Papers of 8ᵗʰ international conference on language, literature & linguistics 2021

26 July 2021

Online Conference

International Center for Research & Development
Sri Lanka

ICRD

8th International Conference on Language, Literature and Linguistics 2021

Conference Convener

Dr. Prabhath Patabendi
International Center for Research & Development, Sri Lanka

Academic Chairperson

Dr. S. Ramaratnam,
Vice Chancellor, Jagadguru Kripalu University, India

Keynote Speakers

Prof. (Dr.) Jagdish Batra
Professor, Head of English Language Centre
O. P. Jindal Global University, India

Dr. Kristian Van Haesendonck
Associate Professor
University of Sanya, China

Organizer

International Center for Research & Development (ICRD)

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Prof. Donathan Brown, Rochester Institute of Technology, New York

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Prof. (Dr.) Jagdish Batra, O.P. Jindal Global University, India

8th International Conference on Language, Literature and Linguistics 2021

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Summary of the Proceedings of the LLL2021Conference

The LLL 2021 Conference organised by ICRD, Sri Lanka was held on 26-07-2021 in Singapore. It was an Online Conference. At the outset, the Convenor of the Conference, Dr. Prabhath Patabendi welcomed the scholars and spoke about the theme of the Conference. The Conference was inaugurated by Dr. S. Ramaratnam, Vice Chancellor of Jagadguru Kripalu University, Odisha, India. As the Session Chair, he spoke on the topic, 'Making the Individual Existence Universal.' Drawing illustrations from the poems of Louise Gluck (The 2020 Nobel Prize winner for Literature), Dr. Ramaratnam demonstrated how Literature can elevate a person from individual level to the Universal level. Following this, two keynote addresses were rendered, one by Dr. Jagdish Batra, Head of the Department of English, O. P. Jindal University, India (who spoke on Post Modernism and Literature) and Dr. Kristian Van Haesendonck, Assistant Professor, University of Sanya, China (who spoke on The World as an Archipelago). The Session was chaired by Dr. S. Ramaratnam. The other session chairs of the Conference were, Dr. Jagsish Batra, Dr. Kristian Van Haesndonck, Dr. Leslie Ljungdahi and Dr. Simon Kim.

The Conference was attended by delegates from as many as 23 countries from all parts of the Globe. There were thought provoking papers on various themes. We had quite a few papers on the current trends in Language, Literature and Linguistics, for example, the problems of Spanish Americans, Automatic Scoring Models, Facebook conversations, Multi-dimensional gender perspectives, on how Socratic questioning can be helpful in online learning, the Net Speak and Communicative language teaching. On the literature side, there was a paper on the famous R.L. Stevenson, which brought back fond memories on his immortal works like the Treasure Island. Letter writing is an art. The Letters of famous English authors and those of Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru on the India side are beautiful pieces of literature. The art of letter writing is slowly disappearing in these days of emails, WhatsApp and Facebook. In the Conference there was a paper on Letter writing. Several new ideas came to the fore during the Conference, like the concept of Narration, and Minimalistic narratives. One of the papers highlighted on how ancient myths can help in tackling today's realities. There were papers on fiction and novels. One paper compared the present Corona situation with the outbreak of Plague in the past. There were papers on how science can be helpful in solving the language teaching problems, on taking language to children with certain disorders, English Education in Japan and the Buddhist talk in Drama Form. There was a paper on a film that brought out the problems of the transgenders. Several linguistic issues were discussed during the Conference. We learnt about the Semantic fields and Semantic Annotation, transitive and intransitive verbs in Vietnamese. Several social issues were also brought forth, like Perfect health, Life without pains, fear and illness and peaceful environment.

We had a panel discussion on the Challenges and issues in teaching language during the Pandemic time. It was chaired by Dr. S. Ramaratnam and the panel members were Dr. Jagdish Batra, Dr. Leslie Ljungdahi and Dr. Kristian Van Haesendonck. The Closing Session was chaired by Dr. S. Ramaratnam and the speaker was Dr. Leslie Ljungdahi. The Concluding remarks were rendered by Dr. Prabhath Patabendi, the Convenor of the Conference.

On the whole, it was a useful and purposeful Conference. It was hoped that the next Conference would be an offline conference where the delegates would be able to interact with each other in person.

Dr. S. Ramaratnam,
(Academic Chairperson of the Conference)
Vice Chancellor, Jagadguru Kripalu University, India

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Written Production: Which criteria are useful for measuring the Linguistic Level and the Level of Text Difficulty?

Chrysovalantou Kapeta, PhD,

Department of Italian Language, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki,

Abstract

Nowadays, it is very important for scientists to find out those criteria that are based on which the linguistic level and the degree of Readability of a produced text can be measured and evaluated. For this reason, 316 texts were chosen randomly produced by Greek candidates of Italian Language for the exams of the Greek State Certificate of Italian Language regarding the period May 2015 and November 2016. After selection, the above were manually digitized in Word format 2010 and measured in the Read-IT tool (Dylan Tool). The data processing and factor analysis were done with the SPSS.24 software which shows that the Greek users B1 and B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages produce texts per level of language learning and degree of difficulty that are differentiated through features intertwined with vocabulary, grammar and syntax, like appropriate or inappropriate language, spelling, textual coherence and cohesion.

Keywords: *Measurement, validity, criteria, level, readability, reliability, fairness*

Introduction

Discovering and verifying different features is of high importance to the academic and scientific community, as they can be used in future research for all levels of language learning (A1-C2) and other languages to build more advanced text evaluation software (Beacco, 2017: 9-19). It is very useful to have adequate tools so that the measurement, processing and evaluation of produced texts is based on data that leads to the validity and fairness of a test for a more objective treatment/grading of candidates in an examination (Elder & Harding, 2008: 341-342). In addition, these elements should be the main components, with which one can produce examination and test instructions per linguistic level (in this case B1 and B2 based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) and according to the degree of difficulty, ie. Radability (Lenzner, 2014: 678-681). In addition, in Greece, the two largest universities, EKPA and Aristotle, already use a very important measurement tool called trat.exe (Klonis, 2019), part of which is the present research, and with which measurements are made for the construction of the exams of the Italian Language of the Greek State Certificate for languages (KPG).

For this research work, samples of latest Italian KPG examinations were used, because the availability of written texts was quite high, as there is continuous cooperation with the Greek Ministry of Education, from where valid sampling was requested.

In addition, the KPG includes four modules (oral production, listening comprehension, written comprehension and written production), while it is graded, which allows the candidate to be examined at two levels at the same time, ie A1 and A2, B1 and B2, and finally, C1 and C2, and at a relatively lower cost compared to a private certification exam. These two reasons often make it eligible, and it has been proven for about twenty years that it has taken an important place in the educational field, as it is preferred by both public and private school teachers. In fact, while it was originally designed for the benefit and use of public schools, it was later introduced in the program of Foreign Language Centers, but also of private schools.

Moreover, B level is very common to Greek citizens because it offers points to apply for public or even private job positions in Greece. Furthermore, the choice of the production of written speech is justified by the fact that so far, no written texts of Greek users of Italian have been studied from which one can conclude when a text is considered level B1 and when level B2. This distinction needs to be

investigated, because on the one hand it will help the examinee to prepare with tangible and precise criteria for an examination per level and on the other hand the examiners, in order to create reliable tests that will then be evaluated objectively by the assessors. In other words, it is sometimes thought that level B2 subjects were easier than B1 or vice versa, that B1 subjects were more difficult than expected. In the context of this division and question, this research tried to focus on the differentiation of these criteria, in order to clarify what features could be used for each level to determine the degree of difficulty of the texts produced.

Aim or research

In short, the following two points were considered:

1. Criteria that determine the level of language proficiency of written production.

2. Criteria that determine the degree of difficulty (or Readability) of written production.

The two main axes in which the research moved are the two levels B1 and B2 and the degree of difficulty of a text. By degree of difficulty, we refer to the degree of Readability of the various features that make up the final purpose of this research.

Readability Formulas

For decades, studies and efforts have been made to find readability formulas that measure the degree of difficulty of a word or sentence and text (Long & Christensen, 2011). Among others, the formulas Spache, SMOG, Fog, ATOS, Flesch-Kincaid, Dale-Chall, Fry have been used many times in previous research and measurements of the English language, while based on them the Read-IT and Gulpease indexes were created for the Italian language and the Flesch - Vacca formula that measures e.g. the size of a word or sentence, the number of syllables per 100 words, the average number of words in a phrase in a sample of 100 words, etc. The specific technological means contribute a lot to the correct evaluation of a text, since it is done in an objective, fast and reliable way. The formulas are called to provide solutions to measurements that can't be easily found humanly, since these are mathematical equations and algorithms with great accuracy and efficiency.

Methodology

First, for the present research, valid samples have been produced in recent examination periods by a large number of Greek candidates. Secondly, a technological way had to be found to digitize them. These were the basic conditions for reaching tangible, substantiated conclusions. For this reason, there was a selection of at least 10,000 samples of KPG examinations provided by the Ministry of Education of Greece. The final set of samples resulted from the above, 316 texts produced in the examination period May 2015 and November 2016 for levels B1 and B2, which were carefully digitized by hand and converted into word format. Measurements were then made with the Read-IT tool (Dell'Orletta, Wieling, Cimino, Venturi & Montemagni, 2014: 164) from which the necessary data for analysis and processing were obtained. They were analyzed through SPSS.24, first individually and then through the factor analysis that exported the final product, in other words the new data, ie the criteria that will be mentioned below in the research conclusions.

Analysis

In the following graphs and tables there are important data that show the ability or even difficulty of Greek users of the Italian language in terms of the use of linguistic features per linguistic level and degree of difficulty.

Bar Chart
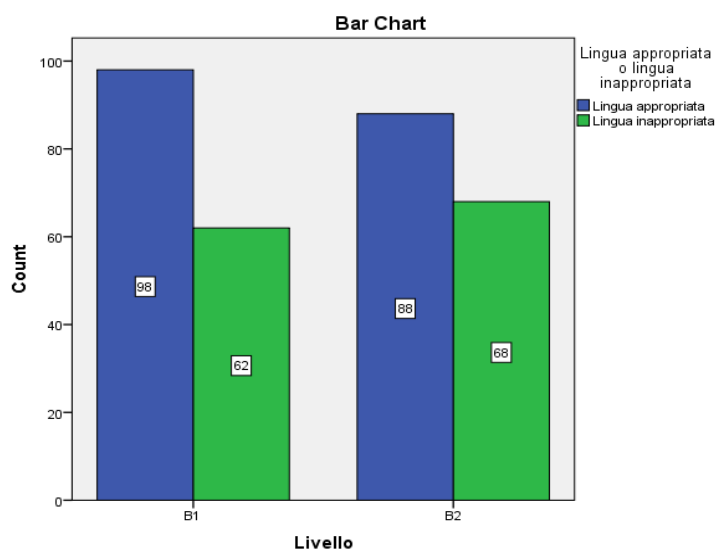
Graph 1: Illustration of the total result of the variables "Appropriate language" and "Inappropriate language" according to the language level

The appropriate language (graph 1) means the use of words in Italian and not from a lexical point of view. In other words, we find certain written productions in which words seem to be Italian, but are of another language (for example honora, phonetics). These words are not part of the Italian vocabulary; however, they are very reminiscent of Italian words. This part of the analysis belongs to the lexical sector, always based on the use of the Italian language.

Read-It Globale (Binned) * Fuori Tema Crosstabulation

Count

		Fuori Tema Fuori Tema o mancanza di informazioni importanti	Entro Tema	Total
Read-It Globale (Binned)	<= 1,00	2	56	58
	1,01 - 7,60	5	111	116
	7,61 - 14,20	3	34	37
	14,21 - 20,80	1	19	20
	20,81 - 27,40	1	24	25
	27,41 - 34,00	1	17	18
	34,01 - 40,60	0	6	6
	40,61 - 47,20	0	6	6
	47,21 - 53,80	0	1	1
	53,81 - 60,40	0	9	9
	60,41 - 67,00	0	3	3
	67,01 - 73,60	0	5	5
	73,61 - 80,20	0	6	6
	86,81 - 93,40	1	2	3
	93,41 - 100,00	0	3	3
Total		14	302	316

Table 1: Total result of the "Off topic" and "Within topic" variables according to the Read-It Globale index
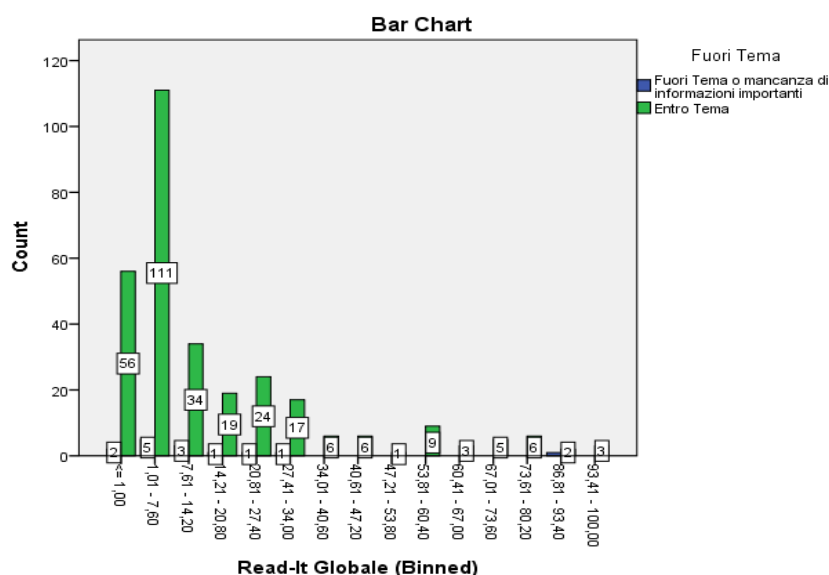
Graph 2: Illustration of the final result of the "Off topic" and "Within topic" variables according to the Read-It Globale index

On table 1 and graph 2, most of the written productions (111 texts) are within the theme of the test, scoring 1.01-7.60% of overall difficulty. This means that the candidates have answered the questions posed in the KPG exam. Very few texts produced are off-topic or include missing important information. In such cases, not all the questions were answered because they were perhaps difficult to understand and because there was probably no time to answer them. Many candidates have written many words and phrases for one question, not having the time to answer others. This appears to have failed to answer in detail and thus important information is missing. Consequently, these produced texts cannot be of the same level of difficulty as others. In other words, in 302 texts that are within the theme, the Greek candidates tried to answer all the questions, although sometimes making morpho-syntactic or lexical errors.

Correlation Matrix[a,b]

		Valutazione	Read-It Globale	Ortografia	Coesione e coerenza testuale	Fuori Tema	Lingua appropriata o lingua inappropriata	Sufficienza o Insufficienza delle parole
Correlation	Valutazione	1,000	,196	,689	,781	,166	-,283	-,256
	Read-It Globale	,196	1,000	,299	,207	,069	-,027	-,075
	Ortografia	,689	,299	1,000	,754	,113	-,138	-,204
	Coesione e coerenza testuale	,781	,207	,754	1,000	,081	-,224	-,262
	Fuori Tema	,166	,069	,113	,081	1,000	-,037	-,231
	Lingua appropriata o lingua inappropriata	-,283	-,027	-,138	-,224	-,037	1,000	,119
	Sufficienza o Insufficienza delle parole	-,256	-,075	-,204	-,262	-,231	,119	1,000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Valutazione		,006	,000	,000	,018	,000	,001
	Read-It Globale	,006		,000	,004	,193	,367	,174
	Ortografia	,000	,000		,000	,077	,041	,005
	Coesione e coerenza testuale	,000	,004	,000		,153	,002	,000
	Fuori Tema	,018	,193	,077	,153		,321	,002

Lingua appropriata o lingua inappropriata	,000	,367	,041	,002	,321		,067
Sufficienza o Insufficienza delle parole	,001	,174	,005	,000	,002	,067	

a. Only cases for which Livello = B1 are used in the analysis phase.

b. Determinant = ,112

Table 2: The most important components among the variables "Evaluation", "Read-It Globale", "Spelling", "Textual cohesion and coherence", "Off topic", "Appropriate language or inappropriate language" and "Sufficiency or insufficiency of words" according to level B1

For level B1, according to table 2, the variables of high importance seem to be "Evaluation", "Textual cohesion and coherence" and "Spelling" between which we see a high correlation. 69% show that the more the "Evaluation" increases, the more the percentage of the "Spelling" variable also increases; 78% show that the more "Textual cohesion and coherence" increases, the more the "Evaluation" increases; moreover, 75% show that the higher the percentage of the variable "Spelling" the more the percentage of "Textual cohesion and coherence" also increases. Above all, these data offer us important information: we encounter factors such as spelling, cohesion and coherence of the text that play an important role in the final evaluation of texts produced, because the percentage seems to be quite high (more than 50%).

Another indicative element is the degree of importance between the correlation of the variables "Evaluation" and "Textual cohesion and coherence" (, 000%). The same happens also in the case of "Read-It Globale" and "Spelling". There is also a similar result for the "Sufficiency or insufficiency of words" and "Textual cohesion and coherence", and lastly the "Textual cohesion and coherence" and the variables "Spelling", "Evaluation" and "Sufficiency and insufficiency of words" and "Evaluation" and "Appropriate or inappropriate language", whose degree of importance seems to be very high (, 000%).

Correlation Matrix[a,b]

		Valutazione	Read-It Globale	Ortografia	Coesione e coerenza testuale	Fuori Tema	Lingua appropriata o lingua inappropriata	Sufficienza o Insufficienza delle parole
Correlation	Valutazione	1,000	,043	,635	,848	,371	-,211	-,422
	Read-It Globale	,043	1,000	,140	,001	-,071	,155	,008
	Ortografia	,635	,140	1,000	,753	,332	-,166	-,331
	Coesione e coerenza testuale	,848	,001	,753	1,000	,330	-,271	-,343
	Fuori Tema	,371	-,071	,332	,330	1,000	-,139	-,541
	Lingua appropriata o lingua inappropriata	-,211	,155	-,166	-,271	-,139	1,000	,055
	Sufficienza o Insufficienza delle parole	-,422	,008	-,331	-,343	-,541	,055	1,000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Valutazione		,296	,000	,000	,000	,004	,000
	Read-It Globale	,296		,041	,495	,188	,026	,459
	Ortografia	,000	,041		,000	,000	,019	,000
	Coesione e coerenza testuale	,000	,495	,000		,000	,000	,000
	Fuori Tema	,000	,188	,000	,000		,041	,000

Lingua appropriata o lingua inappropriata	,004	,026	,019	,000	,041		,247
Sufficienza o Insufficienza delle parole	,000	,459	,000	,000	,000	,247	

a. Only cases for which Livello = B2 are used in the analysis phase.
b. Determinant = ,055

Table 3: Variations or differences between the variables "Evaluation", "Read-It Globale", "Spelling", "Textual cohesion and coherence", "Off topic", "Appropriate language or Inappropriate language" and "Sufficiency or insufficiency of words" according to level B2

For level B2, according to table 3, the variables of high importance seem to be "Evaluation", "Textual cohesion and coherence", "Sufficiency or insufficiency of words", "Off topic" and "Spelling" among which we observe a very strong correlation. 64% show that the more the "Evaluation" increases, the more the percentage of the variable "Spelling" also increases; eighty-five percent shows us that the more the "Textual cohesion and coherence" increases, the more the "Evaluation" also increases; moreover, 75% indicates that the higher the percentage of the variable "Spelling" so does that of "Textual cohesion and coherence".

A very indicative element for level B2 seems to be the correlation between the variables "Off topic" and "Sufficiency or insufficiency of words". On the same table, we see that the more the percentage of the "Sufficiency or insufficiency of words" increases, the less the percentage of the variable "Off topic" and vice versa (-, 54%).

Conclusions

From the new data we have the following observations on the main questions of the research: 1. The level of language learning is interrelated with the degree of difficulty, as the first grows the other shrinks and vice versa (there is an inversely proportional relationship between the two). 2. We see that new factors are born, ie criteria that contribute to increasing the level of difficulty that can affect both linguistic levels. These criteria are for example, evaluation, spelling, appropriate or inappropriate language, in or off topic, sufficiency or insufficiency of the words. All of the above constitute the criteria that could potentially assist in future research in the field of linguistics and the development of innovative software such as the Read-IT tool (Dell'Orletta et al., 2011) and trat.exe (Klonis, 2019) for a more accurate and objective evaluation of generated texts for all levels of language proficiency for all certifiers of foreign languages.

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A Biopolitical Analysis of Juli Zeh's *Corpus Delicti*

Alexandra Juster

University of Córdoba (Spain)

Abstract:

Corpus Delicti by Juli Zeh raises health to the reason of State, depicting a biopolitical health dictatorship, the METHOD. Inspiration by the biopolitical thinking of Foucault and Agamben. Foucault's biopolitical understanding is linked to the sociological interventionist sphere of society, while Agamben's biopolitical understanding is linked to the individual's rights, which suffer a suspension in the "homo sacer". Agamben's theory tries to find an explanation to mass murder under the Nazi regime of Hitler, culminating in its cruelty through the existence of concentration camps. In Corpus Delicti especially Agamben's juridical conception of biopolitics comes clearly through, all governing is linked to the physical body, seeking perfect health, Mia becomes the "corpus delicti" and at the same time "homo sacer" whose body is no longer protected by individual rights.

Keywords: *Foucault's and Agamben's biopolitics - Corpus Delicti - health dictatorship*

Introduction

With *Corpus Delicti* Juli Zeh depicted in 2009 a dystopian totalitarian system legitimating itself by the apparently noble purpose of guaranteeing to all citizens the perfect health and the longest possible life without pains and fear of illness and disease within a peaceful environment, free from pollution. The price to pay is the loss of individual freedom as well as of intellectual and emotional identity. All citizens have to submit regularly intimate health data related to sleeping, alimentation, blood, urine, physical performance. Marriage is allowed only between people whose immunological system is compatible to make sure "quality" reproduction. The State's reason justifies the control not only of all the physical bodies, but also of the individual's soul. Human beings, taken in their physical body, become a tool of biopolitical power, a conception which *Corpus Delicti* draws, on one hand, from the French philosopher Michel Foucault and his socio-political approach and from his Italian colleague Giorgio Agamben and his juridical approach, on the other hand.

Method of research

Study and analysis of Foucault's and Agamben's conception of biopolitics. Study and analysis of Juli Zeh's *Corpus Delicti* (Zeh, 2013) and *Fragen zu Corpus Delicti* (Zeh & Btb Verlag (Tb, 2020). Investigation of Zeh's personal ideals and thinking. Identification of biopolitical features in *Corpus Delicti*. Confrontation of the latter with Foucault's and Agamben's ideas.

Foucault's sociological concept of biopolitics

For Foucault the modern human being is an animal in politics which life as a living creature is questioned: "*L'homme moderne est un animal dans la politique duquel sa vie d'être vivant est en question*[1] (Foucault, 1976)".

One of the decisive moments for the birth of biopolitical State intervention is the transition from the State as geographic territory to the State as a nation composed by its human citizens. This transition allowed simultaneously for protection of life and mass murder in the German Holocaust period.

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[1] "Modern man is a political animal whose life as a living being is under question".

> *"Il en résulte une sorte d'animalisation de l'homme effectuée par les techniques politiques les plus sophistiquées. Alors apparaissent dans l'histoire aussi bien la multiplication des possibilités des sciences humains et sociales, que la possibilité simultanée de protéger la vie et d'en autoriser l'holocauste* (Foucault, 1994: 719)[2]*".*

This means for Foucault that modern biopolitics focuses on strategies dealing with the human existence itself (Gerhards & Braun, 2019: 8), through a strong State intervention in the individual's life granting each individual a better life in singular and, as a result of individual performance, enhancing the performance and power of society as a whole. A "better life" not only refers to physical well being, but to life circumstances in general, such as environment, medical care, cultural offer, quality of education, employment conditions etc, in the sense of "*Leben, Überleben und besseres Leben*[3] (Gerhards & Braun, 2019:23)". Opposite to physical datas which can be improved, enhanced, manipulated, used and physically apprehended, spiritual components such as religion and faith of human's existence do not interest biopolitical strategies, insofar as they cannot be boosted, maximized, because they are not measurable (Gerhards & Braun, 2019: 22).

Indeed, power shall intervene in all processes of human life with the target to improve, rise and optimize continuously. This aspiration to step always higher is intended by Foucault in a constructive, and not totalitarian, way: "*Ausschöpfen statt Abschöpfen, Leben produktiv machen statt beherrschen, Leben optimieren statt disziplinieren* (Gerhards & Braun, 2019:28)"[4]. Such a positive promotion of human existence can happen nationwide, by organising the civil protection, improving the sanitary system, promoting qualitative agriculture granting healthy alimentation, etc as well as on an individual micro scale promoting personal fitness, satisfaction and happiness.

In the modern society individuals compete in the research of perfection: physical perfection, perfect health, perfect career, perfect family life, perfect balance between professional and private life, always more performing and faster administrative processes, elimination of any risk, protection against responsibility, family politics, health politics, youth politics, medical performance, search for a longer life.

Such ideas of the perfect human as an alive creature and the desire to control all natural processes were already developed in the end of the 19th century/beginning 20th century in biopolitical writings by Russian theoreticians as Fedorov, Bogdanov, Murav'ev and Cialkovski (Groys & Hagmeister, 2016). Their interest no longer referred to religion, spiritual beliefs and the human soul, but to the possibility to create the "superhuman being" dominating and ruling all natural laws, thanks to technical and scientific progress. They aspired to breed artificially perfect human beings by eugenic techniques and to abolish death thanks to human resurrection (Groys & Hagmeister, 2016). Later Aldous Huxley in his *New Brave World* depicted a radical eugenic politics, creating human creatures according to criterias established by humans, in the aim to produce human beings with characteristics which best fit with their role and task in society (Huxley, 2020). George Orwell in *1984* (Orwell & Josée Kamoun, 2020) and Samjatin in *Wir* draft a society where the human body, until its deepest intimacy (birth and family), is an object of constant control by the State. Very recently the German philosopher Bernward Gesang (born in 1968) supports the idea to enhance life expectation to the age of 200 as an obligation of any social State which he calls "*Anti-Aging für jedermann*[5] (Bernward Gesang, 2007: 151)", in order to increase individual's happiness. Humankind should determine the age limit for the needs of a perfect society, the more that the outcome of such a policy can be beneficial. For example, people living 200 years would feel more responsible for problems which currently exceed

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[2]"The result is a kind of animalisation of man carried out by the most sophisticated political techniques. Then appear in history both, the multiplication of the possibilities of the human and social sciences, as well as the simultaneous possibility to protect life and to authorize the holocaust".

[3] "Life, survival, better life".

[4]"Exploiting to maximum instead of skimming, making life productive instead of dominating, optimizing life instead of disciplining".

[5]Anti -aging for everybody.

a human life as does the issue of earth pollution. On the other hand, if the number of old people increased, there would arise the need to suppress or to strongly restrict the individual right of free reproduction "*das Individualrecht zur freien Fortpflanzung* (Bernward Gesang, 2007: 150)" through State intervention.

Such reflexions and ideas conduct us to question the compatibility of biopolitics with the principle of self determination in democratic systems and the definition of "self determination" itself, which is seemingly never the product of a real free decision, but conditioned and defined by external influences and factors (Wehling, 2008: 261) such as social pressure, social stereotypes, currents, ideals values, historical circumstances, etc. This raises the question, if biopolitical power is necessarily totalitarian.

Michel Foucault works anticipated the idea that precisely the inscription of human life as the supreme value in Western society led to totalitarian dictatorship, culminating in the paradoxe of Holocaust in the 20th century, without developing it further.

Agamben's juridical concept of biopolitics

The idea of human life as supreme value in democracies has been developed further by the contemporary Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, under a juridical angle of view in his work *Homo Sacer* (Agamben, 2016): the focus on human life as supreme value and the priority of individual rights on the collective interest are responsible for the paradoxical inversion in the totalitarian systems of the 20th century. It's precisely the outstanding importance given to human life, which will be source of extreme politicization culminating in the most extreme form of biopolitical totalitarianism, represented by the Nazi's concentration camps. Again, we are running the risk of exceeding politicization of human life in the current Covid -19 crisis, which leads to restrictions in violation of principles ruling democratic societies.

Agamben's biopolitical reflexions take birth in the attempt to explain the inexplicable: How could the 20th century's totalitarian systems, which disregarded human life and dignity and culminated in the Nazi terror of mass human extermination, based on racial criterias, happen? Agamben tries to elucidate this question in his work *Homo Sacer*: "*Homo sacer*" refers to a human being, denuded of all his rights, no longer worth of being sacrificed and who can be killed without penalizing his killer: "*[...]la vie nue, c'est-à-dire la vie tuable et insacrifiable de l'homo sacer* (Agamben, 2016: 17)". In the ancient Roman law "homo sacer" was defined, according to Festus as follows:" At *homo sacer is est, quem populis iudicavit ob maleficium; neque fas est eum immolari, sed qui occidit, parricidi non damnatur[6]* (Agamben, 2016: 69)".

In our modern understanding "homini sacri" would refer to citizens, who formerly enjoyed full citizen status and rights, but who have been degraded by exceptional law provisions to people exempt of rights, who are now called "naked" bodies and who are no longer protected by the legal system and can therefore be subjected to death without penalty. The most extreme form of the idea of "homo sacer" is represented by the nazi concentration camps, gathering rightless naked bodies, which can be killed without any sanction, because they are placed out of law.

Tightly linked to the concept of "homo sacer" is the juridical state of emergency, which suspends the laws in vigor because of specific circumstances and confers exceeding powers to the Executive, discarting Parliament. Agamben writes at this purpose: "*[...] tout le Troisième Reich peut être considéré du point de vue juridique, comme un état d'exception qui a duré douze ans* (Agamben, 2016: 178)[7]". The day after the blaze of the German Parliament (Reichstag), on the 28th of February 1933, President Hindenburg signed, countersigned by Hitler, the decree suspending the Weimar

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[6]"The holy man is the one whom the people have condemned for crime; he must not be sacrificed, but the one who kills him is not condemned for murder".

[7] A typical example of a 12 years lasting emergency state is the Third Reich, discarting the Constitution of Weimar.

Constitution in order to guarantee the protection of the nation against communist dangers, introducing an emergency state,[8] which will last until the fall of the nazi regime in 1945, providing Hitler with unlimited powers.

For Agamben the nazi totalitarism is the demonstration of a radical biopolitical totalitarian system where public life coincided entirely with private life, every single aspect of human existence, until its deepest intimacy, was subdued to public power. In this context, Agamben reminds the distinction in Ancient Greece between natural life in a strict sense and its function of reproduction (oikos) within the private sphere of the family (zōē[9]) from public life in society (bios[10] in the polis). Agamben sets the starting point of biopolitics and thus the politicization of human life and bodies, in the moment when natural life (zōē) became involved with public life (polis): Politics no longer stops in front of the deepest intimate sphere of human beings who are delivered, somehow "naked", to public life and become an object of political strategies and decisions: *"[...]l'introduction de la zōē dans la sphère de la polis, la politisation de la vie nue comme telle, constitue l'événement décisif de la modernité* (Agamben, 2016: 13)*"*.

Looking backwards in history, Agamben comments that the French declaration of human rights from 1789 can be seen as a first stage towards biopolitics, because of the inextricable link of the fundamental individual rights with the birth, thus the nude human life. Article 1 of the same declaration states that all men are born and remain free and equal in rights: *"Les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits"* (Conseil Constitutionnel, 2018). This very birth, this existence of naked life becomes the stake of biopolitics. In this sense, the originally virtuous provision, virtuous in its intention to grant the same right to everybody without distinction of social status, becomes fatal to humanity, insofar as rights and freedoms are linked to the physical body instead of linkage to criterias independent from the physical body such as, for example, nationality or residence. This physical linkage exposes the human body to become an object of political actions.

The German Nazi totalitarianism as extreme example of biopolitical power

This foundation of power in the sole existence as human being reaches its paroxysm in the national-socialist dictatorship, whose biopolitical ideology is perfectly summarized by the German geneticist Verschuer in 1936:

> *Le nouvel Etat ne connaît d'autre objectif que la réalisation des conditions nécessaires à la conservation du peuple'. Ces paroles du Führer signifient que tout acte politique de l'Etat national-socialiste sert la vie du peuple [...]. Nous savons aujourd'hui que la vie d'un peuple est garantie uniquement si les qualités raciales et la santé héréditaire du corps populaire sont préservées* (Agamben, 2016: 131)[11].

National race and - health criteria of ethnicity are raised to criterias which are only anchored in the human body. All those who do not meet these biopolitical standards will become lawless "homines

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[8] Auf Grund des Artikels 48 Abs. 2 der Reichsverfassung wird zur Abwehr kommunistischer staatsgefährdender Gewaltakte folgendes verordnet: § 1 Die Artikel 114, 115, 117, 118, 123, 124 und 153 der Verfassung des Deutschen Reichs werden bis auf weiteres außer Kraft gesetzt. Es sind daher Beschränkungen der persönlichen Freiheit, des Rechts der freien Meinungsäußerung, einschließlich der Pressefreiheit, des Vereins- und Versammlungsrechts, Eingriffe in das Brief-, Post-, Telegraphen- und Fernsprechgeheimnis, Anordnungen von Haussuchungen und von Beschlagnahmen sowie Beschränkungen des Eigentums auch außerhalb der sonst hierfür bestimmten gesetzlichen Grenzen zulässig (1000dok, 2011).

[9] The simple fact of living or being alive (Agamben, 2016: 11).

[10] The way of living of the individual or of a collectivity (Agamben, 2016: 11).

[11] "The new State has no other goal than that of creating the necessary conditions for the preservation of the people". These words of the Führer mean that all political decisions of the National Socialist State serve the survival of the people [...]. Today we know that the survival of a people can only be granted if the race-related qualities and the inherited health of the public body are preserved.

sacri", which must and may be removed from the national body without sanctioning the authors of this crime (against humanity).

Hitler's dictatorship delivers numerous examples of "homini sacri": Jews, communists, homosexuals and disabled became victims of his ideology of racial pureness and confirmed how tiny the step can be from biopolitics to thanatopolitics. As sovereign over death, and thus also over life, he decided on the scale of values of each individual life: *"Dans la biopolitique moderne, le souverain est celui qui décide de la valeur ou bien de l'absence de valeur de la vie en tant que telle*[12] (Agamben, 2016: 126)*"*.

With diabolic fierceness Verschuer praises Hitler as the first statesman who raised the knowledge about racial hygiene to a guiding principle of his government (Rickmann, 2002: 76). Indeed, the national socialist racial policy was based on two purposes: the "*genetic inventory* (Rickmann, 2002: 83)" and the biological-racial evaluation of the individual. As early as 1933, a national Kinship Office was created, whose task was to record not only the individual but his family branches and descendances in order to establish his racist "purity" and "desirability". Germany had to become racially purely German, cleaned up from any racially impure element. This "biological-racial photograph" of the population was enhanced by the national-socialist legislation (Nürnberger Gesetze[13]) with the purpose of "noble purity" of the German people through forced sterilizations, abortions, geographic relocations and interdictions of marriages. Verschuer is very explicit when stating that inferior genetic material must be eliminated, while superior genetic material should be promoted:

> *Das Endziel der rassenhygienischen Forschung ist, für jeden Menschen durch dessen persönliche Untersuchung und diejenige seiner Blutsverwandten zu ergründen, welches und wie viel krankes und gesundes Erbgut in ihm steckt. Wir müssen das genau wissen, um Träger guter Erbmasse in der Fortpflanzung fördern, Träger schlechter Erbeigenschaften darin hemmen zu können. [...] Schon kennen wir die untersten, schlechtesten Erbtypen, die wir folgerichtig durch das Unfruchtbarmachungsgesetz an einer unseligen Verewigung ihres Zustandes in kommenden Geschlechtern verhindern werden*[14] (Rickmann, 2002: 90) .

The national socialist racial policy is an example, which cruelly illustrates political intervention in the sense of Agamben's "homo sacer" insofar as the individual's racial purity, as determined by Hitler's ideology, decided about value or lack of value of human lives and their degradation to "homini sacri" who could be exterminated without punishment and without limits of extermination methods, culminating in the most horrifying one, the concentration camp as a spot out of law, where the "homini sacri" waited for their mass extinction.

The great doom of modern politics is the recognition of life as the highest and unique social value. The danger of totalitarian systems raising the "naked" life to their ideological pillar still threatens our society.

Biopolitical analysis of *Corpus Delicti*

In our current society the human body seems to be more and more imprisoned between political and economic calculations (lower social security expenses due to less illness, life expectancy, genetics, birth regulations...) and social considerations (the glance of the others on our body, the body as symbol of success, the standard image of the perfect body,...). The spiritual and intellectual components, proper

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[12]"In modern biopolitics, the sovereign is the one who decides on the value or lack of value of life as such".

[13] 15th of September and 18th of October 1935

[14]"The ultimate goal of racial hygiene research is to determine for each person, through its personal examination and that of its blood relatives, which and how much sick and healthy genetic material can be found in. We need to know this exactly to promote carriers of good genetic material in reproduction and to prevent carriers of bad genetic characteristics. We already know the lowest, worst types of inheritance, which we will consequently prevent, thanks to the law of infertilization, from an unfortunate perpetuation of their condition in coming sexes".

to human beings, seem to regress in favor of our physical body and physical appearance, which are easier to control, manipulate and condition than immaterial intellectual qualities.

In *Corpus Delicti* this controllability of our physical bodies takes its full meaning, insofar as the state of perfect health is raised to the reason of State in Kramers State theory "Health as reason of State" (Zeh, 2013, 10). The human body is in the central pillar of the fictional dictatorship in *Corpus Delicti*, defining the State's reason as well as the relationship between citizens and State. Juli Zeh defines the role of the body as follows: "*Der Körper ist uns Tempel und Altar, Götze und Opfer. Heilig gesprochen und versklavt (Juli Zeh, 2013: 170)¹⁵.*" The body is submitted to permanent control to ensure perfect health for everybody, but the counter part is the loss of individual freedom and self determination. A body which does not match with the State's reason must be suppressed and becomes a "corpus delicti" in the sense of Agamben's "homo sacer".

The ideology of this State is expressed by the journalist Kramer in *Corpus Delicti*, who states, satisfied to have reached his ultimate aim:

> "*We believe exclusively in the reason, appealing to a fact which is deeply rooted in the biological existence of life. Because there is one characteristic which is common to all living creatures. [...] The unconditional individual and collective will of survival. It's this will we rise to the foundation of our collective agreement which supports our society* (Zeh, 2013: 40)".

Exploiting this will of survival, the State, the METHOD, sees itself legitimized to require every single citizen to adhere to its rules, no matter if they interfere with the private sphere or individual interests, in order to eradicate illness and pain in the country. Any opposite individual wish or action must bow in front of the collective interest, disobedience to rules is severely sanctioned and any human life or body which threatens to compromise the legitimation of the METHOD is eliminated, after degrading to the status of "homo sacer". Zeh joins Foucault in his macrovision of politics linked to health and body as well as Agamben's vision of the individual which bears rights only as long as it fits into the politics linked to the body.

When Mia is cited before court because of omission of personal health data transmission, due to a depressive episode after the death of her brother Moritz, she simply asks to be left in peace to overcome her depression alone. But the judge cannot understand such an inquiry, because physical health as well as psychological health are submitted to public State control. Therefore, her supposition *"I considered my pain to be a private affair* (Zeh, 2013: 58)", cannot be understood, nor accepted by the court.

Her body no more belongs to herself, it is not submitted to herself determination, but it is governed by political considerations. In this order of ideas, the judge Sophie ammonishes Mia with the reminder that collectivity owes her support in a situation of need, but as a counterpart she owes to collectivity every possible effort to avoid the necessity to provide her with assistance (Zeh, 2013 63). This principle of economy can be observed in our current society, insofar as the human body, its "perfect performance" and "freeness from illness" needs to respond to economically measurable criteria: "*Ill people cost money. Ill people need to be supported by collectivity. And if human beings are seen only as equal to a piece of human capital, life starts being considered in the light of cost, efficiency and optimization* (Meyen, 2020)". The same considerations are currently developed by some European Social security schemes: some institutions decide to refuse reimbursement of illness due to smoking or to tattooing, triggering a feeling of culpability in the patients (Dict Adtv, 2011). Another example of "soft" pressure on clients to promote healthy attitudes, a healthy lifestyle leading to lower social security expenses is the Generali Vitality program which compensates desirable healthy attitudes with economic advantages (Generali Vitality, n.d.) These examples reflect our modern society which is focusing more

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¹⁵"The body is our temple and altar, idol and sacrifice".

and more on physical features of human existence, such as health, styled bodies, fitness programs and physical appearance than on intellectual, immaterial and uncontrollable qualities.

Juli Zeh expresses this tendency to turn away more and more from abstract, moral, spiritual intellectual values to shift towards physical, measurable values through Kramer's ideology in *Corpus Delicti*, reflecting Foucault's and Agamben's concepts of biopolitics, putting him the following words in the mouth to assert the legitimization of the METHODE: "*Ich bin überzeugt, dass sich aus dem natürlichen Lebenswillen ein politisches Recht auf Gesundheit ergibt. Ich bin überzeugt, dass ein System nur dann gerecht sein kann, wenn es an den Körper anknüpft – denn durch unsere Körper, nicht im Geiste sind wir einander gleich (*Zeh, 2013: 194)[16]*"*.

With this representation of the society, composed of biological bodies - "*Materie die sich selbst anglotzt*[17] (Zeh, 2013:29)" - which obeys exclusively to rational processes, exempted from sensitivity, spirit and soul, Juli Zeh raises the questions of the compatibility of search for security, perfection, zero risk and liability with individual rights, privacy and self-determination.

She highlights the danger, that people as "bodies" risk to become reduced to simple instruments of biopolitical calculations, in line with Foucault's and Agamben's analysis, even in democracies, insofar as the body is subdue to control, while immaterial freethinking human qualities escape from the latter.

The concept of the collective body, as the sum of all the physical bodies, against the individual citizen is depicted in *Corpus Delicti* as a possible threat to our modern society, and those individuals who do not "play the game" risk to become "homini sacri".

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[16] "I am convinced that the natural will to live results in a political right to health. I am convinced that a system can only be just if it connects to the body - because through our bodies, not in spirit, we are equal to each other".

[17] "Matter angling itself"

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Connecting the dots: How Sustained Autonomous Inquiry Can Lead to Conceptual Change Concerning the Importance of Cultural Pluralism.

Lynsey Mori[1] and Dean Williams[2]

Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, British and American Studies Department, Japan[1] and Notre Dame Jogakuin Junior and Senior High School, English Department, Japan[2]

Abstract

Cultivating an independent, intellectual, and supportive society is part of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) 2008 reforms in English education in Japan. An increasingly interdependent global society creates an irrevocable force requiring the transformation of the English as an Additional Language (EAL) classroom to a student-centred community of inquiry which will allow all Japanese students to think, communicate, and function more effectively and autonomously. The MEXT reforms are only one aspect of a new cultural pluralism or cosmopolitanism in Japanese education which recognizes that intercultural understanding is vital to solving the pressing challenges of the 21st century. A concrete curricular example of that reform trend is the introduction of Kieran Egan's "Learning in Depth" (LiD) program in selected schools. In the EAL classroom, LiD can cultivate sustained conceptual inquiry that allows collaborative knowledge building, an enterprise in which the natural heterogeneity of the learning community is seen as a strength and not a weakness. Harnessing learning and stimulating a self-interpreted ownership and responsibility of the wisdom gained during the school years, LiD portfolios provide powerful and generative testimonies that can be continually explored and drawn upon throughout the students' lives. Tolerance and understanding of diversity are achievable only through true conceptual change. The LiD portfolios demonstrate a dynamic relational conception of, and profound engagement with, the various topics that can make a positive contribution to that epistemological goal. In the context of Japan, education needs to be transformed to a system capable of developing human resources by fostering thinking, judgement, and creative expression in all young learners. For this to happen, teaching practices and curricular patterns cannot be seen as sacrosanct, but instead they must continually evolve with the times so that the students can fully participate in our rapidly changing global society and not remain mere spectators.

Keywords: *Autonomy, conceptual change, school reform, imagination, lifelong learning.*

Introduction

Teaching practices must evolve with the times so that students can fully participate in our rapidly changing global society. Cultural unification is a utopian desire that is still many years from being realised. The current coronavirus pandemic has been a catalyst to realizing that integrating technology into the classroom can facilitate education and assist in bridging and building mutual understandings across nations. This imminent spread of technology in the classroom can democratize information (Swan and Hicks 2006) and accelerate the dominant use of English as a "universal language". Language and culture will forever be intertwined; when you interact with another language, you are also accessing the culture. Societal behaviours and values are often reflected in language and vice versa. While acknowledging the dangers of linguistic imperialism, this paper shares an experience of how educators can enable students to have equal access to knowledge to enrich their lives and develop expertise in any field they choose. Learning in Depth (LiD) is a progressive, student-centred approach conceived by the educational philosopher and sociologist Kieran Egan. Its foundation lies in a theory of cultural recapitulation which asserts that accumulating knowledge leads to the development of understanding. Egan classifies human learning into five kinds of understanding: somatic, mythic, romantic, philosophic, and ironic (Egan 1998). An exposition of an adaptation of LiD in a Japanese private junior and senior high school will use three of Egan's five understandings to demonstrate how cultivating domain-specific learning can develop a student's critical thinking and research skills, foster autonomous learning, and thus lead to the development of greater intercultural understanding.

Literature review

In the international community of educational researchers and progressive educators, there is a consensus that modern instruction should be student-centred, interactive, and allow for some measure of authentic problem-solving and independent thought and creativity (Fink 2013; Lipman 2003; Scardamalia & Bereiter 2006). The underlying philosophy for this progressive paradigm is constructivism, which is the idea that people construct their own meanings and understandings of the information and experiences they receive (Loyens & Rikers 2011). There seems little doubt that student-centred approaches have made an invaluable contribution to the "How" question of education: How should we be educating our children? But the "What" question (What exactly should we be teaching them?) remains unresolved. The educational sociologist Michael Young (2013) points out that the acquisition of disciplinary subject matter is the basic right of every young person, and that progressive curricula and pedagogy, with their preference for process over product, threaten to leave behind precisely those disadvantaged students we wish most to nurture and protect.

The dominant feature of our times seems to be rapid change. From social norms to politics to our fragile environment, there is no area of life that is untouched by the seething forces of modernity (Craft 2013; Fadel 2015). In the economic sphere this process manifests itself in the ongoing transformation to the "knowledge economy." The production of material goods is becoming less important for the success of nations than the creation of ideas. Knowledge creation is the new coin of the realm, and all societies face the challenge of developing their human capital (Hargreaves 2003; Sawyer 2006).

The knowledge economy in turn is placing its own demands upon educational systems worldwide. Schools must provide young people with a multitude of skills and dispositions that will allow them to survive and thrive in this interconnected and interdependent world. These competences and attitudes include creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, digital literacy, productivity, decision-making, problem-solving, and a host of other capabilities, many of which educational institutions were never before responsible for imparting (Anderson 2008; Dede 2007; Dede 2010; McWilliam 2008; Voogt 2013). Perhaps most vitally, schools today are called upon to instil powerful and enduring habits of living, such as flexibility, curiosity, and persistence that are aspects of what we call lifelong learning or learning how to learn (Costa & Kallick 2015).

Like every other nation, Japan is engaging with these issues with varying degrees of enthusiastic, forward-leaning vision and bureaucratic resistance (Aspinall 2010; Burnett & Wada 2007). The laudable goal of producing global citizens who see themselves "as participants in a larger moral world than that which they inherit from their local culture" (Hansen 2014, p. 4) presents no small challenge to an island nation that still retains a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the outside world.

With a (slowly) diversifying population and a shrinking workforce (McKinsey 2015; Nakayama 2020), Japanese policy setters see little choice but to press ahead with large-scale educational reforms. The most succinct formulation of Monbukagakusho's (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) objectives was promulgated in the First Basic Plan in 2008: "To develop human resources capable of supporting and developing our society and leading the international society" (MEXT 2021). This goal would seem to call for a more open, flexible, and critical-creative approach to educating young people. The New National Curriculum Standards, now in the process of implementation, were announced in 2017. They direct that emphasis be placed on fostering active learning and be "independent and interactive in-depth learning". In addition, beyond the transmission of fundamental knowledge and skills, schools must develop young people's abilities to think, judge and express themselves, while motivating them to learn and strengthening their sense of humanity (Yamanaka & Suzuki 2020).

The LiD program has the potential to play a positive role in schools everywhere. Over the decades, Kieran Egan has developed an incomparably broad, compelling, and humanistic approach to education that is known as Imaginative Education. A selection of his major points:

1) Much of school learning is superficially presented, arid, and ultimately disempowering of our youth.

2) Much of canonical educational psychology, in its dogmatic insistence that children and teens are cognitively mud-bound, concrete thinkers who need to be spoon fed simple, familiar topics until they can process more sophisticated fare, is flat wrong. Even kindergarteners can handle abstract and metaphorical material if it is properly presented in the forms of interesting stories that are filled with heroes, wonder, and mystery.

3) The fundamental purpose of formal education should be to equip young people with a set of cognitive and cultural tools such as oral language and storytelling, literacy, abstraction, metaphor, and humour that will open an imaginative world for them and inspire them to learn and explore more on any topic they choose.

4) Imagination is the key to learning, but it must be based on something, and that something is knowledge. No knowledge, no imagination, no learning (Egan 1997; Egan 2005; Egan & Judson 2009; Fettes 2013).

The concept of LiD is elegantly simple, which partially disguises its radical originality. A first-grader is allowed to study on their own a topic with both intellectual depth and cultural breadth until they graduate from high school. Over the years the student produces, in their own way and at their own pace, a portfolio filled with drawings, data and reports, whatever types of knowledge and materials they find relevant or interesting. The teacher acts as mentor, not instructor, in a gentle process of aiding the student to draw out the manifold educational possibilities inherent in such a years-long intellectual adventure. It was Egan's hypothesis, when he launched LiD as a pilot program at a single Canadian school in 2008, that the gradual accumulation of knowledge in one rich subject area would create a young person with unparalleled cognitive, communicative, and emotional resources (Egan 2010). Since its original inception, this curricular innovation has spread to numerous school systems and countries, and is steadily gaining in popularity as teachers, parents and students realize the advantage of a program that answers both the "What?" and "How" questions of education (LiD program 2021).

Methodology

By focusing on one student's (S1) LiD project and experience over five years, this study examines the role LiD can play in a student's English language journey and personal development. The student was primarily chosen because of her "international relations" topic and her willingness to have open conversations concerning her research. She attends an all-girls high school in East Kyoto, Japan where the LiD program started out as a much smaller trial program and has evolved into an integral part of the curriculum of the school's Global Course. It should be noted that there are several differences between Egan's conception of Lid and ours, involving duration of study, topic choice, and the inclusion of the research into assessment. All the students involved have given their informed consent for their research files to be used in this research.

Across six years of junior and senior high school, one out of five weekly 50-minute English study periods was dedicated to LiD, the others consisting of traditional grammar, reading, writing, listening and communication. A key feature of this LiD project is that students had to produce at least one page of research material on their topic each week. Research takes place mainly outside of the classroom, and students are free to spend as much time on independent research as they wish. In addition to the written material, students must make weekly group and class presentations. They also had time within the 50-minute study period to review what they had learned and to plan their upcoming research for the week ahead. At the end of each ten-week term students make a full oral and visual presentation of their work. Having one study period per week dedicated to this style of independent learning was a first step in transforming a school curriculum and fundamentally deepening students' minds. The students could pursue knowledge and research with little interference or restriction from others. This concept of autonomous learning is radical for Japan and yet represents a key feature of lifelong learning.

LiD topics can be either chosen by the student or allocated by the teacher. Egan suggests assigning topics so that students learn that any topic can prove to be interesting if studied in sufficient depth. Teacher assignment, however, is more appropriate for older students. In the early to late teenage period, having to engage with a topic that is of little or no interest to the student may fail to spark

imagination or enhance motivation to study a foreign language – it may even contribute to demotivating the student. It was therefore decided that students could pick from a teacher-prepared list. This ensured the topics were appropriate and of interest to the students.

At the beginning of the school year, students were given a B5 file with lined paper inserts (See Figure 1 for a selection of S1's research portfolio). Since the digital reform of 2020, these files have converted easily to digital form, mainly using Google Docs and Sites. The B5 folder was similar enough to their other class materials that it did not confuse the students. Part of the evaluation and assessment for LiD classes was to be taken from these 'portfolios', which could contain pictures or models, artifacts, samples and writing. They were asked to gather information about their topics; the emphasis was put as much as possible on things that the student could see, hear, and truly experience. It was important, at least at first, to allow the students the freedom to discover their own abilities and interests and methods of research despite the danger of interference due to the cognitive gap between their L1 and L2.

For the most part, the weekly classes followed the same regular pattern. The students would be placed in random groups, they would present their research in English and their peers would ask questions and elicit more details. They would then develop their next research idea from these discussions and decide how best to proceed. Occasionally, it was necessary to provide some form of research guidance. Often this was conducted as communicative language exchange activities.

Having access to iPads allowed us to better understand the cross-cultural influences of information accessibility and offered us a teachable moment of how to research and to explore what makes a 'good' site; to check and identify blogs and distinguish opinions from facts. The impact of the English language on the functionality of the world-wide medium, the internet, has really pushed the fast-forward button to constructs that may otherwise have been more slowly achieved within the realm of classroom and communication practices. Several Google surveys were distributed to the students to allow them a chance to reflect and personally connect with the teacher at varying points throughout the academic terms. The responses indicated that not only the topic, but also language and research skills were being internalized. The students also developed the ability to explore the internet through the medium of English, which could otherwise become an overly daunting task. Tools such as iPads or smartphones are now required materials for most students these days; how these devices affect their LiD research is worth further and deeper discussion.

Framework, findings, and limitations

The complexities of cultural unification through language can now be hypothesized upon. It is difficult to assess and prove societal conceptual change; however, through LiD, a doorway to some measure of enlightenment appears. Using Egan's Pre-LiD framework, a base can be established that can show the development of language and therefore demonstrate conceptual change over time. The adaptation remains fluid as the students add to, revise, and enrich their theories involving their topic. Cultural pluralism in the 21st century is an ideal that must retain its flexibility and fluidity. As with our classrooms, the students and LiD topics cannot be micromanaged. We must promote dialogue and not unduly interfere with their learning journey.

Egan's framework of five understandings (somatic, mythic, romantic, philosophic, and ironic understandings) chosen to display S1's conceptual change looks at the ways we experience and comprehend the world. Our pre-language understanding is somatic. It persists throughout our lives and helps us to recognise the rhythms of physical sensations. Language, however, is much more distinctive and it is language that we elaborate on here. So, somatic understanding will not be investigated. Egan then draws our attention to mythic, romantic, and philosophic understanding. These are the ideas shared in this paper. Egan goes on to discuss ironic understanding, which is an area for further development in later papers as we are examining the intellectual scope of a student aged 13-18.

The mythic framework is the foundation level and is typically applied to children aged around 3-7 when students' mimic language. This is found in early forms of language use and can be identified in some of the early samples of S1's work. The student is meaning-making as she progresses

linguistically. There are a lot of early, bold titles. "The scars of war remain" and "Power game No.1 war" and binary structuring can easily be identified in the first chapters of S1's LiD file as she repeats and homogenizes the theme of war. This mythic understanding breaks the world up into opposites – good/bad, brave/cowardly, and then allows mediation between the realms. Despite S1's numerous spelling mistakes, it is clear to see that she is trying to make sense of the social studies she is being taught in her subject classes. At the start, she is researching war and looking at the varieties of battles in other countries. She reflects on what Japan fights with other countries about – trade – and eventually, in the first presentation of her material, she chooses to talk about peace. This is a binary understanding of war and peace, even though subtle shades of grey may begin to appear afterwards. It is interesting to note here that the stages of language development are much faster in older EAL classrooms than in monolingual classrooms. It can be theorised that since teenagers have already made sense of the world in their L1, they are only translating these ideas and thoughts into English and therefore these understanding phases can be passed through at a much faster rate. It would be interesting to compare language learners at different stages of their lives across various countries to see how their lifestyle and additional language affects their 5 stages of understanding.

The rhythm of language inherent in mythic understanding is heard as S1 repetitively uses words. This is overt in her entry on "Cataluna". Few educators would argue against the notion of rhythm playing an important role in early language development. The other key cognitive tools Egan refers to in the mythic understanding paradigm is metaphor, creating images from words and being abstract. These examples could be heard in S1's mini-presentations and the way she used her narrative skills to initiate conversations which often fed the imaginations of her classmates and led them to initiate conversations in Japanese rather than the target language of English. It is in these engagements though, that true internalization of the concepts is happening. How controlling of these learning encounters should we really be? It is interesting to think about in the environment of the EAL classroom. This is another reason why Japan is still a truly unique research site. There are usually not enough non-Japanese speakers in the room to make English a compulsory communication tool. It will be interesting to continue this research and see if, due to the unification and collaboration of resources available, which language will dominate. Who will be the future programmers of the internet, who will rule and control the information we view? Will English continue to prevail as the global language?

Romantic understanding is the stage of development manifested in young people aged 8-13, when the mind tries to grasp reality by recognising it is restrained and somewhat vulnerable within it. The romantic understanding makes sense of the world in human terms and identifies emotions as paramount in our affairs. Facts and phenomena possess some unity and display the extremes of society. This is when S1 begins to research marriage and human rights. She begins to connect emotionally and really "feel" the topic. Writings may not be precise, and seize on the exotic and showy rather than err on the side of caution and correctness. She is not just relating facts but proving that everything has a story to tell. This can clearly be interpreted within S1's work when you reach the material headed "Huge Donation", "5 Steps" and "Chain of the espionage". She has a clear conflict in allowing for freedom of expression, being 'polite' and preventing 'unfair' reporting. In Egan's understanding, students do not always progress from the known to the unknown, but also try to reach the furthest extremes first. They try to find the outer edges, the limits– S1 tries to find which country has the longest summer vacation – perhaps imagining moving there someday?! She also researches the safest city among other ideas of extremes. In her many class presentations, she was able to interrelate the various subtopics in international relations and add a personal touch. This was only possible because of the sheer span of time she could spend on her topic.

Learning is conventionally conceived as building gradually from the bottom up. The romantic view is more like a shattered mirror or "holographic plate", to use Egan's (1997) term. The whole image can become clearer as any little piece from any place can be added until the picture is whole again. The romantic understanding inheres in the gradual collecting of items. Amassing a set of memory artifacts develops the reassuring sense that "reality is not limitless" (Egan 1997). So, romantic understanding means knowing the world has limits, which is necessary for progression to the next type of understanding.

The final stage to be discussed here is philosophic understanding, the discovery stage when general truths about the systems that make up reality begin to be perceived. S1's topic leans towards 'consumer-psychology' and curves back to her original theme of trade. She discusses Brexit and the covid vaccine and opening trade borders. In "International Relations Part 2" she begins to delve into the trade negotiations of not only the UK but also Japan and America and begins to recognise social media as a source of alliance between countries in her "#milk tea alliance" entry. This is her penultimate entry of her LiD project for her senior year before her exams begin. It is the perfect example of the philosophic understanding framework. She has come full circle in applying the theory to a case. Her comment that "Japanese young people must pay attention to the democratic movement in Asia" is truly representative of the way she feels about activism and democracy. "I cannot say that international organizations are our hope like I used to. And I feel the limits of international corporations". Starting at a point of research into war, she is now beginning to theorise, make her own judgements and make sense of the world as she transcends into adulthood.

Without LiD, without this opportunity to explore and truly internalise international relations at a pace suitable to herself, this student may never have had the opportunity to integrate a deep knowledge of her individual topic with her growing sense of self and her place in the world.

Conclusion

Productive language learning must foster emotional and sociocultural competence, and enhance the ability to express one's personality in the language (Lever, Ehrman, & Shechtman 2005). Egan's idea to wield the power of the imagination and other related cognitive and cultural tools in the classroom is, quite simply, transformative. We can clearly see how acquiring these understandings ensures that knowledge is acquired, psychological maturity progresses and a socially competent being can emerge. These stages are not simply passed through; they evoke a type of thinking within individuals that encompasses intellectual tools which could help the educational system evolve into one that shares a single goal. One that promotes lifelong learning. One that acknowledges we can think globally, but also act locally. Education is about expanding understanding, maximizing young people's life chances, and guiding them from our experiences into new realms of possibility. Egan's LiD is not simply a project-based type of learning. It is more than that. LiD truly enables students to explore the limitless ends of human knowledge.
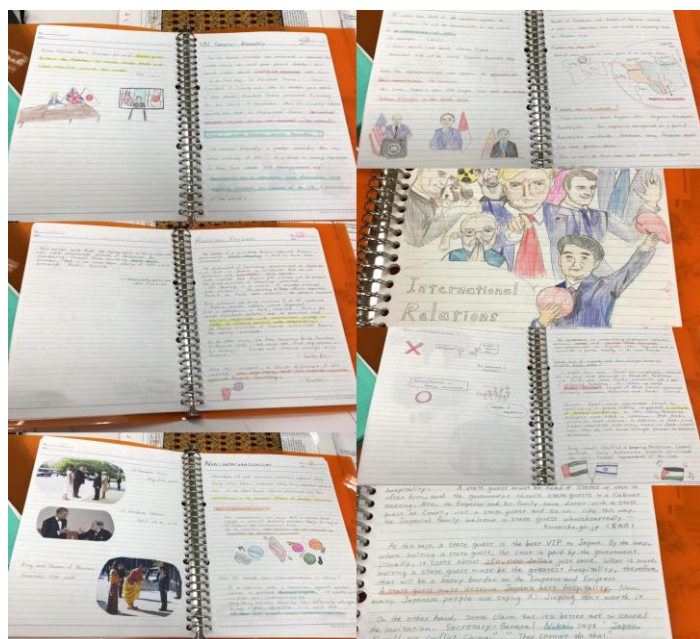

Figure 1.

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Vietnamese non-canonical Objects

Thu Trang HO

Graduate Institute of Linguistics, National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan

Abstract

The large class of action verbs based on the presence versus absence of an object which follows the given verbs can divide into intransitive verbs (e.g. ngủ 'sleep', ngồi 'sit', đi 'go', or đến 'come/arrival') and transitive verbs (e.g. ăn 'eat', viết 'write', mặc 'wear' or làm 'make'). In Vietnamese, some intransitive verbs are used as transitive verbs, thus, termed "semi-transitive" (e.g. ngủ giường 'sleep on the bed'; Lit. sleep bed) (Ho, 2018; Nguyen, 1997a; 1997b). The object giường 'bed' in this V-N compound word formation belongs to conditional objects (i.e. the condition includes location, time, or reason) in Ho's (2018) book. He concludes that this kind is mostly inconsiderable because of its small number. In this paper, first, I show that these "semi-transitive" verbs have the same grammatical properties as unergative verbs.

In Zhang's (2018) study, such kind of object (e.g. giường 'bed') is known as colloquial, termed a "non-canonical object". Building on her research on non-canonical objects (NCO), this paper aims at providing the syntax of NCOs in Vietnamese with a comparison of NCOs in Mandarin Chinese (MC). I argue that Vietnamese NCOs, similar to MC, indicate instrument, time, manner, location, and so on, instead of theme. I employ the basic layers of projections in Ramchand's (2008) argument structures to give explanations of the syntactic position of Vietnamese NCOs. This paper, thus, claims that the syntactic position of Vietnamese NCOs is the complement of an unergative verb. Instead of generally discussing non-canonical arguments, the paper not only addresses non-canonical arguments in the postverbal but also points out their exact syntactic position in the sentence.

Keywords: Vietnamese, non-canonical objects, unergative verbs

Introduction

Regarding transitivity in Vietnamese, according to Nguyen (1997a), the occurrence of a present or absent postverbal object distinguishes two classes of functive verbs, verbs of action. The verb is intransitive if there is a null object in the construction, otherwise, the verb is transitive. In the case of transitive verbs, the direct object (i.e. Theme) follows the main verb such as the *cơm* 'rice' , the *thư* 'letter' and the *banh* 'ball' in these verb phrases *ăn cơm* 'eat rice', *viết thư* 'write letter', *đá banh* 'kick ball' etc. In the case of intransitive verbs, Nguyen (1997a) explains that the action which is expressed by a verb does not relate to any object, thus, there is no requirement of an object in the construction. For instance : (i) *Nam đang ngủ* 'Nam is sleeping/asleep; Lit. Nam PRG sleep.' , (ii) *Nam đang ngủ trưa* 'Nam is taking a siesta/nap; Lit. Nam PRG sleep noontime.' In Nguyen's (1997b) study on Vietnamese verbs, the noun *trưa* 'noontime' in (ii) is not the object of the verb *ngủ* 'sleep', but it serves as a circumstantial complement to the verb nucleus. He lists some similar verb-object compounds such as *ăn sáng* 'have breakfast; Lit. eat morning.', *ăn đũa* 'eat with chopsticks; Lit. eat chopstick.', *tắm sông* 'bathe in the river; Lit. bathe river.' etc. But he has no more explanation about such kinds of objects in these compounds.

In Ho's (2018) work on the V-N compound word formation, he classifies kinds of objects in this construction as direct objects, indirect objects, and conditional objects (i.e. the condition includes location, time, or reason) such as *làm ban-ngày* 'work in the morning; Lit. do morning', *dạo vườn-hoa* 'take a stroll around the flower garden; Lit. stroll garden-flower'. He concludes that the last kind is mostly inconsiderable in Vietnamese because of its small number. However numerous examples of objects she provided, he does not state which verbs can take the so-called conditional objects.

In the book discussing the modern Vietnamese, Ha (2020) claims there is no concept and clear distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs in grammatical terms. While speaking or writing, Vietnamese people do not clarify which ones are transitive verbs or intransitive verbs. Due to the form

of verbs, Ha categorizes Vietnamese verbs into three 'groups': intransitive groups, transitive groups, and mixing groups (i.e. have the nature of both previous groups) (see Ha, 2020 for the details). Indeed, he shows the ambiguity in Vietnamese verbs by providing many examples but no further explanation.

In a nutshell, Nguyen (1997a, 1997b), Ho (2018), and others (Ha, 2020; Thompson, 1984-85) agree that the formation [V+Conditional Object] also is a tight construction, then readers have not much effort to gain their meaning due to regularity. Howerver, none of them clarify the constraints on the verb that takes an NCO and a verb that denotes the unergative predicate.

In Mandarin Chinese (MC), Li (2014), Lin (2001), and other scholars extensively discuss non-canonical arguments in subject and object positions. Relating object arguments, they demonstrate examples to claim that object positions allow not only the typical nominal but also many other possibilities such as *chi da-wan* 'eat with a big bowl; Lit. eat big bowl' , *chi xia-wu* 'dine in the afternoon; Lit. eat afternoon.' (also see Li, 2014 and Lin, 2001). Especially, Zhang's (2018) study on non-canonical objects (NCOs). She shows the syntactic and semantic position of NCOs and claims that NCOs refer to event kind-classifying elements.

Instead of general discussion like previous studies, this paper aims to have an understanding of NCOs in Vietnamese and answers the question of why NCOs present at the apparent direct object positions.

Building on Zhang's (2018) work, the paper provides the syntax of NCOs in Vietnamese with a comparison of NCOs in MC, In section 2, I show that Vietnamese NCOs, similar to MC, indicate instrument, time, manner, location, and so on, instead of theme. In section 3, I indicate the unergative properties of NCOs and consequently, answer the research question, claiming that an NCO is the complement of an unergative verb. Then I employ Rachand's (2008) argument structures to explain the syntactic position of Vietnamese NCOs in section 4. Section 5 concludes.

Non-canonical objects in Vietnamese

Similar to direct objects, a postverbal non-canonical object denotes various non-theme roles (Zhang, 2018). The following examples correspond to hers in which the NCOs are in italics. In (1a), (2a), and (3a) the verbs function as transitive verbs in other contexts, followed by a direct object. But these verbs are also able to be followed by an NCO here. Whereas the verbs in (1b), (2b), and (3b) belong to the type of intransitive verbs. They are, however, also followed by an NCO here. That is, in a nutshell, Vietnamese NCOs denote non-theme like Instrument, Manner, Location, Time, and so on.

(1) a. viết *bút-mực*   b. ngủ *lều*   [Instrument]
         write pen ink   sleep tent
         'write with an ink-pen'   'sleep in a tent'

(2) a. mặc *mốt*   b. múa *ba-lê*   [Manner]
         wear mode   dance ballet
         'wear clothes trendily '   'dance in the style of ballet dancing'

(3) a. ăn *nhà-hàng*   b. ngủ *giường*   [Location]
         eat restaurant   sleep bed
         'eat in a restaurant'   'sleep on the bed'

The semantic role of these NCOs can refer to a a postverbal prepositional phrase PP. Taking (3) as examples:

(4) a. ăn [PPtrong nhà-hàng]   b. ngủ [PPtrên giường]
         eat in restaurant   sleep on bed
         'eat in a/the restaurant' 'sleep on a/the bed'

According to Li (2014) and Zhang (2018), in Chinese, the aspect marker *le*, *zhe*, *guo* are possible in non-canonical object constructions[18]. And like canonical objects, NCOs can be a type of any nominal expressions such as definite, indefinite, or quantificational. Zhang (2018) states such object can be not only bare nouns (5a), proper names (5b), but also nominals with a demonstrative (5c), and nominals with a modifier (5d). We see the corresponding examples in Vietnamese below.[19]

(5) a. Nam đã đá *nửa-hiệp-đầu* rồi.   NCOs as bare nouns

Nam PERF kick half-session-head already.
'Nam have already played in the first half session of the football match.'

   b. Lan đang chuẩn-bị du-lịch *Đài-Loan* .   NCOs as proper names
Lan DUR prepare travel Taiwan
'Lan is preparing to travel in Taiwan.'

   c. Nam có-thể sẽ ăn *cái bát lớn đó*.   nominals with a desmontrative

Nam may FUT eat CL bowl big that
'Nam may be eating with that big bowl.'

   d. Ngày-mai chúng-ta sẽ ăn *nhà-hàng vừa khai-trương đó*.   nominals with a modifier

Tomorrow we FUT eat restaurant just open   that
'Tomorrow we are going to eat in that restaurant which just openned.'

From above sentences, it shows that a verb that takes an NCO, in Vietnamese may occur with many temporal and aspectual markers such as the perfective *đã*, as in (5a), the durative *đang*, as in (5b), the future *sẽ*, as in (5c). One more thing is that, such verbs can be compatible with a modal verb also, as in (5c). In these examples, NCOs may be indefinite, as in (5b), definite, as in (5a), or quantificational, as in (5c).

Zhang (2018) observes that neither a pronoun nor a classifier-initial can be allowed in the Chinese NCO construction. In Vietnamese, an NCO is not allowed to be a pronoun as in (6) and not followed by a classifier as in (7c). The pronoun *họ* 'they' in (6) makes the second clause unacceptable. Then, the canonical object *một cây bút-mực* 'an ink-pen' in (7a) can not be the non-canonical object in (7b). The intended meaning of (7b) is indicated in (7c), where the NCO *bút-mực* 'pen-ink' is a bare noun.

(6) *Nam làm *giỗ bố-mẹ* ở Việt-Nam, *[em-gái anh-ấy cũng làm giỗ **họ** ở Mỹ.]
Nam do deathday parents at Vietnam, sister he-DEM also do deathday they at American
Intended: 'Nam celebrated his parents' death anniversay in Vietnam, and so does his siter in America.'

(7) a. Lan muốn mua *một cây bút-mực*.
Lan want buy one CL pen ink
'Lan wants to buy an ink-pen.'

   b. *Lan muốn viết *một cây bút-mực*.[20]

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[18] Chinese aspect markers *le*, *zhe*, *guo* correspond to the perfective, progressive, and experiential respectively
[19] Abbreviations: CL: classifier, DEM: demonstrative, DUR: durative, FUT: future, PERF: perfective
[20] Zhang (2018) provides an explanation of the form constraint on NCOs as in sentence (b) and her example (14b) alike. However in her systematical study, she shows the semantic functions of NCO first.This is beyond to the scope of this paper. Then I leave it for furture works.

Lan want write   one CL pen ink
c.   Lan muốn viết *bút-mực*.
Lan want write pen-ink
'Lan wants to write with an ink-pen.'

As demonstrated by the above examples, in Vietnamese, similar to Mandarin Chinese, non-theme nominals such as location, manner, time can occur at the covert postverbal object position. In the next section, I point out the verbs which take NCOs are unergative verbs. The supported claim is that the hosting NCO constructions get the same constraints that occur in unergative verbs.

The unergative properties of Vietnamese NCOs

Based on previous studies on the NCO construction, specifically, the flexibility in the word order of Li(2014) and Lin (2001), Zhang (2018) illustrates four arguments to prove that the Chinese NCO construction is unergative constructions. She proves that an NCO has the same properties of a non-theme nominal as in an unergative predicate. Table 1 shows her all four arguments of NCO in Chinese which the last one includes three signs.

Table 1: The unergative properties of Chinese NCOs and a comparison with Vietnamese NCOs

The properties	Chinese NCOs	Vietnamese NCOs
1. An NCO occurs with an unaccusative verb	*	*
2. An NCO is an Agent	*	*
3. Subject of an NCO is an Agent	✓	✓
4. An NCO construction denotes an activity	✓	✓

The typical unaccusative verb *đến* 'come/arrive' can not precede the NCO that refers to an instrument *xe-lửa* 'train', as in (8). A Vietnamese NCO occurs in unergative predicate only.

8.   Nam đến *(bằng) xe-lửa
Nam come by train   Intended: 'Nam came by train.'

The unergatives have an external argument, hence, their subjects function as agents or experiencers (Perlmutter, 1978; Permutter & Postal, 1984). This constraint judges the ungrammaticality of the sentence in (9b). Syntactically, the subject *Mai* that bears the agent theta-role in (9a) occurs at the highest position, so it is not allowed to be the object of the verb *ngủ* 'sleep' which is the lower one. The ungrammatical sentence in (9c) shows that a Vietnamese NCO, which is post-verbal, is not an agent.

9   a   Mai ngủ rồi.   b *ngủ rồi Mai.   c.   * viết người-già
. .

Mai sleep already   sleep already Mai   write person old
'Mai has slept   Intended: 'Old people write.'
already.'

I follow Zhang's (2018) using the agent-oriented *guyi* 'deliberately' to demonstrate the distinctions between an agent and a cause for morphosyntactic. The subject is an agent that is animate and volitional.

In unergative construction, as in (10), the subject *Tân* closely denote an activity, *chạy chậm* 'slow down'. Then in NCO construction, as in (11), the agent *Tân* is the subject of the activity *nằm đất* 'sleep on the floor'. The agent-oriented *cố-tình* 'deliberately' can occur in (10) and (11) but disallow in the construction (12) whereas *động-đất* 'earthquake' is a causer, and the *cây-cầu* 'bridge' is a canonical object of the verb *phá-huỷ* 'destroy'.

10. Tân cố-tình   chạy chậm.
     Tân deliberately run slowly
     'Tân deliberately slows down.'

11. Tân cố-tình   nằm *đất*.
     Tân deliberately lie ground
     'Tân sleeps on the floor deliberately.'

12. *Động-đất (*cố-tình) phá-huỷ cây-cầu.
     earthquake deliberately destroy bridge
     'The earthquake destroyed the bridge.'

Similarly, the unanimated subject *động-đất* 'earthquake' or *giông-bão* 'thunderstorm' can't *chạy khắp-nơi* (Lit. run everywhere), either *tắm nước-lạnh* (Lit. wash water-cold) or *nằm đất* (Lit. lie ground) (see Zhang, 2018 for details).These examples prove that NCOs occur in an unergative predicate only. Put differently, in NCO construction, the subject must be an agent, rather than a causer.

Next, a predicate that has an NCO denotes activity (Zhang, 2018). Three following signs claim this property. First. an NCO is incompatible with a post-event result-durative. The durative *mười tiếng* 'ten hours' or *một tháng* 'one month' have an inconsequent reading, not a resultative reading either in unergative construction (13a) or in NCO construction (13b).

13. a. Nam ngủ mười tiếng rồi.
         Nam sleep ten hour already
         'Nam has already slept for ten hours.' Not: 'Nam stopped his sleeping ten hours ago.'
     b. Nam ngủ phòng đó một tháng rồi.
         Nam sleep room that one month already.
         'Nam has already slept in that room for one month.'
         Not: 'Nam stopped his sleeping in that room one month ago.'

Second, an NCO is incompatible with a restitutive reading (Zhang, 2018). In (14a) the co-occurrence of the preverbal adverb *lại* 'again' and postverbal adverb *nữa* 'again' modifies the action *sleep* 'ngủ'. The unergative predicate, as in (14a) has a high scope reading. So does the NCO construction, as in (14b). Put differently, a low reading (i.e. a restitutive reading) is absent in both constructions.

14. a. Nam lại ngủ nữa.
         Nam again sleep again
         'Nam is sleeping for the second time'. Not: ' Soneone slept before and Nam does it.'
     b. Nam ngủ phòng đó nữa.
         Nam sleep room that again
         'Nam is sleeping in that room for the second time.'
         Not: "Someone slept in that room before and Nam does it.'

Lastly, an NCO is incompatible with an IN-temporal adverbial (Zhang, 2018). I claim that an NCO is not compatible with a telic reading. The unergative predicate in (15a) is atelic. The NCO *trưa* 'noontime' occurs in an unergative predicate, as in (15b), the predicate is atelic. That is, the activity *ngủ*

'sleep' or *ngủ trưa* 'take a nap' has an imperfective or atelic reading.

15. a. Mai ngủ (trong) 10 phút.[21]
        Mai sleep in   10 minute
        'Mai sleeps for 10 minutes.'

      b. Mai ngủ trưa   (trong) 10 phút
         Mai sleep noontime in 10 minute
         'Mai takes a 10 minute nap.'

So far I have shown that Vietnamese NCOs occur in unergative predicates only. This is supported by these four arguments: (1) an NCO doesn't occur with an unaccusative verb, (2) an NCO is never an agent, (3) the subject of an NCO construction must be an agent, and (4) an NCO construction denotes an activity.

The syntactic postion of NCOs in Vietnamese

Ramchand (2008) configures the argument structure with three crucial layers: initiation phase (initP), process phase (procP), and result phase (resP) as shown in (16). Then Zhang (2018) indicates that either DP_1 or DP_2 is the base position of the canonical object (i.e. direct objects) if the predicate is telic or atelic, respectively. The examples in (16) and (17) are taken from (Zhang, 2018) and from (Ramchand, 2008) respectively.

(16)   [$_{initP}$$DP_3$ $^{subj\ of\ 'cause'}$init [$_{procP}$ DP_2 $^{subj\ of\ 'process'}$ proc [$_{resP}$ DP_1 $^{subj\ of\ 'result'}$ res XP]]]]

(17) a. Katherin broke the stick.

      b. [$_{initP}$<Katherin>[$_{init}$ break [$_{procP}$ the stick [$_{proc'}$ <break> [$_{resP}$ <the stick> [$_{res'}$ <break>]]]]]]

The telic (17a) has the argument structure in (17b), where *the stick* is originated in resP. The atelic (18a) has the argument structure in (18b), where *the cart* is originated in procP. In the atelic structure (18b), there is no resP. The example in (18) is taken from Zhang's (2018) study.

(18) a. John pushed the cart.

      b. [$_{initP}$<John>[$_{init}$ push [$_{procP}$ the cart [$_{proc'}$ <push>]]]]

The unaccusative predicates, as in (19a), have a structure, as in (19b) (Ramchand, 2008; Zhang, 2018). In Ramchand's theory, the unaccusative verb *arrive* precedes a resP because unaccusative verbs are result verbs. Their argument's base position is Spec of resP.

(19) a. Michael arrived.

      b. [$_{initP}$<Michael>[$_{init}$ arrive[$_{procP}$<Michael>[$_{proc'}$<arrive>[$_{resP}$<Michael>[$_{res'}$<arrive>]]]]]]

Zhang (2018) states that if an NCO is base-generated as the complement of proc, the NCO structure is the same as in (20b). The verb *xie* 'write' originates in procP, its subject *Lisi* originates in Spec of proc, and the NCO *mao-bi* 'brush-pen' is the complement of proc. I have observed a similar structure of Vietnamese NCO, as in (21b). The verb *nằm* 'lie' is based-generated on proc, its subject *Nam* is base-generated as Spec of proc, and the NCO *đất* 'ground' leads the complement of proc. Both (20) and (21) are atelic structures because they have no resP. The sentence and structure in (20) cited Zhang's (2018) study.

(20) a. Lisi xie mao-bi.   (21) a. Nam nằm đất.

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[21] In Vietnamese, the phrase *in 10 minutes* or *for 10 minutes* is interpreted as "*trong 10 phút*". That is explained that an IN-temporal adverbial occurred in the gloss but was absent from the English translation. When the preposition *trong* 'in' occurs with a temporal phrase (i.e. 10 phút '10 minutes'), the whole phrase denotes a restriction of time to finish an activity that is denoted by the verb. Then the generic reading in both examples (15) is atelic whatsover the occurence of *trong* 'in'.

> Lisi write brush pen   Nam lie ground
> 'Lisi writes with a brush-pen.'   'Nam sleeps on the floor.'

b. [$_{initP}$ <Lisi $^{external\ argument}$>[$_{init'}$ xie [$_{procP}$<Lisi $^{external\ argument}$>[$_{proc'}$ <xie>[$_{DP}$ **mao-bi**^{NCO}]]]]]

(21)   b. [$_{initP}$ <Nam$^{external\ argument}$>[$_{init'}$ nằm [$_{procP}$<Nam $^{external\ argument}$>[$_{proc'}$ <nằm>[$_{DP}$ **đất**^{NCO}]]]]]

Now, as we can see, the absence of resP in the structure can explain that(1) no unaccusative verbs take NCOs. Moreover, the NCO structures don't have either telic, consequent reading, or low reading of *lại* 'again' due to the missing of resP. In other words, (2) an NCO construction denotes an activity. The base position of the agent of an unergative predicate or an NCO construction is Spec of proc, as the external argument, whereas a causer orginates in Spec of initP. That is to say, (3) the subject of an NCO construction is an agent, rather than a causer. In Ramchand's structure, an agent isn't base-generated at the complement of proc. Hence, (4) an NCO is never an agent. These (1) – (4) completely point out NCOs syntactically function as the complement of unergative predicates.

An iterim conclusion

I have proposed that Vietnamese does indeed have "semi-transitive" verbs, but that is, precisely, unergative verbs. Moreover, Vietnamese allows non-canonical arguments such as locations, instruments, manners to appear in the typical postverbal object position. I have argued that these behave like objects are, namely, non-canonical objects. Non-canonical objects occur in the unergative construction only. I have claimed a Vietnamese NCO leads the complement position of an unergative verb. I have to acknowledge that there is some issue concerning NCOs not to clarify in this paper. What is the semantic function of NCO? What is the ungrammaticality of classifier-initial NCOs? When do we need the preposition in unergative predicates?. etc.

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Sophocles' *King Oedipus*: A Buddhist Talk in Drama Form

Newton Ranaweera

PhD Candidate, CTL, OISE, University of Toronto, Canada

Abstract

This article discusses the underlined relationship between some selected Buddhist concepts and the central theme in Sophocles' King Oedipus: the truth of suffering, a key concept in Buddhism. Additionally, being truthful, exploring truth within, karma as a complex entity, cause and effect and dedicating one's life for the betterment of the many are some of the other significant concepts in Buddhism. The article claims that Sophocles' performance of Oedipus legend, which he uses as an effective communicative strategy (the subject matter), is a Buddhist talk in drama form on the truth of suffering. Sophocles presents Oedipus as an emblem, a flag of suffering. Then he unfurls and hoists this flag visibly, higher in the sky in his talk so that his listener/spectator can visualize suffering, which we deliberately submerge but often emerges. For necessary evidence for its analysis, the present article refers to Aristotelian Poetics as an additional text. The article identifies an underlined connection between Sophoclean Greece and Buddha's land, which is known as Jambudvipa. However, the present article does not claim that Sophocles has had any direct influence from the Buddhist tradition. Instead, it keeps a space open for the reader, if interested in, to find proofs for such a bold claim.

Keywords: *Buddhism, cause and effect, duality and sacrifice, King Oedipus, self-exploration, Sophocles, truth of suffering*

Introduction

In *King Oedipus* (a drama guidebook) Sophocles (5th century BCE) delivers a Buddhist talk in drama form. Sophocles develops the truth of suffering as the central theme in his talk. As in any other Buddhist talk, Sophocles uses a well-known narrative (Oedipus legend) as an effective communicative strategy to convey his message on the truth of suffering. Oedipus, as an individual, is an emblem (a flag) of suffering. Spectators can see how doomed Oedipus is to relentlessly suffer for no deliberate fault of his own by listening to what Theban elders (Chorus) say when Oedipus recognizes his identity in the scene of recognition:

> *All the generations of mortal man add up to noting!*
> *Show me the man whose happiness was anything more than*
> > *Illusion*
> *Followed by disillusion.*
> *Here is the instance, here is Oedipus, here is the reason*
> *Why I will call no mortal creature happy* (Watling 1231-1236).

Theban elders and spectators view Oedipus as the most miserable man on earth. He severely suffers at his birth. He suffers while struggling to live, abstaining from evils. Three times, he rejects the crown; he sacrifices his physical and emotional comfort and the ease of mind to refrain from committing evils: bloodshed and incest with the closest blood-relatives. However, all his attempts to escape from committing sins fail due to tragic circumstances. Finally, he terribly suffers as a self-blinded man in the remaining years of his life for the evils he has committed unwittingly. The Theban elders' above statement (choric ode) sums up the central theme of the drama: the truth of suffering. They question if what men perceive as happiness is not mere illusion that leads to disillusion. They show Oedipus as a living example for the spectators to realize that no mortal creature is happy. The idea that happiness is a mere illusion is further heightened when Corinthian Messenger says that Jocasta and her husband would be both glad and distressed at the same time on hearing his message. What Jocasta askes, "What is it that can have such power to please and grieve?" (Watling 969) alludes to an incident that happened

at the naming ceremony of the child Siddhartha (Gotama Buddha's childhood name). Some key concepts of the play, including the central concept: truth of suffering, character portrayal, the concept of tragic pleasure and Oedipus' philosophy of life suggest that *King Oedipus* is a Sophocles' attempt to deliver a Buddhist talk in drama form.

An Unconventional Moral Hero

For his Buddhist talk in drama form, Sophocles chooses a tale of the most ridiculed and hated person in the 5th century BC Greek society and converts him to a moral hero. The Greek society punished Oedipus, as we often do, considering only what he was said to have done but not why or how he had happened to commit the two crimes. But in his Buddhist talk, Sophocles presents Oedipus as a pious, truthful, emotional, generous human being. He considers his wife as an equal in his rule. He does not tell lies; nor does he tolerate when others tell lies. His life's philosophy is to help others. Thus, Sophocles, in his Buddhist talk, creates an unconventional moral hero, who reminds us a similar character in Buddhist tradition, Angulimala, a man who wore a necklace with 999 human fingers and terrorized an entire kingdom of people. However, the Buddha's compassion turns Angulimala into a moral hero. Similarly, it is Sophocles' compassion that makes Oedipus into a moral hero. Taking precedence from these two unconventional moral heroes, Bertolt Brecht creates Azdak and Shen Te, unconventional moral heroes, in his epic plays, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and *The Good Woman of Setzuan*. If we consider Oedipus as the tragic hero of the play, Sophocles portrays him far differently from heroes in Shakespearean tragedies (i.e., Macbeth or Hamlet). Whom Sophocles portrays is a human being with human potentials and inherent weaknesses, yet not an epic hero. Sophoclean portrayal is consistent with the Buddhist idea of humanity in Dhammapada: "Every human being is a person with great worth who has within himself a vast store of good as well as evil habits" (Adikari 182). Sophoclean portrayal is also compatible with Aristotelian concept of tragic hero: "Such is the man who on the one hand is not preeminent in virtue and justice, and yet on the other hand does not fall into misfortune through vice or depravity, but because of some mistake" (Zebra & Gorman 17). Using Oedipus tale, thus, Sophocles develops cause and effect, human intelligence, having/not having eyes, being truthful, exploring truth within and dedicating one's life for the betterment of the many as some sub themes to develop the central theme of his Buddhist talk in drama form: the truth of suffering.

Suffering

We consider one's childbirth as an auspicious occasion; however, Sophocles presents how suffering begins at childbirth. Infant Oedipus suffers. See, the oozing blood on his ankles. No fault of his own infant Oedipus suffers. His father suffers. We need to imagine the cascade of Laius' tears at the time when he had his men bolt his infant son's feet. We may hear Jocasta's (Oedipus's mother) rueful cry inside the palace. Their cries melt our hearts and, we suffer, too. Living is suffering. Though Oedipus enjoys a short time of relief while living in Corinth, he suffers with the constant fear that he would accidentally do the two grievous sins that the Oracles predicted. The effect of what he thinks, says and does is suffering. Who would leave his parents while keeping stars between him and his supposed birthplace? Listen to Oedipus' words, "This is the reason / Of my long estrangement from Corinth / Though nothing can fill the place of absent parents" (Watling 1026-1028). Who would leave his parents' love, warmth and care? Who would leave his own bodily comfort and all that luxury and grope on the street as a homeless man? See, how terribly he tries to escape from committing sins. When Corinthian messenger comes with a welcome message that Oedipus can become the Corinthian king since Polybus is dead, Oedipus says, "There is the other still to fear…my mother… / …while she lives … I am not safe" (Watling 976-987). See, how determined he is to abstain from committing sins. Then imagine, how terribly he would suffer when he turns back and realizes that all his attempts are in vain? What Tiresias says, "Wise words; but O, when wisdom brings no profit, / To be wise is to suffer," (Watling 316-317) suggests to the spectators the terrible pain of knowing the truth. Fagles' (1982) translation of these lines, "How terrible – to see the truth / when the truth is only pain to him who sees!" (359-360), more explicitly enhances the acute pain of knowing the truth. Also, Teiresias' speech implies

that it is safer to live 'day to-day', without worrying about what happened in the past or what is to come next. Jocasta's words, too, recommend Oedipus and us that it is better to live "day to today…because future is all unknown" (Watling 978-979). Then how terribly he should suffer when he realizes that the woman whom he embraces erotically for fifteen years is none but his closest blood relative? How terribly he should suffer when he feels that his children can address him as father and brother at the same time? What should we do if we were in his destitute situation? Should we kill ourselves? Can the action of killing ourselves help us to escape from our sins? Such a cowardly act would bring us only a momentary relief. Theban elders, too, assert that Oedipus had "better to die than live in blindness," but Oedipus stresses, "I will not believe this was not the best / That could have been done. Teach me no other lesson" (Watling 1405-1406). Oedipus could have taken the decision to kill himself. But, he knows that he can momentarily escape from the punishment for his terrible sins and feels fear of facing the repercussions in the life after death. Moreover, being an honest, truthful man, who is true to himself, he decides that he needs to select a better punishment so that he can inflict pain on him to suffer for the offences he has committed in this life. What he has committed are two grave sins, and he should grievously suffer. Therefore, he decides to sentence himself a lifelong punishment. He blinds his eyes and decides to live the rest of his life, utterly suffering, in Mount Cithaeron, a place that his parents once chose for him because the sins that he has committed (either deliberately or unwittingly) are beyond imagination.

Human intelligence. We assume that we, humans, are intelligent. But, Sophocles proves with evidence in his Buddhist talk that we are so helpless; he proves that we do not know what we say or do. Human intelligence is limited. We are so helpless that we often imagine that something miraculous would occur and save us from the present calamities. For example, Thebans identify Oedipus as the most intelligent man among them because he saved Theban citizens from a she-witch, Sphinx, by solving her riddle that nobody else could solve. Literary, he saved the Thebans from a terrible famine, plague. For some reason even Teiresias could not solve the riddle. In the agon/conflict scene, Oedipus mocks at Teiresias for not being able to solve the riddle:

> *There was a riddle too deep for common wits;*
> *A seer should have answered it; but answer came there none*
> *From you; bird-lore and god-craft all were silent.*
> *Until I came – I, ignorant Oedipus, came –*
> *And stopped the riddler's mouth, guessing the truth*
> *By mother-wit, not bird-lore* (Watling 394-400).

Oedipus believes that Tiresias (who has been known as a seer, predictor, a blind prophet) should have been able to solve Sphinx's riddle and save the city. As he says those capable people such as Teiresias could not do anything until he, the ignorant mortal, came and solved the riddle. Thebans now consider Oedipus to be the most intelligent, the beacon in the city, their guiding star. The irony is that he cannot guide or shed light even on himself. We see him groping in sheer darkness, not knowing what he is saying or doing. That is the true width and length of human intelligence. It is so limited, and meaningless, and we realize it, too late. The realization that stems too late in our life infers how helpless we are; how poor our intelligence is.

Having/Not having Eyes or Appearance & Reality. By developing Tiresias' character in contrast to that of Oedipus, Sophocles subtly questions the use of having or not having eyes. Oedipus is supposed to be the man with the clearest eyesight. See, the fight between Oedipus and Laius' royal party. He strikes everyone in a quick second. However, can he identify the man he killed; can he identify the woman in front of him; does he see where he is living; with whom; or what he is doing? In contrast, Tiresias is blind, but he can see who Oedipus is; who his parents are; and what he is doing. Do Oedipus' eyes help him to refrain from committing those grievous sins? Then what is the use of having eyes? Is this not the question that Oedipus metaphorically raises by blinding himself? Then does our intelligence or having clear eyes help us to see the hurdles before us and abstain from suffering? In the scene of gradual resolution, Oedipus raises this question of having/not having eyes, "What should I do with eyes / Where all is ugliness? (Watling 1380-1381).

Plot Development/Self-Exploration: Sophoclean complex plot development presents Oedipus as a self-explorer, a truth seeker.

Figure 1: *Self-Exploration*
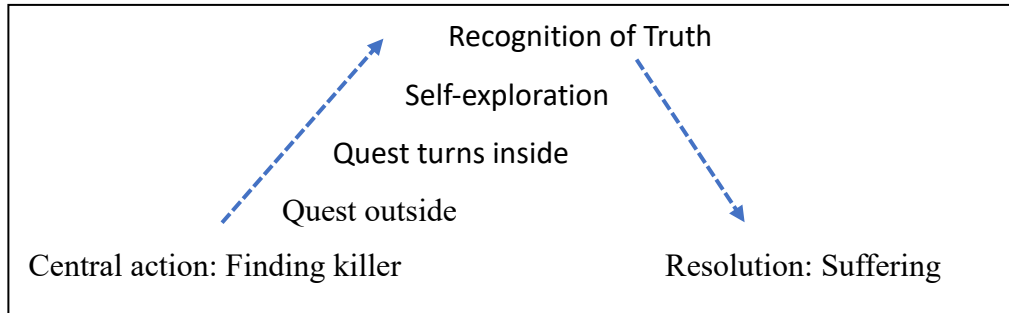
Sophocles develops Oedipus' self-exploration as the central action. In the first dialogue (between Oedipus and Theban citizens), he exposes self-exploration symbolically through Oedipus' attempt to find Laius' killer. As everyone does, Oedipus begins his quest for truth outside while terribly fighting with others. Oedipus fights with the general Theban citizens, Teiresias and Creon. Additionally, Sophocles reminds his audience that life is a complex riddle with 'knots inside, knots outside and knots within knots'. Being confused and angered by Teiresias' accusation, Oedipus fights with Creon, whom he assumes to have hired the blind seer to accuse him and usurp his throne. By giving us (audience) a sigh of relief, Jocasta comes to console Oedipus. However, by revealing the place (a crossroad) where the supposed robbers killed Laius, she confuses him more. Equally we are given promises in these places that Oedipus (and others) would feel better, but soon the unexpected hurdles withdraw those promises, proving the Buddha's word that agony of our suffering heightens when we get what we wanted to rid off rather than what we desired for. These incidents repeatedly remind us that life is on a constant flux and the status of impermanence and suffering. Buddhism, further asserts that one should look for truth within oneself, yet not in the outside world. He soon realizes that his attempt to find truth elsewhere (outside) is meaningless. The turning point that instigates him to find truth within is his conversation with Jocasta. Jocasta gives him the first clue to suspect and find the killer (truth) within himself. In the next dialogue (between Oedipus, Jocasta and Corinthian Messenger), the central action splits into two. Instead of merely suspecting himself of Laius' assassination, Oedipus now wants to find who he really is. Those who love him and want him to live in a deep trance of ignorance (as we humans often do) ask him to abandon his self-exploration. Teiresias asks him; Laius' shepherd (Oedipus' rescuer) appeals him; and Jocasta demands him, "In God's name – if you want to live, this / Must not go on" (Watling 1090-1091). But Oedipus realizes that he "cannot leave truth unknown" (Watling 1095) because "[t]ruth lives inside him, him alone" (Fagles 340), proceeds his self-exploration and uncovers a bundle of harsher, bitter, gruesome truths. This situation in which Oedipus' own better human potentials contribute to his tragic suffering, makes his tragedy more tragic. A benefit of watching a tragedy, as Aristotle suggests in his *Poetics*, (Zebra & Gorman 1982) is that our emotional tempest relieves us from disturbing emotions such as 'pity and fear'.

In the climactic scene, Oedipus' exploration of truth ends when he finds responses to his riddles: who the killer is and who he really is. Proving Sphinx's riddle of man: how man goes in threes in the evening, self-blinded Oedipus leaves Thebes, the drama stage, with the help of a stick.

Causes of Suffering

What causes his suffering? Does he suffer due to his own deliberate acts? Does he suffer because of the decisions that his parents take? Is it fate or God's will that causes his suffering or is it his own *karma*? Would he have to suffer if his parents had decided to allow him to grow with them? What if the Oracle told him that he was not the legitimate son of Polybus and Merope? Would he leave

Corinth then? What if the first shepherd (Laius' servant) killed infant Oedipus? These are some of the questions that we raise while reading the play and when considering the causes of his suffering.

Fate (God's will) or Karma. Is Oedipus a mere victim of fate (God's will) or his past *karma* alone? Can we get support from the evidence that Sophocles provides us to prove the common stance that Oedipus' downfall from mountain height to the stinking gutter occurs due to his fate or karma? Or do things happen in *King Oedipus* according to the 'law of cause and effect', a natural law? Can we neglect his willfully and deliberately taken acts and say that fate (God's will) or his past *karma* causes his downfall and suffering? When Theban elders (Chorus) exclaim, "What evil power has driven you to this end?" (Watling 331), Oedipus says:

> *Apollo, friends, Apollo*
> *Has laid this agony upon me;*
> *Not by his hand; I did it.*
> *What should I do with eyes*
> *Where all is ugliness?* (Watling 332-336).

Personally, he denies the responsibility of any superhuman power for his suffering. Instead, he takes the responsibility on himself, on his own shoulders. *The Dhammapada* notes the Buddha's thoughts on one's responsibility on his own deeds, "By oneself is evil done and by oneself is one sullied" (Adikaram 165). In this context, how does Oedipus' downfall occur? Can we say that his downfall occurs due to an error of judgement? Then what is the use of his intelligence? His words, "I Oedipus, / Whose name is known afar" (Watling 6-7), suggests how proud he is about his intelligence. Even Theban elders approve what Oedipus says about the fame for his intelligence. Then what does cause his terrible downfall, suffering? In Buddhism, fate or *karma* is not the main cause of one's suffering. It is only just one among five other seeds that contribute to one's disaster/suffering. While neglecting other four, one cannot say that *kamma* or fate alone caused Oedipus' downfall. As Oedipus himself says, "If he still says 'robbers / It was not I: one is not more than one. / But if he speaks of one lone wayfarer / the finger points to me (Watling 891-894). However, Sophocles could not deliver this new concept or message to his Greek audience who believed that one's destiny is already designed/arranged, or fate causes their rise or downfall. Therefore, in his Buddhist talk, Sophocles subtly creates a conflict or duality in their thoughts. The central incidents happen as they happened in the Oedipus legend and as Greek audience wanted them to happen, but this duality that Sophocles creates should have had an impact on their thoughts. Similarly, writing an analysis to *King Oedipus* (including other contemporary plays) Aristotle asserts, "[n]ow in the finest tragedy, the structure should be complex and not simple" (Zebra & Gorman 17).

Craving, Ignorance & Lust. Oedipus is not an innocent, helpless and passive victim whom a thunderbolt strikes and brings his downfall or suffering. In addition to his willfully taken acts, his hereditary weaknesses such as craving, ignorance, anger and pride (probably that he has inherited from his father) contributed to his downfall and bitter suffering. One's ignorance breeds pride and anger. As the Theban elders (Chorus) articulate pride makes a tyrant, but his pride itself drags him down from mountain height to the stinking gutter (Watling 879-880). Oedipus' another character flaw is his relentless anger. He kills the old man whom he meets on the way because of his anger, while he is fleeing from Corinth. He enrages Teiresias and Laius' Shephard in the recognition scene. However, he has reasons for being angry in both these occasions. Oedipus strikes the old man only when the old man and his men strike him. In other words, he kills the old man and his party of men in self-defense. Had Oedipus' case were summoned in a court of law, he would be acquitted of the murder. In his conflict with Teiresias, he has reasons to be angry because it is not for his pleasure but for the sake of common citizens that Oedipus wants Teiresias to reveal the killer of Laius. The man knows but he does not tell. Being a responsible king, Oedipus cannot tolerate when a man does not help him to save the Thebes and its citizens, and he feels furious.

Willingness to Self-Sacrifice. In addition to external forces, adults' irrational decisions, naturally arisen circumstances, fate, *karma* or his inherent weaknesses, even his own human potentials

contributed to his downfall and suffering. What he repeatedly promises is that he would do 'anything' to help others, for their wellbeing, their betterment. In the proclamation scene (where Oedipus announces his punishment to Laius' assassin), he promises to the public, "tell them / There is nothing I will not do. Certain it is / That by the help of God we stand – or fall" (Watling 144-146). While coming with the message from the God, Creon asks Oedipus whether he would reveal God's message in person (in a private room) or before all, Oedipus says, "Speak before all. / Their plight concerns me now, more than my life" (Watling 93-94). When Tiresias denies revealing Oedipus as the killer, he feels furious because what he has been vehemently determined is to help others. He keeps his promise while keeping his life at risk. He does not allow anyone to stop him enacting his promises to the people. He does finally sacrifice his life for the well-being of the others while setting himself as an example to mold even the Jesus Christ's life, who sheds his blood to pay for others' sins.

Cause and Effect. Does Sophocles create an ambiguity or duality so that we can see complexities of life's issues, for which we cannot seek simple, direct solutions? Can we say that Oedipus' tragic downfall occurs because of his *karma* (in his past life or life at present)? Can we say that it is his fate (or God's will) that causes his tragic downfall? Can we say that it is his own weaknesses or human potentials that cause his tragic downfall? Can we say that it is his parents' decisions, soothsayers' predictions, or others' enaction/not enaction of orders that cause his tragic downfall? Doesn't this Buddhist concept, "Neither he is; nor he is not" (Rahula 34), create the same duality/ambiguity? Can we say that the one that steps into the river is the man who wanted to step into it first? Similarly, does the river remain static? The river that he steps into is not the one that he wanted to step into a moment ago. Both man and river (and all other natural elements) are in a constant flux. Thus, Buddhist way of understanding one's life and happenings around cannot be comprehended or interpreted in isolation. They are in a web of interconnected tapestry. The factors that Sophocles presents as responsible for causing Oedipus' downfall are equally complex and interconnected. Therefore, the reader may not take a hasty decision and declare that it is Oedipus' fate or *karma* that causes his downfall and suffering. However, one thing is certain. Sophocles does not keep any room in his Buddhist talk for assumptions of magic. Nor does he drag in a *dues ex machina* (mechanical devices or superhuman forces) to resolve any conflicts in the narrative that he uses as a communicative strategy to convey his message on the truth of suffering. Nothing happens in *King Oedipus* without any cause/reason.

Crime & Punishment. Oedipus proclaims the punishment immediately after hearing that the reason for the present disaster (famine) in Thebes is the assassination of King Laius and the killer needs to be punished to rid off the famine. The punishment he proclaims is killing or banishing the assassin. His truthfulness never allows him and nor does he withdraw his words when he identifies himself as the killer of Laius. Killing father and mother are two grievous sins in Buddhist tradition. He has done the first crime: killing his father. One may argue that he does not commit the second crime: killing his mother. However, having a conjugal affair with her, he metaphorically kills his mother. Thus, he has committed two grievous sins. As Buddhists believe, one does not need to wait for the next birth to get a punishment for such grievous crimes. They get a punishment in their present birth. Nor does Oedipus intend to get the due punishment in his next birth. He does not either wait until some other person gives him the punishment. He punishes himself severely by blinding his eyes. The Buddhist way of punishment, however, is not to destroy the wrong doer "but to make him realize how foolish to commit evil and to point out the reaction of such evil deeds" (*Dhammananda* 183). Sophocles cannot change the story that had been well-established in his Greece. If he made any change, critics would consider such a resolution as unrealistic.

Conclusion

Why is Oedipus' tragic downfall considered as a convincing lesson for us to realize the truth of suffering? It is because the one that becomes a blind beggar is none but a great king, a rare human being. He is a courageous hero who swims upstream. He rejects the royal crown three times. First, he rejects the crown by leaving Corinth at dead night; then he rejects it by refusing to go back to Corinth; and

finally, he rejects it in the recognition scene by deciding to unravel his identity saying, "There is nothing to fear. Though I be proved slave-born" (Watling 1092). He rejects the royal crown because what is more important for him is to escape from sins and continue his quest for truth than gaining meaningless, physical/material pleasure. We know that Prince Siddhartha rejected the crown and left the palace in search of *nirvana*, the ultimate peace.

Oedipus' sole purpose of living is to help others but not gaining material pleasure while living in deceit or untruth. "To help his fellow-men / With all his powers is man's most noble work" (Watling 343-344), is the motto in his life and he walks his talk. Doesn't Oedipus' motto remind us The Buddha's advice to monks, "Go now and wander for the welfare and happiness of many" (Piyadassi 40). Thus, Oedipus' better human characteristics and the philosophy in his life suggest to us another aspect of Sophocles' Buddhist talk. In parallel to the truth of suffering (the central theme), Sophocles develops a lesson to mold a mass-friendly, scarifying, honest king. To be truthful, walking his talk, being empathetic, dedicating his time and labour for the benefits of many are some of the aspects of this lesson that we can hear in Sophocles' Buddhist talk. Oedipus sacrifices his life for the betterment of the others. His greatness as a human being suggests to us that he does not deserve suffering. However, if we explore our own 'self', we may uncover the truth as worse, more gruesome and more horrible than what Oedipus discovers. However, the problem is whether we are willing to do an honest and deliberate self-exploration. We can imagine the heap of the rotten garbage that is lying within us, like a feeble but potential flame. If it were aroused, we know that it would burn our entire body and soul. It is better, therefore, to live in designed, fake ignorance; in a deep trance, as if the sun might not dawn tomorrow.

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A Study of Multidimensional Violence in Life of Trans Individuals as Depicted in Bengali Cinema with Special Reference to Kaushik Ganguly's '*Nagarkirtan*'.

Alankrita Bhattacharya

M.A. English, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Abstract

'Nagarkirtan' gives a detailed account of the journey of Puti, a gender nonconforming individual at preoperative stage who intends to get Sex Reassignment Surgery done. This paper would offer an analysis of Transphobia as well as Intra-community violence by studying the domination-submission dynamics within the 'Guru-Shishya' tradition that is prevalent within Transgender communities in India with special reference to Kaushik Ganguly's national award-winning film, 'Nagarkirtan'. Puti gets cheated by her cisgender gay boyfriend, gets mocked by her father for crossdressing, and is finally compelled to run away from her house. Madhu, Puti's present love interest is confused about his feelings for a transwoman. He has internalized homophobia. Also, within the transgender community, where Puti has acclimatized, she gets slapped for eating Chinese food without the Guru's consent. She is forced to elope with Madhu because she was convinced that other members from the community would be inconsiderate about her romantic feelings for Madhu. Also, there is a myth in India, that numerous cisgender men merely 'pretend' to be transgenders for alms. It is seen at the end of the movie that, Puti fails to pass the test of legitimacy of her claim, of being a transgender (because she wasn't a transgender by birth). A group of transgenders strip her off in public, beats her up, hands her over to police, where she finally commits suicide due to psychological trauma. Silent bystanders were shamelessly clicking videos of the brutal incident. The aim of the paper is to establish that if gender is not a binary, it is also not as unidirectional as binary plus one. 'Trans' is a term that should not be put under singular umbrella. Even the transgender communities sometimes fail to comprehend the diversity of the term 'trans' that might include crossdressing, hermaphroditism, pseudohermaphroditism etc.

Keywords: *Guru-Shishya Tradition, Transphobia, Intra-community violence*

The role of mass media is a significant one modern society. It can bring about radical changes and improve social situation as it has the ability to influence the minds of people. So, the platform of cinema should not be used simply as a money-making machine. For a long time, Indian films have distorted the representation of trans individuals on cinema. It could be due to their lack of knowledge or simply a shrewd marketing strategy or the directorial arrogance of the filmmakers. In many cases these people with queer identities were represented as petrifying villains like the character of Lajja Shankar Pandey from the film 'Sangharsh' where Ashutosh Rana played the role of a trans woman who used to abduct kids. Sometimes they were represented as comic relief and such examples are many. In the essay "On the Very Possibility of Queer Theory" Claire Colebrook questions the fact that is queer theory a reflection of what it means to be queer or the very definition of queerness changes with the way it is being theorized? Same is the case with representation. It impacts mind. This is perhaps one of the significant reasons that many have internalized transphobia. Many possess this general idea that either these people are associated with some sort of criminal activities, or they are comic figures so mocking or abusing them has been normalized. Kaushik Ganguly deliberately involves people originally belonging to the transgender and transsexual community in order to avoid the politics of representation. It is an established fact that separation of identity from representation could lead to lack of authenticity in representation. They could be underrepresented or even their predicament could be over sentimentalized.

The film begins with Madhu a flute player in a Kirtan team (kirtan is a regional form of devotional song that is deeply associated with the reformist Bhakti Movement popularized by

Mahapraphu Chaitanya) goes to drop his ailing and aged co-performer at his house where he first met Puti around whom the plot of the film revolves. The co-performer of Madhu is referred to as "Masterbabu", literally meaning a teacher because he use to teach few members of the transgender a musical instrument called dhol (a form of drum), for their livelihood. It should be mentioned in this context that even today playing dhol at rural wedding ceremonies or in a house where a baby is born and charging some money is one of the means of their livelihoods apart from begging in the traffic signals. It is revealed that many construction companies had come to the dilapidated building to construct new apartments where the trans community stayed, but none of the plans were executed because they had to be allotted a new apartment after the project was completed and that if "they" stay in an apartment, the promoter won't find any other so called "normal" customer, hence otherizing them. The marginalization of trans individuals by cis gender men and women on the basis of 'us' and 'them' is due to the misconception that they are "not normal." This is not only the case with cis gender people. There are some self-imposed restrictions within the community also. For example when Madhu asked if they (the members of transgender community) would like to listen to a Kirtan on flute? they bursted in to laughter claiming devotional songs are not meant for them. Also, When Puti danced to a song of Rabindranath Tagore even then they had chuckled. They have also internalized the fact that they do not adhere to something that is popularly termed as "Bhodroloki" culture. In context to this, it should be mentioned that there is a myth prevalent that the trans individuals are quite shameless, they do certain things or speak in vulgar language not acceptable in the social structure. This stereotype is challenged in one part of the film where a member from the community refuses to serve tea to Madhu who was an outsider for them because her blouse was torn.

There are multiple short snippets that throws camera on the diversity of marginalization that the trans individuals face on an everyday basis. In one portion of the film when the they were begging on the traffic signal an auto driver says that the "quantity" of "these people" were not so much even two years ago almost quantifying them as liability, and further a lady passenger expanded on it saying that many men are dressed up as transgenders citing the reason as unemployment. This is a perfect quintessence of the lack of understanding of the term "queer" itself. People can be transgenders by birth or Transsexualism could be defined as innate, not chosen, and biological, therefore deserving of both social and legal recognitions. According to Bornstein Transgender people express their behaviour outside traditional heteronormative behaviours. Prosser writes about turning one's body into one's imagined ideal is how sex reassignment surgery comes into picture. He says, "reassignment that is a restoration of the body."

There are also multiple instances of intra community violence as well projected in the film. It should be noted that sometimes it is not only the cis gender men and women who inflict violence on the queer. There is a latent domination-submission dynamics within the guru-shishya cult which is widely prevalent in India. In this system there is an alpha trans individual who trains the neophyte trans individuals in singing and dancing. After the completion of the training, she formally recognizes and acknowledges the student. After this, as portrayed in the film the formally recognized student almost loses her individuality. In one part of the film when the guru asks Puti not to loiter around with Sandhya (another member from the community), after begging on the streets, and Sandhya questions why? The guru firmly comments that the decision is solely hers. She also doesn't pay attention when Puti asks about the sex reassignment surgery. She does not pay heed to her emotions. The guru slaps Puti because she ate Chinese food from Madhu and further orders Madhu not to eye on Puti romantically and persuade her.

Puti is also exploited by cis gay men. Subhash a private tutor was involved with Puti romantically for a very long time and on realizing that this relationship has no respectful future he ended up getting married to Puti's elder sister. Though the Supreme Court of India has decriminalized homosexuality but still there is plethora of social stigma and public shaming associated with it. When Puti wanted to remove her hair extension on one occasion, due to uncomfortability, Madhu sort of ordered him not to do. Because he didn't like her in the short hair. In fact, Puti becomes the victim of Madhu's (her love interest's) what Laura Mulvey would term as male gaze. He says Puti to come

prepared as a complete woman, as he is uncomfortable with her artificiality of gender, paying importance to his gaze more than her comfortability. Though Madhu himself is confused and he expresses his dilemma to Puti that he is not sure that if love and a sexual relationship is possible between two men. The film 'Arekti Premer Golpo' or 'Just Another lovestory' by Kaushik Ganguly explores the exploits of a woman trapped in a man's body and the transwoman being consistently harassed by her closeted gay lover.

Manabi banadopadhyay who is appointed as the first trans woman Principal of a prominent College in West Bengal (a state in India) in real life plays a cameo role in this film. She is the representative of class privilege. She is actually one among those few privileged people to have undergone the sex reassignment surgery. In the film she claims that the women professors of her college does not let her use the ladies washroom because they do not consider her as a complete woman. In the film 'Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish' by Rituparno Ghosh, Rudro after he had undergone a sex reassignment surgery his boyfriend Partho tells him that he would better have a full and natural woman rather than a half woman. Dr. Manabi Bandopadhyay makes Puti aware about the criticality as well as the expenses of the surgery. It is later revealed in the film that Puti even faced terrible abuse in family from her father because she dressed up as a lady in a local fancy dress competition as kid. Puti was a transvestite who was into cross dressing. She escaped from the house when very young, to circumvent discrimination. Lane notes the concern of transsexual voices being silenced or ultimately erased under the umbrella of transgender. Concentrating on the artificiality of gender can deemphasize the need for transsexuals to change their sexed body, which is central to transsexual lived experience, thus excluding transsexual narratives in queer and transgender theories.

On revelation of Madhu's sexual preferences in his family Madhu's elder brother asks him not to keep any contacts with the family any further, it is only then Madhu's sister in law secretively gives some money to Madhu and also tells him to take care of Puti. She is one of the few characters in the film who has not internalized transphobia. In the last portion of the film Puti is finally beaten up by the members of transgender community, stripped off in public as he is unable to show proper identity verification documents, obviously because she was not transgender by birth she was simply into cross dressing and a transvestite at preoperative stage. According to Bornstein's definition, Preoperative stage is defined as the stage before the genital reconstruction surgery and postoperative is defined by one that has already had the genital reconstruction surgery done and is fully living in the role of another gender. People were shamelessly capturing video of the scenario where she was being stripped off and finally Puti was arrested and where she committed suicide.

As per Wilchins Gender identity has been described as an individual's internal sense of self as being male, female, or an identity between or outside these two categories. So, the objective of my paper is to establish the fact that queer means strange and trans means beyond, it is probably a flawed attempt to categorize queer people under a singular umbrella, it is also one of the reasons why, the term third gender has not been used in the paper because whenever the term third gender is used, it is automatically assumed there is some first and second gender, it is important to comprehend the nuances of gender identity and redefine the very contours of existing definition of the term "queer" itself.

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Forms And Functions of Graphicons in Facebook Private Conversations Among Young Filipino Users

Dolot, Dyea[1]

[1] Centro Escolar University, The School of Education-Liberal Arts-Music-Social Work, Philippines

Abstract

Understanding the functions of graphicons such as emojis, images, memes, videos, GIFs, emoticons, and stickers has become increasingly relevant as they have become extensively integrated into textual messages on Facebook, especially in group chats. This study aimed to investigate the forms and functions of graphicons used by young Filipino users (ages 18-31) on Facebook group chats. The datasets were extracted from the corpora, ten Facebook group chats, each lasting for three months, and analyzed using or computer-mediated discourse analysis or language-focused content analysis. According to the findings of this study, emoji was the most widely used graphicon by young Filipino users on Facebook, while sticker was the least. Adopting Herring and Dainas' six functions of graphicons (2017), the researcher discovered additional five functions on Facebook group chats. These functions are identified as mention, reaction, riff, tone modification, action, narrative sequence, response, sharing, replacement, complement, and attention. It was also discovered that a graphicon could serve more than one function in a conversation. Tone modification was the most commonly used function, while the narrative sequence was the least. It was found out that in both emojis and emoticons, 'tone modification' was the most used function while 'sharing' in both images and videos. Meanwhile, 'action' was the most used function in GIFs, 'attention' in memes, and 'mention' in stickers. Because of the significantly increased use of online communication, this study may provide insight on how people may use these graphicons in their everyday conversations.

Keywords*: graphicons, forms, functions, language use, multimodal communication*

Introduction

Topping the ranking of most numbers of active users on social media platforms, the usage of Facebook in communicating became a norm for some people, especially Filipinos. In fact, according to Kemp (2019), the Facebook messenger was the top messaging application in the Philippines in 2019. Because of free Facebook released by telecommunications in the Philippines, Filipinos can send messages through Facebook even without data.

Graphicons such as emoticons, emojis, stickers, GIFs, images, meme, and videos (Herring & Dainas, 2017) are often used on Facebook communication since Facebook allow the users to use them on private messages, status, and the comment section. Alongside texts, these graphicons can now be used to interact with other people even if they are not communicating face-to-face; however, face-to-face interaction is still different from communicating online. Bliss-Carroll (2016) claimed that more than the actual words being said, 'gestures', 'vocal tonality', and 'inflection' give more cues to the receiver of the message. Though these three can be seen in face-to-face communication, these cannot be seen in computer-mediated communication, especially in e-mails and chats. Jiang, Fiesler, and Brubaker (2018) argued that when interpersonal cues are not present, communicators tend to create notions through the use of the limited available cues. Though non-verbal communication such as body language or gestures, and vocal tonality is not present in online communication, Bliss-Carroll (2016) claimed that emojis can create the elements in verbal and gestural expressions which can be seen in face-to-face interactions, and this is why they are accepted as important "enhancer and clarifier" in the digital communication.

Studies about emojis and emoticons (Bliss-Caroll, 2016; Kelly, 2015; Dainas & Herring, 2019/2021) have been made; however, other graphicons such as GIFs, stickers, and memes are very limited. Although Herring and Dainas' (2017) studied the pragmatic functions of graphicons, where they found six (6) functions, namely: reaction, tone, action, mention, riff, and narrative sequence, they only focused on Facebook comment threads. At present, there are no studies that discuss all the

graphicons and their pragmatic functions in private conversations in the Philippines. Hence, this study is a significant pursuit in pragmatics, especially that the Philippines is dubbed as the social media capital of the world, and the Facebook platform, the most popular social media in the country as a means of communication with people in the country and around the world.

In Herring and Dainas' (2017) study, they discovered six pragmatic functions of graphicons on Facebook comment threads using the computer-mediated discourse analysis (Herring, 2004). Adopting Herring and Daina's (2017) framework, the researcher aimed at discovering the forms and functions of these graphicons on Facebook group chats and their implications for language use.

Methods

The corpora of the study were gathered from ten chosen group chats of one of the researchers on Facebook messenger. The corpora were the three-month-long conversations of each group chat. The oldest chats were from 2016, while the latest chats, in 2019. These chats were chosen according to the time they were chatting the most using the graphicons. The contexts of these chats were also varied. The researcher identified the datasets and extracted these from the corpora. Because of their expertise in the field and having conducted several studies on multimodal computer-mediated communication, the researchers used the framework of Herring and Dainas (2017), the only study the researchers discovered that included all of the graphicons that emerged from the dataset. This framework presents the six pragmatic functions of the graphicons. The researchers also used computer-mediated discourse analysis or the "language-focused content analysis" by Herring (2004) to analyze the frequency and the functions of the graphicons, as well as the ground theory approach in order to enable the function categories to emerge from the data.

Results and Discussion

1. Discussion of Forms

Table 1
Forms of Graphicons in All Group Chats

Graphicons	Frequency	Percentage
Emojis	2322	60.48%
Images	838	21.83%
Memes	301	7.84%
Videos	189	4.92%
GIFs	89	2.32%
Emoticons	79	2.06%
Stickers	21	0.55%
Total	3839	100%

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of the graphicons according to their forms. Based on Table 1, 3839 graphicons were analyzed in this research. Among these graphicons, 2322 (60.48%) or more than half of the total graphicons were emojis. This is in line with Herring and Dainas' (2017) study, where more than half of their datasets were also emojis.

According to the participants of the study, some factors affect their choice of graphicons in conversations.

1.1 Accessibility – they tend to use graphicons that are easier to access than others. They tend to choose other graphicons which are easier to access and are included in the free Facebook option

than GIF which needs more effort to look for an appropriate GIF and extra data since it is not included in the free Facebook.

1.2 Preference – users tend to use graphicons that they personally prefer. Some of them like sending emojis, while some like GIFs, etc.

1.3 Aesthetics – users tend to choose graphicons that look interesting, cute, or fun for them.

1.4 Substitutability – users tend to choose graphicons that can be the best substitute for their words or messages.

1.5 Appropriateness – users are more inclined to choose graphicons that are appropriate for the mood and type of the conversation, as well as the appropriate graphicon for the receiver (e.g. a child, a professional, etc.)

1.6 Culture – users are more likely to choose graphicons that are more popular or more used in their culture and/or their generation.

Based on the forms of graphicon the researcher found in the corpora, the researcher categorized the forms of graphicons based on the graphicon complexity map of Herring and Dainas (2017).

Figure 1

Graphicon Forms and their Categories
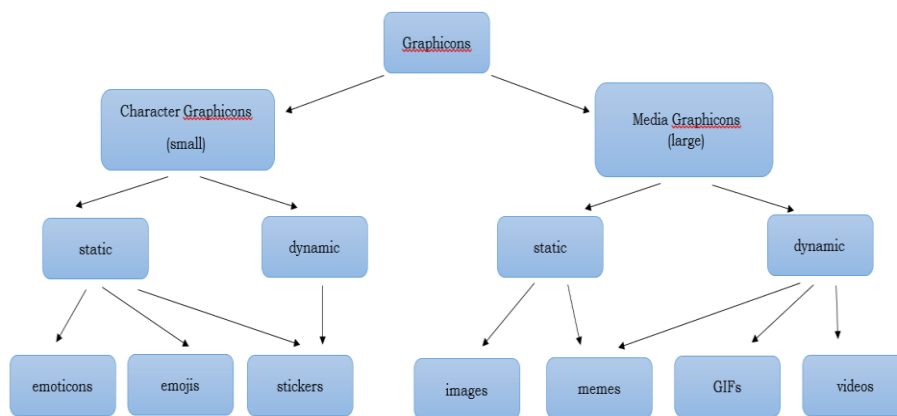
The forms of graphicons are categorized into two different types, each with two subtypes, as shown in Figure 1. Graphicons were divided into two categories: character graphicons and media graphicons. Each type is further subdivided into static and dynamic graphicons. Character graphicons, emoticons, and emojis are classified as static (non-moving graphicons), while stickers are classified as both static and dynamic since there are non-moving and moving stickers. Meanwhile, in media graphicon, images are classified as static in media graphics, whereas GIFs and videos are classified as dynamic. Memes, on the other hand, can be either static or dynamic.

2. Functions of Graphicons

Discussion of functions

There are eleven (11) functions that emerged from the data. Six (6) of them are similar to Herring and Dainas' (2017) pragmatic functions: mention, tone modification, reaction, action, riffing, and narrative sequence response; while five (5) of them are the newly found functions of the graphicons: replacement, sharing, complement, and attention.

2.1 Tone Modification – used to modify the tone of the text or the graphicon it accompanies. (See Figure 2)

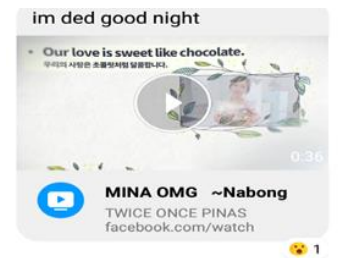**Figure 2**
Tone Modification, Video

Figure 3
Reaction, Emoji
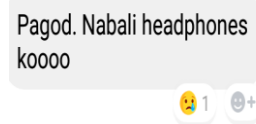
2.2 Reaction – used as an emotional reaction to a previous message. (See Figure 3)

2.3 Sharing – used to entertain or inform (reference, example, and evidence). (See Figure 4)

2.4 Attention – used to get the attention of the other users and serve as an emphasis to a message. (See Figure 5)

Figure 4
Sharing-Reference, Images

2.5 Replacement – used to replace lexicons (mostly emojis) or the whole message of the sender. (See Figure 6)

Figure 5
Attention, GIF

2.6 Complement – used to complete the message it accompanies or serve as an accessory/decoration. (See Figure 7)

2.7 Response – used as a respond to a message, question, command, or request. (See Figure 8)

2.8 Action – used to replace a physical action. (See Figure 9)

2.9 Mention – used to refer to the graphicon itself. (See Figure 10)

2.10 Riffing – used as a parody or humorous elaboration of a previous message or a graphicon. (See Figure 11)

2.11 Narrative Sequence – used to create a message or story by using a series of graphicons. (See Figure 12)

Figure 6
Replacement, GIFs

Figure 7
Complement, Accessory-Emoji

Figure 8
Response, Images

Figure 9
Action, Sticker

Figure10
Mention, Sticker

Figure 11
Riffing, GIFs

Figure 12
Narrative Sequence, Memes

Frequency of Functions and Their Forms

Table 2

Frequency of Functions According to their Forms

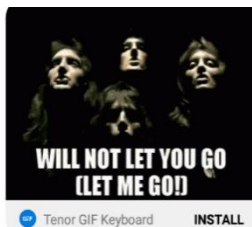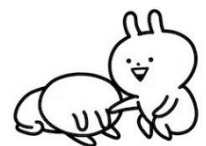|	Tone	React	Share	Atten	Rep	Comp	Respon	Action	Ment	Riff	NS	Total	%
Emoji	**1142**	**958**	**0**	25	**255**	**324**	**207**	**225**	18	45	**84**	3283	55.64
Image	3	20	**791**	**444**	39	1	41	13	**176**	35	10	1573	26.66
Meme	2	40	105	113	58	1	55	36	13	**50**	6	479	8.12
Video	**0**	**0**	102	95	5	**0**	**1**	**1**	20	3	**0**	227	3.85
GIF	**0**	28	7	15	31	2	34	34	3	28	**0**	182	3.08
Emoticon	65	5	**0**	**0**	9	22	5	6	**0**	**0**	**0**	112	1.90
Sticker	1	8	8	**0**	**4**	1	3	8	9	1	1	44	0.75
Total	1213	1059	1013	692	401	351	346	323	239	162	101	5900	100
%	20.56	17.95	17.17	11.73	6.80	5.95	5.86	5.47	4.05	2.75	1.71	100	

Table 2 presents all the functions of graphicons according to forms. During the analysis, the researcher found out that each graphicon can have more than one function in conversations. Since it shows the functions of graphicons according to form, the frequency count of the forms of the graphicons in Table 2 differs from Table 1, which shows the total number of each graphicon only; however, the order of the graphicons (most frequent to least frequent) did not change. The overall results show that the graphicon that has the highest total number of functions was emoji (3283 or 55.64%), while the least was sticker (44 or 0.75%).

It can be observed that, of all the graphicons and features, emoji was the most widely used graphicon in all functions, being the most commonly used graphicon in seven out of eleven functions (tone modification, reaction, replacement, complement, response, action, mention, and narrative sequence). Next are images, which were the most used graphicon in three out of eleven functions (sharing, attention, and mention). Then meme, which was the most used graphicon for riffing. Meanwhile, the graphicon video was the least used graphicon in all functions, being the least commonly used graphicon in six out of eleven functions (tone modification, reaction, complement, response, action, and narrative sequence). It is followed by emoticon, which was the least used graphicon in five out of eleven functions (sharing, attention, mention, riffing, and narrative sequence). GIF and sticker, on the other hand, were both least used graphicons in two out of eleven functions (tone modification and narrative sequence; attention and replacement). It was observed that tone modification was the most used function while the narrative sequence was the least used function among all the functions of the graphicons. The most or least used pragmatic function of graphicons, however, varies depending on the used graphicon.

The most used and the least used (or never used) graphicon depends on each function. The most used function for emoji and emoticon is tone modification, sharing for both image and video, attention for meme, action for GIF, while mention for sticker. Meanwhile, sharing is not used as an emoji function; narrative sequence, complement, tone modification, and reaction are not used for videos; narrative sequence and tone modification are not used for GIF; mention, sharing, narrative sequence, riffing, and attention are not used for emoticon; attention is not used for sticker; while complement is the least used for both image and meme.

3.   Implications for Language Use

After the incorporation of graphicons into textual computer-mediated communication, their use in digital communication has increased. As a result, their emergence affected the use of language in digital communication. Based on the findings above, the researcher listed the impacts of graphicons on language use. Rouse (n.d.) spoke about the five broad categories of language use: informative, evocative, expressive, evaluative, and performative. Using the descriptions of the languages uses below, the researchers listed the most appropriate forms and functions of graphicons in each language use.

Based on the results above, the most appropriate functions for informative are replacement, response, and sharing. This is because these three fit the description of the given function, which can be used to inform. Moreover, emojis and images were the recommended graphicon forms, for they were the most used graphicons for the given functions. Though the gap of the results is wide, other media graphicons can be used for this usage as well.

Since evocative is the language used to elicit a response, such as questions or commands, the most appropriate function for the category is replacement. It can be observed that even though the gap between emoji and the three given graphicons is huge, the researcher still added these three in the recommended graphicon. This is because, according to the findings, emojis are mostly used to replace lexical words than the whole message, while the media graphicons are used to replace the whole message itself. They were also added because of the participants' claim that they use graphic media to replace messages that they are lazy to put into textual messages. Emojis, on the other hand, can also be used to change the tone of the whole message (tone modification), making statements evocative.

Because expressive use is the emotional expression of people, tone modification and reaction are the most appropriate functions to use for this category. This is because tone modification deals with the tone of the message, changing the mood or emotions of the message, while reaction deals with the emotional reaction of the user. For the graphicons, emojis and emoticons are recommended for the function tone modification, for they were the most used graphicons for the said function. On the other hand, when it comes to the function reaction, besides emojis, images, memes, and GIFs are the recommended graphicons for it gives a vivid expression of people's emotions.

The use of words to express judgments is known as evaluative use. As a result, the most suitable language functions for this use are replacement, reaction, and response. Emojis, images, memes, and GIFs, on the other hand, are the graphicons that are recommended for this category. Though emoji was most commonly used for the specified functions, the said media graphicons can provide a vivid evaluation of whatever or whoever is being evaluated.

Performative use is the expression of doing or acting something. The most appropriate functions for this category are replacement, action, and response while emoji, meme, image, and GIF are the recommended graphicons for this language use. However, even with a low number of usages in the findings, video is also recommended for this usage since it can show a more detailed way of performing the act.

Conclusion

This paper presents all the forms and functions of graphicons in Facebook private conversations, as well as their implications for language use. It was observed that emoji was the most used graphicon, followed by image, meme, video, GIF, emoticon, and sticker. However, the forms of graphicons used in chatting largely depend on one's generation, environment, culture, and schema. Users are also inclined to use forms that are 'appropriate' in a certain conversation. They also tend to use graphicons that connect more with their generation. The receiver's age and background also determine the forms used in conversations. Some graphicons are also preferred than other forms due to their features and convenience of use. Emojis are preferred to emoticons by users because of their accessibility. Emoticons are less used because some automatically transform into emojis on platforms like Facebook. Also,

images are being used more because users need not explain in narrative form. Many users like to use GIFs but because it needs data, it limits them in using the graphicon. Lastly, stickers are more suitable for kids because they are cute and simple.

Eleven functions emerged in the dataset collected from the corpora: mention, tone modification, reaction, action, riffing, narrative sequence, response, replacement, sharing, complement, and attention. A graphicon can be used in more than one pragmatic function but cannot be used in all functions. Some graphicons are specific to a purpose such as relaying a message. Moreover, the functions of the graphicons affect the form usage of the users.

Graphicons are heavily integrated into computer-mediated communication. With the rise of computer-mediated communication, especially during the pandemic, more people are using graphicons on Facebook and other social media platforms. Since graphicons are now a big part of online communication, people should be familiar with their forms and functions. Depending on the purpose of the users, graphicons could be utilized in different language use such as in sharing information, suggesting evocative meanings, expressing emotions, evaluating messages, and performing acts. The findings of this study may also serve as a reference to people who are interested in internet communication. Present studies mostly focused on some of the graphicons, especially emoji; however, with the growing use of the different graphicons in conversations, it is recommended to study not just only one or two graphicons but all the graphicons that are used in a conversation. However, since the corpora were from 2016 to 2019 on Facebook messenger, some new emerging graphicons are not included in the study. Because of this, future researchers may try to focus on different forms of graphicons such as animoji, avatars, and bitmoji. They may also focus on private conversations on other platforms like Twitter and Tumblr, or even different conversation topics. They may also feature the implications of the graphicons for other fields.

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Emerging Netspeak Word Choices in Social Media on Filipino Pop Culture

Camille P. Monderin

Graduate Student, Centro Escolar University (CEU), Manila, Philippines

Abstract:

The emergence of the Internet gave birth to a new form of language that is unique to the users of the network. Netspeak is the language of the Internet and has adapted the features of both speaking and writing, however, Netspeak has its own unique characteristics as well. This study aimed to find the emerging lexical patterns of Netspeak as used by Filipinos, the extent of use of Netspeak in three most popular social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) as well as various domains of pop culture (entertainment, politics, fashion and sports) and its implications to the language studies in the Philippines. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this study. The corpora of the study were gathered from two months' worth of social media activities focusing on the comments in the Facebook, Instagram and Twitter of selected public figures. The findings showed that the emerging lexical patterns of Netspeak were abbreviations and homophones and that social media platforms and pop culture domains affect the use of Netspeak features. The platform and domain that got the highest extent of usage of Netspeak lexical features were Twitter and Politics respectively. The results of this study will help in understanding the language that is used in the Internet as well as raise awareness that this kind of language exists.

Keywords: Netspeak, lexical patterns, Internet linguistics

1. Introduction

Language is constantly evolving and along with it, new stylistic variations of language as well as new forms of communication. The advancement of technology has been a factor to the development and evolution of language, most prominently with the emergence of the Internet where its users have developed their own language, their own form of communication, one that is unique to the users of the network. As people communicate more frequently through the Internet, the language has adapted to the one that is used by its users. In order to properly describe the Internet language, Crystal coined the term "Netspeak" as an alternative to all the previously mentioned locutions. He stated that Netspeak is "succinct and functional enough" and clarified that speak includes both talking and writing and "that any speak suffix also has a receptive element, including listening and reading" (Crystal, 2001). The term presented by Crystal not only covers the Internet, which is the medium, but also "speak" which is the language itself. The term Netspeak is generic enough to include all languages that are used in Internet but is also specific enough to show that the term is meant for describing the Internet language. The term as well as its definition provided by Crystal fits the researcher's idea of the language of the Internet. The present study subscribed to Crystal's term and description and used "Netspeak" to describe Internet language.

Netspeak as a language is neither spoken nor written: it has the features of both speaking and writing in order to suit the medium, which is the Internet, and has also different features that neither speaking nor writing could ever deliver (Crystal, 2001). In Crystal's book, Language and the Internet (2005), he described the salient features of the language of the Internet and how the Internet affects the use of language. The features included lexicon, neologisms, abbreviations, acronyms, capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and the use of smileys or emoticons. As the Internet is full of people from different backgrounds, countries, cultures, and languages, some features of Netspeak may be present in some languages and some may not. These features that are present in some languages may be specific to those countries or the speakers of the languages, which may or may not be influenced by their own culture. The researcher believes this phenomenon to be present in the context of Philippine Internet language as

well. Culture, on the other hand, is defined as "socially constructed or learned behavior" (Ohiagu and Okorie, 2014). Culture is the behavior characteristic of a particular social group. Culture shapes language and language reflects culture. Dominick (2013), cited in Ohiagu and Okorie (2014), described culture as a "complex concept that refers to the common values, beliefs, social practices, rules and assumptions that bind a group of people together". The use of Netspeak in the Internet gives identity to the users as part of the same group as they can understand each other and can recognize the language that they are using. As part of the same community, these people can communicate using Netspeak when others may have difficulty to do so.

This study is interested in investigating the lexical patterns of Netspeak in Filipino social media and pop culture. Precisely, the following research questions guided the analysis:

(1) What was the extent of usage of each of the Netspeak features across the three most popular social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter)?
(2) What was the extent of usage of each of the Netspeak features across the domains of pop culture (Entertainment, Fashion, Politics and Sports)?
(3) What were the emerging lexical patterns of Netspeak in Filipino social media and pop culture?
(4) What are the implications of the findings of the study to language studies in the Philippines?

2. Methodology

This study aimed at finding the emerging lexical patterns of Netspeak in social media accounts of Filipinos. To accomplish this goal, the descriptive method was used. Descriptive research aims at describing a phenomenon and its characteristics. In descriptive research, "the data may be collected qualitatively, but it is often analyzed quantitatively, using frequencies, percentages, averages, or other statistical analyses to determine relationships" (Nassaji, 2015). This kind of research focuses more on the what rather than the how or why.

The corpora of the study were gathered from the comment threads in Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter of twenty (20) popular public figures, 5 for each domain of pop culture, from January 2020 to February 2020. The public figures under were chosen generally based on the following criteria:

a) They have public or official accounts/pages in all 3 platforms.
b) They need to have at least 1 verified account among the 3 platforms; if there is no verified account then they must be recognized or tagged by another verified account.
c) Official accounts in different platforms must be linked or tagged in other social media accounts.
d) They have made names for themselves in their specific field of career.

The data gathering technique used in this study was data mining. Data mining is defined as a process used to extract usable data from a larger set of any raw data. The usable data here refer to the Netspeak while the set of raw data consisted of the comments from the social media accounts of the public figures. The corpora were collected by combing through countless comment threads and extracting only those that contain Netspeak. As the corpus of the study was taken from the Internet, the privacy of the social media users was highly observed. In the analysis and discussion, no names, usernames, and profile pictures were shown in the body of research to ensure that private information is not released.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Netspeak in Facebook, Instagram and Twitter

The results and discussion is presented following the order of the research questions. Data revealed that among the three social media platforms, Twitter had the highest usage among its users followed by Instagram and lastly, Facebook. The descriptive analysis of the extent of usage of each of netspeak features in Facebook, Instagram and Twitter is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Extent of Usage of Netspeak in Social Media Platforms

	Abbreviation	Homophone	Acronym	Onomatopoeia	Slang	Coinage	Blending	Total
Twitter	356	280	410	360	191	97	16	**1710**
Instagram	465	285	270	299	223	17	27	**1586**
Facebook	437	382	245	202	194	41	29	**1530**
Total	1258	947	925	861	608	155	72	4826

Among the three social media platforms, Twitter has the highest frequency count for Netspeak usage and within this social media platform, acronym is the most used feature. The most popular acronyms used in this platform was "ily" followed by "omg" and then "lol". The reason for the usage of "ily" can be attributed to the fact that the comments were meant for public figures, therefore, adoration and sentiment were highly used. Meanwhile, onomatopoeia is also found in high frequency in the Twitter platform. Onomatopoeic words found in the study can be categorized into three: 1) laughter, 2) cry and 3) Internet onomatopoeia. These onomatopoeic words help in making the language and communication in the Internet more expressive and creative. There is also an onomatopoeia that is exclusive to the Internet, *sksksk*. These different ways of typing emotive language help in expressing the needed emotion that the users want to convey in their comments without relying on the use of emojis, emoticons and such. Abbreviation was used in Instagram more than in Facebook and Twitter, with a total frequency count of 465 in this platform alone. As Instagram is a social networking site that is photo and video-centric, the word "pic" had been used in the comments to refer to the post made by the public figures. On the other hand, slang had the highest frequency count in Instagram than Facebook and Twitter. The most popular slang used in this platform is a Filipino slang *sana all* which literally translates to "hope everyone experiences that" is used to show that the person hopes for the same thing as the post and it is not limited to material possessions but extends to experiences, achievements, success, luck etc. As slang may differ in meanings based on contexts and the community where the slang is used, it is imperative to know who the receivers are in order to avoid misunderstanding and miscommunication. In Facebook, homophone is a highly used netspeak feature. The use of homophone to replace similar sounding sounds was very common in this platform. As homophones are used to replace similar sounding words with another letter, there were instances where a variety of homophones were used in a single comment. Yeo and Ting (2017) stated that the use of homophone is influenced by the way they speak when they type, therefore, mimicking how these words were pronounced and then spelling them that way.

The language used in the social media platforms has evolved creatively in order to suit the particular needs of its users, including but not limited to typing space, effort, and creative expressions. The uniqueness of each platform has given way to the creation and usage of language that is fit for the situation. The platforms have also influenced the type of Netspeak used in each of the platforms. As medium for communication, these platforms introduce new words on a regular basis which get exposed to the users who adopt the changes.

3.2. Netspeak in Entertainment, Fashion, Sports and Politics

Data revealed that among the four pop culture domains included in the study, Politics had the highest usage among its users followed by Entertainment, then Sports and lastly, Fashion. The descriptive analysis of the extent of usage of each of netspeak features is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Extent of Usage of Netspeak in Pop Culture Domains

	Abbreviation	Homophone	Acronym	Onomatopoeia	Slang	Coinage	Blending	Total
Politics	300	254	335	214	128	98	5	**1334**
Entertainment	177	273	244	337	239	20	35	**1325**
Sports	506	212	202	115	114	20	5	**1174**
Fashion	275	208	144	195	127	17	27	**993**
Total	1258	947	925	861	608	155	72	4826

Among all the pop culture domains, Politics had the highest frequency count. Acronym is the most common netspeak used in Politics. The nature of acronyms used in this domain is very well related

to politics. The researcher found that the names of organizations, cities, and government institutions were mostly in acronym forms in the corpus. The researcher observed that the acronym mostly used in this domain was "VP" which refers to Vice President, which is one of the public figures chosen to be included in the study. The convenience of using acronyms instead of typing the whole word is what makes this Netspeak popular with the users. Coinage had a low ranking within Politics itself but the frequency count of 98 is already the highest among the domains. Samples of coinage found in the corpus of Politics were few to begin with, however; it is in this domain that a certain coined word was repeatedly used in the comments. Majority of this netspeak frequency belongs to "fake news", a coined word to describe information that are presented as news with the purpose to mislead and misinform. The active exchange between social media users in the Philippines, particularly when it comes to politics, sometimes leads to arguments with different claims from each side further proliferating fake news as each side has his/her own 'credible' sources. The engagement of its users leads to long conversations, usually in two opposing sides, both citing their own sources to further their claims. After Politics, Entertainment had the second highest overall usage of netspeak features. The highly used feature was onomatopoeia. This result meets the expectation of the researcher because as she was observing the social media accounts of the public figures in the entertainment domain, a lot of comments had onomatopoeias in them. There is a lot of emotional nuance that is hard to convey through writing. In speech, people use intonation to convey differences in expressive meanings like happiness, surprise, wariness, ire, etc. These subtle differences in emotions are hard to translate to writing, especially in the standard language. Netspeak helps bridge that gap with the use of creative spelling, word choice, and narrative.

Among the four domains of pop culture, Sports was leading when it comes to abbreviation usage. The most popular abbreviation used was "congrats" with 294 occurences, which was still the highest of all pop culture domains. The Philippines was the host of the Southeast Asian Games where a lot of our athletes won gold for the country. Big competitive events had influenced the usage of "congrats" especially if they themselves secured a place in the competition. This can be interpreted as occasions having an influence on the type of Netspeak used by people. Lastly, the Fashion domain had the lowest overall usage of netspeak features. The feature mostly used in this domain was abbreviation. The abbreviations found include but are not limited to congrats, pls, fave and adorbs. The abbreviation adorbs is short for adorable. The word was clipped on the last part and was added an -s mainly for ease of pronunciation instead of just stopping at the last letter and ending it abruptly when pronouncing. In social media where these public figures can post their fashion, a lot of comments were made in reference to their styling. On the other hand, the slang feature, although low in rank in this domain, was domain-specific as some slangs were found only in this domain. Slangs like *slaying*, *killing it*, *bomb* and *on fleek* were used to describe someone's appearance or style which is why it had a higher occurrence rate in the Fashion domain more than in any other domain. Most of the slangs pertain to the fashion itself making it a unique aspect of the domain.

Netspeak features found in the pop culture domains were influenced by the domains themselves. The occurrence of domain-specific words in the politics domain such as fake news and troll shows that there are netspeak that were created from the phenomena that happened in that particular domain. As expected of the Entertainment domain, onomatopoeia with transcriptions of laughter having high frequencies, as well as the mimicking of certain catch phrase, shows the influence of the public figures on the language used in the comments. As for the sports and fashion domains, netspeak that were unique included local terms as well as events limited to the domain themselves. Competitions and celebratory events also influenced what netspeak was used in these domains as people are inclined to comment congratulatory messages if there is an occasion like winning gold for the country, having a birthday party or anniversary, etc.

3.3. Emerging Lexical Patterns of Netspeak

Among all of the Netspeak, abbreviations had the highest frequency count, followed by homophone, acronym, onomatopoeia, slang, coinage, and lastly, blending. The total count of Netspeak found in the corpus was 4826.

Table 3. Emerging Lexical Patterns of Netspeak

	Abbreviation	Homophone	Acronym	Onomatopoeia	Slang	Coinage	Blending	Total
Frequency	1258	947	925	861	608	155	72	4826
Percentage	26.07%	19.62%	19.17%	17.84%	12.60%	3.21%	1.49%	100%

The emerging lexical patterns of Netspeak were further analyzed to investigate and describe their characteristics.

A. Abbreviation

A total of 105 different abbreviations were found in this study. The formation of abbreviations can be analyzed from the perspective of their structure and can be organized into four types:

   a. *Front clipping* is the deletion of the part of the word occurs at the initial part of the word.
   b. *Middle clipping* is the deletion in the middle of the word, where several letters are dropped in between the first and last part of the word.
   c. *Back clipping* is the deletion at the last part of the word.
   d. *Clipping* with spelling change is the deletion in the first or last part of the word with added letters at the end to complete the abbreviation which are usually not present in the deleted part of the word.

B. Homophone

There were 43 homophones found in the study. The homophones found in this study were limited to English and Filipino homophones. They can be organized into two types, which can further be analyzed and categorized as follows:

   a. *English Homophones* are letters in the English alphabet that are used as a replacement for a similar sounding word or similar sound in the word. They can be categorized into four:
      i. *Single letter to whole word replacement* is a kind of homophone where a single English alphabet letter is used to replace the whole word which sounds similar to the letter.
      ii. *Single letter to similar sound replacement* is a homophone where a single English letter is used in replacing only the similar sounding part of the word.
      iii. *Multiple letters to whole word replacement* is a homophone where a combination of a few letters act as replacement for the similar sounding word.
      iv. *Number homophones* are homophones that use numbers to replace a word.

   b. *Filipino Homophones* are letters in both the English and Filipino language used in replacing similar sounding Filipino words. An additional category present in Filipino homophones was found in this study:
      i. *Syllabic replacement* is a homophone where a single letter replaces only a syllable of the similar sounding word.

C. Acronym

A total of 153 acronyms was found in this study. There were acronyms that were based in the Philippines, mostly of the government institutions, local cities, local TV shows and personalities, etc. They can be analyzed and organized into three types as follows:

   a. *Standard Acronyms* are words that are related to names, events, places, organizations, institutions, or any other formal terms used in the internet. Acronyms like this are usually written in all capital letters but are not necessarily needed to be considered a standard acronym. Standard acronyms can be further divided into two:

    i. *Initialisms* are acronyms consisting of initial letters of a formal term which are read or pronounced separately.

    ii. *Pronounced as a new word* is an acronym where the combination of letters can be read or pronounced as a whole word rather than separately.

b. *Single-word Acronyms* are single words which are further shortened by using only a few letters, usually two, to form an acronym.

c. *Phrasal or Sentence Acronyms* are acronyms formed from a phrase or even a whole sentence by taking the first letters in each word. This category, like the Standard Acronyms, can further be divided into two:

    i. *Initialisms* are acronyms consisting of initial letters which are read or pronounced separately. These initial letters are taken from each word in a phrase or sentence and are formed together to create an acronym.

    ii. *Pronounced as a new word* in phrasal or sentence acronyms are also formed by taking the initial letters of each word in a phrase or sentence and are combined to form the acronym, however, these letters are not pronounced separately but together like a new word itself.

D. Onomatopoeia

A total of 10 onomatopoeic words were found in this study. The onomatopoeias found in the corpus were analyzed and organized into three types as follows:

a. *Transciptions of laughter* are onomatopoeic words related to happiness which includes laughing, chuckle, giggle, etc.

b. *Transcriptions of cry* are onomatopoeic words limited only to crying.

c. *Internet onomatopoeia* refers to the onomatopoeia that is created, popularized and used within the Internet only.

E. Internet Slang

There was a total of 68 slang words found in the study, 50 of which were English and 18 were Filipino. Internet slang is divided by the researcher into two types for better analysis and interpretation: English slang and Filipino Slang. These were further analyzed and categorized in the next page:

a. *English Slangs* are slang words in the English language. These words are very popular in the Internet, and some words may be used only in the context of the Internet. English slangs that are found in the study have the following characteristics:

    i. *Meaning deviation* wherein the standard definition of the word has been changed to a new one that fits Internet uses more.

    ii. *Spelling* of some of the Internet slangs have added letters to the original word. The added letter adds emphasis and stress to the word.

    iii. *Social media slang* are slangs that are created in the Internet. These words have been created with the influence of various communities in the Internet (like gaming, social networking sites, etc.) and are not in the dictionary, therefore, it's the users that give them meaning and life.

b. *Filipino Slang* is slang words that are popular and are used in the Philippines. Filipino slang focuses on the creation of slang words as well as word structures. Filipino slang has the following characteristics:

    i. *Reverse speech* is a kind of slang in Filipino where the words are spelled backwards or pronounced invertedly.

    ii. *Gay lingo* is the use of terms and words from the gay community.

iii. *Pronunciation* is the nonstandard pronunciation and spelling of English phrases, often applying the Filipino sounds to English words/phrases.
iv. *Bilingual phrases* are Filipino slang that use a combination of English and Filipino words.
v. *Meaning deviation* wherein the definition of an English word is different when used in the Philippines.
vi. *Social media slang* is a slang created in the Internet.

F. Coinage

There was a total of 17 coinages found in the study. The coinages found in the corpus were analyzed and organized into three types:

a. *Internet processes* are coinage in Internet that are influenced by the processes that are exclusive to Internet use like download, upload and install.
b. *Social Media coinage* are words influenced by the specific functions of a social media platform like Twitter. Words that were created based on networking sites are also under this category like blog.
c. *Phenomena coinage* are words influenced by the happenings in the Internet as well as the users and their behavior in social media.

G. Blending

The blended words that were found in the study were only 6. The blended words found in the corpus have the same characteristic, which is simply combining two words to form one word.

3.4. Implications to Language Studies in the Philippines

Through the analysis of the data, the researcher observed that the language used in online communication is changing and deviating from that of the standard usage. This study analyzed and observed seven Netspeak features in the social media accounts of Filipinos, as well as their extent of usage in the most popular websites and domains of pop culture. Netspeak in the Philippines provides an interesting and vast array of language use that language studies can take advantage of. From the findings of the study, the following implications that may have bearing on language studies in the Philippines were drawn:

1. From the ever-evolving language of the Internet, with all of the inputs from its users, several linguistic properties have emerged from this growth. Evidently, social media platforms and domains of pop culture have brought about much of the emergence of these linguistic properties which comprise what we now call as Netspeak. Central to Netspeak are its lexical features which were the focus of this study. It is important, therefore, for language educators to be always adept on these features and see how they could be utilized towards meaningful and relevant teaching.
2. Knowledge of Netspeak can also help language educators to identify its effects on the use of standard English, which is the prescribed language of communication in formal writing, and suggest some measures to avoid possible problems that may arise from this.
3. The present study can be used as a reference to teach language evolution and language variation. That even if Netspeak is considered nonstandard and unconventional, it can help students realize that creative language is still communicable, that being creative helps in keeping the language active and even help in improving it.
4. The present study may inspire language scholars to conduct more research on similar or other language phenomena to enrich the field of sociolinguistics and Internet linguistics.

4. Conclusion

This paper shed light on the characteristics of netspeak found in Filipino social media and pop culture domains. The data collected and analyzed disclosed that abbreviations and homophones were the emerging lexical patterns of Netspeak in the social media accounts of the Filipinos and that the extent of Netspeak usage in the social media platforms shows high frequency of certain Netspeak features in each platform. In Facebook, abbreviations and homophones were the most prevalent features. In Instagram, abbreviations and onomatopeias were used more than any other features. In Twitter, acronyms and onomatopeias were of the highest frequency of usage. Among all three platforms, Twitter had the highest total frequencies of Netspeak features while Facebook had the lowest. Some of the features found were influenced by the social media platforms including the restrictive character limit of Twitter and the photo-centric nature of Instagram. The extent of Netspeak usage in the domains of pop culture was also evident in high frequency of certain Netspeak features. In entertainment, onomatopoeias and homophones were frequently used; in fashion, abbreviations and homophones, and in politics, acronyms and abbreviations were often used. Lastly, in sports, abbreviations and homophones were also frequently used. Among all domains of pop culture, the usage of Netspeak lexical features was most prevalent in the Politics domain and least, in the Sports domain. There were Netspeak features found to be unique to a pop culture domain which include high frequencies of laughter in the entertainment domain, high usage of the coined term fake news in the Politics domain, the occurrence of domain-exclusive slangs in the fashion domain, and the prevalence of abbreviated congratulatory messages in the Sports domain.

Netspeak is a dynamic language that is fast-changing and ever evolving. Social media platforms and pop culture domains shape the language of the internet, just as Netspeak shapes the contents of social media platforms and pop culture. Since Netspeak is the language of the current generation of students, language educators, especially in the Philippines, should be familiar with and updated on its features, which they could utilize in their teaching, to make classroom experience for their students more interesting and relevant. The findings of the study may serve as a reference to linguistic studies in the Philippines. The present study focused on English and Filipino Netspeak only, however,the Philippines is a country with a lot of languages and it is recommended that the study be extended to these languages. It may be interesting to see if there are netspeak that are unique to them and may even come up with new types of Netspeak.

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Using Ancient Myths to Tackle Today's Reality – Zeus in Fiona Benson's
Vertigo and Ghost

Simon KIM

French Language and Literature Department, Korea University, South Korea

Abstract:

Winner of the Forward Prize and Shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize, Fiona Benson's 2019 book of poetry Vertigo and Ghost *strikes its readers by its violence, by the rage it exudes. Constituted of two parts, the book bares with a deeply intimate voice the testimony of a woman of these days. Dealing with rape and sexual harassment, the 26 poems of the first part of the book describe a reality that has become more broadly denounced in recent years only. Yet the tour-de-force of Fiona Benson is to use familiar figures from the Classical Mythology of the Ancient Greeks, and most particularly Zeus, known in the ancient lore as a "womanizer." But in Benson's poems, the godly figure is that of an assaulter, a sex-addict, and a rapist. The poems alternate between different voices, that of Zeus himself and that of his victims, Danaë, Semele, Io, and others. By making use of the mythological figure of Zeus, Fiona Benson hits a double target: giving a new light to the myth itself, and highlighting the mythological proportion of the problems that women face today. This article thus aims at analyzing the poems from* Vertigo and Ghost *in the light of this double interpretation. Furthermore, it intends to observe how myth (mythos) as a narrative tool can be used to tell and show realities in ways the usual language (logos) cannot, and remain relevant in the context of our contemporary cultures. The same way Zeus is a master of transformation and metamorphosis, we shall see how the myths help us to change or transform ourselves in the way of social and cultural improvement.*

Keywords: poetry, myth, gender, violence

Introduction:

In 2019, British poetess Fiona Benson won the Forward Prize and was shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize for her poetry book entitled *Vertigo and Ghost.* This collection is Fiona Benson's second publication after her debut collection *Bright Travellers* and it was described by Kate Kellaway in *the Guardian* of January 29th 2019, as "one of the darkest, bravest and most unsettling collections", while John Self earlier in the same month (January 4th) talked of reading it as "an addictive, thrilling, sickening experience". What make these poems so dark, unsettling and sickening is the subject they are tackling. Constituted of two parts, the book bares the testimony of the hardships of being a woman. Most especially, the 26 poems of the first part deal in a crude way with sexual violence. They constitute more than a series of autonomous poems such as they may appear in the second part of the book, but they tell a story, the structural script of rape.

We would like to focus on this first part and analyze the use Fiona Benson make of mythological figures such as Zeus, Nemesis, Medusa and others, to unfold her depiction of sexual violence. It seems the mythological nature of the figures involved in telling the stories of sex crimes first help go beyond the singularity of the events described and put them in a more global perspective. Secondly, the use of mythological gods, who are transcendental by essence, pushes us to interpret the problems at hand in a broader and more structural level. There are societal questions that are deeper and more fundamental behind the repeated stories of sex crimes that make the headlines in the news. Thirdly and lastly, Fiona Benson invites us, by unsettling us and sickening us with these harsh realities, to see the possibilities of a change in the way our society is structured.

1. Seeing the cultural dimension of rape through the glance of Ancient Myths

The first poem of the series, [Zeus] (p.5), lays down the situation that is the core of the whole series. The narrator begins by mentioning the "days I talked with Zeus" but as she says that, she immediately adds how she "felt the blood trouble and burn / under my skin" as well as the "blisters / on the soft parts / of my body", letting us readers know of the pain and scars she is holding as she talks with that individual called Zeus. The third stanza unveils the set of these "talks" as she describes the

"bullet-proof glass / and a speaker-phone between us" reminding us of a prison's visiting room. The events that led to the set situation we are introduced into is easily induced from these elements: a girl or woman is visiting in the prison he is held in her assaulter. And the anger which fills her explodes in the last line of the poem: *You won't get away with this*.

The setting is realistic, the objects mentioned draw to a contemporary era, to a somehow familiar scene, one of those regularly seen on the news or on various police tv series. And yet the name of the male character, the crime perpetrator, the rapist contrasts with this contemporary setting. Zeus, as he is named here in the poem, is the Greek god, the god of the gods, known in mythology for his constant infidelities, so much so that Robert Graves reminds us in his *Greek Myths* that "when his mother Rhea, foreseeing what trouble his lust would cause, forbade him to marry, he angrily threatened to violate her." If we can identify the assaulter of Fiona Benson's female characters as the Greek god, it is because she describes him in another poem, [closed circuit], as follows:

> *in the electric chair*
> *Madcapped, zapped,*
> *At home in the lightning*
> *no way to kill him,*
> *monstruous, jiggered, laughing. (p.30)*

There is "no way to kill him" because he is a god, because he owns lightning (Homer calling him "he who marshals the thunderheads" and "he of the dazzling bolt"), has the capacity to transform himself as he did to rape or seduce, as the tradition was more lean to say (Frazer, in his translation of Apollodorus' *Library*, uses the expression "Zeus consorted with" on many occasions), Nemesis, Io, Danae and others:

> *REMEMBER DANAE*
> *I CAME TO HER*
> *AS A SHOWER OF GOLD* (p.14)

The question that we are then asking is why Fiona Benson chose to make her serial rapist out of a figure from Ancient Mythology. By making use of the myth of Zeus, she not only draws the mythological figure into her world but she also brings along the function of the myth or mythos. This means that, if we recall what myths were in the first place, though mythographers argue as to their origins, they were stories or narrative segments that serve when logos or mere rational discourse fails to deliver the whole extent of the reality is described. As Karen Armstrong says, myths were "metaphorical attempts to describe a reality that was too complex and elusive to express in any other ways." (Armstrong, p.11).

The representation of rape is delicate as it is culturally inframed in a discourse that is often not lenient towards the victims. And Fiona Benson is well aware of this fact as she writes in the poem [not-Zeus: Medusa 1] of the Zeus series:

> *I came to understand*
> *rape is cultural,*
> *pervasive;*
> *that in this world*
>
> *the woman is blamed. (p.26)*

The series alternates roughly between poems written from Zeus' point of view (in "bullying capital letters" as Kate Kellaway describes it) and poems giving a voice to the victims and their parents. And whenever it is the victim who speaks, a pain is present on so many different levels, from the physical pain (told of in the first poem of the series with the "blisters / on the soft parts // of my body" and the "tissue-crease / haemorrhage" to the moral pain of never being safe ("and still I wasn't safe") and of being held accounted for what happened to her. It is as Canning puts it: "Making rape something shameful so that women would not dare voice their experience led women to believe that since they were the only ones suffering, they were responsible." (Canning, p.152)

This is another thing that Fiona Benson acknowledges in another poem entitled [personal] (p.7):

> *(...)*
> *Sometimes you are*
> *outside yourself*
> *looking down*
> *thinking slut*
> *as you let him do*
> *what he wants*
> *on your own familiar sheets*
> *(...)*

The blame on the victim is so pervasive, culturally attached to the very idea of rape, that the victim herself blames her own weakness.

The use of the mythological figure of Zeus in such a context aims at elevating the crime perpetrated to these girls and women to a more universal level, making their traumatic experience an experience that becomes emblematic, a metaphorical attempt to stand against and castigate the cultural frame in which sexual assault is understood. Indeed, Zeus is the ultimate 'womanizer' in the Western tradition, his rapes are told as conquests, but Fiona Benson puts these stories under a new light and reassesses them as they are: sexual crimes.

2. Critic of the male dominion over society

There also seems to be a limit to the realistic depiction of this traumatic experience by the victim. Lisa Fitzpatrick in her article on the problems of representing sexual violence on stage tells us that there is a distrust amongst feminist practitioner of theater for realism in the representation of such sexual assault "for the way that it obscures its ideological underpinning, disempowering the audience by presenting them with a verisimilar fictional world and a plot that unfolds logically so that the outcome seems inevitable or a matter of common sense" (Fitzpatrick, p.185).

Therefore, by using the figure of Zeus and by dragging the Ancient Mythology in the whole representation of sexual violence, Fiona Benson goes a step beyond the mere verisimilar depiction of sexual assault. As we have mentioned already, Zeus is not just *a* god; he is the most powerful of the gods, called by Homer the "father of gods and men". He does not just represent the 'alpha male', described in the Zeus series as "strip[ping] off / to a minuscule / red speedo / and bulg[ing] profanely" (p.10), "an exemplary member / of the swimming squad;/ look at his muscular shoulders, / the way he forges through water" (p.6). He is also a figure of power, of authority. At the lowest level, he is the coach "with his hair in a golden tail / down at the running track /coaching girls" (p.7) yelling ominously:

> *I WILL MAKE YOU AS FAST*
> *AS SHOCK LIGHTNING*
> *MY BEAUTIES*
> *IF YOU LISTEN*
> *IF YOU GROOM WELL*

At a higher level, Zeus represents not only physical male power but also political power, as shown in the poem [Zeus: Danaë] which alludes directly to former President Donald Trump:

> *I LOVE THIS PRESIDENT.*
> *HIS SHINY GOLD TOWER*
> *(...)*
> *HERE'S HIS TOWER'S*
> *GOLDEN PHALLUS*
> *SUCH CHUTZPAH*
> *I SHOULD SMITE HIM*
> *BUT IT'S FUN*
> *TO WATCH HIS WIFE*

> *HER SMILE FAILING*
> *AS HE LOOKS AWAY*
> *IT'S A MEME*
> *ON THE INTERNET* (p.14)

Zeus the rapist god becomes the narrative instrument to point how much "*THE WORLD / IS VIOLENT AND / RIDICULOUS AND SWEET*" (p.15).

Robert Graves explains that the mythological figure of Zeus as a "womanizer" served at establishing a patriarchal system over the pre-existing system in which the woman was the goddess. It is something that is clearly demonstrated by the reversal of Nemesis' love-chase myth:

> *Nemesis was the Moon-Goddess as Nymph and, in the earliest form of the love-chase myth, she pursued the sacred king through his seasonal changes of hare, fish, bee, and mouse – or hare, fish, bird, and grain of wheat – and finally devoured him. With the victory of the patriarchal system, the chase was reversed: the goddess now fled from Zeus.(Graves, p.105)*

In Fiona Benson's retelling of the chase [transformation: Nemesis], Nemesis flees upriver ("I fled upriver / cut gills, sprang scale"), becomes a snake ("I became a snake / and hid on my belly"), then a rabbit ("I became long-eared / and burrowed into earth"), then a deer ("I was a deer / streaking for the hills"), before being pinned by the swan Zeus :

> *before I reached the stars*
> *he was swan, I was pinned –*
>
> *we made a crater where we fell*
> *screaming through the night*
> *a bloody prolapse –*
> *his shame, not mine. (p.13)*

Charlotte Bunch sees violence against women as "structural relationships of power, domination, and privilege between men and women in society" (Bunch, p.491) while Sharon Marcus sees rape as "one of culture's many modes of feminizing women" (Marcus, p.391) in a societal structure where masculine power and feminine powerlessness are anchored and institutional. The use of the mythological figure of Zeus thus helps enhance this position of power and domination held by men in our societies, which have gone from patriarchal to plain sexist.

Zeus is yet again an example of this masculine superiority as Fiona Benson paints him looking at the magazines his wife Hera buys in the poem [Zeus]:

> *I LIKE THESE MAGAZINES*
> *YOU BUY HERA*
> *YES.   I LIKE THEM*
>
> *LOOK AT THIS ONE*
> *HER BIRD-FINE COLLARBONE*
> *HER NIPPED-IN WAIST*
> *LITTLE BABY-FACE* (p.9)

At the beach he appears to be in the look-out for his next prey dressed in his minuscule red speedo:

> *Zeus leans back once more*
> *in his perilous chair*
> *and watches*
> *as the lovely nymphs*
> *walk by*
> *in neon bikinis ([personal: speedo], p.10)*

Zeus, just as the society he is part of, objectifies the female body, and his going from fantasizing to actual sexual harassment presents, as Lisa Fitzpatrick says, "an image of human agency that neutralizes male experience as universal, and reinforces patriarchal hegemony while naturalizing the objectification and commodification of the female body" (Fitzpatrick, p.185). The sexual assault becomes some sort of bodily colonialism, to use Anne Cubilie's expression, where "the world of the self of the rapist/torturer expands to fill the area left by the contraction of the victim's world into the space occupied only by the physical sensations – pain – of the body, where the self has been annihilated" (Cubilie, p.56). Zeus' sexual insatiability appears as a pathological need to expand his dominion and to occupy all space by exerting his power onto the bodies of his victims.

3. From leniency for the god to intransigeance for the criminal

As the poems follow the journey of Zeus' sexual insatiability, the lustful coach of the beginning becomes a sadistic monster:

> *WHAT I LOVE:*
>
> *THE MOMENT BEFORE DEATH*
> *THAT CANDLE-SNUFF LOOK*
> *AS THE FLAME BLACKS OUT*
> *UNDER THE HOOD*
>
> *ALL THE BRAIN CELLS FLICKING OFF*
> *(...)*
>
> *I LIKE THAT MOMENT*
> *OF EXTINGUISHMENT,*
> *ITS HUMAN GONE.* ([Zeus], p.19)
>
> *(...)*
> *I LIKE THE INVOLUNTARY NOISES*
> *HUMANS MAKE – CHILDREN –*
> *THEIR HIGH-PITCHED SQUEAL*
> *THAT GOES ON AND ON* ([Zeus addendum], p.20)

Sade said it himself: "the sexual act has a close affinity with murder" (Wilden, p.42) and Zeus is no stranger to that "in the dark holding the lamp, / keeping it steady for the rape, and the kill" ([transformation: Daphne], p.32). The evil god of Fiona Benson's poems strives for always more violence, despite the always strengthened jails he is put in. From the cell with bullet-proof glass of the beginning ([Zeus]), we see Zeus put on the electric chair ([closed circuit]), in a mental institution where he is fed pills ("Zeus watching carp in the hospital pond / on Zenuphlate, Zemperon X, Zanutax." [surveillance], p.36), and so on. And yet nothing seems to be able to restrain him, for after all he is a god:

> *Zeus who can walk between raindrops*
> *without getting wet*
> *who can pass through the vaults*
> *and walls of this prison*
> *as if they were air*
> *who could pour himself*
> *between the atoms. ([screenplay], p.32)*

Beyond the divinity of his mythological origins, as a mythos, as a narrative tool to explain an eluding reality, Zeus represents that part of patriarchal hegemony that refuses to be bound by the laws of a society ruled by reason, reserve and restraint. And to borrow Bataille's definition of evil (Bataille, p.22), Zeus is in "revolt against the real world, dominated as it is by reason." And here what is called

'reason' would be to acknowledge the re-assessment of the game of power between men and women made so loud by the #meToo movement of these past years in the search of an equilibrium between the two. But we could also see it as going further beyond.

The shift from the sexual molester of the beginning to an actual monster and murderer reflects the change society – and Fiona Benson – are asking for. If at the beginning of the series ([archives], p.6), "the judge delivers / that he is an exemplary member of the swimming squad" and leaves his sentence when addressing the victim: "as for the girl", in the last poem of the series dedicated to Ganymede [translation from the annals: Ganymede], the sole male victim of Zeus' murderous lust, "Zeus has been dismembered and set in separate cages" (p.41).

In the end, the portraiture Fiona Benson makes of the rapist in the shape of the Ancient Greek god, with all his godlike power but also with his monstrosity, is a metaphor of a system gone wrong, derailed from the reasonable path ("*I WILL RAPE A CHILD WITH AN IMPLEMENT / AND THAT IMPLEMENT WILL BE SWAN*" [surveillance], p.36) onto something that rules on fear ("I have lost us / our immunity / and I am afraid" (p.37) "and I became something beyond afraid" (p.41)) and becomes unbearable. And as such this whole series echoes like a cry for change, in the form of poetry.

Conclusion

Anthony Wilden, in his chapter on the body as the discourse of the Other, equates rape, as a crime of power, with the mark of fascism, the complete breakdown of a democratic ideal. By representing patriarchal hegemony in its most violent form, Fiona Benson reminds us of the threat its acceptance or any complacency towards it might represent for our democratic societies. She emphasizes the fact that the threat is never far away:

> *All round me*
> *in the heavy air*
> *watching, Zeus. ([surveillance], p.37)*

Even when the Evil is dismembered and set in separate cages, the narrator of this last poem ends on these unsettling words: "and still I am afraid" ([translation from the annals: Ganymede], p.42).

The only hope is to be found in women when they stop yielding to the discourse that tries to annihilate them. It is present in Fiona Benson's poems in the person of Hera, the only one capable of obstructing Zeus' evil plans:

> *IF YOU WOULD JUST MOVE*
> *THAT FIRE HYDRANT*
> *I COULD SEE*
> *THE VIRGINS BATHING.*
> *OH HERA. ([surveillance], p.30)*

Only she can "vouchsafe our children in the world": "Keep him in the prison of your vigilance. Make sure. Hold" (p.39). It is no surprise that this poem is entitled [votive], as it rings as a prayer.
Hence by making use of the mythological figure of Zeus, Fiona Benson turns her unsettling and sickening portraiture of a sexual criminal into a vitriolic denunciation of the way our society has pushed patriarchal masculine domination so far that it has become monstruous in his leniency towards this sort of crimes (exemplified with the outcome of the Brock Turner trial in 2016). By his mythical dimension, that is by his metaphorical function, Zeus becomes the representative not only of all the molesters and sexual assaulters, but of the whole system that supports and makes the becoming sexually criminal possible. This use of ancient myths, because of its narrative nature, help us understand and deconstruct rape analyzed by Lisa Fitzpatrick as a "culturally and socially constructed narrative, within which both victim and aggressor perform traditional gender roles" (Fitzpatrick, p.186). And it is when we understand this narrative that we will finally be able to change it.

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Methods in Language Studies: the use of Letters in Narratology and Literature Studies.

Monica, Mastrantonio.

Language and Related Literature, Visiting Professor, University of York, UK.

Abstract

Letters are not merely literature pieces for curiosity and daily amenities, but means of extensive use in the past when there were not many options for distance communication. Although privately written – letters are public documents that offer valuable information to understand human relations not only in the past but offer help to actual events and can bring light to future ones. Letters can be used in multiple fields of knowledge and disciplines, and offer extensive possibilities for interdisciplinarity. Bergson's concept of knowing includes intuitive knowledge and temporal multiplicities. In this context, the past is made present when common aspects and empathy are evidenced. Therefore, much of the content of these letters are similar to issues that are common in today's societies. This method of reading and using them interactively is going to be called in this research - the "organic method in Social Psychology" and is focused on presenting material in which past, present, and future are not in a linear sequence, but juxtaposed. The three authors whose letters are famous and highly spread are the letters of Lord Byron to his editor, the letters from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to her former husband, the letters from Emily Dickson to her tutor. Inspired by the impact of these letters nowadays and Bergson's concepts of time and intuition – actual dilemmas in relating to a publisher, to an ex-husband, and a tutor are perfectly portrayed by these masters of literature.

Keywords: methods, letters, literature, language, "organic"

Introduction

> *"A Letter always feels to me like immortality because it is the mind alone without corporeal friend. Indebted in our talk to attitude and accent, there seems a spectral power in thought that walks alone - I would like to thank you for your great kindness but never try to lift the words which I cannot hold,"* Emily Dickson

There are many formats of written texts – articles, essays, poems, letters, diaries, and the list could go on. These are not merely objects of literature, but interactive ways to create and boost communication among individuals (Barton; Hall, 2000).

Letters are frequently used in humanities research as an amendment, a curiosity, a document, a source of data towards a situation or fact. They may highlight autobiographical and historical data and are one of the richest data towards women's voices in the fields of literature, politics, and science (Ritcher, 2010).

Letters link the private and public dimensions together with mobility –they had to cross borders and many other hardships to arrive at their destiny (Franklin, 2020).
Letters will be used in this research in their multi-dimensional aspect. They connect past, present, and may add new views towards the future. They bring intimacy in evidence - they are moving texts. They have a historical aspect, but as living history, they can be brought into life again.

Letters do not only present personal annotations and frugality about everyday living, but they transform experiences. This discursive production is not new, it dates back from 500 BC with the first recorded handwritten letter by Persian Queen Atossa, according to the ancient historian Hellanicus. The leaves of plants allowed the possibility of having messages written on them and being delivered to their destiny.

Besides that, most of the New Testament for the ones acquainted with the Bible – are letters from St. Paul (see Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters by Penn State University Press).

By the 18th century, letter writing was predominant – in such a way, that one of the first prose narratives from Samuel Richardson's called "Pamela," and it was composed entirely of letters of a daughter to her parents (Curran, 2018; Taylor, 2018).

Most of the letter-authors knew they would be read in the future and even mention this in them like the 1841 graduate of Jefferson Medical College, John Plimpton Green, who clearly states and to those who will read this in the future (Dunster; Kipnis; Michael Angelo, 2014).

Last century, "A Soldier's Last Letter," "Please, Mr. Postman," "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter," to name a few, have maintained the old habit alive.

Correspondences among writers, lovers, public figures, and friends were the possible way for distant people to communicate (Dyer, 2020; Newton, 2020)

Nevertheless, letters are narratives, language in action, production of texts and contexts. It is important to recognize that these texts bring language in movement and give life to them (Curran, 2018). Being objects of love and hate (Gori, 2011), of possession, of travels, perils and adventures, of good and bad news, letters constitute actions when they produce effects, mobilize affections, and inspire others. On top of all that, they shaped our brainy brain (Vinci-Booher; Hu Cheng; James; 2019).

Bergson and the "intuitive" method

The method used in this research is named "organic" upon Bergson's intuitive method (Fell, 2012). This method of reading letters and compound a system that is multi-dimensional and expansive by creating multiple interactions between past, present, and future makes it possible to have a unique perspective upon past letters.

What is being looked upon is not what differs the present from the past, but what links and connects both – the empathic aspects.

Bergson's notion of intuition as a concept and method is applied as a way to creating knowledge. Intuition is a non-intellectual way of knowing reality. For Bergson (1946), intuition is the way that enables us to attain absolute reality – to understand the whole of things and ourselves.

His particular method will dissolve many aspects that could be the object of this research if the focus would be the differences between past and present – there could be a list of things in this case, like the historical aspects, the language used, the metrics, the relations among the authors of the letters and to whom they were addressed to, the power relations, and the list could go on.

Nevertheless, what unites us all and makes them actual and present and alive is empathy – the feelings that connect us to them. The western world divided intuition and intellect, and the reading and analysis of these letters reunite them. The choice of these specific letters was pure intuition and sympathy – aspects that connect us to them.

In Time and Free Will, Bergson (1910) deals with the self as a totality of two components – 1) one is the superficial self that is limited by the conceptual language, habits, and rules of the society (social side). However, the other 2) is the fundamental self that transcends the structures of social life and enables us to be aware of the reality of dynamic life (conscious life). This free side moves us away from the domination of social life towards the inner free life. A life that may lead to continuity and that puts us in dialogue with these authors from the past (Westmoreland; Karas, 2016).

All three authors made use of letter writing extensively and with multiple purposes (VanHaitsma, 2014) following intuition; this research takes an independent front-line. This way, we grasp the knowledge of the object in itself by experiencing it (Olkowski, 2020). This allows us to follow through with change, evolution, and movement of the object from the inside.

By acts of pure intuition, these letters were randomly selected as well as these authors. The author per se – not totally randomly as I have been reading their letters for quite some time now and this gave me an in-depth perspective on their connections with the actual world. The more I read them, the more sympathy I feel for every word portrayed in those letters. I could feel what they felt. Sometimes, I felt wholly with them and that we share the same humanity – the same feelings – the same issues, their voices are also mine - this specific sympathy paves the way for absolute knowledge. In short, the experience of sympathy, going into an object and grasping its uniqueness and peculiarity. Analysis operates on immobility, while intuition is located in mobility, in other words, in duration.

For Bergson (1910, 1946) instinct and sympathy are not feelings, these are ways of knowing each other. This transport of intuition-sympathy is not ordinary language or simple verbal communication, but, in the sense of the French expression "transports amoureux," something to express the inexpressible. This is what is highlighted here. I have felt many times like Lord Byron (2011, 2015) having issues with editors, I have felt like Lady Mary Montagu (1965, 1967), and there are times that I think I was just like Emily Dickson in search of approval of my tutor.

Time is consequently a 'multiplicité indistinct or qualitative', not broken by spatial intervals, but in juxtaposition. Everything is given all at once ('tout d'un coup'), but time is what prevents everything from being present. In space, there is no real succession, but simultaneity and juxtaposition Duration is the continuous progress of the past that gets into the future and which swells as it advances. Thus, our immediate conscious states are formed by spatial multiplicity.

In the "organic" approach to letter reading of letters from the past, the reader reads these letters in search of this juxtaposition and unicity, in what is unique and eternal in them.

Results – The letters from Dickson, Byron, and Lady Montagu

The letters chosen in this study are all from the 17th and 18th century period. By reading them, readers are directly put into contact with the intimacy and struggles of their authors. They show us their inspirations, doubts, fragilities. The reason letters are such grand ways to bring the past into living is that their voice is there – a voice that was addressed to someone specifically in the past, but at the same time, it is the voice of the self that prolongs living and arrives here and now. Looking in multiple ways – these voices have been pulled, they remain suspended in the air, but when we read and make sense of them and feel empathy for their authors – it is as if we have pulled a balloon and hold it close to us now. They show our humanities, not our intellect.

Letter from Emily Dickinson to Higginson

"25 April 1862
Mr Higginson,
Your kindness claimed earlier gratitude-but I was ill-and write today, from my pillow.
Thank you for the surgery- it was not so painful as I supposed. I bring you others-as you ask-though they might not differ-
While my thought is undressed-I can make the distinction, but when I put them in the Gown - they look alike, and numb.
You asked how old I was? I made no verse-but one or two-until this winter - Sir-
I had a terror-since September-I could tell to none-and so I sing, as the Boy does by the Burying Ground-because I am afraid- You inquire my Books-For Poets-I have Keats-and Mr and Mrs Browning. For Prose - Mr Ruskin - Sir Thomas Browne - and the Revelations. I went to school-but in your manner of the phrase-had no education. When a little Girl, I had a friend, who taught me Im- mortality-but venturing too near, himself-he never returned-Soon after, my Tutor, died - and for several years, my Lexicon - was my only companion-Then I found one more-but he was not contented I be his scholar-so he left the Land.
You ask of my Companions Hills- Sir-and the Sundown-and a Dog-large as myself, that my Father bought me-They are better than Beings-because they know-but do not tell-and the noise in the Pool, at Noon - excels my Piano. I have a Brother and Sister - My Mother does not care for thought-and Father, too busy with his Briefs - to notice what we do - He buys me many Books - but begs me not to rcad thcm-because he fears they joggle the Mind. They are religious-except me-and address an Eclipse, every morning-whom they call their "Father." But I fear my story fatigues you-I would like to learn-Could you tell me how to grow-or is it unconveyed- like Melody-or Witchcraft?
You speak of Mr Whitman-I never read his Book-but was told that he was disgraceful-
I read Miss Prcscott's "Circumstance," but it followed me, in the Dark-so I avoided her-
Journals came to my Father's House, this winter- and asked me for my Mind-and when I asked them "Why," they said I was penurious - and they, would use it for the World -
I could not weigh myself-Myself-
My size felt small- to me- I read your Chapters in the Atlantic- and experienced honor for you-I was sure you would not reject a confiding question-
Is this- Sir-what you asked me to tell you?

Your friend,
E - Dickinson."

Letter from Lord Byron to John Murray

"Stilton, Oct. 3, 1813.
Dear Sir,—I have just recollected an alteration you may make in the proof to be sent to Aston.—Among
the lines on Hassan's Serai, not far from the beginning, is this:
Unmeet for Solitude to share.
Now to share implies more than one, and Solitude is a single gentlewoman; it must be thus:
For many a gilded chamber's there,
Which Solitude might well forbear;
and so on.—My address is Aston Hall, Rotherham. Will you adopt this correction? and pray accept a
cheese from me for your trouble.
Ever yours,
B.
P. S.—I leave this to your discretion; if any body thinks the old line a good one or the cheese a bad one,
don't accept either. But, in that case, the word share is repeated soon after in the line:
To share the Master's "bread and salt;"
and must be altered to:
To break the Master's bread and salt.
This is not so well, though—confound it! If the old line stands, let the other run thus:
Nor there will weary traveller halt,
To bless the sacred "bread and salt."
Note.—To partake of food—to break bread and taste salt with your host—ensures the safety of the guest;
even though an enemy, his person from that moment becomes sacred."

Letter from Lady Mary Montagu to Mr. Wortley

"To Wortley [28 April 1711]
I cannot write and only say I have receiv'd yours; I have allwaies ten thousand things to say to you, and
yet I solemnly and sincerely desire you to desist writeing. I could wish it was possible to keep a
Correspondance with you without scandal or discovery, but as that cannot be, in Generosity do not make
me uneasy. There is nothing I would not do to make you easy. That Gentleman has no interest in my
heart, and yet I think he has as much as he deserves. I have the vanity to beleive a Man that could engage
me must have a greater share of understanding. Had he desir'd it, it could never have been, but tis no
Lie to assure you, he never attempted it. Mr. D. is one of those fine people [that] have the same way of
talking to all the Women they see, that every body suffers and no body esteems. I cannot deny he has
often entertaind me in that manner he does a thousand others, which I never took to be in earnest because
I knew he never meant it so. I beleive he may have been well with some women, but I hope they have been
women of a charecter very different to mine. All I know is that there was never any thing between us but
a little raillery. I suppose it will [be] no hard matter for you to beleive this. I wish I could as easily clear
my selfe from the other. My word is not sufficient for that, in your Opinion. Time and observation would
soon do it, but then you may imagine me forsaken, or that we are broke off from some other cause, but it
will be impossible to convince you of the truth.
I have seen enough of the world not to be very fond of it. I have seen so manny Acquaintance unhappy,
and heard so manny secret complaints of Husbands, I have often resolvd never to marry, and allwaies
not to Sacrifice my selfe to an Estate. Having done with your Heart, I have no pretensions to yours. As I
am, I enjoy every satisfaction but your Conversation. Marrying you is ⟨to⟩ part with every other for
that; ⟨that⟩ I once resolvd to do it shews ⟨I⟩ set no common value on it. While I thought you lovd
me, I could have liv'd with you in any place or Circumstances. I have but this satisfaction, that one time
or other, I am assur'd, you will think of me and regret you have wrong'd me. Adeiu. I desire you not to
answer.
Address To Mr Edward Wortley Mountague [in another hand] at Wortly near Sheffeild Yorkshire Free"

Discussion

These are three different letters, they were written and assembled by different authors at
different places and situations - they also speak about different aspects of their lives and circumstances.

However, when the letters are read taking into account Bergson's method of intuition, sympathy, and multiplicity of times – the interaction with them becomes different.
Therefore, three aspects are going to be highlighted in this analysis are

1) Empathy – when the reading material is read intuitively, it is possible to share the same perspective as the author; it is possible to be one with them. It is possible to experience the juxtaposition of the other within oneself. The researcher becomes one with the author of the letters and they create change upon us. It is possible to infer, for instance, that Emily Dickson was quite lonely most of her time. It is also possible to infer that Lord Byron and Mr. Murray had many changes in the written versions of the texts – he even sends him a piece of cheese and makes a parody with the sharing of the perils and glories between the editor and author. Lady Mary Montagu has resigned herself in trying to convince her ex-husband. There has been too much talk about them and what goes around. She truly says that she has been to the world and seen it a lot – and about her, other flirts and interest, but she mentions her affection for her and that one day he will be able to see her as she is.

2) Time – although written more than two centuries ago, the preserved letters can immediately create a bond with the present and the future. La duree – the duration of time is not connected to the chronological calendar, but by bridges that are created in completion to a big picture. Time is not the linear chronological time that disconnects us from them – here, in time as experience, all the time-gap, which separates these letters from the actual time, means nothing. Here, the three hundred years which separate their past and 2021 does not matter at all when the perspective is the same – humans have been to these places somehow…they have felt lonely, they have given away too much cheese, and they have been expecting for some sort of recognition. This is humanity.

3) Place – these letters have been written from different places, but they all carry inside them the art of letter writing. They have not been written by someone who was writing a letter for the first time, but by authors, whose letters gained international recognition. This recognition is also located in the places they have been, which lead to notoriety and fame, and also because they wrote letters like they knew they would be read and important in the future – mentioning this in them. A letter is not only important documentation for researchers and readers, but letters are places where multiplicities can exist, where past, present and future cam meet.

Conclusion

The use of letters in research, the incentive to make the Millenials write and read letters, the reading of past letters, and the use of letters in everyday living may bring more challenges than answers. Personal letters can serve as an important role in the construction of historical narratives, but they can also teach us not only about the past, but abut ourselves.

If both in academia and social practices, we want to promote the use of letters in narrative studies, Bergson's concept of time as la duree and the "organic" method of reading letters as a place can help us to create larger connections with them.

Or, paraphrasing Curran (2018) "When they keep letters, they continue their work" – when we read them, we bring their lives back.

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Narrative Techniques and Visionary Insight in the Work of Robert Laius Stevenson

Dr. Saed Shahwan, Associate Professor,

Department of English, Hail University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

One of the characteristics of language and literature is the use of narration. Narrative methods provide the reader a better understanding of the issue and allow them to utilise their imagination to picture it. Literary devices are another term for narrative literary methods. Because literary methods are best understood in the context of one of these components, it's essential to realise that literary elements in narratives include things like the location, storyline, subject, style or structure, characters, and viewpoint, or voice of the tale. Robert Louis Stevenson was a novelist, poet, essayist, and travel writer who lived in Scotland. He has contributed many masterpieces to the realm of children's literature via his works. Treasure Island, Kidnapped, and The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are among his best-known works. Stevenson's writings are distinguished by his use of storytelling methods and visionary insights to convey his views. Robert Louis Stevenson is a master at utilising foreshadowing to heighten the novel's tension. Several hints are given to let the reader know that treachery awaits the adventurers. In line with the theme of cultural unification through language development, Stevenson's narrative and visionary insight provides a good approach of cultural unification. Stevenson's narrative technique and visionary approach expresses cultural aspects in a manner that appeals to a diverse audience. Stevenson's technique of narration applies to the style and plot of the literary work.

*Keywords***:** *narrative, technique, literary, Robert Louis Stevenson*

Introduction

The paper is going to analyse the idea of cultural unification through language development with the help of Stevenson's narrative and visionary insight that provides a good approach of cultural unification. The object of the paper is to analyse, discuss and conclude on the Stevenson's narrative technique and visionary approach which expresses cultural aspects in a manner that appeals to a diverse audience. Surprisingly, Stevenson's narrating method relates to the literary work's style and storyline. Metaphors, similes, personification, imagery, exaggeration, and alliteration are all common methods used in style, or the language used to convey a narrative. Stevenson's work exemplifies how to effectively use these narrative components into storey telling. Backstory, flashback, flash-forward, and foreshadowing are all common narrative devices. The first person, second person, third person, and third-person omniscient are all methods that are important to narrative viewpoint, or who is narrating the tale. As a result, Stevenson's storytelling methods serve as a useful model for using literary and linguistic strategies to achieve cultural unity. The paper is also going to help analyse Stevenson's theories on the role of setting and principles of certain forms of stories that are narrative and can be used to train and teach literary works.

Literature Review

Everyone's life is filled with tales in some way or another. Others are continuously telling each other tales, most of which are about events that have happened to us or people we know. These aren't typically made-up tales, but they are tales nevertheless. And without them, people wouldn't be able to make sense of the world (Ribó, 2019).

There are many methods to categorise literary tales into different genres, such as whether the stories are true to life, if the stories are presented in poetic form, the length of the storey, or what the story's subject matter is. (Ribó, 2019).

Stevenson's effect on narrative literary style is difficult to evaluate, since he wrote prolifically in many genres, from novels, short stories, travel essays, ethical treatises, dramas, poems, songs, prayers, critical essays, sermons, and even political tracts. (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947).

In other words, Stevenson has blended poetry, charm, and a narrative to depict "The Amazing Marriage" (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947). In a concise paragraph, Stevenson writes that "These strange wanderings in the South Seas; these escapes from death; these eccentricities of behaviour and appearance; the poverty, the hardship, and the incredible tenacity; all of these were effective in captivating the public imagination, through their diverse and cumulative effects. His death was intimately tied to his life. It seemed only appropriate that he would die in the middle of great victory from an impossible disease (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947).

Three different authors throughout his career (George Meredith, Henry James, and Maurice Hewlett) utilised his career as a reference for their works, demonstrating his broad popularity.

His many editions, including the "Edinburgh," "Biographical," "Vailima," and "Thistle," demonstrate his achievement (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947).

Some critics think that a portion of Stevenson's popularity was due to the "booming" of his critic pals, who were able to generate a sufficient amount of "Stevensonia" to cause a response against the author; a reaction that has lasted to the present.

Henley responded in part to an article written by Henley on the publication of the Balfour Biography, which included a picture of Stevenson with questions about his Bohemian upbringing left out (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947). This article further highlights his narcissism and expresses scepticism about his true motives while writing religious works (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947).

Stevenson's study of storytelling technique in the book and its use as a source of character and action developed from earlier roots, such as the "once upon a time" of folk tales (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947).

Later in the era, narrative technique was recognised and used in works such as Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso" and Spenser's "Faerie Queen," and in prose, Defoe was the first English author to create a utilitarian connection between the location and the action (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947).

While environment was necessary for the action of Robinson Cursoe, it was unrelated to the character himself. The island had a role in Crusoe's deeds, but not in Crusoe himself; Stevenson recognised Hugo's victory over Defoe in this regard (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947).

Fielding and his contemporaries were the first English writers to utilise location as a tool for character development, although he and the majority of eighteenth-century authors employed environment for the sake of vividness, to provide credibility to action and people (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947).

The term "narrative" is renowned for being difficult to define precisely. But, even before individuals try to come up with a workable definition, we already know it relates to narrative. The word narro is derived from the Latin word narro, which meaning "to tell." To narrate in English is to tell a tale. Many anthropologists believe that this capacity is shared by all humans. People all across the world and throughout history tell each other tales, or narratives as they are officially known (Ribó, 2019).

Methods and Materials

Since its inception, scientific research has sought empirical evidence and logical reasons to demonstrate that it is an authentic approach to the outcomes or findings generated after completing the research study (HK, 2021).

Research tactics differ depending on the research subject; there are numerous variations depending on the nature of the issue. For example, if a researcher is doing research on a scientific project and the subject requires practical experimentation, the researcher must perform qualitative research. In this case, the research strategy must be modified, and the researcher must follow the qualitative research study method. Many things evolve in this manner as nature and the necessity for the subject alter (HK, 2021).

The qualitative approach will be the emphasis of this research. Focus groups, interviews, ethnographic research, case studies, record keeping, and process observation are all part of the qualitative method research. However, in order to comprehend the topic of 'Native Techniques and Visionary Insight in the Work of Robert Laius Stevenson,' this study will use the methodology of case study research (HK, 2021).

A case study is a research method for gaining a comprehensive, multi-faceted knowledge of a difficult problem in its real-world setting. It is a well-established research strategy that is widely utilised across many fields, especially in the social sciences (HK, 2021).

Population

Population is anything that aids the researcher in generalising his or her whole scientific process. To address worldly concerns, problems, and issues, research investigations are performed. This is only feasible if the study is carried out with consideration for the nature of the subject and the people (LLL, 2021).

The world's population is varied in nature, and their issues are diverse as well. Things change depending on the people, and difficulties and problems differ depending on the country. For example, if a researcher wishes to generalise a research study, he must check inside that nation to see if that particular issue exists there or not. Things change through time, and some problems are addressed quickly while others take longer.

The researcher will to discover the facts regarding this issue, thus this study is being performed on language, linguistics, and literature at a conference event in Singapore (LLL, 2021). The individuals who are enrolled in the International Conference on Language, Literature, and Linguistics are the target group of this research project (LLL, 2021).

Sampling

The sampling of the research will be done through existing case studies found in journal articles and books. The relevant data presented in the journal article and books. The sampling will be done through systematic sampling methods in which individuals are randomly chosen from the sample frame at regular intervals. The intervals are selected to guarantee that a sufficient sample size is obtained (Allen, 2017).

Research Instrument

A research instrument is a tool that is used to collect data in order to evaluate, quantify, and develop results. After doing a comprehensive review of the literature and adapting it, the researcher may create a research instrument (RIE, 2021).

Closed-ended and open-ended surveys, interview questionnaires, check-lists, and observation are only a few examples of research tools (RIE, 2021). Typically, instruments are chosen with the nature of the research method in mind, such as in a completely qualitative research study where the research need is to perform a thorough observation. There will be many instruments created. Instruments, too, are dependent on the type of the research endeavour (RIE, 2021).

The researcher has used observation to integrate information for the responder to add some specifics to the topic matter in this research study. A researcher has modified a naturalistic observation based on spontaneous behaviour of participants in natural settings according to the nature of the investigation. This will meet the requirement for qualitative research methods to get precise and comprehensive information about the study from respondents (RIE, 2021).

Data Collection

The data collecting technique for this study will be observation since it is based on a qualitative research approach. Because this is a qualitative study, data will be gathered from reputable journal papers and books. After that, the information will be analysed using a naturalist observation method.

Data Analysis

The fundamental component of every research project is data analysis (Payne, 2020). Alternatively, we might argue that it is the most important aspect of every research project (Allen, 2017). The whole research study is dependent on it, as are the findings, and many aspects of the research are dependent on this portion of the research (Caulfield, 2019).

Since the subject of the study is 'Native Techniques and Visionary Insight in Robert Laius Stevenson's Work,' the data obtained via the naturalistic observation method will be analysed using narrative analysis in this study (RIE, 2021). Narrative analysis is a kind of analytic framework in which researchers analyse tales given in the context of study or shared in daily life (Payne, 2020). By concentrating on various aspects, scholars who perform this kind of study come up with a variety of interpretations and findings that are all equally significant and relevant (Allen, 2017).

The research will also use thematic analysis combined with narrative analysis technique to find the results. In the thematic analysis model the researcher is going to use the generating themes, defining names and themes model to analyse the data (Caulfield,2019).

Results and Discussion

Because this study is based on a mixed method qualitative research technique, a theme has been developed based on the research goals in order to get accurate findings and meet the research study's criteria.

Since the researcher has used naturalistic observation, the study of individuals' spontaneous behaviour in natural settings. The researcher just takes notes on what they observe in whichever format they see it in.

Naturalistic Observation: a participant in my group was asked a question that, how the native techniques and visionary insight work of Robert Stevenson can be utilised to have a better understand of an issue? (RIE, 2021)The participant replied by saying Stevenson's influence on the use of narrative technique was difficult to assess, not only because of his numerous literary accomplishments in genres as diverse as the novel, short storey, travel essay, ethical treatise, drama, juvenile poem, ballad, prayer, critical essay, sermon, and even political tract, but also because of his excellent way of explaining issues within these genres through the use of a narrator (RIE, 2021).

Data: The naturalistic observation goes on to identify the data from a journal of Loyola University Chicago which states the success of Stevenson that due the booming of his narrative technique, 'Stevensonia' is responsible for leading a greater understanding of the problem and the ability to visualise it using their imagination Narrative literary techniques are also known as literary devices (RIE, 2021).

Analysis: Since the analysis will be done using mix method, which is narrative analysis and thematic analysis, the results will be displayed as follows.

Narrative Analysis:

Table 1 Narrative Analysis

Data Analysis Focus	Type of Analysis	Analytic Process
Stevenson's success was narrative technique to understand the literary works	Biographical Narrative-Interpretative Method (BNIM)	When "Treasure Island" was released in 1883, the audience was desperate for the oxygen that only a tale with outside movement and action could provide; invertebrate intricacies, strained philosophies, and crude naturalistic studies had already been

		exhausted. "Treasure Island" arrived at the right time; a year earlier, "The New Arabian Nights" had provided the same kind of nonsense but had gone mostly unnoticed. Readers were overjoyed to go from individuals who had lived in the past to people who had lived in the past.

Source: (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947)

The analytic process of narrative analysis identifies that the Authour Robert Stevenson is trying to highlight the audience that was deeply interested in a story like Treasure Island which could provide them with philosophies, naturalistic studies and invertebrate intricacies. Stevenson also came up with another novel which went under the name of 'Arabian Nights'. Though it did not have naturalistic settings but the readers were overjoyed as the Authour use narrative technique to shed light upon how people use to live in past life (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947).

Thematic Analysis:

The thematic analysis of the results section will help identify themes and that data that is significant to understand how Stevenson uses narrative techniques to help understand the literary techniques as it is critical to recognise that literary aspects in narratives include things like the setting, plot, topic, style or structure, characters, and perspective, or voice of the storey, since they're best understood in the context of one of these components (RIE, 2021).

S. No.	Core Theme	Sub-Themes
1	Importance of Narrative techniques of understand literature like stories, poetry, novel	a. To help in understanding literature b. To get meanings

Figure 1 Thematic Analysis

Source: (O'Toole, Margaret Mary, 1947)

Core Theme No.1: Importance of Narrative techniques of understand literature like stories, poetry, novel

The data of narrative method for a better comprehension of a literary work is required for a visionary approach, according to the data collected from the journal article.

> *'When "Treasure Island" was released in 1883, the audience was desperate for the oxygen that only a tale with outside movement and action could provide; invertebrate intricacies, strained philosophies, and crude naturalistic studies had already been exhausted'.*

The author Stevenson intends to say that the audience that was captivated by a tale like Treasure Island, which could offer them with ideologies, naturalistic research, and invertebrate complexities Stevenson also wrote a book called 'Arabian Nights.' Despite the lack of realistic surroundings, readers were ecstatic because the author used literary style to give insight on how people used to live in the past.

Sub-Theme No.1: To help in understanding literature

Stevenson's influence on the use of narrative technique is difficult to quantify, not only because of his numerous literary accomplishments in every genres but also because of his exceptional ability to explain complex issues within these genres through the utmost simplicity.

Sub-Theme No.2: To Get Meanings

Narrative techniques help the reader grasp the problem and enable them to visualise it using their imagination. Literary devices are another name for literary techniques used in narrative literature. Because literary techniques are best understood in relation to one of these components, it is critical to understand that literary aspects in narratives include the setting, plot, topic, style or structure, characters, and perspective, or voice, of the storey.

Discussion

The focus of Stevenson narrative technique on the novel's narrative methods, as well as its usage as a source of character and action, had evolved from more loosely localised origins in the history of fiction, such as the "once upon a time" of early folk stories. Later on, the visual significance of the location was recognised and used into such poetry works as Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso" and Spenser's "Faerie Queena," as well as Sir Philip Sidney's prose masterpiece, the Arcadia.

Narrative techniques help the reader grasp the problem and enable them to visualise it using their imagination. Literary devices are another name for literary techniques used in narrative literature. Because literary techniques are best understood in relation to one of these components, it is critical to understand that literary aspects in tales function similarly to genre (Ribó, 2019).

Robert Louis Stevenson was a Scottish author, poet, essayist, and travel writer. Through his writings, he has contributed many masterpieces to the field of children's literature. Among his best-known novels are Treasure Island, Kidnapped, and The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Stevenson's works are characterised by his use of narrative techniques and visionary insights to communicate his ideas.

Robert Louis Stevenson is a master at using foreshadowing to ratchet up the suspense in his novels. Numerous clues are dropped to warn the reader that the heroes will face treachery. In keeping with the idea of cultural unity from language development, Stevenson's storey and visionary insight provide an effective strategy for cultural unification. Stevenson's storytelling style and imaginative approach effectively convey cultural nuances to a broad audience. Stevenson's narrating method is applicable to the literary work's style and storyline (Ribó, 2019).

Conclusions

Robert Louis Stevenson's book The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, the moral dualism that drives the storey and serves as the narrative's central subject is undermined by the realisation that good and evil cannot be readily differentiated, much less decanted as distinct essences. Indeed, as contemporary tales often suggest, morality is more a question of perspective and interpretation than of a set of fundamental principles or laws that individuals should follow.

So far, the study has focused on the story's major components, or "existents of the story world," as they've been dubbed: events, settings, and characters. However, the story world only exists when someone, known as a narrator, narrates a storey to someone else, known as narrate. Robert Lauis Stevenson used to do something similar. Narration is a kind of communication that takes place outside of the story world or at the story's level. In our semiotic model of storey, narrative is a component of discourse, which is the second level.

In some ways, Stevenson's relationship to narrative technique uses of setting, both in theory and practise of seeing context as a source of character and action, as well as a motivating force, may be considered one of the forerunners of more contemporary applications of this aspect of fiction. It's impossible to picture Stevenson's varied characters or the thrilling action of his stories without their unique settings, whether in terms of time or location.

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A Comparative Study of Carver's *"Popular Mechanics"* and Hughes' *"Early Autumn"* by Minimalistic Narratives

Xia Hou[1], Noritah Omar[2], Hardev Kaur[3], Ida Baizura[4] Yingying Fan[5]

[1]Universiti Putra Malaysia,43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia;
[1]Associate Professor, College of Foreign Languages, Zhoukou Normal University, 466001 Henan Province, China
[2, 3, 4 & 5]Universiti Putra Malaysia,43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract:

American writer Carver's short story "Popular Mechanics" is considered to be one of the representative works of the American minimalist literary school in the 1980s. 30 years before its publication, the American Harlem Renaissance represented Hughes "Early Autumn" has the characteristics of minimalism. This paper utilizes Charles May's Minimalism theory and Micheal J. Toolan's narrative concepts as the research method to compare the selected texts. The two works are similar in terms of ambiguity in title selection, de-plot processing and scene narrative function and reader-centered external focalization. However, "Popular Mechanics" seems to be more concise in the aspects of plot, theme with intertextuality and parody to create richer meanings.

Keywords: *"Popular Mechanics", "Early Autumn", Minimalism, Intertextuality, Parody*

Minimalism, as a literary genre, appeared in the United States in the 1980s. Novelists represented by Carver advocated the aesthetic concept of "less is more" (Yu, 89), and the original linear development of events, by cutting off the causes and consequences, narrating from the middle, and finally forming an open ending. It simplifies the tedious and detailed plots into the words and behaviors in daily life. The author adopts an external perspective to allow readers to guess the psychological factors that cause these words, behaviors and the consequences. Charles May believes that minimalist novels have the following characteristics, "a rhetorical technique that obtains meaning through omission; a language style that creates metaphors through metonymy; and a way to express psychological reality by describing external reality" (May, 80). However, the minimalist writing style does not originate at this time.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Ezra Pound's Imagist poetry advocated condensing poems into fresh and natural images, which can be regarded as a typical example of minimalist narrative language. His works does not contain any subjective evaluation of the author, allowing readers to understand, interpret or perceive themselves. We can trace back to the Chinese culture Taoist thought with tradition of advocating simplicity represented by classical poetry which influenced Pound and other Imagist poets. Chinese ancient philosopher Lao Tzu's classic expositions of "Great music has the faintest notes; great form is beyond shape" and "action through inaction" provide an aesthetic basis for understanding minimalism (Yu, 89). After that, Hemingway's iceberg theory focused on describing the behavior of characters and using concise sentences to describe events. One-eighth above the iceberg is the surface meaning of the narrative level, and seven-eighths hidden under the water are the deep level of interpretations which requires readers to figure out and dig out by themselves. In the 1950s, the American Harlem Renaissance representative writer Langston Hughes' short stories also have similar styles, as the personal characteristics of minimalism and the representative works of the minimalist genre. Caver's "Popular Mechanics" and Hughts' "Early Autumn" contain some similarities and differences in terms of title, plot, scene, narrative, theme, intertextuality and parody.

Title with Multiple Interpretations of Ambiguity

The titles of minimalist novels are usually ambiguous (the indicated things are uncertain or refer

to multiple things), which requires readers to use their imagination to interpret. "Popular Mechanics" is one of Carver's collection of short stories *What do we talk about when we talk about love*. It introduces a couple who struggles and tears over their baby when they break up. There is almost no connection between the title and the content of the article. It seems to be a popular science article which introduces the forces and reaction forces in physics, but the meaning is deeply explored. The grabbing of the baby has the physical force of pulling by the woman and man's opposing forces. There is tension in the text, for example, the interaction between text and readers involved mechanics. Carver's minimalist thinking also has a discussion of power. A text needs to have tension, a feeling that something is about to happen, and something is in constant motion, otherwise there will be no stories happening at all under normal circumstances. The method of creating tension in the novel is to connect specific words together to form a visible storyline, but at the same time benefit from the things that have been omitted and hinted. The design is stable, but sometimes broken, under the turbulent surface. At the text level of this novel, there are two tensions: language tension and action tension.

When the heroine of the novel sees her husband leaving home, she continues to vent her emotions with words. "I am glad you are leaving", while the man keeps packing and does not respond. "Can't you just look at me?" Facing the woman's complaints, the man continues to be indifferent. His language became tight and loose, indicating that the relationship between the two has come to an end and cannot communicate. The man's words are almost always repeated, "I want the baby". In the use of language tension, there is also action tension. The man and woman have three rounds of tearing. The woman is holding the baby, standing in the corner by the fire, and then the man comes up and holds the baby tightly. The man forces the woman to the corner, with one hand trying to break her fingers, the other hand with all his strength to hold the baby's wrist close to the shoulder. After that, the woman holds the baby's other arm tightly. Finally, the two persons try their best to tear the baby, like a tug-of-war. When reading the text, the tension created by language and action in this article urges readers to have an ominous premonition in reading, worrying about the fate of this baby. The last sentence of the novel implies the ending, "In this manner, the issue was decided". We don't know whether the baby is killed or not. But the word "decide" contains the root cid, which means to cut and kill. This conflict between man and woman, the noisy fight of divorce, may evolve into the killing of the baby, and the child becomes the ultimate victim. The narrative of the novel is concise, but its tension makes readers deeply disturbed, anxious and suspenseful. The title "Popular Mechanics" also reflects the author's minimalist view of tension.

"Early Autumn" is one of Langston Hughes' short stories collection *Ordinary Stories and Others*. The protagonists, Bill and Mary, fell in love when they were young, but due to some trivial matters, they were separated for many years. Years later, they meet in Chicago Square one afternoon, Mary has illusions, and Bill had become a stranger and had no feelings for Mary. On the surface, early autumn is only the time for the two to meet again, at the same time, autumn is the harvest season, and it is also the season when the autumn wind is bleak, and everything is about to wither. This contradiction and ambiguity is also reflected in Mary's obsession toward Bill, and there are some illusions in her heart. Unconsciously, Mary raises her cheek, as if she wants a kiss. It shows that Mary still maintains some of the habits when the two fell in love. Later Mary says that she has been thinking about Bill all these years, and wants to know what he was doing and how he was going. She asks if Bill was married. Bill says, sure, two kids. Mary says Oh and falls into a long silence. Mary's long years expectations and hopes are finally shattered, just to confirm the characteristics of the early autumn season, which is the season of harvest (Mary's encounter with Bill) and the season of decline (diminish of illumination). The moment Mary's bus closes the door, all of her hopes disappear forever. Mary looks at the lights on the streets with tears swimming in her eyes. There is a sea of people between Bill and Mary. At the end of the selected text, Mary is still regretting not telling Bill her youngest son is also called Bill. Mary's love towards Bill is concentrated in this image.

Content with De-plot Processing

"Popular Mechanics" and "Early Autumn" both are only about 500 words, but the story factors are relatively complete. As shown in the table:

Story Factors	Popular Mechanics	Early Autumn
Characters	him, she, baby	Bill, Mary
Time	morning	(early autumn) yesterday dusk
Location	Home (bedroom, kitchen)	Washington Square
Background	\	Break up in love and get married respectively
Incident	snatching the baby	reunion again
Settings	snow melts into sewage, darkness,	cold, fallen leaves, pedestrians

There are no ups and downs in the story, on the contrary there are only dialogues and some scenery descriptions. The stories of the two selected texts show slices of daily life. Several strokes of "Early Autumn" bring the background of the story. When they fell in love, Bill was still young. They were walking, chatting, and spending time together. Then something that seemed not very important separated them, making the two strangers. She, impulsively, married a man she thought she loved, and Bill was lamenting the woman. Hughes fixed the story at the moment when the two met briefly at Chicago Square. From the beginning of the greeting to the end of the goodbye, it was just a few lines of dialogue (Zhang, 172). Similarly, "Popular Mechanics" even omits the background. It starts directly from the breakup of their relationship, when the man packs up his luggage and prepares to leave home, and ends with the fight for the baby. There are also a lot of quarreling words and snatching actions. The seemingly simple dialogues and behaviors in the two works contain a lot of information, which requires readers to use their imagination to fill in gaps. For example, in "Early Autumn", Mary met Bill for the first time in a crowded square, and she directly called out his name to reflect her unforgettable memory, and that Bill's looks remain basically unchanged due to his happiness in life and marriage over the years. However, Bill does not recognize her, but later says, "Mary, where did you come from?" It shows that he doesn't expect to see her again. The turn of the two of them was basically raised by Mary, only when Mary heard that Bill had been married and fell into a long silence. In order to break this embarrassment, Bill asked for the first time, what about your husband? Mary answered about her children and occupation to avoid this topic and reflect the misfortune of Mary's marriage. Later, Mary introduces her address, hoping that Bill could come to see them, and Bill replied, of course, she must visit his family to show his pride in his marriage.

The personal actions of the two also reflect some implications. Mary habitually raises her cheek, hoping to get a kiss from Bill, but Bill only stretches out his hand as a symbolic polite greeting. This explains Mary's dedication to love, but Bill has forgotten the past, just like a stranger. In "Popular Mechanics", the woman keeps complaining that man is leaving at the beginning of the story, which reflects that the woman duplicity attracts the attention of the other party. The man remains silent and ignorant. Even afterwards the two parties were only arguing. The hero repeatedly said, I want this kid. One side said you would hurt this child, the other said no, I did not hurt him. Two people scold each other (Get out of here! Get away! Let go of him.). The contradiction at this time has reached the point where it cannot be reconciled. In such words, we have a profound experience of the dilemma of marriage and the unreconcilable daily life of the male and female in modern society. In the endless quarrels and snatching actions, we can't help but worry about the fate of their baby. The action between the two persons is just a rough tug, ignoring the baby's life at all, so that the baby may be torn in halves. The darkness and selfishness of human nature, the hysterics that cannot control emotions, and the evil performance are vividly presented before the readers. The omitted background and open ending of "Popular Mechanics" give readers a broader imagination. The story elements such as background, events, and ending of "Early Autumn" are more complete, leaving readers with deep regrets in the end.

The scenery descriptions in the two novels also foreshadow rich meanings. Elliott believes that the author presents carefully selected revealing surface details. This kind of non-emotional detailed description plays a symbolic role (Zhu, 56). As in the opening chapter of "Popular Mechanics", the

weather changed in the morning, the snow melted into sewage, and water flowed down from the small shoulder-high windows. The outside of the car wading by is black, and the inside of the house is also black (Carver, 103). The snow here symbolizes the pure beginning of the beautiful love between the two, but after the weather changed, the snow melted into sewage, indicating that due to some reasons, the relationship between the two people became tense and worsened and even split. Sewage flows down from the shoulder-height windows. Shoulder is exactly where the baby is torn into halves. Sewage flows on the shoulder-high windows, symbolizing that two evil forces tore the baby apart. In the West, darkness symbolizes crime and ignorance. The darkness inside the house and outside the house indicates the gradual change from light to darkness, and evil extends and finally comes, which indicates that a crime and tragedy will be inevitable. Especially in the latter part of the article, the author further said that through the window, there is no light, and the room is almost dark (near-dark). The evil comes suddenly, and it is extremely terrifying, and it is bound to be unavoidable. "Early Autumn" has three scenery descriptions, when Mary knows Bill was married, the writer inserts the first description of the environment. Many people passed by between them, people they didn't know. This is the evening in the afternoon, close to dusk, and the weather is very cold. In the second scene, after Bill promises to go and see Mary, the author describes that the leaves were falling slowly, there was no wind, and Mary felt sick at dusk.

The last paragraph of the article describes that people come and go, passing streets, and there is space and people. These scenery descriptions indicate that Mary and Bill will never go back to the past. The dusk, fallen leaves, pedestrians, and cold here all herald the disillusionment of hope, as well as the lingering disappointment and sadness of Mary. "Popular Mechanics" uses settings to predict the ending, while tone of "Early Autumn" is sentimental in the scenery descriptions with a wealth of meaning which needs to be further explored by readers.

Narration with Reader-centered External Focalization

In addition, in terms of narrative, both articles abandon the author-centered internal perspective narrative method, and adopt the reader-centered external perspective to make it a video recorder, allowing readers to directly obtain the complicit from the selected words and actions (Yu, 89). All the details in the author's words have become codes, waiting for readers to decode and explore the profound meanings contained therein. As discussed earlier, readers can interpret a large number of elocutionary meanings in terms of speech, behavior, and scenes, and associate them with content outside the texts, which is helpful for a deep understanding of it. The two short stories do not have the author's subjective evaluation and the insertion of emotional inclinations, and hardly involve the psychological state of the characters, but only objective statements and descriptions of events. Therefore, the evaluation of the event can only rely on the interpretation and interpretation of the reader. The "invisibility" of the writer brings uncertainty of meaning, which makes people feel incomprehensible (Yu, 90). But this does not mean that the author has no position or preferences. For example, in "Early Autumn", most of the writing is used in Mary's words and actions, which indirectly reveals the author's affirmation of this character. "Popular Mechanics" cannot distinguish between the power of the male and female, but the dirty water and dark used by the author in the description of the scene reflect that the author's derogation of a crime cannot be avoided. In the end, the baby may be torn and killed. In a brief narrative, the author strongly denounces this cruel behavior is really unbearable, and hopes that the tragedy will not repeat itself.

Techniques Whether to Adopt Intertextuality and Parody

In terms of intertextuality, "Popular Mechanics" borrows from the Biblical allusion: "Kings", Chapter 3, verses 16 to 28, are about the plot of Solomon's trial. In the case of Solomon's trial, two women claimed to be the mother of a baby. Solomon said, took the sword and cut the child in halves, half to each person. At this time, one of the women begged Solomon not to kill the baby, admitting that the child was not hers. Solomon immediately decided that she was the mother of the baby. The ending of this story is that kindness will be rewarded, and Solomon's wise judgment. However, "Popular Mechanics" depicts the tearing actions of the man and woman, which is a tragedy. Carver's borrowing

and transformation of biblical stories expanded the meaning of traditional texts and gave new referential meanings. These are the characteristics that "Early Autumn" does not have.

Theme with Modern Fables and Language Events

The characters in "Popular Mechanics" have no specific characteristics, and do not refer to a specific couple. The characters inside do not have any names, only he, she, and baby are used instead. It can be seen that the characters in the text refer to every man, which is universal. All quarrels and fights which males and females treat marriages vulgarly and contemptuously, only children have to pay the price. It also reflects that modern people often use crude and simple ways to deal with some problems. It shows typical postmodern themes such as the predicament that contemporary people cannot get rid of, and the difficulty of effective communication between people (Yu, 92). Carver himself once said that I write stories about people who are not followed...I don't see myself as their spokesperson, I am a witness to their kind of life (Grimal, 72). Readers can feel the loneliness and alienation theme of the distorted human nature in American modern and contemporary society by reading such text about fragments of life. But "Early Autumn" is just an individual language event, a reunion of two concrete characters, without universality.

Conclusion

The selected texts have a similar minimalist writing style, which contains profound meanings under the plain and straightforward text. "Simplicity" is a way to richness and profoundness. In addition to the similar ambiguity of the title, the deletion of the plot, the implied meaning of the scene, and the narrative from the external perspective, "Popular Mechanics" is more profound in the theme. It is a modern allegory story that reveals the common existence of people between husbands and wives in American society. The indifference between the two, and the damage caused by the divorce to the child will be irreparable. "Early Autumn" is the reunion of two specific characters, a special language event. In terms of intertextuality and parody, "Popular Mechanics" borrowed and transformed the text of the Bible, giving new meanings. From these points, "Popular Mechanics" compared to "Early Autumn", the "minimalist" presentation of reality shattered the integrity of the novel composition, cut off the cause and effect of things, and caused vacancies and breaks, so its objective effect close to postmodern novels. Its plot is more concise, the meaning is richer, the technique is more skilled, and the theme is more general and profound. It is worthy of being one of the most representative works of minimalism.

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