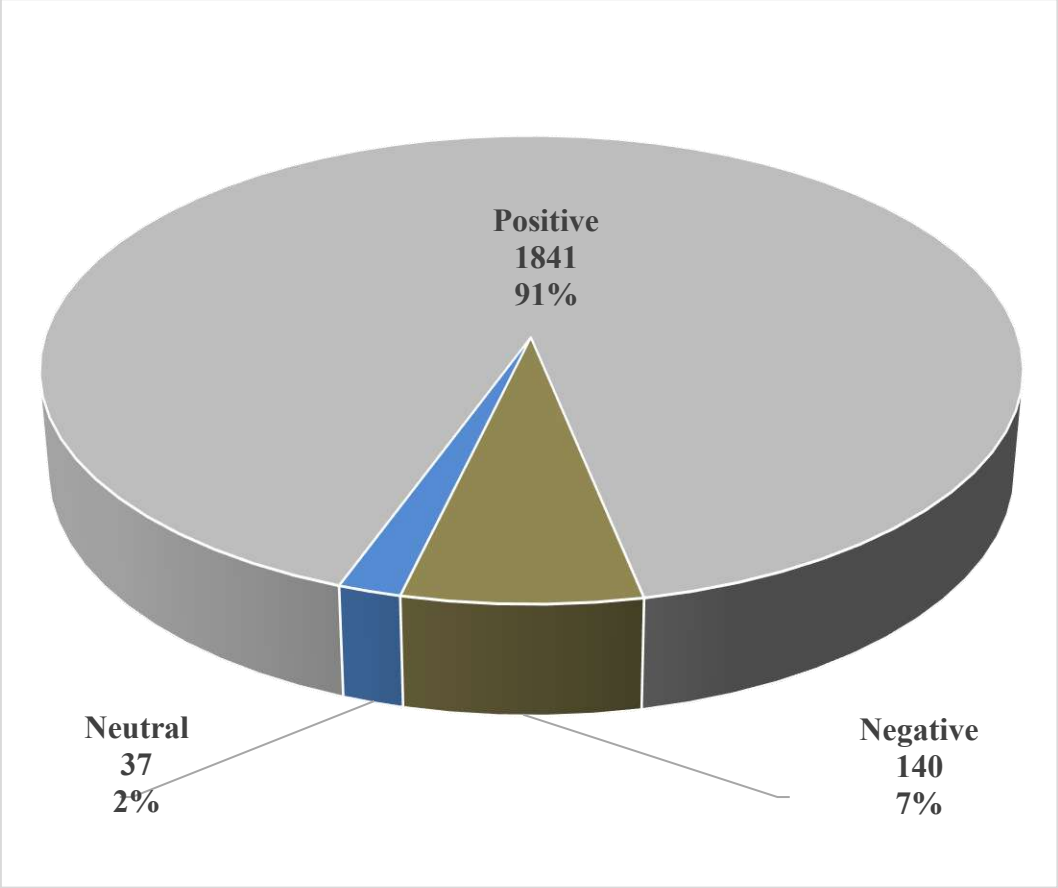

Figure 1. Attitudes towards English

Figure 1 shows that the highest number of comments carries positive attitudes towards English in Morocco. However, these people used different ways to voice their positive attitudes. In some comments, people would show their full agreement with the Minister or would urge the decision makers to act, or else would claim that English is useful for development, technology, scientific research, tourism, or economic growth, etc. They demonstrate implicitly and explicitly different levels of awareness regarding the issue of language policy in Morocco. In a wider perspective, Figure 2 illustrates the twelve arguments which represent the attitudes of people towards language issues in Morocco.

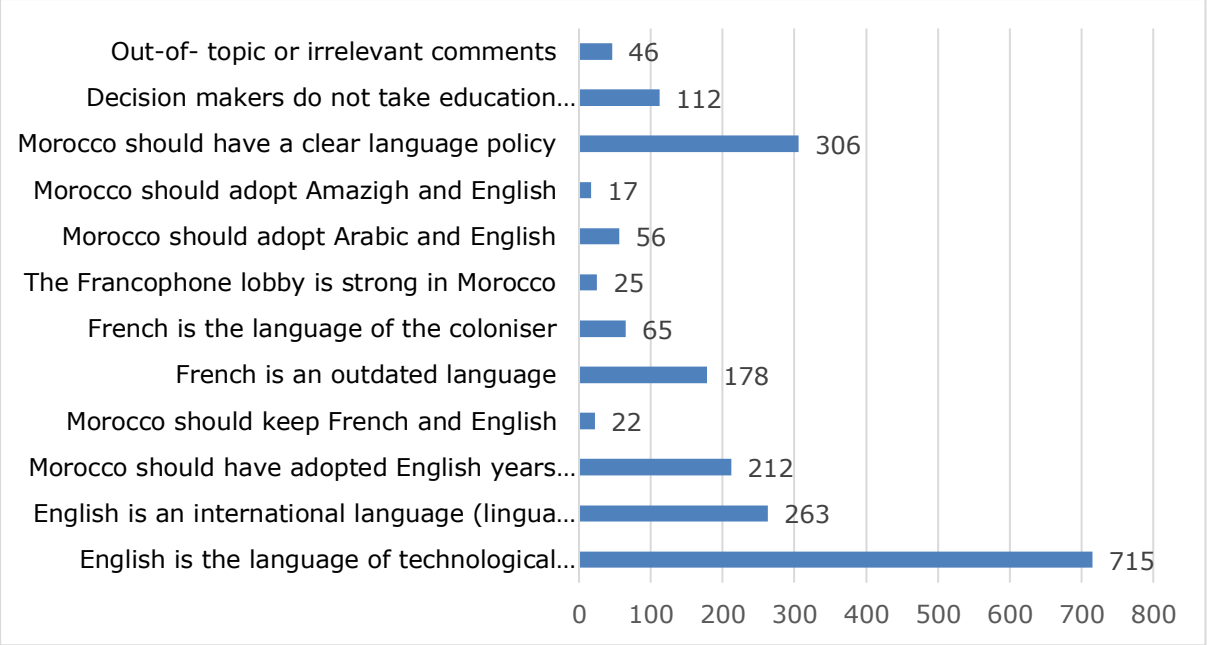

Figure 2. The frequency of the twelve patterns in SNS comments

Most comments in Figure 2 have focused on English (59%). The Moroccans share the idea that English is important for technology and scientific research, international communication and that Morocco should act quickly and adopt English. Noticeably, this focus comes at the detriment of other languages. Very few people have chosen the combination of another language with English as they show reservation in adopting any of the other languages in use in Morocco, namely Arabic, Amazigh, or French. French tends to be the least preferred language by the commentators as they not only refuse to keep it in addition to English but they consider it to be outdated and would like to reduce its dominance in Morocco. Although the comments were on foreign languages, the commentators did not fail to raise the issues related to the official languages and to widen the discussion to include language policy and education reform.

The commentators have discussed many aspects that provide adequate answers to the research questions. First, the results show that there is a significant proportion of Moroccans who hold positive attitudes towards adopting English while others maintain negative attitudes towards the status of French in Morocco. Second, many respondents back up the priority of promoting the mother tongue before adopting a foreign language. Third, some comments reflect a certain knowledge about language policy. Finally, a close look at the comments reveals some interesting facts. It shows that the frequency of comments is closely related to the language of the text and the popularity of the website.

Texts written in Arabic stimulated more reactions than those written in other languages. Hespress generated most interactions; for example, eleven articles generated 1,482 comments (73.4%) among which the top ones received 244 and 205 comments. The comments in English seem well thought and their writers are aware of the language policy in place. Interactions in French are rare and the SNSs in French that deal with language issues seem almost inexistent.

Discussion

The findings of this research bring to the fore some interesting issues related to the attitudes towards languages and the languages in use in Morocco. They pave the way for further discussions that will clarify some misconceptions prevailing in the online comments.

Discussions in Social network websites

Recently, the SNSs have become an area of research as they have democratised information. They offer alternative platforms to people to react to areas of their interests. They sometimes serve as a means of putting pressure on policy makers to act in accordance with recurrent views and attitudes. In the case of this study, the articulated views about foreign languages, and particularly about English, have helped to bring the attitudes the Moroccans hold towards the issues of language policy offline to the online environment (Steinert-Threlkeld et al, 2015). Being spontaneous, these views must voice their producers' opinions as Hampton, Shin, & Lu (2017) confirm Hampton's (2015) *persistent contact* and *pervasive awareness* when they write: "Social media increasingly make ties from offline contexts persistent online and make awareness of the opinions, interests, and activities of these ties pervasive" (p. 1104). To confirm their pervasive awareness which provides "multiplexity, transitivity, and social presence" (Hampton, 2015, p. 12) and escape the fear of voicing an opposing view in face-to-face settings or the *spiral of silence* as termed by Hampton et al. (2014), most commentators use nicknames that are unlikely to disclose their identities. Such a framework of keeping in touch despite distances and voicing opinions online with more freedom informs the dynamism of discussions in the investigated SNSs in this study. The sequence of the views is far from being a thread of discussion. Accordingly, instead of interacting with the other

members' comments in the studied SNSs, the commentators have used the online space of discussion like a bulletin board in which they put up their opinions without drawing on previous postings or even referring to them. In addition, many postings are not related to the text on which they comment. The only instances in which sequential interactions occurred are those in which language ideologies and conflicts are involved.

Attitudes towards English

It is not surprising that many people consider English the key to success and fame (Deng, 2015). Moroccans are no exception. Their comments in SNSs reveal that they view English as a passport to digital and technological revolution in many industries and sectors. Quite similar views and inclination to English are confirmed by Moroccan youth (n = 1,211 aged between 15 and 25) (British Council, 2021). The Moroccans tend to believe that shifting language will be a leading key to economic growth. However, there is no evidence that shows that English is distinct from other languages and thus has an impact on economic development. The rise of English and its widespread might make some illusionary links between the economic growth and the language itself. The measurement of the impact of languages especially English on economic development is too complex (Coleman, 2011, TESOL Quarterly, 2002 *inter alias*). Therefore, the findings are not based on solid evidence that English directly contributes to the development of a particular country. Some studies such as Jain (2011), Grin (2013), and Laitin & Ramachandran (2014), to cite a few, show that English plays a minor role in country development and economic growth.

The main claim that has been put forward in the findings is that of English being a language of technological progress and scientific research. This claim should be taken with care, however. Montgomery (2013) explains why some people think that English is the language of scientific and academic research. He argues that researchers who use English are more advantageous than those who use their native languages. English is crucial for scientists and academics to have access to material written or published in English. In fact, Bouziane (2021) reviews some bibliometric studies on the scientific publications in English in the domains that Morocco prioritises and has found that their percentages range from 90% to 100%. For example, among the publications on COVID-19 (19,991 publications by both native and non-native speakers) that appeared from

December 2019 to June 2020, 93.8% are in English (Kumara, Kumar, & Vinay, 2021). Therefore, those who do not master English may find it difficult to catch up with the rapid progress of research. Regardless of the importance of English in the field of scientific research, some countries managed to develop a long tradition in scientific research without using English. The Royal Society (2011) predicted the rise of China's, together with other countries', contribution to "the increasingly multipolar scientific world" (p. 5) and thus it might surpass the UK in the coming years. Similarly, Deng (2015) claims that Germany, Japan, China, and Russia are some countries that have developed long traditions in scientific research without depending on English as a crucial language for the development of their countries. Therefore, it remains quite fallacious to claim that if policy makers adopt English, Morocco will join the leading countries in scientific research.

English not only has dominated international scientific publications but also has established itself as a universal language (Bidlake, 2008). The wide spread of English as the language of international communication has an impact on their perception of the English as it is expressed in the comments under focus. Nevertheless, it is not practical to implement a language because it is a *lingua franca* (House, 2003).

Attitudes towards French

Most comments about French emanate from affective attitudes which are mostly voiced in a resentful tone. These comments express the view of the Moroccans who think that French is an outdated language of the coloniser. Such an attitude can be explained in the light of the state of alienation (Cox, 1998) as people who do not master French feel they are excluded (Bullock, 2014). Besides the state of alienation, ideological affiliations play an important role in the construction of attitudes. Ideology is a major factor in shaping people's opinions about a particular subject and, thus, attitudes are the reflection of these opinions (Wortham, 2001). The claims in some comments that raise that French is the language of laicism or that French is not Morocco's national language reflect some attitudes that prevail in the society about the status of French in Morocco as some people think it sustains social class discrimination. Within the framework of ideology, the Moroccans' preference of English to French may stem from the status of both languages in Morocco and worldwide. While French is directly associated with the coloniser in

Morocco (Buckner, 2011; Chakrani & Huang, 2014; Ben Haman, 2021 *inter alias*), Coleman (2010) describes English as a neutral language.

In this same vein, pan-Arabists usually believe that there is a francophone conspiracy against the development of Arabic and, by extension, of the country that uses it (Ives, 2004). However, these arguments seem too simplistic if seen from a macro or institutional perspective. There are many realistic factors which if put together would dictate the language choice in Morocco. These factors include the economic dependence of Morocco on France as a first economic partner, the duplication of its education system, the historical relations between the two countries, adopting French as a language of business in Morocco, and the insufficient logistics to shift from French to English. All these elements make it too difficult for Morocco, at least in the coming years, to shift its interest from French to English or even develop its official languages to compete with the leading languages.

Language and identity

Different attitudes towards languages in Morocco and their relation to identities are full of intricacies that may be beyond this article. However, identities shape language choices of individuals as well as those of communities. The findings in this study echo the three trends of language identity advocated in Morocco as identified by (Benmamoun, 2001, p. 95) but with softened discourse. A trend that claims adopting classical Arabic only and eliminating French especially in the education system still prevails in some comments. Unlike in 2001, these advocates either have become advocates of English or have softened their discourse. Another trend that promotes Amazigh as a component of the Moroccan identity has been recurrent. Apart from a few radicals (see below), this trend claims generalising the Amazigh language in all schools and granting this language its real status of an official language (see further discussion below). The last trend that started from the premises that "the question of language policy should be framed in pragmatic developmental terms" (Benmamoun, 2001, p. 104) is the most prevailing. The advocates of this trend consider French or another foreign language a means of maintaining Morocco's interests with other countries and keeping it abreast of technological and research updates. It seems that this openness to foreign languages has outweighed English over French.

As mentioned above, the proponents of Arabic believe that there is a conspiracy against Arabic and claim that Arabic should be implemented properly. Although the issue of Arabisation has not been directly raised in the comments, it has its share in the slowdown of the Moroccan education system because it has not been appropriately implemented (Boutieri, 2016). The status of Arabic is far more complex because for Moroccans "Arabic is the language which represents them and with which they project their identity in the world. This being the case, however, reality shows the reverse." (Loutfi, 2020). Despite so many publications on this issue (see for example Ennaji, 2005), this area of Arabic, identity and language choice needs further research.

Advocates of the Amazigh have shown diverse attitudes. Some see the focus on Arabic and Arabisation as a continuity of marginalising the Amazigh language. They think that the policy makers are not serious in the implementation of this language (Zouhir, 2014; Alalou, 2018). Realistically, Morocco does not suffer from the lack of a comprehensive vision of the role of Amazigh; rather, it suffers from the lack of adequate human resources and infrastructure for its gradual implementation and, especially, of more support from the government and the Moroccan youth who relate success to English and French (Schwed, 2017). Some calls for revitalising the Amazigh are launched (Boukous, 2011; Idhssaine, 2021) especially for the sake of preserving it for future generations (El Kirat, 2008). "Amazigh activists are asking the government and the parliament to enact further laws for the implementation of their language" Jaafari (2019, p. 129) stated. Other advocates of Amazigh see in Arabic an alien language and they prefer the adoption of English only as an alternative to Arabic. More radically, a few comments in favour of Amazigh are loaded with hateful views towards Arabic language. The writers of these comments consider Arabic the language of the "coloniser" which must be abolished from being used in "Amazigh land", meaning free people's land.

Adding English to French is another argument. Advocates of this trend argue that Morocco has long relations with France and other French-speaking countries in Africa. They consider adding English will enable Morocco to improve its relations with other English-speaking countries, especially with the new interest in Africa after Morocco's renewal of diplomatic and political relations with African countries (Charai, 2016). Generally, the Moroccans' attitudes towards foreign languages are triggered by instrumental motives (Buckner, 2011; Bouziane, 2020a and 2020b, *inter alias*).

Language policy and language conflicts

Many other comments express clear criticism to the policies of the state. They put the blame on the role of the state in designing inaccurate policies. They raise that the real problem in Moroccan educational system is the lack of the necessary tools for the implementation of an appropriate language policy. These people argue that English or any other language alone cannot improve the educational system and develop the economy of the country. They believe that language is just a minor factor in solving the problem (Laitin & Ramachandran, 2014). They think that the problem of language cannot be solved unless Moroccan officials consider the problem of designing an effective language policy to be a priority. In fact, Morocco needs a formalised policy which makes the teaching of languages coherent together with concrete mechanisms of implementation of this policy (Bouziane, 2018).

Strikingly, the investigated comments show that the Moroccans involved in this study tend to adhere more to an *either-or* than to a *both-and* perspective regarding languages. They failed to show an attitude of adopting the existing languages from a complementary stance. Their comments tend to reveal that an introduction of a language in the Moroccan linguistic scene should take place at the detriment of another existing language. For example, they failed to see that adding English to other existing languages is a source of empowerment and that all the languages should be welcome. Kachoub (2021), through the frequent use of English in the ads, considers that "in Morocco these four languages [Amazigh, Arabic, French, and English] do not seem to be at odds with one another, but rather to be used in complementary ways." (p. 231). She also considers that English is spreading non-formally at a large scale in Morocco and thus it is becoming an additional language.

Conclusion

This study started with the premise of investigating the Moroccans' attitudes towards the issue of languages via their comments in SNSs. The purpose of investigating these comments is to check whether Moroccans are aware of the complexity of the issues related to language policy or they hold impressionistic arguments that need more refinements. The findings of the study show that most Moroccans who commented on the

online materials under study hold positive attitudes towards English. The arguments put forward to implement it in the education system, in lieu of French, evolve round English having an important role in boosting technological progress and scientific research, providing opportunities of employability and international openings. However, other languages have been raised, too. The advocates of Arabic or Amazigh did not fail to voice their worries about their respective language preference. The language that received the least preference, and most criticism, is French. The discussions of the findings have mitigated many of the arguments adopted by the commentators. Such arguments have been shown to be founded on impressionistic views that need further scrutiny. The beliefs that English is the key to development, and implicitly to boost the quality of the education system, may be illusionary. The Moroccans need to benefit from experiences in other countries and from the re-introduction of French over the last years in the Moroccan system to replace Arabic that had been implemented through Arabisation for decades.

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"MY NAME TO ME A SADNESS WEARS:" SELF AND OTHER ACCORDING TO *DIARY BY E. B. B.*

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Abstract

This paper dwells on the issue of selfhood in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Diary* (1831 – 1832). It explores individuation against three major presences in the poetess's life: her father (and family), Hugh Stuart Boyd, and literature. The employed strategy of research includes a phenomenological (interspersed with feminist touches) focus on select excerpts from the *Diary* which reveal the writer's concern for *Self* as the recognition of the priority of a precursory *Other*. Observations are made on the limits of human perception, time and space as human variables, the ontological essence of interpretation, and memory as a premise for cognizing life as care. A rare example of prose-fiction in the poetess's oeuvre, her diary could be read as an instance of simultaneous self-nullification and self-affirmation, which offers possibilities for a dialectical definition of female genius as dialogue through narrative.

Keywords: Elizabeth Barrett Barret (Browning), diary, Self, Other, care, guilt, death, hermeneutics

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A Thought for a Background

To write with confidence on the apriority of the *I–Thou* relationship with respect to the diary of one of many traumatized, precocious, and devotionally self-abnegating Victorian literary daughters (25 at the commencement of this venture) seems like a precarious undertaking. The stakes: Martin Buber's foundational research on the matter. Implying the eternity of Jesus's unsurpassed redemptive concern for man, Buber propounds reciprocity inherent in the anthropology of love: 'Love does not cling to the *I* in such a way as to have the *Thou* only for its "content," its object; but love is **between** *I* and *Thou'* (Buber, 1937, pp. 14-15; emphasis added). One of the momentous cues of Buber's Christological interest in drawing a demarcation line between *I–It* and *I–Thou* is his argument regarding the mutual responsiveness as oughtness in the 'natural' combinational element of the latter as opposed to the 'natural' divisional essence of the former (p. 24). If an allusion be permitted, Elizabeth Barrett's diary (1831–1832) could be interpreted as a compendium of her excruciating confessions about the impossibility of attaining selfhood out of touch with an Other who she foregrounded in designing the ethico-aesthetic premise of her own being.

Early enough (June 11th – 12th, 1831), Barrett prefigured a Buberian clinging to a better Other in validating her own life. A heteroglot narrator livestreams and dramatizes her environment, her fear of leaving home, and her irredeemable sense of inferiority[1]:

> Can I not still look unto **the hill from whence cometh my hope**? **That hope is a hope of spiritual blessing**; but I have found & «known» it to be one of **temporal comfort** also! Walked out with **Bummy & Arabel**, on the «bank» on the other side of the water. Strangers may soon walk there, with other feelings than mine. Bummy asked why I seemed grave. … **Papa in better spirits**. How often I thought of Mr. Boyd today! He is the only person in this neighborhood, whom it will affect my happiness to leave. **I shall be very sorry to leave Eliza Cliffe** «**but not unhappy. *Why did I scratch that out? — Let me be honest, If I cant be wise!*** »

[1] Elizabeth Barrett's original spelling and punctuation, as in the extant manuscript of her diary, have been adhered to (with all of the writer's own linguistic infelicities of quoting from other sources), following the edition of *Diary by E. B. B* referenced hereby (and abbreviated as *UDEBB*), and considering the editors' full notation. The conventionally accepted abbreviation "EBB" has been employed to address the poetess. The Brownings' correspondence has been referred to as "*BC*", followed by the respective date(s), volumes, and pages.

> … **Must [Mr. Boyd] not care a good deal for me**, … ? And in the case of caring <u>at all</u> for me, must he not wish, «for» his own sake, to «live» near me, wherever I am? **I shall never get any «certainty, by» this interrogative system**. Hope says one thing; & «Fear», another, in reply! **– If we do leave this dear place** , what a consolation it wd. be to me, not to leave besides, **the dearest & most valued friend I have in the world** «*!!*» – ***But God's will be done in all things***. ***I wish those words were as clearly written in my heart, as on*** «***my***» ***paper – in spite of my alleged illegibility!*** **– No letters today** – **[Papa] is not in good spirits**; & I am not in great ones. Now I am going down to prayers! «bell» ringing! — Read ***nothing but the Bible*** today. (*UDEBB*, pp. 12-13, emphases added)

Until the end of her life EBB seems to have remained coy about, and dissatisfied with, her diary which she abandoned unexpectedly. Having lasted for less than a year (4th June 1831 – April 23rd 1832), it documents her agonizing infatuation with the blind scholar and neighbor H. S. Boyd, her anxiety about her father's diminishing health and financial affairs, the loss of her poetic cradle (Hope End, the family estate), her recollections of her mother (who died 7th October 1828), her growing curiosity about literature, and her insatiable zest for knowledge. As can be inferred from the emphasized parts of the current excerpt, the *Diary* provides priceless information about the poetess's insurmountable hunger for affection, her self-identification in familial terms, as well as her ultimate doubt about her worth as a servant of God, of truth and of the pen. EBB commemorates a 'hill' (a pun on Cinnamon Hill in Jamaica, the family estate, and the intervention of divine help; *UDEBB*, p. 12, note 1), her maternal aunt (Bummy), one of her junior sisters (Arabel), father Edward Barrett Moulton-Barrett (Papa), Hugh Stuart Boyd, and Eliza Cliffe (a neighbor who painted a portrait of EBB). And just as in a poem of 1838 titled *To E. W. Cliffe Painting My Picture*, when in a self-reflective gush the poetess imagines herself dead ('And when my lips are mute & faded – / And when my brows are cold & shaded,' ll. 11-12), questioning the verity and efficacy of a piece of art ('Albeit each line & hue agree – / It will not long resemble me,' ll. 7-8), in her *Diar*y, discovered as late as 1961, she doubts her own ability to do justice to herself as a friend, as a member of the family, and as a writer. She interrogates her own sincerity of mind, her confirmed Christianity, and her right of authorship – all traits of her striving outside the confines of her own being, written self-recitation, and toward an external interlocutor as a bona fide moral corrective.

What a Diary Could Give

EBB's quest for a better Other was founded on literary role models she would interpret forever in her diary: Pindar, Shakespeare, Marie de France, The Bible, St Gregory Nazianzen, Madame De Staël, Mary Shelley, Ann Radcliffe etc. Pivotal was the role of father Barrett. The poetess regarded her own writing as a duty to humanity. Her diary betrays incompletion and self-denigration, yet achievement and self-parade. From a phenomenological angle of looking, the quoted excerpt contains a conundrum: a *post eventum* preservation of experiences through narrative based on actual memory, and narrative as immediacy *in eventu*, a 'cognitive instrument' of composition which conditions the very 'possibility of the event', as Paul Ricoeur argues in *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Ricoeur, 2006, pp. 241, 246). Through her diary EBB sculpted her especial grasp of existence as conversation and responsibility in a 'bipolar model of signifier and signified' (p. 247), securing a peculiar mutual complementation between Self and Other, confessor and confidant, or author and recipient, always seeking for an interlocutor.

Expertise feminism has been especially sensitive to point out diurnal life-writing as the 'right' type of creative expression of woman (Kaplan, 1999, p. 75) in the period 1830 – 1860 whereby woman sought to serve some great cause. EBB's diary is an instance of feminine self-analysis as homage to a loftier authority: God, father, H. S. Boyd (Cooper, 1988, pp. 5-7). It could also be perceived as a metonym of the cloistered maiden (no need to tautlogize over such maidens in the works of Tennyson, R. Browning, or D. G. Rossetti), or an intellectual rebel (Lupton, 1999, pp. 34-35) striving for an Iserian ex-centric liberation through writing. Alethea Hayter's proficient take on EBB's development as a Congregationalist insists on the poetess's view on the 'direct relation of the soul to God' through suffering (Hayter, 1962, pp. 28, 30) which also spurred EBB's motivation to interpret, and employ in communication with other people, The Holy Bible. At that, father was ever the last resort for the often emaciated young mind, engaged in vehement reasoning: 'My own dear kind Papa! — How very kind to think of me & my pedestals at such a time! — How *I ought* to love him! — ought! — how *I do*' (*UDEBB*, pp. 26-27). Father Barrett sanctioned the edition of EBB's first major poetic collection *Essay on Mind, with Other Poems* (1826). She commemorated him in her juvenile birthday odes and in her letters.

Diary by E. B. B. demonstrates the processual nature of the *I*. The narrative Self identifies with an Other who triggers the emergence of identity primarily 'through all that happens to [the *I*]' rather than [merely] through what the *I* may be willing to commit" (Levinas, 1979, p. 36). Thus, the *I* emerges as sufferance rather than perpetration. Emmanuel Levinas's speculations on the ontology of exchange totalizing the *I–You* dichotomy could help the scholar discern the role of parent in the young writer's denial of the 'monotonous tautology: "I am I"' (1979, p. 37) in her incantatory self-chastisement:

> **We** are sinful deeply sinful, sorrowful creatures; & if **Thou** Oh **Lord** most merciful holy & true, dost not wipe away **our** sins & **our** tears, oh Lord Who < ^under Heaven, > «will» cease to sin & weep? **Speaking & feeling for myself**, — the dye of **my** sin, & the stain of **my** tears, will last for ever! — … **I** had a letter from **Papa** today. (*UDEBB*, p. 66, emphasis added)

In her diary EBB reproached herself for almost any aberration from the normal order of things, and most certainly for her abiding desire to see what lay beyond the world of home and of received wisdom (*UDEBB*, p. 149).

Limned by Family

EBB's idolatry of the two chief fathers in her life, as can be inferred from the quoted excerpt, conveys a sense of obligation which could also be encountered in the majority of her early ballads where self-sacrificial maidens waste away in the expectation of a male rescuer (*The Romaunt of Margaret*, 1836), or bravely follow, only to perish, an ungrateful male role model (*The Romaunt of the Page*, 1838). It is against her family that EBB defined herself – a sinner in need of protection. Such self-stigma befits a general critical outlook on the poetess as an infantilized invalid cursed by failing health, frequent hysterical bouts, fairly limited social contacts, and absolute devotion to parent. There is hardly a single diary entry without mention being made of the father's wellbeing, daily routine, and regularity of communication. One of the commonest phrases appears to be 'No letters today!' The lack of a written statement could stand for no bad news (father was well or/and the selling of the lavish castle-like Hope End, which the family would lose through failing business, was postponed) or no good news (e.g. father was unwell or actually unable to find a customer for Hope End, hence the promise of even drearier times for all). However interpreted, the father was the

paramount external referee in the young writer's account of life. But both agent and object of narrative mutate and get peculiarly intertwined. As James Olney's competent research on autobiographical writing suggests, diurnal narrative leads to a mutual mirroring, reshaping, and fictionalization of both self and life within the processual nature of identity (Olney, 1980, pp. 21-22, 24). Father, as a steadfast external presence, helped the writer grasp existence as wholeness: he aided her mind in escaping solipsism, he was a light out of the darkness of her not seeing herself from without (Gusdorf, 1980, p. 32), a plea 'before the moral system of an outer, objective life' (Spender, 1980, p. 120). Yet father was that spatiotemporal barrier beyond which the young writer was often unable to perceive the prospective range of her own potential. As a result, she at once obeyed and caviled – her composition confirmed and denied him. The undulations of her attitude to her father were reciprocal to the undulations of her own self-perception.

Papa's health was a major concern, as was his power over time and space. By ordering the adjustment of the clock he would control EBB's faith: 'half an hour more forward; & this sent my hopes forward … before we are removed for ever from this sound' (16th June 1831, *UDEBB*, p. 18). When leaving Hope End, the family chose to take the clock (p. 18, note 1). It was a priceless token of EBB's happy infancy and a herald of her adulthood, perhaps just as emblematic as Big Ben in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* – that invention which counts time humanised against time cosmic and natural. In Woolf the dispersal of the leaden circles of Big Ben symbolises the sameness of gambled, disunited souls in the psychological account of the injured memory of post-war England on a London day in June 1923 (adroitly linked to time as the illness of the communality of existence through memory in Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* and Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* by Paul Ricoeur in *Time and Narrative,* Part III). In EBB's diary the focus on time humanised seems narrower: EBB's record of the adjustment of the clock parallel to her registration of her self-managed scholarly progress with the Classics (Aeschylus) against the temporality of her brothers' education ('I heard Stormy & Georgie read Homer & Xenophon — as usual, — tho' I have not yet commemorated them here —', p. 18). The documentation of the passing of time bears an unfortunate feature: the poetess sensed 'coldness', H. S. Boyd's condescending attitude toward her in a '"skeleton" of Friendship"', which propelled her to seek solace in God: 'Read, as I do every day, seven

chapters of Scripture. My heart & mind «are» not affected «by» this exercise as they should be – witness what I have written today' (p. 19). She soliloquised over mortality and over her own insufficiency of skill, fearing some immense affliction (p. 4), empathising with the grief of the family nurse (4th September 1831, p. 116), or worrying over the wellbeing of her brother ('dear Bro convalescent,' 20th August 1831, p. 96). She rebelled against her own imperfection and self-imprisonment: 'I cant bear anyone to think of me … what I am! — Last night I read some of my diary to Arabel in bed! My diary is not meant to be read by any person except myself…' (2nd January 1832, p. 202). She announced her own failing health ('I am not well…,' 21st April 1832, p. 239), searching to bestow all her love on an Other. Devastated by the loss of her own mother, she was 'hung upon the past' which reverberated with her mother's 'you will never find another person who will love you as I love you' (13th August 1831, pp. 88). Such states exacerbated EBB's unflagging sense of duty to her dearest people but her own spirit remained ever unfulfilled:

> … there is no use in writing. The world is the world. I cannot make it Heaven. Only it is hard that I who wd. have done «everything», shd. be directed by those for whom I wd. have done it, to the example of those who wd. have done nothing. // Mr. Boyd pressed me earnestly to go to see him for two or three days — "There is no harm in asking! — Do ask your Papa." I was obliged to say "I will think of it": tho' thinking is vain! // Went away in the pouring rain. Left (23rd April 1832, UDEBB, p. 241)

How could she go, do something and be away from father who might require her? The elliptical, unpunctuated 'Left' closes the Diary and throws at the scholar a final ambiguity. A supplication for a leave of absence denotes the escapist range of EBB's diurnal annals which recite her fear of easing away unappreciated as a human being. Yet her unfolding sense of identity required caution in her every discussion with father:

> Papa & I talked about predestination this evening. The first time I have ventured on the subject these two years — I mean with him. (8th January, 1832, p. 204)

> Finished the preface to my Prometheus, — & delivered it to Papa in the evening… in my opinion [he] did not very much «… like», it… (27th February 2019, p. 219; here EBB mentions her first translation of Aeschylus's drama from Ancient Greek, published in 1833)

Fearing his daughter's '*turning into a shadow*', Papa adamantly boycotted her secretarial toil in reading and translating for Boyd – even if she held 'a pistol to [her] head' (11th March 1832, p. 224). Bringing to the discussion Susan Sontag's exploration of illness as metaphor, it could be argued that the spectrality of the image of "shadow" inventories the covert 'medical paternalism' of regarding female creative will as a deviation from normalcy, especially in cases where the woman may be intent on psychologizing her experience in trying to control events beyond her reach (Sontag, 1978, pp. 7, 55-56, 68). EBB suffered from consumption, a spine injury, menstrual irregularities and anorexia nervosa. Her bodily disorders entailed a dependence on others who would alleviate her suffering yet infantilize and immure the young writer within her own mind which became her fixation and immunity against physical feebleness. EBB's diary, as a 'personal narrative least colored by artifice,' as Judy Lensink asserts (Lensink, 1987, pp. 39-41), sentimentalised her ambiguous obedience to her father, camouflaging poorly what Victorian patriarchal vigilance found particularly hard to value: worth of *woman as an equal Other*. On the other hand, EBB's trust in the instrumental agency of family could be found to anticipate Gadamer's opinion on the prefatory role of an individual's social context (rather than one's own independent judgment) as 'the historical reality of his being' against which subjectivity would be a "distorting mirror" (Gadamer, 2006, p. 278).

Noema and Noesis: Hugh Start Boyd

Interpretation is the abiding feature of EBB's diary, particularly in view of the writer's 20-year long acquaintance with the blind, 'limited, ineffectual' Hugh Stuart Boyd (Hayter, 1962, 54). Boyd's work on the Greek Fathers appealed to the young poetess: she followed him in her preferences for Christological literature in the period 1827 – 1832 (Taplin, 1957, pp. 26, 29, 40, 51). A mind full of life rather than natural asceticism, in her early odes and ballads, such as *Bertha in the Lane*, she nonetheless saw herself as 'Lord Byron's page' or an accepting sister (Shutz Boas, 2010, pp, 52-53, 57) in need of an 'instinctive and informed… brother-babe' – a need met by Robert Browning, rather than by father, Bro, or Boyd, as Barbara Dennis argues in her study of *Aurora Leigh* (Dennis, 1996, 34, 36). Examining poems related to Boyd (e.g. *Wine of Cyprus* (1844), the 1850 sonnet triptych *HSB*: *His Blindness*, *His Death*, and *Legacies*), an early

biographer reveals EBB's lingering between a fancy for Ancient culture that Boyd transmitted to her, the void of time she sensed in his absence, and her faith in literature as a carrier of moral truth (Ingram, 2017, pp. 13-15). EBB was a voracious reader: printed culture became a shared experience with a tutorial Other to whom she clung as a voluntary apprentice, assuming the task of articulating justice and freedom for all men (as in *The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point* (1847), or *Hiram Powers' Greek Slav*e (1850)). Such a task could be accomplished through meticulous, methodical learning from the past, as EBB would also demonstrate in her essay sequence *Some Account of the Greek Christian Poets* (1842).

In her early esteem of Boyd, EBB reported a nearly hysterical, phantasmal anxiety over his health ('Arabel dreamt last night that he was dead & that I was laughing'), preceded by the well-known initial sentence of puzzlement over whether she should 'burn this sheet of paper,' and then the inter-textual confession that 'words stick in my throat like «…» Amen in Macbeth's' (4th June 1831, *UDEBB*, 1969, p. 1-3), apparently provoked by Boyd's dissatisfaction with the quality of her own published verses. There could be registered diminution of the writer's self-confidence and a tendency for reclusiveness because of Boyd: 'for the thousand & first time I <owned> myself (to myself) a fool' (21st June 1831, p. 26). She was an unwelcome guest at the Boyds, expected to depart sooner rather than later (24th June 1831, p. 30). Redundancy ('I suppose he means to neglect me altogether,' 29th June 1831, p. 36) worked its way in. 'Porsonia' (as she was dubbed by Boyd, after the classical scholar Richard Porson) got drawn into the intimate life of the "nasty Boyds" (10th July 1831, p. 52) who discussed reading Coleridge. She was urged to ponder over St John's gospel and expound on 'Election & perseverance' (26th Sept 1831, p. 140), fearful of incurring Papa's anger over her outrageously frequent and protracted visits to Boyd, admitting to there being 'no room for me in the carriage' (17th Oct 1831, p. 160), disrespected ('He did not seem to care … <u>much</u> about parting with me —', 20th October 1831, p. 163), considered merely 'a funny girl' (3rd April 1832, p. 231), and engaged in endless entertainment of, translation, reading, and copying for, sulky Boyd whose '"drudgeries' wd. «… devolve» upon me' (4th July 1831, p. 44). Boyd became an ultimate physical presence which would steer the young writer's perception per se.

An anticipation of Levinas's obligating *Face* (Levinas, 1979, pp. 50-51), Boyd competed with father Barrett over the position of an exemplary Other. He fostered in EBB self-identification through knowledge countered by a sense of subalternity, secondariness, and an almost anomalous figurative and literal starvation:

> M^r^. Boyd gave me Nonnus's paraphrase of St John's Gospel — … *that I might hunt for hiatus[e]s for him*. I was reading some of it *today, which is the day of the general fast*. Whenever he says exactly what is in Scripture, he does not say it as well as Scripture says it: and *whenever he introduces more than is scriptural, he does it ill*. Jesus wept is "done into" Jesus shed "unaccustomed tears from his eyes unused to weep" … // *I was quite exhausted with fasting today. My head was dizzy, my limbs languid, my «mind» incapable of applying «itself» to any subject. … I won't fast again without being more sure of Scriptural premises than I can feel just now*. At church. // Not reading Nonnus, — but correcting my press instead. *My translation does not please me altogether*. (21st – 22nd March 1832, *UDEBB*, pp. 226-227, emphasis added)

Boyd's iconic authority gradually cracked – primarily over his oftentimes inexplicably callous and derogatory attitude toward his pupil. In her letters EBB shared her devotion to Boyd's example, striving for knowledge as the justice of a poet's being, consecrating the 'grand moral Harmonicon' that Homer through Boyd was (*BC*, 1st December 1827, Vol. 2, pp. 91-93), chastising herself as 'an unassisted student — "*slovenly*" enough' (*BC*, 15th December 1827, Vol. 2, p. 99-100), 'a lame horse' (*BC*, October 1831, Vol. 2, p. 217) under 'Mr Boyd's parental authority' (3 October 1830, Vol. 2, p. 262). She was grateful yet she remonstrated: 'I have not deserved to be pained by *you*. … and I think, never can deserve, that you should forget me or neglect to write to me, or withdraw your friendship from me' (*BC*, 17th May 1832, Vol. 3, pp. 18-20). There was no reciprocity in the proper sense of the word: in her tutor she saw more than there was. In this sense, the *Diary* remains EBB's written record of what she was as well as what she foresaw she could (not) be through a protective, greater Other.

Through Hugh Stuart Boyd EBB called into question her own spontaneity of mind by way of recognizing the presence of an Other as 'an irreducibility to the I, to… [her] possessions:' the young writer struggled for transcendence of egotism through 'appreciating in discourse a non-allergic relation with alterity' (Levinas, 1979, pp. 43, 47). In the logic of Levinas's perception of Other, Boyd could be seen as at once as a noematic and a noetic

vindication of writing. He surges as an intentionality founded on an actual, real, exemplary Other – remembered, but also as the developmental reflexivity of the mind in the experience of reasoning and cognizing through the creation of a better Other (p. 127). In Ricoeur's terms, Boyd was the young diarist's diplomacy between '*la mémoire* as intention and memory (le souvenir) as the thing intended': 'the noesis of remembering and the noema of memories' (Ricoeur, 2006, pp. 22-23) – a duality which secured, also, a mutuality between viewer and viewed. The diary became that shared space which allowed the writer *to be* through moderation of the egology of 'the solitary consciousness of self;' 'the other' was both the primordial physical 'not-me' and the 'consitututed' in 'me' (2006, pp. 115, 118). One excerpt from the *Diary* speaks for itself: 'I do like & admire Gregory's prose!! — & *I enjoy reading a beautiful style so much the more, when I can read it with one who enjoys it too — when I <ʌcan> read it with M^r. Boyd*' (19th September 1831, *UDEBB*, p. 132). Away from Boyd's Ruby Cottage at Malvern, EBB sank and failed (15th November 1831, p. 177), yet finally she redirected her attention toward her own original composition and translation (15th February 1832, p. 216). Boyd was at once an ineradicable presence and a desired absence – both would stir EBB's creative agency. She would write on Boyd because he *was* and *was not* there: he would place the poetess outside herself by offering a unique and irreducible presence which would request from her what Bergson named an 'immediate intuition' (Bergson, 1991, p. 75) - Boyd was to EBB a tangible manifestation of reality, intuitively sensed yet rationally verified. Such care would defeat causality though 'time in prayer' and 'space in sacrifice' – for an Other (Buber, 1937, pp. 9, 50).

An Other, Better Word

EBB has been perceived as a 'Miltonic daughter,' 'a prosthetic, a … satellite rather than … [a] manager' of her own life (Rodas, 2007, p. 103, 106, 109), a passive observer in a masculine world of woe. A position visible, also, in the theme of premature or sudden death in her poetical meditations: *The Mourning Mother, The Seraphim, The Poet's Vow, Remonstrance, Isobel's Child, The Virgin Mary to the Child Jesus, Consolation, Bereavement, Cowper's Grave, The Measure, Little Mattie, Sent to Mama on 1st May 1814*, *De Profundis*, etc.

EBB inhaled literature as an otherness which instilled in her a sense of duty and a vigilant need to interpret. Still, her sophisticated smirk over literality transpires at all times:

> Hotter than hot — but went to Church in despite of the sun. Went to church? Yes! & to Chapel — heard a preacher, who reversed an ancient precept, <ʌ into> — *Si vis me <u>ridere</u>, dolendum est tibi*. So much melancholy never before created so much mirth! I am very sorry I went to hear him; <for> the frame of mind into which he threw me more than once, was unchristian & to be repented «of». (31 July 1831, *UDEBB*, pp. 72-73)

The reference to Horace's *Ars Poetica* ('Si vis…') – 'If you would have me weep, you must first feel grief yourself' (p. 72, note 1) – symptomatizes EBB's ontology through a chronically mimetic outlook on empathy founded on primary example whereby the viewer always responds, comes second, sabotaging her own initiative. But by commemorating an Other, she pens her own Self; by recollecting, she creates; by worshipping, she rebels. In the excerpt discussed, there could be found an example of what Gadamer prescribes as 'a heightened truth' of the being of the world through presentation (i.e. the immediate reality of life which contextualizes Horace as the art of received, written wisdom). In addition, the 'ontological reality of the picture' (or, the text) actualizes the 'continuity' of the presenter with herself in the historical mediation between a 'dead', literary, past and a living, familiar, present (Gadamer 2006, pp. 132, 135-136, 156).

The *Diary* testifies to a striving for being valued by an Other: father, God, or a scholarly authority that would equal EBB's own capacious mind and humanism. As she wrote she felt safe in the hands of Christ – '«this» <u>unweary</u> benefactor' who, she hoped, would teach 'the unthankful & unworthy' to love more through the word (19th June 1831, p. 23). She compared herself to literary heroines and other writers, ready to learn German just for the sake of accessing directly '*the Sorrows of Werter* [rather than] Klopstock's *Messiah*' (13th July 1831, p. 55). She mourned her own internal exile, quoting in the original Lamartine's *Méditations Poétiques* (23 July 1831, p. 64), praising Mary Shelley for her *Frankenstein* (9th August 1831, p. 83), wondering how anyone could ever lose one's taste for poetry, '& yet live' (10th August 1831, p. 85), alluding to herself as a 600-year-old proud reader, with a sense of taste and speed – as opposed to other women in the vicinity (11th August 1831, p. 86). She barely

disguised her impatience of meeting Boyd – in inchoate Italian: 'Aspettare e non venire … *tre cose a far morire*' (2nd September 1831, p. 112). She expostulated on *The Holy Bible* and the message it conveyed in chapter 5 of *Romans* (8th September 1831, p. 121). She admitted, in an ekphrastic self-projection, to being complimented on resembling a Vandyke (28th November 1831, p. 185). Commiserating with the unfortunately married shepherdess of J. F. Marmontel's *La Bèrgere des Alpes*, 1763 (28th November 1831, p. 186), she withdrew from the possibility of marrying: 'I am not (I think) built for posterity' (23rd January 1832, p. 208). The chaste literary maiden that she was, she heralded Christina Rossetti's 'not customarily spiritual' (Karamitev, 2015, p. 239) yet empathetic and martyrised femininity of Lizzie from *Goblin Market*, while echoing de Staël's lonely female artist from *Corinne* (3rd March 1832, *UDEBB*, p. 220).

In Need of Approval

Similarly, in EBB's poetry, the motifs of loss, feebleness, self-split, insult from paternal underestimation, and the incurable sense of derivativeness, emit a striving for external appreciation and a perpetual need for dialogue. The poet may be caught dwelling on the death of her mother, as in *The Deserted Garden* ('My childhood from my life is parted,' l. 81), or she might rebuke herself for her uncouth 'rhyming' of classical literature, unable to resuscitate the bliss of her infancy (*Hector in the Garden*, ll. 478-47, 105-107). As early as 1814, she dismissed herself as 'a chatting parrot' (*Epistle to Henrietta*, l. 16). In 1827, in *The Poet's Enchiridion*, alternatively titled *The Development of Genius*, she attained a minimalist, defective vision of her own talent: 'my silent song', 'my harp… her theme is gone', 'my narrow song', 'My lips ask 'What is life' with faltering breath / And all things sensible do answer – *Death*' (ll. 4, 13, 21, 65-66)! The call-and-response structure of the latter example tallies with EBB's philosophy of self-questioning and self-denial visible in her mature verses, as in *Mother and Poet* (ll. 11-15): 'so tired, so tired, my heart and I,' having 'trusted men' and 'dealt with books', 'once … loved, used' (*My Heart and I*), unengraved and unread (*The Pet-Name*, 1-5, 11-15), 'paling with love', 'too bold to sin, too weak to die,' a 'native' of Florence, intoned and entombed solely by the song of the bird of love (*Bianca among the Nightingales*, ll. 19, 64, 82, 141-143). A poetizing nightingale herself, ostensibly a '*Vox, et prœtera nihil*' (2nd July 1831,

UDEBB, p. 41), encaged at home, playing 'on the guitar to please the people who asked me, till my voice was worn out' (2nd September 1831, p. 114), she would be nonchalantly written off by her very idol of knowledge:

> Mr. Boyd observed that "if we remained at Hope End, & if I were to die, it was clear to him that my family wd. break off all intercourse with his." If I were to die! — <Not> an improbable case; but supposed so coldly! — (4th August 1831, p. 78).

At this stage, the exploration of the dichotomy *Self–Other* in EBB's diary could go a number of other ways. For instance, psychoanalysis: self-denial against a higher authority which suggests a cathetic 'circumscription of the ego,' paralleled by an expectation of punishment (Freud, 1953, pp. 244, 246, 255). The pedestal of righteousness was presided by Christ in whom EBB took refuge while being awed by Boyd and her own father. Papa, mourning the loss of his wife, was only too eager to protect his poeticizing daughter by shutting her off, as he thought, from harmful contact with the exterior world (Dally, 1989, pp. 37-38). The familiar story of a Victorian daughter's metamorphosing into a writer of her own upon parental (dis)approval, as a most recent perspicacious biographer showcases (Sampson, 2021, pp. 8, 12). From here the road would be short to a feminist retrieval of the filial nuances of diurnal self-narrative as an endless trade between 'the completely formed [and] that which is in the process of being formed' – an oscillation between duty and choice, enclosure and escape, passivity and activity, totality and separateness, perpetuation and creation, yet toward a Catherine-Earnshaw-like admission of the absolute fidelity of 'Nelly, I am Heathcliff' (Beauvoir, 1956, pp. 41, 54, 150, 618).

In delineating the anthropological dimensions of the problem of Otherness in EBB's diary, eye-opening could prove certain early biographies, psychological, and further hermeneutic-phenomenological research. For instance, Martha Foote Crow's disquisition on EBB's tendency to avoid 'direct realism' by way of embracing a "seraphic", highly individualized approach to depicting presences by spiritualizing them through aporetic crossing-overs between life and death (Foote Crow, 1907, pp. 82, 93, 116). Research on the diurnal formation of the human imagination based on the reproduction of an 'original event' (e.g. EBB's mother's death, which could also be termed, following Ricoeur, an *axial moment*) would confirm the

ontological role of memory in autobiographical writing which, also, permits the self to be a producer of a narrative as well as 'the object of [the] intentional relations' of others (Moore and Barresi, 2013, pp. 293, 299). M. Bakhtin's monumental work on art as answerability, with the aesthetic event emerging between two non-coincidental 'emotional-volitional attitudes', could help the scholar discern the primacy of the Other in Barrett as a truth engendered in infancy through parental care, also man's inborn 'insufficiency of cognitive comprehension' in the absence of an Other who could only ever be 'experienced by me as connatural with the outside world' (Bakhtin, 1990, pp. 40-41, 86, 209, 212).

Conclusions

Given that there has been no dearth of interest in EBB, there stands out the relative sparsity of published studies especially on the poetess's diary – not unsurprisingly against a peculiar absence of female autobiographies of celebrated 19th-century English women of letters such as the Brontës, E. Gaskell, Fr. Trollope, G. Eliot, and Chr. Rossetti (Jelinek, 2004, p. 76). If a further, Modernist, context to the problem of Self as concern for Other be permitted, one might refer to the *Diary of Virginia Woolf* (1882 – 1941) and the *Journal of Katherine Mansfield* (1888 – 1923). Each captivates the reader with an observer's sensitivity for detail, the troubled expectation of an epiphanic resolution of some tension in communication, the foreboding of some disaster ingrained in the daily registration of mortality, as the last entries, in implying departures, indicate. Departures for the Elizabethan age (while Woolf documents the emergence of *Between the Acts*) or for memories of friends (E. Bowen, E. Sitwell; Woolf, 1953, p. 365). Or departures from the possibility of a Chekhov scholar's finding the right word in Russian for reporting the acute pang of loss, dark, and ultimate uncertainty of what life signifies in the absence of a friend ('I am cold,' 'cinders,' 'black paper,' 'I would like to speak Russian with you'), against the 'gentle whispering' of the November leaves (Mansfield, 1954, p. 336).

The Diary of E. B. B. chronicles the poetess's growing awareness of human identity as processual relationship, insufficiency, and forthcoming completion, rather than categorical achievement. A palimpsestic record of personal experiences which allows for (re)editing and

compounding perceiving subject and perceived object, source and result, start and finish, and faith and failure, a diary is a story in progress. If story signifies exchange in time and space between Self and Other, then EBB's diary represents the writer's anxiety of being 'robbed of support' by (Ricoeur, 1994, p. 166), as well as her hope of rescue through, narrative as dialogue.

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DISMEMBERMENT OF KATHLEEN'S PSYCHE IN JOYCE CAROL OATES'S *THE RISE OF LIFE ON EARTH*

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Abstract

Postmodern literary texts have been exploring characters that are whimsically strange. The tacit plots in the postmodern textual space enable the writers to construct and manifest the mental space of the characters in the textual world. *The Rise of Life on Earth* written by Joyce Carol Oates concocts the emotional estrangement of the protagonist, Kathleen Hennessy. Decrypting the text amplifies the unabating efforts of Kathleen to survive in a world that has been portrayed as a larger, repressive and pernicious family. Her masquerade to be a shy, passive and well-behaved girl hides the menacing vengeance that has culminated as a result of abuses and afflictions. Her mental spaces are constructed during the course of narration. This paper purports to scrutinize the fragmented psyche of Kathleen and the conceptual integration of mental space and textual space that replicates both social and individualistic reality and expands the understanding of Oates' text.

***Keywords*:** Fragmented psyche, Mental space, Reality, Textual space, Transmogrification

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Postmodern era has been reflecting upon the heterogeneity of space. The impalpable mental space and tangled textual space have been the concern of literary writers who endeavour to foreground reality. Postmodern writers have been exposing the often-neglected mental spaces of their characters and the antipathy that results out of social ostracism using the complex textual space. They parody the psychosomatic predicaments that human beings face in their mundane life. The suffused actuality and the interaction of different spaces (such as physical, mental, cultural, textual, and others) in a literary work enhance the creative supremacy of the writers. Meanings emerge in postmodern texts as a consequence of the dislocations that the characters suffer and the dynamic perspectives that shift with time and space.

However, the retaliation of characters to a given situation depends a great deal on writers who, discerning the agony, build up an alliance with the readers. Realist fictions 'frequently witness strong emotional responses from reading audiences, often with negative valence' (Rossi, 2017, p. 280) and psychological realism has amplified the need to study the abstract concepts that exist in a textual space. Psychological realism probes into the intricacies of the tormented realm of the psyche that suffers dislocation due to a life not so harmonious and idyllic.

Consequently, the reader is compelled to investigate the text as a space that connects to other spaces. Peter Harder (2003) in his article points out that 'Mental world, like the real world, can be assumed to have spatial and temporal dimensions inside them' (p. 94). The conceptual integration of the different mental spaces of the characters enables the writers to construct a concrete textual space. In this way, discerning the afflictions and the inner drives of the characters reveal the text to be a psychic product and address the natural tendency of the characters to elude the conflicts. The textual spaces in which the characters originate substantiate the frictions that common readers experience. The mettle of the characters is revealed by their propensity to be persevering and stoical. Therefore, a greater sense of emotional outburst will be evoked when the readers perceive the anguish to be happening to them.

Joyce Carol Oates, a versatile American writer, in her works excoriates the adaptation of the American family to encounter the rapidly mutating world. The increased unrest that followed the Great Depression ramified the stature of family in

America. Jim Wayne Miller (1989) has remarked that 'The history of the American family shows a continuing flexibility, adaptability and resilience in its form and function' (p. 4). Oates has epitomized the reality of American society in her works. Her oeuvre has been infiltrating the affluent American society and they have arrived at the adroit rendering of the unfathomable darkness.

Specifically, Oates is concerned with the endeavours of the young adults and their intricate mental space. The ruptures of the past and the present shape the perspectives and choices of the young adults who carry the traces of violence throughout their life. Kathryn Hume (2012) approbates that 'When serious artists take up violence or outré sex, they tend to produce something different from the genre norm and their works are likely to provoke audience resistance and critical recrimination' (p. 115). Critics and commentators, like Greg Johnson, Joanne V. Creighton, Heinrich F. Plett and others, have also acknowledged the finesse of Oates. The irrefutable defiance of her young adult female protagonists makes them prototypes and as Elaine Showalter et al. (1993) acknowledge,

> What marks all of her portraits, no matter what the mode – realism, surrealism, or gothic – is the scrupulous detail of the historical documentation and psychological realism. Executed with historical and psychological complexity, her portraits of women have often been groundbreaking. (p. 232)

Barbara Soukup and Yuan-wen Chi have analyzed and listed the images and stereotypes of women found in Oates' voluminous writing. This paper purports to explain uncertainty and violence as the feasible sequels of psychological disfigurement in Oates's *The Rise of Life on Earth*. Further, it would explore the bifurcated mental space of Kathleen Hennessy and venture into the series of attributes that substantiate her uncanny aspirations in the textual space.

Demythologizing family

Though society is perceived to exist prior to individuals, human praxis are the foundation for establishing social structures or institutions. But, individuals cannot exist alone. They are coerced into specific social positions that not only foment agitations in them but also condition them to reproduce the social protocols. Thus, a strategically

relational approach in reading would help us understand the transformation in individuals who as agents restrain themselves from the society of its autocracy.

Markedly, Family is a dynamic social arrangement constructed with emotional fervour. Familial praxis adjudicates the standard of living of human beings. In this context, Terry Eagleton (1996) vindicates that

> One feature that distinguishes human beings from the other animals is that for evolutionary reasons we are born almost entirely helpless and are wholly reliant for our survival on the care of the more mature members of the species, usually our parents. (p. 132)

Familial space instigates proximity to other spaces. It acts as a spur and enables a child to adjust and adapt to the unnerving events of life. Also, the inadequacies in the propensity for nurturance in a family influence changes and transformations in the child's mental space.

Many writers have turned to be the representatives of realism trying to heed to the schizophrenic familial experiences of the working class people. Casualness and laxity caused disintegration in the American families of the twentieth century. The fundamental antipathy to family ensued from the vital relation between the familial constructions and the economic and social conditions of the time. The kingpins of the family – Father and Mother – felt confined in a landscape that encumbered them. Children and adolescents, on the other hand, were engulfed by their emotions and were bedeviled by the dearth of serendipity.

Subsequently, the children were benumbed. But, they often returned to the 'real' and got acclimatized to the vitiating society. Marilyn Wesley (1993) in the preface to her work posits the 'tactics of liberation' (p. xi) that Oates' female characters exhibit in her oeuvre. She also expounds that they are important in understanding the shifts in the familial and psychological experiences of the young Americans – mostly the sons and daughters. The sons and daughters, embroiled in the stupefying affairs of life, embrace, what Wesley endorses as, 'refusal and transgression' (p. xii). Oates tries to overhaul the adolescents, who are victimized either by destiny or by the relationships they hold with others (sometimes by both). She ventures into the dysfunctionality of family and

relationships as social institutions and, as Wesley contends, 'Oates' young protagonists enact a trenchant critique of the American family and of the society which has formed it' (p. xiv). The multidimensional conception of social reality negates certain facets of individualistic reality. Realist fictions highlight the individual traits whereas reality is based on the relations that individuals establish with their society. The transformations in an individual occur with their wavering conceptualizations about the world. The portrayal of the existence of human beings viz. realism is different from the efforts taken by them to make their experiences reified viz. reality.

Oates portrays the realm which blends the responses of the characters in both familial and societal spaces. As Harder (2003) postulates, 'Blending spaces gives fascinating results, because previously disparate properties can be brought to co-exist in the same mental space with properties that were found in neither of the original spaces' (p. 91). The blend enables the characters to create a self that is composite. The composite self is the median of the divided self and reflects every other self. It surfaces the rejections and attractions, repulsions and desires, and the unwarranted jealousy and the self-persuasion to live. These polarities are often concealed or subdued, and are to be understood in conversation with the different ways of retaliation that the characters show. The characters dynamically adjust to different spaces, and their changes fit into the exigencies of life. The fusion of different spaces provides the characters new identities that are deflecting and renegotiating in nature. The transformations in an individual make sense only when the ontology of individuals is related with the ontology of the society.

In this regard, *The Rise of Life on Earth* is a severely critical narrative that presents the textual space as the metarepresentation of Kathleen Hennessy. Kathleen's engagement with the society urges her to exist with a fragmented understanding of the crystalized ontology of the society. The novel probes into the intransigent social institutions like family, relationships, and gender. It sketches the Kmart realism (also called Dirty realism) that, in the words of Bill Buford (1983), deals with the '… unadorned, unfurnished, low-rent tragedies about people' and the characters are 'waitress in roadside cafes, cashiers in supermarkets, construction workers, secretaries and unemployed cowboys.' Set in Detroit of the 1960s and 70s, the novel unfolds the hostile circumstances and the emotional aloofness of Kathleen. Detroit was the haven for the

blue-collar population, and Oates' writing is shaped by interlacing the turmoil of post-Great Depression with a greater class of entities like economy, gender, psychology, abuse and violence. Her Gothic tone voices the horrifying events that have been covered up by the autarky and serenity of the opulent Americans. Walter Sullivan (1987) alleges in his article:

> We know that in Detroit and New York and points south and west there are millions of people living ordinary lives on ordinary incomes, committing no murders, indulging no illicit appetites, requiring no psychiatric therapy or protective incarceration. She wants hers either rich or poor, criminal or sick or drifting in that direction, with here and there a reasonably normal human being who might in rare instances earn the reader's unqualified admiration. (p. 7)

The counterfactual statements of the naïve realism are Oates' forte, and she tries to elaborate on the ontology of the world in its very existence, devoid of epistemic fallacies. She registers the anguished rejection of family which is supposed to be the source of nourishment. Kathleen's actions reflect how individuals, being an agent, recast the societal praxis when they undergo emotional estrangement in them. Further, the novel depicts Kathleen's coming of age in a desensitized environment, and her criminalities after turning to be a schizoid.

Dismemberment of Kathleen's psyche

Dismemberment refers to the fission of a realm. It is employed as a tool to study the narrative components and it evinces intense sensibilities among the readers. Further, the narratives of dismemberment portray multidimensional characters and their enormous layers of lives. In consequence, understanding the characters' actions and incitements becomes complex. The situations that promote such behaviours in the characters contradict or interlink or/and reinforce each other.

In parallel, Oates' work is based on social complexity and it revolves around 'home' with interludes of terror. She tries not to sublimate the violence in her novels because she believes that America grew with it. She allows her characters free, and it is to be noted that a mere psychosis does not radiate violence in her storyline. It is a set of psychotic confrontations that gain prominence by making the characters suffer from the

unexpected emotional traumas following the insults and the injuries. The characters struggle to survive amidst a threatening society. They endure the duress and exercise their free will under traumatizing conditions. This, in turn, recompenses them with scars of frightening memories. As Brian Birdsell (2014) explains, 'While mental spaces exist in our working memory, once they become established they exist in our long-term memory as a frame, which then can be called up into working memory when the context deems it to be necessary' (p. 73). In this novel, Oates exudes the throes effectuated by a transmuted family (that exist in Kathleen's long-term memory) and mirrors the menaces (play of the working memory) that the society shoves on an individual-Kathleen. The concomitant experiences of dismemberment result in fracture and fragmentation of self that makes it difficult to establish subjectivity. Kathleen's mental space carries the blended memories that facilitate the organization of her personal space. The dissolution of a single self enables her to renegotiate her life. The tridimensional image of self (self-perception, other's perception of self and self's perception of other's perception) influences her behavior. As Erol Subaşi (2020) avers, 'Although people act purposefully, the general results may not reflect their original aims' (p. 113). The plot discloses the series of clever devices used by Kathleen, who tries to elude the insidious trap by being guileful. The clash between the 'angel' and 'demon' in her mental space supplies shocking revelations.

When the novel opens, the intimate and comfortable details of Hennessy's family are under pressure and the members of the family are in a difficult situation. Kathleen and Nola are the daughters of a stereotypical Oatsian mother who is opportunistic, manipulative and amoral. As a consequence of her disappearance, their father becomes derisive, and his impudence is beyond the tolerance of the children. Nola is found dead and Mr. Hennessy is imprisoned for murdering his daughter. This underscores the opinion of Wesley (1993) who affirms that 'The initial move in Joyce Carol Oates' domestic fiction is the demotion of the mythic Mother and Father to the ordinary mother and father, a demotion usually inscribed in contrast to the omnipotence of former deities' (p. 17). Kathleen, being orphaned, survives the injuries and is nurtured by the nurses in the hospital. However, she suffers from the memory of the nightmarish event. She has been bereaved of Nola due to her depraved hysteria. She had banged Nola's head causing her death and Mr. Hennessy was accused. But, during his trial he behaves as if his daughters 'ceased to exist, thus could have no specific connection with him' (Oates, 1991,

p. 12). The representation of the compressed agony makes Kathleen a unique Oatsian protagonist, and as Birdsell (2014) writes, compression '… is the ability to condense a vast amount of conceptual structure into something that is easier to understand and control' (p. 76). Kathleen's compressed mental space allows the readers to contemplate on her positions and dispositions in the plot, and reassess the relatively enduring norms and representations of the society. We can easily perceive Kathleen to be tactful but her enervation in a sterile and bleak environment needs to be appraised.

However, Kathleen's debilitation makes her passive and she breaks-off smiling. But, she does not succumb to the deprivation of maternal affection and the patriarchal rage, rather becomes indomitable. She becomes the object of admiration during her stay in the hospital: 'For Kathleen had no visitors except now and then someone from the special-welfare agency, thus no gifts. Yet she was so uncomplaining: so docile, so seemingly sweet-natured. If only all their patients were like Kathleen Hennessy! –– so the nurses concurred' (Oates, 1991, p. 6). The extravagant love showered by the nurses, who admire this child with an adult-like fortitude, impedes her interest to get discharged. She admires Betty Lou, a nurse, who gives her rosary – the symbol of radiant hope – before she moves to the Chesneys' place.

Chesneys' foster home shapes what Kathleen turns out to be. Manea & Barbu (2017) advocate that 'Because people need to orient themselves in the surrounding space, the human mind acts as a sort of simulator by creating images with which people can operate inside their reality' (p. 38). Kathleen vitalizes her ability to embrace reality but the excess stimuli falsify her propensity to build images. She is often reminded of the locution 'one thing cancels out another' (Oates, 1991, p. 38). She tries to retrieve the lost maternal affection and connects with Mrs. Chesney. She begins to expand her mental space and affiliates her emotions with other children. Nevertheless, her reality distorts. She accords to the disgruntled comment of Mrs. Chesney that 'a defenseless child must be turned to an unworthy mother, an alcoholic, or a drug addict, or a whore, any type of lowlife white trash favored over her because she was only a "foster" mother' (Oates, 1991, p. 30). This befuddles her ideology about family.

Despite the nurturance that Kathleen receives from Mrs. Chesney, she is abused by Tiger, Mrs. Chesney's son from her first marriage. Her sanguine impulses fade with his

humiliating comments and behaviors which were not restrained by Mrs. Chesney who 'could be in one of his loud jokey jovial moods, bullying, hurtful' and it was, in terms of diplomacy, 'just kidding around' (Oates, 1991, p. 37). Every abuse, humiliation and infliction gets engraved in her mind, and she gets incrementally associated with the traumatic events. Re-experiencing such events stipulate reparations from a depressive state.

Kathleen learns to recreate the sullen trance of life into something defensible. She lays down her arms and surrenders to the swaying movement of life. When asked about something she stutters 'I don't mind if I do' (Oates, 1991, p. 35). She is often found inarticulate – unable to express. Additionally, she suffers from dysgraphia and has a cognitive disability that 'moving her pen so slowly across the paper she forgot what she was trying to say' (Oates, 1991, p. 33). Sullivan (1987) explicates that in Oates's works,

> There are sexual encounters, arguments, fights, accommodations, but except for the fact that we continue to read about the same group of characters, the incidents and sequences appear to be separate unto themselves. And soon, the seemingly inevitable disintegration toward mental illness sets in. (p. 13)

Kathleen's infirmity arouses slowly with the storyline.

> Sometimes a sensation as of ants rippled across her skin, her scalp shivered and prickled and she knew there was something that must be done, something pent-up like the air before an electrical storm that must be discharged otherwise she could not sleep. (Oates, 1991, p. 42)

After the mysterious fire at the Chesney's house, Kathleen relocates to different places. The fire had something to tell her and she remembers Mrs. Hennessy's words 'fire teaches *whatever is, is now*' (Oates, 1991, p. 42). To brood over something seems futile, and Kathleen drifts with the eventualities of life. Her fragmented and persecuted psyche becomes a blend that fosters both the responsibility to be amiable and the devastating malice.

Later, when Kathleen becomes a nurse's aide, her torments and retaliations are camouflaged with her innocent, reliable and diligent manners. 'The thoughts start from the body and they are translated into metaphors that are used and expressed in an almost

unconscious way' (Manea & Barbu, 2017, p. 39). Her gestures give prominence to the unarticulated emphatic emotions. She counts her blessings so as to forget the cruel reality and to remember those who touched her with love. Her deepest cuts are surfaced when she utters her bedtime prayer:

> I stood before them, oh and I was not ugly or clumsy like a cow but seeing me they saw my soul like a shimmering flame they did not see me in the flesh at all but another standing where I stood: Praise God. (Oates, 1991, p. 62)

She is exalted to be a nurse's aide, the profession which bestowed on her the endearment that any human being deserves. She forbears to react to her natural instincts. In this way, Kathleen's forbearance occurs at two levels. The chasm between these two viewpoints allows the readers to approach the novel with epistemological determinants that verily result in the revelations which tussle with the ontology.

Suitably, the scrimmage between 'who' she is and 'what' she has to be is relentlessly cross-examined in the novel. The dismemberment of Kathleen's psyche occurs in the abstract sense. Kathleen, psychologically averse, is caught between self-annihilation and self-vindication. Oates's grotesque inventiveness shows how Kathleen is forced to undergo the process of degeneration. Consequently, Kathleen's constructive and amenable 'what she should be' is ousted by 'who she is' – which is defiant and recedes into mere nothingness. Kathleen feels empowered and supercilious to the patients, those who were dying: '…her powers of observation were sharpening; her senses were becoming more alert'. Earlier, in school she was detested for her awkward writings, but in the hospital her problems with enunciation vanished and 'she was intelligent as the other nurse's aides' (Oates, 1991, p. 67). This may be seen as the influence of Betty Lou and other nurses, who had admired Kathleen during her stay in the hospital after the devastating event.

Oates' manoeuvre, on eulogizing the stigmatized nursing profession, has evolved the desired ripple of ardour. Deep in her heart, Kathleen has developed a profound fondness for the profession that when she saw 'a nurse's photograph in the newspaper, she'd speak out with uncharacteristic avidity so the others might glance at her as if a chair or a door had spoken, 'Oh! –– that's what I'm going to be, a nurse'' (Oates, 1991, p. 32). The flaws in the character's perception and her ultimate surrender to darkness are not

attributable to the profession. She has to be judged in accordance with the robust mind. Despite the noxious sensations, she looks after the patients like an indefatigable defender.

Despite her assiduity to her profession, the bleakness of life haunts her. She turns pale and distracts her consciousness by turning herself back to the methodical process of cleansing. She is often found cleaning her hands and the surgical instruments, in the way they were meant to be. She finds pleasure in doing it, as if it cleansed her body and soul. The vignette of the meticulous cleansing process provided by Oates may be seen as analogous to the inexorable guilt and anxiety felt by Macbeth, who feels excruciated by the stain on his hands. Kathleen entails herself to the cleansing process to redeem her clandestine soul.

Nevertheless, the fiery sensation of ants, as if they thronged on her skin, stifled her. She hides her agitation and follows her instinct that says, '*Never lose faith*.' (Oates, 1991, p. 70) She remembers the fire that had destroyed the Chesney's house. It was a mystique which, according to the commoners, had nothing to do with the 'innocent' and bemusing Kathleen.

> Kathleen Hennessy was surely blameless and never for a moment under suspicion and perhaps in fact it had not been she who'd dropped a lighted cigarette into a greasy rag so oddly hidden away in a closet at the front of the house... (Oates, 1991, p. 73)

Such dispositions in her evolution as an Oatsian prototype juxtapose the biblical archetype Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who was acquitted from her crime. Kathleen's predilection to be ambivalent diminishes the bleak and gruesome horror. The voice of premonition is muted within her.

She then gets into the web of love spun by Orson Abbot, a medical intern, who exploits her physic and psyche. She tries to elude into a 'self-constructed life' but is thrust into the gyre. She believes that tranquility and happiness are still possible and is not aware of the aphorism that states '*…the first shall be last and the last, first*' (Oates, 1991, p. 83). She is enmeshed to believe in the sadistic/voyeuristic pleasure that her transmogrified self seeks not righteous indignation; instead, the vexation is ventilated through the sequestered and ghastly proclivity. She feels the vacuity sternly when Abbot

rejects her and, as Frederick R. Karl (1987) states in his article, this emptiness is something 'outside space and time, in some dimension that lies in the subconscious'. He asserts that it is 'for Oates, a paradigm of what women must do – that emptiness, for her, defines in the main where women are' (112). Kathleen's mind flips with the question '*Why her and not me*?' (Oates, 1991, p. 92) whenever she locates women who are adorned with an engagement ring. Her psychological resilience has become feeble that she feels accursed when all other women could afford a pliable life. Her feral hankerings are the only accomplishments that admonish the upshots of free will.

Kathleen feels exasperated with the fiery sensation that grows in her in an unwavering manner. She feels baffled when Abbot asks her to define 'what was her life' (Oates, 1991, p. 106). She learns that she has curved without giving much thought about 'Life'. Her nihilistic outlook has prevented her from being adventurous and the hoaxes that Abbot loads over her leave her pathetic. '*Better to learn now than later* but she could not remember who had told her that' (Oates, 1991, p. 120). This way, as Beachler and Litz adduce, 'Oates enables her female characters to function as subjects in themselves rather than as constructions of male desire' (Showalter et al., p. 238). Now and then there were mysterious deaths in the hospital and Kathleen was not suspected. She was one of those 'diligent and dutiful' nurse's aides. Kathleen, deprived of all viable assistance, quits her job and expects a new beginning – a new 'rise'.

Oates heed to the politics of abortion that had been of great interest in America between 1950 and 1970. Julie Burchill (1987), the British feminist and abortion advocate, in her work states that 'The freedom that women were supposed to have found in the Sixties largely boiled down to easy contraception and abortion; things to make life easier for men, in fact' (p. 13). When Kathleen finds her belly swollen, Abbot had already depleted her body and emotions. She decides to involve herself in self-abortion and feels no misery. The prenatal space becomes an abstract – something far from her existing mental space, which engages in grasping the distinctly momentous events. She knew that she 'had ceased to exist for him' (Oates, 1991, p. 123). The intoxication of the drugs eases the pain of abortion, both physiological and psychological, and she feels compelled to do it so as to maintain a balance between her 'calm countenance' and her 'neurasthenic aspirations'. She feels a sense of relief as '*Now the worst has been done, now there is nothing*' (Oates, 1991, p. 33). Kathleen's act bears emotional, psychological and social

connotations. Self-abortion enables her create a psychic space that both intensifies and relieves her trauma. All through the process the only ray of hope was the rosary that Betty Lou had gifted her. She tries to reconstruct her world with the debris of the past. However, her decisive impulse may be seen as a continuation of the abandonment by her mother (registered in her long-term memory) and she becomes sterile with regard to maternal affection in the present. In this regard, Kathleen remembers and re-members the social strictures that stimulate her counteractions.

Apparently, Oates' narration resonates with the consumerist living experiences in America, where everyone and everything has to be consumed. Her delicacy in exploring the gothic components in her work underscore the proposition - consume violence else violence will consume you. Hume (2012) extrapolates that, 'Violent fantasies are part of most people's unconscious repressed by laws and rules of our culture.' Characters, who consume violence, often bear witness to the consideration of the social order as beneficial and defensible. 'Granted', states Hume**,** 'not all genre horror ends with the positive characters emerging into sunlight' (p. 116). The bizarre decisiveness shown by Kathleen in the novel is the reprisal of the gaze thrown at her by the society. Oates's subtle parlance intensifies the impelling darkness that enables the readers to dwell in a menacing fictional reality. The antithesis between the title and the denouement exhausts the readers. The covert storyline creates suspense, and the flashbacks disclose the restricted perceptions making the text more accessible.

Oates' parlance of food as a symbol finds a different connotation in the novel. She tries to project the American appetites – the grotesque relation between food and people. It is highly significant to discern how the excerpts related to food in the novel display Kathleen. Hilde Bruch (1973) has noticed that 'There is no human society that deals rationally with food in its environment that eats according to the availability, edibility and nutritional value alone' (p. 3). Oates designates the eating habits to demonstrate the emptiness felt by her character. Kathleen is either ravenous or craving for food. Her hunger did not subside during her stay with the Chesneys. She 'prays in silence––*please let there be enough* and if there was enough she did not then pray not to be teased, not to be tormented, reasoning that God had extended His kindness far enough for that occasion' (Oates, 1991, p. 41). Oates's inclination is to match the filling of the stomach with the effort to fill the spiritual emptiness. The transformation of Kathleen with a better

principle of eating habits is seen during her service at the hospital. 'It gave her pleasure to assist a patient at mealtime and naturally it gave her most pleasure when a patient ate well, and with appetite; she never failed to report to the nurse those patients who were eating poorly' (Oates, 1991, p. 66).

As demonstrated, Kathleen suppresses her insecurity with a smaller self image and tries to uplift her assertiveness. She relives the memories and the ensuing neurasthenia relieves her from the emotional disturbances. Her poised behavior conceals the forcible synchrony of intimacy and the emotional estrangement. This perplexity augments the following proposal of Manea & Barbu (2017): 'By creating these personifications of other people with whom the individual interacts, people unconsciously create a mental model of their social world' (p. 41). The people that surround Kathleen cause anxiety, and Kathleen is the angel who hides her devilish instincts. Though the apparent transformation of Kathleen creates a sense of uneasiness among the readers, she is an exemplar for the visionary reworking of the victim who reconstructs her life with the help of the reality she has witnessed. Her evolution, precisely transmogrification, is spontaneous with the afflictions. Kathleen as an angel is the representative of any woman who yearns for love and as a demon is the carrier of the anguish and abhorrence of the abuse survivors. Suitably, Kathleen, as a prototype, repudiates conformists' response to violence.

Kathleen is motivated by her instinctual cynicism which transmogrifies her into a diabolic self. As Oates wryly comments '…Masks do not merely, or exclusively, hide faces. They shape faces too.' (Oates, 1990, p. 128) Oates transcribes the transmutation of women's faces and phases in their life. The equivocal narration complements the characterization of Kathleen. Oates engraves the existential angst that causes transmogrification in the docile Kathleen. Kathleen's uncanny appetence is camouflaged with the sublime smile, which she thinks would adjure people to relish her presence. Kathleen, born with undefiled/unsullied intentions, is not edified, and in her attempt to face the insentient world, she draws a veil to her disastrous thoughts projecting only her good nature. The untrammelled conjectures about life escort her into a pejorative phase that incarcerates her in ambivalence.

Elizabeth Cady Santon in her *Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Convention* points out that 'The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her'. Kathleen's antagonistic views of the world arise from her experiences. Manea & Barbu (2017) expand this view as: 'Also besides the language, there also exists a field of sensorial experiences projected in space of which people are not aware of' (p. 38). Kathleen's neurasthenia and her adherence to the methodical cleaning process are the instances from the novel that justify the above proposition. These non-verbal gestures are stimulated spontaneously and are the sources of meaning-making. Kathleen's nightly prayers and her continuous affinity with the rosary reflect her immaculate soul. Yet, these actions fail to satiate the fiend in her that waits for an unleashing moment and when unleashed, it destroys all that it can. She is an archetype of the blend that Harder (2003) has formulated – '… the ability to blend mental spaces must presuppose the ability to entertain two pictures of the same thing simultaneously' (p. 93). Kathleen accepts violence like an angel and stands up to it with her anomalous mould.

Conclusion

Any child is innocent when born. It depends on the adults for its cognizance of the world. The demented adults convolute the child's perception of the world by infusing or reticulating violence and abuse into their life. When exposed to harsh realities of life, the child becomes traumatic and faces problems in decision making. In this way, the child loses its innocence and grows into a distorted adult. Oates's description of the ghastly life makes us feel sympathetic towards Kathleen. She doesn't resolve the issues, rather she affirms that the conflicts are inevitable. She enunciates the collective consciousness of those whose life on earth has never met with a rise but has always been a fall. 'Oates' criticism endorses a paradigm shift from the competitive 'I' to the collective and cooperative 'we'' (Wesley, 1993, p. 143). The dedication caption of the novel *FOR THE KATHLEENS* signifies the women born and brought up with pain and violence. Though the text does not provide any resolving statements, it encourages us to consider our own answer to the problems, just as Kathleen does.

The self-generated suffering and the psychological resilience in the face of adversity overlap creating a vicious circle. The search for a meaningful life is replaced

with the need to exist. Oates's dynamism in creating characters like Kathleen can be seen as the response of writers to the debauched society. The title captures the little hope that keeps mankind going amidst the chaos. It signifies the love and nurturing elements enjoyed by mankind. But it is ironic to what Kathleen actually meets with in the novel. She has been portrayed as a girl who endures a tragic life. She symbolizes people who are born and raised in situations that can never be repaired. Her life is dominated with abuse and indifference. Though the readers cannot sympathize with her, she is the symbol of resurgence at odds with the repressive and disputatious society. Her stratagem stems out of the cognitive structure that takes inputs (passivity and insularity) and creates a new relation of the inputs culminating in transmogrification. Once the readers identify the blend in inputs, they seek meaning out of it by investigating the cause and effect kind of vital relations.

Mary Kathryn Grant (1978) affirms that Oates' female characters are 'physically crippled by the events of their lives and the tragic frustrations with which they cannot cope; their only redeeming quality is that they do survive' (p. 25). This novel extends our reading approach in two ways – muting violence by situating it at the fringe of the society, and raising voice against violence by conceptualizing it as episodes of life. What one comprehends is the genuine, grim and graphic reality of life and an exigency to accept such reality and find a plausible approach to it. Wesley (1993) specifies in one of her chapters, "The Transgressive Others", 'Oates' oeuvre is the presentation of the American family as the classic dilemma of colloquial expression: "you can't live with it, and you can't live without it"' (p. 144).

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COUNTER CLASS AND COUNTER IDENTITY: CONFRONTATIONS OF POWER IN TONY HARRISON'S POETRY

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Abstract

Tony Harrison is a contemporary British author whose poetry is highly influential in encountering the issue of identity and class struggles. As a working-class student, Harrison was subject to prejudice and discrimination for his working-class accent. This paper investigates two of his highly admired poems, "On Not Being Milton" and "Them & [uz]" from a cultural standpoint, mainly concentrated on John Fiske's theory of power and language. The role of language in the context of his poems is probed. The multiaccentuality of language is represented in his poetry and these two poems become the site of struggle for the imperialising and the localising power. It is intended to illuminate the sought space of identity which Harrison is constantly referring to as a member of the English working-class society. Lastly, the social and personal relationship between Harrison and Milton has been explored positing Harrison in a transcendental context in his relationship with Milton.

Keywords: Tony Harrison, Cultural Studies, *On Not Being Milton, Them & [uz],* Imperialising Power

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A major British poet, playwright, and translator, Tony Harrison is among the most prominent literary figures in contemporary British literature. Harrison is well known for reverberating the working class's voice and identity. "Harrison will always remain important as an advocate for Leeds, for ordinary speech, for the working class, the common tongue" (Bower & Blakesley, 2018, p. 5). The issue of identity is constantly referred to which directly mirrors Harrison's social identity as a working-class poet. "He has never felt fully at home in either the world of literature or the world of his working-class background" (Handley, 2016, p. 276). Harrison's career as a poet distanced him from his background, and this issue caused a feeling of loss, a void in identity, which deprived the poet of a certain sort of belonging. A significant part of his poetry was published in January 1978 in his *From the School of Eloquence and Other Poems,* which includes many poems from his sonnet sequence devoted largely to the issue of identity considerably more than his previous work *The Loiners* (1970). In this article, I intend to analyse *On Not Being Milton* and *Them & [Uz])* to illuminate the role of individual identity as well as social identity. The purpose of this study is to show how power and resistance are constantly at work to take hold of social and individual identities.

Cultural scholars have been embarking on the issue of identity for decades. "Cultural Studies is to be seen as the expression of a projected alliance between various social groups" (Jameson, 1993, p. 17). The space which these social groups create to represent their identity has largely been analysed in the domain of Cultural studies. "Stuart Hall is a central figure in history and the continuing evolution of cultural studies" (Wolfereys, 2006, p. 84). Hall suggests that identities "emerge within the play of specific modalities of power" (Gay & Hall, 2013, p. 4). The significance of power in shaping identities is extraordinary. John Fiske, a media scholar, and a cultural critic illuminates the role of power in creating different identities. This article aims to analyse two of Harrison's poems (*On Not Being Milton, Them & [uz]*) under Fiske's theories of power, identity, and language. This paper explores the role of power in shaping opposing discourses which results in opposing identities in Harrison's *On Not Being Milton* and *Them and [uz]*. Imperialising power and localising power are dominantly illustrated in these poems. This study further analyses the role of language as a vehicle of both imperialising and localising power to elucidate how language functions under these two

forces. Furthermore, the anxiety that the poet senses between these two forces is fastidiously explored.

In the poem "Them & [uz]", Harrison portrays two opposing voices. On one hand, the teacher who is strict with accent urges the students and the narrator to speak with Received Pronunciation which is the dominant accent of England, and the narrator, with a working-class background, tends to speak Cockney. This encounter of accents creates a conflict between the teacher and the narrator. "The clash of discourse in this poem is not merely a matter of juxtaposition: a literal struggle is enacted" (Roberts, 2007, p. 217). The title of the poem is quite self-explanatory. Houdu (2017) illuminates: "The title 'Them & [uz]' contains the ampersand which unites but also makes a distinction between the two elements associated" (p. 5). 'Them' represents the speakers of RP while '[uz]' represents the working-class identity. In a study, Whale (2018) elucidates what necessitates Harrison to take poetry as a passion as well as an occupation. Analysing his interviews, he claims that "The making of Tony Harrison as a poet…requires a deep-seated engagement with the dominant mores of English society in the mid-twentieth century" (pp. 8-9). His poetry makes him a meticulous observer of social and political issues. Consequently, Harrison's poetry simultaneously functions beyond the realm of poetry for the poetic techniques and literary genius are well appreciated in British social context.

It is difficult to limit Harrison's career and success in the realm of poetry. He is a poet, a translator, a playwright, and a director. His encounters with literary works and translation of some works from a language other than English has provided Harrison with a vast insight that is depicted in his poetry. Bower & Blakesley (2018) suggest that for fully appreciating Harrison's works one must "look beyond Leeds, beyond Britain, beyond English" (p. 5). He takes the example of his hometown 'Leeds' and he questions universal issues in the same context. "Harrison has always been resolutely committed to justice and equality, and above all, to highlighting the way that culture is inextricable from barbarism" (Bower & Blakesley, 2018, p. 5). In his poetry, personalisation of universal subjects takes place which enables the reader not only to question social conditions but also to experience these issues alongside the poet. Investigating Harrison's poetry, much of his work is recognised as a reaction to political and international issues. Copley (2018) "prompts a critical re-examination of the poet's position as an international war writer" (p. 19). She admits the dominant voice of a proletariat raging to reflect his identity, yet

she explains: "Harrison also exhibits his concern with historical and political events that extend within and beyond the borders of Leeds, Britain and Europe, and that transcend the class conflicts of post-War England" (p. 20). This universal outlook of Harrison which is largely reflected in his poetry suggests that he is well-aware of the political circumstances. Moreover, by representing such significant issues in his works, he yields for reform on multiple social and political grounds.

Harrison's "On Not Being Milton" is a significant poem which has been appreciated by critics and readers. In a study, Handley (2016) elucidates two opposing voices in the poem. One which belongs to the poet as a working-class character and the other one "the form of the dominant language, [which] is framed, constructed, exclusive, and owned like the knitting-frames by representatives of a dominant social class" (p. 281). These opposing voices were also seen in "Them & [uz]". It appears that opposing voices are always at work in Harrison's poetry which indirectly resembles Bakhtinian Heteroglossia. "Heteroglossia is … constituting condition for the possibility of independent consciousness in that any attempt to impose one unitary monologic discourse as the Truth' is relativized by its dialogic contact with another social discourse" (Bakhtin et al, 2003, p. 73). Although Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia was concerned with novels, it appears that Harrison's poetry is capable of presenting such features. Opposing discourses are constantly at hand and they actively participate in undermining and subverting one another. In this paper, it is intended to illustrate how power functions in Harrison's social context in relation to Fiske's theories of power and identity.

Power, Language, and Identity

Cultural Studies is an interdisciplinary field of research which is majorly concerned with the definition of culture and how it comes to existence as well as its identity and formation. "Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (Williams, 2017, p. 49). This difficulty is due to its unlimited terrain which involves nearly all social activities and every singular act is somehow related to culture. Like many developing fields, Cultural Studies' "earliest encounters were with literary criticism" (Johnson, 1986 p. 38). The issue of identity is constantly under scrutiny in cultural analysis. Consequently, and in order to comprehend the essence of identity, cultural critics have been engaged with the concept of power and how it works in social

contexts. "It is … impossible to carry through any serious cultural analysis without reaching towards a consciousness of the concept itself" (Williams, 1977, p. 12). Many different cultural critics have been meaning to narrow down the definition of culture to a specific and restricted terrain and among whom, John Fiske has been rather more successful. "Culture is a living, active process: it can be developed only from within, it cannot be imposed from without or above" (Fiske, 2011, p. 23). What we need to know is that culture is a constantly moving train which never stops experiencing new social realms. It is always in the "constant process of producing meanings" (Fiske, 1989, p. 1). It is through meaning that culture comes to existence and subjects of culture act accordingly, where a certain form of meaning is constantly being reproduced, the subjects tend to value it more.

Meanings are being produced and reproduced consistently through discourses. Discourses are vehicles of power; they work either in the alliance of one another or in opposition to each other. The dominant power shapes a web of discourses to produce meanings aiming to necessitates its existence and simultaneously, to suppress other opposing forces. On the other hand, resistance produces meaning through an opposing set of discourse to subvert the dominant power. Resistance to power "exists all the more by being in the same place as power" (Foucault, 1980, p. 142). Therefore, resistance is an inseparable part of power. It is the nature of language which permits clashes of various discourses and encounters of different meanings. The imperialising power is the power of the dominant. "It strives constantly to extend the terrain over which it can exert its control extensively to outer space and the galaxy and intensively to people's most mundane thoughts and behaviours" (Fiske, 2016, p. 11). The imperialising power extends its terrain through power blocs; that is "social formations… which can readily turn to their own economic and political interests" (Fiske, 2016, p. 10). The imperialising power has an unlimited thirst to conquer more terrain of human's social context for its own benefits and its survival. As earlier suggested, it does so through uniaccentuality of language. Power blocs form a homogenous hegemony which facilitates the process of control. In this sense, the imperialising power is monophonic.

Contrary to the imperialising power, the localising power is "the power sought by subordinated social formations" (Fiske, 2016, p. 11). The purpose of localising

power, unlike imperialising power, is "not concerned with constantly expanding its terrain but interested in strengthening its control over the immediate conditions of everyday life" (Fiske, 2016, pp. 11-12). It can be argued that the purpose of localising power is to resist the forces of imperialising power. "The function of this power is to produce and hold on to a space that can, as far as possible, be controlled by the subordinate who live within it" (Fiske, 2016, p. 12). This space that Fiske argues has got four dimensions (interior, socio-political, physical, temporal). It is in these four dimensions that localising power operates and the combination of these four elements creates a 'locale'. A locale is a space where the subordinated subjects can experience their own identity in its interior, physical, socio-political, and temporal sense. As opposed to the imperialising power, localising power is polyphonic; that is, it produces heterogeneity of voices to resist the imperialising power.

Everything takes place in the terrain of language. "Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated" (Ashcraft et al, 2010, p. 7). The reason why Foucault (1990) suggests that "power is everywhere" (p. 79), is because language as the most powerful sign system exists everywhere. Consequently, everything takes place within the domain of language and as a result, it becomes "a crucial site of struggle" (Fiske, 2016, p. 30). A wide range of discourses from the most covert to the most overt exist in the realm of language and these discourses are constantly at war to win the production of meaning. This suggests that "language is multiaccentual. That is, it always has the potential to be spoken with different accents that inflect meanings towards the interest of different social formations" (Fiske, 2016, p. 31). The issue concerning language and its multiaccentuality, however, is that "it is neither neutral nor equally available" (Fiske, 2016, p. 30). It is usually more available to the dominant imperialising power rather than the localising power. The reason behind this is that imperialising power has more control over language than the localising power. "The language of imperialising power is uniaccentual. Localising power, on the other hand, exploits the multiaccentuality" (Fiske, 2016, p. 31). This is because imperialising power always seeks unity to better control its subjects and the localising power strives for heterogeneity to make it difficult for the elements of imperialising power to subvert it.

Them & [uz]; Battleground of Language

The title of the poem separates two opposing forces, two different and conflicting identities. The representations of these two identities are meticulously drawn by the poet. The poem consists of two parts. In the first part, the representation of 'them' is drawn while in the second part '[uz]' participates largely in the poem. "*Them* is clearly different from *[uz]*, even more so since one is written English whereas the other is phonetics and consequently related to oral language" (Houdu, 2017, p. 5). Written language is more associated with a unifying dominant voice whereas oral language is naturally heterogeneous and with various accents. Following the title, the first stanza appears:

αίαι, ay, ay! … stutterer Demosthenes
gob full of pebbles outshouting seas – (1-2)

The beginning of the poem is an allusion to Demosthenes who was believed to have cured his stutter by filling his mouth with pebbles and speaking out loud. This stanza signifies a difficulty in speaking in a literal sense while the poet, we later realise, has difficulty with a different issue; that is a different accent from the dominant one. This is vividly sketched in the second stanza:

4 words only of mi 'art aches and … 'Mine's broken,
you barbarian, T.W.!' He was nicely spoken.
'Can't have our glorious heritage done to death!' (3-5)

It appears that in this part, the narrator who is a student, is reciting the beginning verse of Keats *Ode to a Nightingale* (1819), which he has difficulty pronouncing in the dominant Received Pronunciation therefore, he creates an unwelcome scene where the teacher mocks and humiliates him. The teacher's treatment of a schoolboy is rather harsh.

"Mine's broken, you barbarian T.W!" (3-4), represent a disappointment in the student for his lack of proper speech. "The concern for 'proper' speech seems a classic demonstration of cultural hegemony" (Ashcroft, 2013, p. 58). The issue is barely a simple mispronunciation or a different accent, it is rather, the confrontation of two opposing identities. The teacher represents the imperialising power even though the student signifies the localising power. The teacher, consequently, fails to acknowledge the student's identity, therefore, he refuses to call the student by his name and rather calls

him 'T.W'. By hailing him to a different name than his own, the imperialising power commences its active process of subversion. "The aim of *imperializing power* is to extend its reach as far as possible_ over physical reality, over human societies, over history, over consciousness" (Fiske, 2016, p.11). The teacher continues his role as the representative of the imperialising power by saying "Can't have our glorious heritage done to death" (p. 5). The use of the word 'our' reflects something different from its literal meaning. In this case 'our glorious heritage' signifies a formation of a power bloc; that is "a relatively unified, relatively stable alliance of social forces" (Fiske, 1989, p. 8). By proposing a significant power bloc in English culture, the teacher intends to subvert the student by including him in this power bloc. The poem follows:

I played the Drunken Porter in Macbeth. (6)

It appears that due to the speaker's inability to speak with Received Pronunciation, his role in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) has been relegated to the drunken porter. The role of a 'drunken porter' indicates the encounter of the imperialising power with opposing forces. Instantly after identifying the elements of localising power reflected in the student, he is marginalised to a 'drunken porter'. The next stanza moves back to the classroom:

'Poetry's the speech of kings. You're one of those
Shakespeare gives the comic bits to: prose!
All poetry (even Cockney Keats?) you see
's been dubbed by [ʌs] into RP,
Received Pronunciation, please believe [ʌs]
your speech is in the hands of the Receivers.' (7-12)

In this part, the teacher keeps magnifying the significance of Received Pronunciation. In fact, he considers the student's accent rather incorrect or improper than simply different. "Poetry's the speech of kings. You're one of those Shakespeare gives the comic bits to: prose!" (7-8). The teacher suggests that the student deserves only the minor role who serves Shakespeare a comic relief. He is justifying the fact that the student has been given the role of 'drunken porter'. The fact that the teacher states that 'poetry has been dubbed by us' suggests the dominance of the imperialising power. The imperialising power keeps representing and reproducing everything for its own purpose.

"A culture of power is a culture of representation" (Fiske, 2016, p. 143). At first the teacher claims that "poetry's the speech of kings" (7). This glorification of poetry is also decided. Poetry is overvalued because it has been fully 'dubbed' and represented by the imperialising power, hence it works as a strong element for imperialising power. "The association between accent and class in Britain is well-established and has a long history" (Donnelley et al, 2019, p. 2). Cockney, represents the accent and identity of the working-class people and it is therefore, consisted of localising power since it belongs to people. On the contrary, and "[h]istorically, much prestige was associated with the accent referred to as Received Pronunciation (RP), itself originally associated with the gentry, aristocracy…" (Donnelley et al, 2019, p. 2). If in the current era RP does no longer belong to the aristocracy, it is undoubtedly the dominant accent in England. "your speech is in the hands of the Receivers" (p. 12), illustrates how RP speakers are representatives of the dominant imperialising power. The second part of the poem is significantly different from the first part:

> So right, ye buggers, then! We'll occupy
> your lousy leasehold Poetry. (17-18)

The multiaccentuality of language is at work. The term 'bugger' is a vulgar slang meaning "a worthless person" (Entry 1 of 3) which is aligned with 'ye' meaning you with the student's accent. By stating "We'll occupy your lousy leasehold poetry" (17-18), the student is resisting the imperialising power. By occupying, he means he will continue resisting the dominant power and will utilise his own accent when reciting poetry. "Resistance is itself a form of power; what distinguishes one form from the other is not an essential difference between them, but a difference in their relationship to the social order" (Fiske, 2016, p. 75). The resistance of the student to the dominant power is localised, it seeks to preserve its locale to present the subject's identity. The speaker, therefore, undermines and questions the authoritative voice of the dominant. Two different knowledge is at work. The knowledge which is produced and represented by the imperialising power suggests "Poetry's the speech of kings" (7), and the knowledge which is produced and represented by the localising power suggests "lousy leasehold poetry" (18). Consequently, "truths compete with each other for power within a social system" (Fiske, 1989, p. 177). It can be arguably stated that localising and imperialising knowledge are continuously acting against one another. The next stanza follows:

I chewed up Littererchewer and spat the bones
into the lap of dozing Daniel Jones,
dropped the initials I'd been harried as
and used my name and own voice: [uz] [uz] [uz],
ended sentences with by, with, from,
and spoke the language that I spoke at home.
RIP, RP, RIP T.W.
I'm Tony Harrison no longer you! (19-26)

The narrator proceeds with his resisting discourse. Daniel Jones "whose *outline of English phonetics* (1918) is considered the first comprehensive description of Received Pronunciation" (Ferguson et al, 2005, p. 1874). The narrator vehemently confronts RP and its supporters as an opposing force. "I'd been harried as and used my own voice: [uz] [uz] [uz]" (21-22) is the voice of the narrator who seeks to be himself, his localised identity. In the first part of the poem, the language was in service of the imperialising power. In the second part, however, language becomes a means of subversion contrary to the first part. As the poem proceeds the narrator keeps revolting against the imperialising power. "RIP, RP, RIP, T.W." (25), is a temporal victory won by the localising power. The narrator is done with RP and with his assigned name and tends to be called by his own name which once more refers to his localising identity. This poem is a spectacular sketch of the multiaccentuality of language and the hostility of two contrasting forces. The meticulous narration of the poem suggests the poet's awareness of understanding the nature of power. The outburst of the narrator, be it temporary, constructs a narration where two forms of truths, two different knowledge, and two contradictory discourses exist in parallel to one another. One side seeks to subdue and suppress the other while the other attempts to create a space where it can exercise its own identity. The localising power, neither can nor cares to subdue and subjugate the imperialising power since the imperialising power is indeed stronger in essence.

The Unsettling Ground of Tony Harrison in *On Not Being Milton*

The title of the poem creates an illustrative description concerning the nature of this poem. Harrison attempts to create a poem which is the least related to Milton; at least this is what the title suggests. There are mainly two reasons why the poet urges to

distance himself and his work from Milton. The first reason is the anxiety of influence; that is "an anxiety that compels a drastic distortion of the work of a predecessor" (Abrams, 2015, p. 176). Every poet is constantly confronting the previous poets. It is a love-hate relationship which is impossible for the poet not to be influenced by the previous poets. Harrison tends to make the impossible, possible and as the title of his poem suggests, he attempts to be the least concerned with Milton, one of the greatest English poets. Nevertheless, as we analyse the poem we realise that he is not all done with Milton. The second reason is rather social than individual. In the previous poem, the teacher suggested that "Poetry's the speech of kings" (7). Milton, with his eloquent language and unique, moving style overshadows English poetry and through his poetry, he creates norms in English poetry. "Norms do not exist in their own terms, but only as products of a monitoring knowledge system" (Fiske, 2016, p. 71). Milton's poetic language and accent have defined normal in the imperialising power. The imperialising power has made use of Milton, as it has made use of every canonised poet and author in English poetry. Consequently, Harrison, as a working-class poet feels under pressure both socially and individually by the dominance of Milton over poetry. The poem begins:

> Read and committed to the flames, I call
> these sixteen lines that go back to my roots
> my Cahier d'un retour au pays natal,
> my growing black enough to fit my boots. (1-4)

Harrison's concern with identity is once more portrayed here. Unlike those dominant aristocratic poets who were born with the gift of geopolitical determinism in its literal sense, Harrison comes from a working-class family which serves him nothing but extreme difficulty to present a voice of his own, and his own class while every element of the imperialising power tends to subdue him. In this case, the poet is well-read and well-educated, yet, at the time of his creation and his experience with his poetry, he is obliged to "go back to his roots" (2). The poet seeks to present the voice of the working-class in his works and that is one reason why he tends to be distanced from Milton. The grand and fancy style of Milton and language has barely anything to do with the working-class identity. After becoming a well-studious poet and before creating any poetic works, he feels he must return to his working-class identity. "Cahier d'un retour au pays natal" (3), is a title of a book written by Aimé Césaire in 1939 meaning 'Notebook of a Return to

My Native Land' deals with the issue of cultural identity. The last verse of this stanza "my growing black enough to fit my boots" (4), is assiduously "strengthened by referencing the blackness of coal as the main natural resource of the English North East" (Handley, 2016, pp. 279-280). References to localised identity are resisting the imperialising power. As it was earlier stated, localising power seeks to create a space to allow the subordinated people to exercise their individual and localised identity.

> The stutter of the scold out of the branks
> of condescension, class and counter-class
> thickens with glottals to a lumpen mass
> of Ludding morphemes closing up their ranks.
> Each swung cast-iron Enoch of Leeds stress
> clangs a forged music on the frames of Art,
> the looms of owned language smashed apart! (5-11)

In this stanza, the poet displays more concern with the issue of identity. The concern with identity is represented through differences in accents. Brank means "an instrument consisting of an iron frame surrounding the head and a sharp metal bit or gag entering the mouth formerly used to punish scolds" (Entry, 2:2). The poet signifies a character who stands against the dominant imperialising power which is constantly in the process to subjugate and subdue its subject. The poet, however, will not be silenced and he keeps shouting this tyranny and prejudice over his working-class accent and identity. Exercise of accent is a bodily practise. The body is where the imperialising power and the localising power consistently confront one another. "For the body is the primary site of social experience. It is where social life is turned into lived experience" (Fiske, 2016, p. 55). Therefore, the poet's indication concerning "thickens with glottals to a lumpen mass" (7), signifies a bodily resistance of the subordinated people in its micro-level. "Controlling the body is a first step in the control of social relations" (Fiske, 2016, p. 56), and this is why the imperialising power vehemently reacts to the issue of accent. "Power works strategically to secure its boundaries and thus to exclude that which lies beyond its control" (Fiske, 2016, p. 63). RP is a unitary accent hence power is at much ease in controlling this accent. The rest of the British accents carry too much meaning and identity, they carry a multiplicity of meanings and as a result, they reach beyond power's

control. This is why the dominant imperilaising power tends to marginalise the rest of British accents.

Three cheers for mute ingloriousness! (12)

This verse is dramatically controversial in relation to the rest of the poem. This "mute ingloriousness" (12) refers to John Milton, it is an allusion to Thomas Gary's elegy *written in a country churchyard* (1750). "In his elegy, Gray sympathizes with the inglorious Milton from a distance and in a highly literary voice" (Handley, 2016, p. 280). From the beginning of the poem, we encountered heartbroken Harrison who endeavoured to be as distant as possible with Milton as the representation of the standard and normal imperialising poetry, and yet, he expresses his good wishes for him. These "three cheers" (12) are most probably concerned with the individual love-hate relationship between the poet and Milton as someone who is inseparable from Harrison and his works. This anxiety of influence, Harrison feels will always return to the poet unlike cultural barriers and power struggles. This poetic relationship is beyond the control of localising and the imperialising power. It belongs to a transcendent realm which is deeply personal and despite the numerous attempts to stain this relationship for the benefit of either imperialising or localising power, the relationship remains deeply rooted in the personal feelings of the poet rather than social circumstances.

Conclusion

Tony Harrison is one of the most significant contemporary British poets whose poetry is elegantly written and covers many national and international issues such as identity, war, culture, and class struggles. He makes examples of seemingly insignificant issues and he reconstructs a worldly subject. The prominence of this poet is not wholly due to his poetry, he is a well-studious graduate from Leeds University. His translations and his plays are highly remarkable. In this article, two of his notable poems from *School of Eloquence* (1987), were analysed. "On Not Being Milton" and "Them & [uz]". The issue of identity has largely been explored in Harrison's poetry. Much of his poetry is troubled with working-class identity and its marginalisation. Yet, this paper sheds light on a new aspect of his poetry, it explores the role of language in shaping identities and the role of two opposing forces, the imperialsing power, and the localising power. The example that

Harrison sets in both of these poems is the issue of accent where RP is privileged and the rest of British accents, mainly Cockney, is vanquished.

The reason why both imperialising power and the localising power are concerned with the accent is that it takes place on a micro-level, the body. Controlling the body has been argued is considered the major site of struggle for both imperialsiing power and the localising power and these two forces are constantly struggling to win the body. Discourses concerning accent, therefore, become the most significant element of power in Harrison's poetry. The multiaccentuality of language is illustrated in his poetry where language can be in service of one sort of power and equally and simultaneously to the other one. Although language is usually not equally available to everyone and it is generally more available to the imperialising power, Harrison in his poetry, and especially in "Them & [uz]" presents more balance in confrontations between these two forces. In "On Not Being Milton", the issue of identity once more has been covered. Yet, another important subject is at work and that is the relationship of the poet with his predecessor, John Milton. It has been claimed that the reason why Harrison distance himself from Milton is because he is the representation of the dominant imperialising power and Harrison seeks to represent the localising power's voice, however, at the end of the poem, Harrison is reconciled with Milton and his poetry since his poetic relationship is beyond cultural barriers and thus it is transcendental.

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THE MIND'S EYE: PICTURE AS NARRATIVE IN THOMAS HARDY'S *A PAIR OF BLUE EYES*

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Abstract

This paper focuses on Thomas Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes* in discussing certain peculiarities of narration. The numerous descriptions of people and scenes in the book are examined as basic building blocks used by the architecturally trained novelist to carry vital narrative information. This decision is approached by way of utilising ideas from the realms of phenomenology, cinema and photographic theory to prove that in addition to carrying aesthetic merits, Hardy's descriptions are intricate data containers that reflect how the human mind processes experience.

Keywords: perception, scene, picture, Thomas Hardy, mind's eye, narrative

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The present academic undertaking examines *A Pair of Blue Eyes* – one of Thomas Hardy's early novels – from the point of the narrative technique employed. The aim is to provide sufficient evidence for the suggestion that Hardy's visually intense descriptions, in which his fiction abounds, serve a purpose higher than that of decoration. What is understood by this is that very often the writer resorts to meticulously crafted delineations of people and scenes that seem to render a picture before the eyes of readers which is there not only for aesthetic fascination but also to carry important narrative information. To support these claims, pertinent studies by authors such as Wolfgang Iser, Paul Ricoeur, Sergei Eisenstein, and Emmanuel Levinas are used.

A Much-Needed Initiatory Glimpse

In his preface, Hardy referred to *A Pair of Blue Eyes* as 'an imaginary history of three human hearts… found… a fitting frame for its presentation' (Hardy, 2009, p. 3). The concept of a book as a framed history may have to do with his infatuation with the arts of painting and photography, but it is also pertinent to Wolfgang Iser's ideas about the interaction between the fictive and the imaginary (Iser, 1993) – Hardy's imagination picked and choose elements from stories of real life and combined them with other ideas of his which resulted in a fictive story framed by the novel's limitations. A frame is like a container and a container has specifications that limit what is stored inside. These restrictions, in this case, facilitate a higher degree of concreteness of the imaginary so that when placed in a container (frame) it ferments into the fictive. Hardy's method of visual storytelling may result from the aforesaid fascination with pictures as it is known that 'he made use of every opportunity which the International Exhibition of that year [1862] and public and private galleries afforded to extend his knowledge of the various schools of art' (Gibson, 1999, p. 9). An article from 1886 makes it known that Hardy's own home at Max Gate, constructed by himself, was made so that its location affords a particular optical effect at sunrise in the eyes of beholders in the vicinity, as well as that the windows therein have been placed with an awareness of what can be seen from within and without – the architect-novelist arranged some of them so as to frame certain views of the environment (pp. 20-21). These influences shaped this technique which is not restricted to the current book but appears in one way or another in other novels (such as the episode in *Desperate Remedies* where Cytherea's father dies as she is contemplating the tragedy from a window) and poems (as

in *Outside the Window* where the hero obtains vital information about his sweetheart by seeing and hearing her interaction with her mother concerning him through a window).

Patterns of Perception

To get a more concrete understanding of what is meant by visually intense descriptions, one must spend quite some time selecting from numerous examples. This investigation contains a few noteworthy ones. On the first pages of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (Hardy, 2009, pp. 21-22), one stumbles upon a curious episode with two main characters in which the readers witness Stephen's developing tender feelings for Miss Elfride as he is contemplating her features. The used language can not only articulate this fascination but also disclose important ideas related to the way the author builds his narrative and the manner in which, he believes, human perception works.

The Mind's Eye: Receptacle and Agent of Perceptions

The episode mentions a man's 'mind's eye' which contains 'a permanent impression' left by a woman in a 'scene' (p. 21). Judging from the context, this 'eye' could refer to that part of the human brain which deals with the perception of visual imagery or works by means of such imagery. In other words, 'the mind's eye' appears to function as a processor and an archival repository that keeps images on 'the pages of his memory' (p. 21). Then follow more details revealing the essence of the recorded – the narrator explains it has an 'attitude and accessories' as in a Mediaeval illumination (p. 21). From this, two suggestions may be made, one being that the recorded is remembered by means of fragmentary pieces of information relating to the object (attributes) and that these images carry some treasured spiritual value as is the case with ecclesiastical illustrations. As regards these attributes, they appear to be like the 'clues that guard against forgetting' Ricoeur uses in his definition of the word *reminding* – they resemble 'signposts' that 'guard against forgetting in the future' (Ricoeur, 2004, p. 38). The next few paragraphs exemplify some of these signposts – the character's profile, dress, face, hands, and so on. So, the relationship between the object portrayed and 'the mind's eye' has a metonymic flavour and shows reverence in contemplation.

Capturing Perceptions as Images

The ideas about human memories being stored in the form of images are old. Paul Ricoeur examines them in his *Memory, History, Forgetting*. He asks 'Do we not speak of what

we remember, even of memory as an image of the past? The problem is not new: Western philosophy inherited it from the Greeks and from their variations on the term *eikon*' (Ricoeur, 2004, p. 44). He mentions Socrates's ideas that when we record perceptions there is a scribe accompanied by a craftsman who is a painter and follows what the scribe writes, providing illustrations (p. 14). This paper makes no attempt to explain this complex philosophical issue but it aims to show that Hardy, intentionally or not, gives voice to this phenomenon which means that his descriptions are tinged with phenomenological sensibilities. Also of utmost importance is the name of the image in question – 'a permanent impression'. On the one hand, this could refer to an everyday use as in an idea or opinion of what someone is like ("impression", 2021). On the other hand, considering the specific focus of this analysis and the special attention paid to visual phenomena on behalf of the narrator, one could suppose another more peculiar use of the word. In his book on theories of photography, Peter Geimer observes that some scientists involved in the early development of photography (Henry Talbot and Dominique Arago) used the word 'impression' ('empreinte') to denote a photograph as an image stamped onto paper by light and fixed there by chemicals (Geimer, 2011, p. 21). So, if a person's memory is like a book, drawing on the use of 'pages of his memory', then images are likely to be captured on their surface just as photographs are captured on various surfaces, including paper. Thus, one's memory or part of it can be seen as a photo album. In a discussion by F. B. Pinion on Hardy and pictorial art, a comment is made on 'the modes of perceiving different art forms' – 'pictures emerge as we read, and can be stored in the memory; or a few selected features can be so presented that an impression of the whole is flashed upon the 'inward eye'' (1977, p. 18). This seems to be the case with the examined fragment. Readers are presented with a scene that is to be stored in the memory of one of the characters in it, and the strong impression is dissected or explained in terms of certain features subjectively chosen by the beholder. Another notable moment in this episode is where the text reads 'Miss Elfride's image chose the form in which she was beheld…' (Hardy, 2009, p. 21) suggesting that the image has been created of its own accord and not because someone has conceived to take it. This corresponds to one of the earliest understandings of the photographic process. Talbot and later Andre Bazin believed that a photograph came into being on its own and the 'artist' was there only to place the camera before the subject and leave it time to be exposed as long as necessary, and Bazin, adding some details, has stated that the photographer's role should be seen in choosing the subject and composition, and the

premediated impact (probably referring to the decision at what moment to initiate the act of capturing) (Talbot & Bazin in Geimer, 2011, pp. 75, 79). At the time Hardy wrote this novel he might have been familiar with Talbot's ideas and used this phrasing to illustrate a parallel between processes in nature – photography (possible because of the rules of physics) and human perception (which happens according to natural rules which could possibly be explained by science). It is not known how interested in photography Hardy was but it has been documented that he and Hermann Lea, who produced 243 photographs of Wessex and had them printed in a guidebook called *Thomas Hardy's Wessex*, were close friends and Hardy helped him with the text and instructions about the locations of this fictional realm, also accompanying the photographer (Gibson, 1999). This means that Hardy was acquainted with photography in a not so distanced way, hence the potential interest in this art and what pertains to it. Additionally, one guest at Max Gate recalled that during his visit in 1910, in Hardy's drawing-room there was 'a full selection of photographs, scattered here and there' (Gibson, 1999, p. 91) which shows that the writer was interested in this art.

Structure of Recorded Perceptions and Cinematic Sequences of Images

One writer who has discussed Hardy's relations to visual arts has written that 'For Hardy, the visual image, whether a slight sketch of his own or a canvas by Rembrandt, acted as a kind of reservoir of ideas and feelings' (Bullen, 2009, p. 220). Thus, it seems that there exists something like a Chinese-box structure – one's mind is a container that holds images, and these images have their own contents. The latter could be emotions, feelings, or crucial moments that carry a particular significance. This structure also suggests synecdochical relations (part–whole) between the images that our minds hold and the things they point to. Perception suggests framing, focusing, and fixing of an object or event – to capture at least partially what is ever fleeting so that it can be played back, appreciated, and understood. Moving on, the reader finds out that Elfride's form was 'beheld during these minutes of singing' (Hardy, 2009, p. 21) which means two things – the time Stephen's mind was exposed to Elfride's image took more time than a regular photograph would require and that there was motion and sound. All this cannot but give a cinematic sensibility to the episode (moving pictures accompanied by sound). The narrative continues with a description of various details of the lady playing and singing – her dress, the colour of her neck, her face, hair, and hands. It must be pointed out that the word 'face' is repeated many

times on these initial pages (pp. 21-22) that it cannot go unnoticed. In an article about Hardy from 1894 he wrote that when travelling 'I find myself observing my fellow-passengers and constructing the story of their lives from what I see in their faces' (Gibson, 1999, p. 45) which is an instance of the interplay between fictionality and historicity – Hardy selected fragments from reality (passenger's faces in this case), his imagination processed them and then a final fictive product was born in writing. This attention to countenances is common to the entire book and to other novels by Hardy – very often characters' faces signify certain messages and emotions. Here, it is as if a camera is moving and recording a series of close-ups that feature important parts of Elfride and their interaction with the lighting and other pertinent objects such as the piano. The gluing together of these images could remind one of Sergei Eisenstein's montage theory of phenomena in film editing. He examines literary examples that are like predecessors to the methods employed for image-building in films. One of his reviews focuses on Homer and Lessing's analysis of the *Iliad* wherein the ancient poet is found to have used a device of forming an image by describing its key features in a logical order (Agamemnon's garments – each item is delineated in a sequence as if to dress the character before the eyes of readers) in which he finds an analogy to what cinematographers do when editing (Eisenstein, 2012).

David Lodge talked about Hardy as a cinematic novelist, giving examples from *The Return of the Native*, *The Woodlanders*, and the short story *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress* – a remnant from his first novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady* (1999, p. 80, p. 87). Among discussing research by other scholars (Leon Edel) and suggesting that cinematic sensibilities are present in most realistic novelists of the 19th century (p. 78), Lodge delineated some differences between realistic novels and films, the former being freer as they can describe both visible and invisible phenomena hence a cinematic novelist is one who 'deliberately renounces some of the freedom of representation and report afforded by the verbal medium, who imagines and presents his materials in primarily visual terms, and whose visualisations correspond in some significant respect to the visual effects characteristic of film' (p. 80). It appears then that these cinematic peculiarities are not inherent only to these novels but also to the earlier *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. While it is difficult to say how much of his freedom Hardy renounced, it is clear that there is an emphasis on visual terms. In 1900 William Phelps visited Hardy and when discussing literature, the novel in question among other things, Phelps told Hardy 'I should have known by the

structure of his novels that he had been a practising architect' and what he had in mind was plot structure, from what can be gathered from this account (Gibson, 1999, pp. 63-64) but since there are pictures and scenes 'where more is meant than meets the eye' (Pinion, 1977, p. 22) everywhere in this book, it can be concluded that a literary picture is the main building block Hardy used to construct his products of literary architecture. The latter term was used by the novelist himself when talking about Victor Hugo's works – he saw them as 'the cathedrals of literary architecture' (Hardy, 1962, p. 311). All this shows that the architectural foundation of Hardy's novels is strong, and this is pertinent to the cinematic question as Eisenstein observed that in the construction of cathedrals one discerns other analogies between the philosophy of cinema and that of architecture because there exist specific sculptural groups or stops signifying the road to Calvary that have to do with the symbolism in ecclesiastical ceremonies (Eisenstein, 2012, pp. 147-148). Additionally, he talked about Bernini's Baldachin and how its coats of arms are analogous to frames – script fragments with the same outline but different contents (details) that unfold an entire drama (p. 149). Hardy was occupied with architecture at a stage of his life and church-restoration was one area he was closely familiar with (Hardy, 1962, p. 31), therefore, he must have been acquainted with these symbolic peculiarities of architecture. Hence, it could be argued that this influenced him, subconsciously or not, and added to the architectural sensibilities of his works that could also carry a cinematic tinge. Other writers have seen similar features in Hardy's 'hugely agile manipulation of distance and perspective' in later novels such as *Tess* and have gone on to call them proto-cinematic (Bullen, 2009, p. 221). This further solidifies the sense of such properties in his writing and shows consistency in the use of a particular technique.

Faces as Narratives

Later in the novel one finds a scene that seems to have called into partiality an otherwise somewhat distanced narrator. He has become infatuated with the pair of blue eyes looking at Knight, another character Miss Elfride has feelings for, and describes them as worthy of a painting (Hardy, 2009, p. 150). The description of her look makes it obvious that her eyes and face are not simply aesthetically pleasing. The eyes express a trait of the character's behaviour that not only confirms her prettiness but also highlights the properties of her observation of the world – selective, deep, undisguised, and honest (p. 150) and that is very important as regards the quality of narrative data. It may be argued

that this narrative charge, the facts one learns about Elfride's perception of the person she is interested in, is what lends charm to her persona. In other words, Elfride is an interesting character because she exhibits certain behaviour which also greatly contributes to her appearance. This impression of the girl in the minds of the narrator and Knight seems to fit in one definition of impression Ricoeur mentions in his investigation of Plato's legacy regarding the questions of memory and recollection – 'an affection resulting from the shock of an event that can be said to be striking, marking' (Ricoeur, 2004, p. 14). Here, however, 'the shock' and 'striking' event that make this episode memorable are such in a good sense and are depicted in an intense fashion that highlight this scene as an act of falling in love.

The account continues with Knight's reception of this girl's exhibition of feeling. It is in two ways that the portrait painted with words by the narrator could be read. Firstly, it shows Elfride's face exhibiting awareness of the rashly but sincerely spoken words in 'the bright rose colour of her cheeks' which the falling sun saturates further (p. 151). Faces signifying feelings, messages, and emotions are indeed common with Hardy. One explanation may be what Levinas expressed in his *Totality and Infinity*, a work on 'patterns of experience as we live them through,' where he has pointed out that 'the face is a living presence; it is expression… The face speaks. The manifestation of the face is already a disclosure' (1979, pp. 12, 661). It is a manifestation of what happens in her mind that the reader witnesses here. On the other hand, this episode begins with 'Knight could not help looking at her' (Hardy, 2009, p. 150) which leads one to the assumption that what follows is a description of the way Elfride appears to him – someone who is not impartial to her. Sunset light is flattering but, in this case, it may only highlight the radiant charm this girl has for Knight. This corresponds to one of the picture types Pinion believes were used by Hardy – 'psychological' – 'a concrete and sometimes poetic way of expressing states of mind, feelings, and moods in the protagonists themselves' (1977, p. 25). Thus, Elfride's rose-coloured radiance has to do with light and the temperature of sunlight at a particular angle, and also with Knight's perception of her through rose-tinted spectacles, to use a more modern idiom. Again, this part of the book illustrates that a beautiful description of a character is not there to merely decorate. It clothes narrative

[1] It is important to note that this remark is a basic conclusion about body language. Levinas' discussion of "face" is a more complex philosophical idea developed later to talk about the presence of an Absolute Other, an interlocutor sine qua non who defines the Self.

information of considerable importance in an appealing garment – one learns how characters' perceptions work and how their appearance signifies internal processes and feelings.

History Viewed as Layers of Recorded Images

Another truly memorable moment in the novel is Knight's hanging off a cliff in chapter XXII. The narrator mentions the grim features of the face of the cliff opposite the character himself who can behold: 'Nature's treacherous attempt to put an end to him' (Hardy, 2009, p. 199). As he hangs on, he discerns 'an imbedded fossil', a dead creature whose eyes 'were even now regarding him' (p. 200). What is present in this scene seems to illustrate eloquently Pinion's comment that 'Harmonization of landscape and situation is to be found in several of Hardy's novels' (1977, p. 29) – a dreary harmony exists as the unfriendly cliff, the fossilised organism, and surrounding environment are in accordance with Knight's peril.

The visual contact with the fossil triggers a peculiar thought process. But what is so special about this remnant of old life? Maybe the fact that it is a kind of an index that stands for more than the individual creature of a bygone epoch. The preserved fossil is a relic, just like an image could be. Something that projects into the viewer's mind a record of valuable information. Knight sees himself 'face to face with the beginning and all the intermediate centuries simultaneously' (Hardy, 2009, p. 200) and this could be read as a stream of consciousness in which 'images' follow one another – each signifying ages in the development of life on earth, flashing within seconds before Knight's inner eye. He has some knowledge of geology but more importantly – he thinks of large periods of time as images of scenes (p. 200). The latter is an important word in Hardy's works and it is difficult to define what exactly he meant by it – maybe it was something like a snapshot of a landscape. One recollection of a guest tells a story of how they went out of Max Gate, and upon reaching a high road and gazing at the panorama Hardy remarked that 'the scene interested him most as a record of history' after which he discussed the various tribes and peoples that had lived there and 'called the land a palimpsest, on which many a record had been written only to be erased to make place for another…' (Gibson, 1999, p. 92). Knight's confrontation with the geological cross section appears like a reading of this palimpsest. Also noteworthy is the fact that in an interview Hardy used the same term – 'The human mind is a sort of palimpsest, I suppose; and it's hard to say what records

may not lurk in it' (p. 67). It would appear that this similarity exists because humans are parts of nature and this is what enables them to recognise and read the various layers of history. Elsewhere, Hardy uses a character to say 'Ay, life is a strange picter...' (Hardy, 2009, p. 241) which shows a certain attitude of thinking about life. If life is a picture, then it is natural to think of different epochs of life as pictures or scenes. Additionally, the compression of time – 'Time closed up like a fan before him' (p. 200) – and the ensuing awareness of how petty life can be, depending on the point of reference, are triggered by this curious token with eyes that perceive nothing but incite reflection about what they have actually witnessed once in a primitive way and later continue to behold in this fossilized form. What happens is reminiscent of Ricoeur's thought that 'The brevity of human life stands out against the immensity of indefinite chronological time' (Ricoeur, 2004, p. 155). 'Chronological time' according to him 'designates the linear times of long periods: century, millennium, and so forth…' (p. 156) and the available geological strata facilitate the character's understanding and shock.

Knight's reaction is quite similar to the one Roland Barthes experienced when he saw a photograph of Napoleon's youngest brother and thought that he was looking at the eyes that had seen the Emperor (Barthes, 1981). It seems that a photograph shares similarities with a fossil – either way one is beholding something that has existed (considering only photographs that have not been manipulated) and while a fossil is the physical remains of the actual thing, a photograph also has a physical connection with its subject because it is the product of light rays bouncing off what one is photographing and falling into the photographic emulsion. The enlarged image from a negative/positive is indeed a copy but it also shares a physical connection with the emulsion that was originally touched by light. Moving back to the character in danger – Knight believes he is to die in the company of a primitive organism which, he feels, diminishes his dignity in a way. The man's thoughts also explore the intermingling of natural history and cultural history – seen in the combination of his historical and geological knowledge with the mention of 'the doomed Macbeth' (probably the Shakespearean character, not the historical Scottish king) (Hardy, 2009, p. 200). This appears to be a mixture of historicity and fictionality – inherent to human perception of the past in general. People tend to look back, selecting only what their subjective stance sees in the past (an act of selection – a manifestation of the fictive) and mingle it with matters that have not occurred in actual history. Additionally, this sequence of imagery can be viewed as the phenomenon people say happens before one is about to

perish – they view their life as if it were a short film. In this case, however, he sees the history of life on earth and a fragmentary picture of the future – Elfride living without him. Also noteworthy is the use of the term 'inner eye' (p. 201) which seems identical to the 'mind's eye' discussed above.

Another instance is the parting of Knight and Elfride, a sad moment after which the man witnesses a scene which 'was engraved for years on the retina of Knight's eye' (Hardy, 2009, p. 311). Here it is obvious that a landscape cannot be physically engraved on the eye but that the narrator is referring to that 'inner eye'. Once more the reader is reminded of the idea that one's mind works with mental images. In other words, what people look at influences their thought processes which use algorithms that make their minds picture (call out ideas for consideration in the form of images). Thus, to say that Hardy is a visual writer could be equal to talking of him as a writer who explores the human psyche.

Light as an Instrument, Framing, Synecdoche

One of the most recurrent motifs in the novel is the presence of light. A good example could be taken from the second half of the novel. Its role appears to be instrumental in the revelation of various objects but also of entire scenes – 'The scratch of a striking light was heard… Stephen… saw in the summer-house a strongly illuminated picture' (p. 224). And what the picture consists of is Stephen's sweetheart in the close company of his friend and mentor Henry Knight (p. 225). In other words, light makes things visible. If things are visible, perception employs its most influential channel (there exist other channels but the visual seems to be the strongest with Hardy) and stories can be generated. In this case, the story of a heartbreak that is a fragment of the human relationships that unfold the novel's plot.

Further on, the three members of this novel's love triangle are found in a church's vault discussing the stories of the people buried there (one of them being Elfride's grandmother) and at a point Knight is caused to express his thoughts on the fragility of human life (pp. 244-245). The sight of the tombs initiates a more general discussion on existence which features several curious points. The human body and individual human life (depending how one interprets things) is a 'frame', a 'narrow cell' which can be overcome when one's mind is provoked into deep reflection and unlocks its huge capacity (p. 245). It follows then that Hardy's narrative technique of presenting events and characters as (parts of) scenes or pictures is as per this philosophy. Since one's existence

happens within a frame, then it is natural that the writings concerning people and their life are presented in frames. This is in accordance with the logic implied in the previous discussion of synecdochical relations. It is important to mention that similar phenomena are also present in his poetry – *Satires of Circumstance in Fifteen Glimpses* (1911) features pieces that illustrate this. One writer has observed that 'the past returns through places, through objects of concrete physical value… whereby one recalls' various previous experiences (Rowland, 2014, p. 152). In other words, the presence of an item refers metonymically to something else which is usually bigger.

Toward the end of the book the narrator offers another noteworthy picture-related episode. After their estrangement, the two suitors of Elfride meet again. Stephen has a few pocket-books with various sketches among which there are some mediaeval figures. After some perusal, Knight notices 'a peculiarity' – all female saints have a feature in common – 'That profile – how well Knight knew that profile' (Hardy, 2009, p. 331). In the conversation between the two men, it becomes obvious that Stephen has been unconsciously using the portrait of his beloved as a model in these images (p. 332). It can be argued that pictures have been used again as an intricate narrative technique. It is not the sketches that are important as plans for a stained-glass installation, but what they show beyond that – the fact that Stephen has not forgotten his sweetheart and has subconsciously professed his love for her in these drawings. It is interesting that Stephen himself has performed an act of fictionalizing – the man has taken something from his history (one must call it so for a moment despite the fact that it is a novel portraying an imaginary chain of events) and combined it, unconsciously, with other ideas to produce fictive pictures that carry a strong narrative charge in addition to their aesthetic merits.

Conclusions

It becomes clear that Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes* employs a peculiarly visual narrative technique that carries phenomenological tinges with an interesting insight into the way human perception works. A path for future investigation could be the classification of all manifestations of this technique in Hardy's novels – the meaning of landscape, the importance of perspective, faces, or the use of ekphrasis. *The Return of the Native*, published approximately five years after *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, offers a lot in this respect. One could analyse its emphasis on the appearance of faces as an intricate way of plot-building – a character's countenance as a container of vital information. Alternatively, the use of

perspective as a trigger of satires of circumstance is another question worthy of examination – the discussed characters become victims of circumstance or are saved from becoming such depending on what their perspective allows them to perceive.

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