

**Papers of 9th International Conference on
Language, Literature & Linguistics 2022**

25 - 26 July 2022

National University of Singapore Society

Singapore

PAPER PROCEEDINGS

**Unique Conferences Canada Publication
Toronto, Canada**



Published by Unique Conferences Canada

Unique Conferences Canada
Suite 2201, 250 Young Street,
ON M5B 2L7
Canada
info@uniqueca.com
www.uniqueca.com

ISBN 978-1-988652-54-2



Published Online in Canada
October 2022

@UCC October 2022
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9th International Conference on Language, Literature and Linguistics 2022

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Unique Conferences Canada

9th International Conference on Language, Literature & Linguistics 2022

25 & 26 July 2022

National University of Singapore Society (NUSS)

Proceedings Note

The 9th International Conference on Language, Literature & Linguistics 2022 & and the 4th Asia-Pacific Conference on Advances in Education, Teaching & Technology 2022 were conducted on the 25 & 26 July 2022 under the auspices of the National University of Singapore Society (NUSS), Singapore. The Conference had as many as eight sessions and was attended by about 50 participants drawn from 17 countries.

The Welcome Speech and the Introduction were rendered by Dr. Prabhath Patabendi, Convener of the Conference. In his address, Dr. Patabendi expressed the hope that the various problems connected with language teaching and learning would be addressed at the Conference.

There were two keynote speakers at the Inaugural session. The first speaker was Dr. S. Ramaratnam, Vice Chancellor of Jagadguru Kripalu University, Odisha, India. With a Power Point presentation, he explained the "Globe Trotting Culture that carries with it Language and Art." In his speech, Dr. Ramaratnam highlighted the role of the Mother Goddesses as a cultural flare that unified the world irrespective of the religion, caste, creed and nationality. His speech was received with thunderous applause. The second speaker was Dr Kenneth Tan, Vice President & Head, Certis Corporate University & Adjunct Faculty, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He spoke on "The Impact of Organizational Learning and Development for Employee Performance and Development: The Certis Group Case Study." His speech was received very well by the audience

The topic of the first session of the conference was 'Education, Teaching and Learning.' The session was chaired by Dr. Kenneth Tan. The first paper was presented by Alison Rodrigues from U K. He spoke on '*The Impact of Covid-19: Reflections and Aspects of the School Experience.*' The second participant of the session was Dr. Rasmitadila of Indonesia who emphasized the need for University-School collaboration, in her paper on '*Adjustment of Inclusive Education Courses with Inclusive Elementary Schools.*' This was followed by a paper on '*Teachers' Perceptions of Environmentally Based Sundanese Language Learning During the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Case Study in Indonesia,*' presented by Megan Asri Humaira from the Philippines. In the next presentation, three young students from Indonesia, Jimmy Ellya Kurniawan, Kuncoro Dewi Rahmawati and Evan Tanuwijaya opined that the Teachers' innovative methods of teaching and behaviours will fulfil the expectations of the stakeholders of Education. Ima Masafatus Sholihah of Indonesia spoke next on '*Visual Type Related to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) on Biology Textbooks Analysis of Vocational High Schools in Indonesia.*' The last paper of the session was presented by Anna Riana Suryanti Tambunan from Indonesia again, who emphasized the need for '*Using Social*

Network Sites in English Language Learning.' She echoed the voices from Indonesian Higher Education Students.

The second and the third sessions took place after lunch, and it was presided over by Dr. S. Ramaratnam. The theme of the session was 'Language and Culture.' The first presenter was Eric Joseph Brisson from the USA who was of the opinion that the global pop music cannon can be used as a Language Learning Tool. His paper entitled '*Polyglot Playlists*' created a lot of interest among the participants. The next speaker was Masaki Makino from Japan who spoke on '*Metacognitive Approach in a Developmental English Class.*' This was followed by a presentation from Dr. Kent A. Lee of Korea who expressed his views on '*Language Ability and Motivation Issues in English Medium Instruction Courses in Korea.*' The next paper dealt with the problems of Academic writing. It was presented by Justy P. Tuquib of the Philippines who spoke on '*The Unfiltered Voices in Students' Academic Writing.*' The next paper was dedicated to the problem of learning Japanese as presented by Siyan Dang from Japan. The topic of the paper was '*Easy Language and Social Sustainability: A Case Study of Yasashii Nihongo (Easy Japanese).*' In the study of languages, folklore has an important role to play. The last paper of the session was on the Cultural approach to Batak Toba Folklore, presented by Maritess A. Rulona of the Philippines.

The second day of the conference opened with the fourth session dedicated to the topic 'Dynamics of Education and Technology.' It was chaired by Dr. Rasmitadila. The first paper was presented by Dr. Alvis Fong of USA who spoke on '*Case Study: Experiential Learning Activities that Build Trustworthiness in AI Across Multiple STEM Disciplines.*' The next speaker was Prof. Ji Lian Yap of Singapore who gave an outline of '*An Online Law Journal to Engage Mature Students.*' The third speaker, Sinta Masitohwati from Indonesia presented a paper on '*Difficulty and Effectiveness Analysis of STEM Education with Online Learning Modes: An Initial Systematic Review.*' Dr. Darwin A. Sarandi of the Philippines made a Comparative Analysis of the Professional Competence of School Principals in District IV, Division of Manila. The penultimate presentation of the session was by Ms. Yuwen Dai of Singapore who spoke on '*Asynchronous Learning Lesson Design of Narrative Writing.*' Nana Mardiana of Indonesia who was the last speaker of the session highlighted the '*Interests and Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics Career Plan of Secondary School Students Majoring in Natural Sciences.*'

The world of Literature and Linguistics came to the fore in session 5. Dr. Kent A. Lee was the chairperson. Prof. Steve Dixon of Singapore opened the proceedings with a paper on '*Revisiting T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land: A South-East Asian Film Re-Imagining.*' Shakespeare entered the scene with Prof. Mufeed Al-Abdullah of Jordan speaking on '*Future Memory in Macbeth: The Supernatural vs. The Neuropsychological.*' Dr. Válmí Hatje-Faggion of Brazil turned to Bernard Shaw as the speaker referred to '*Translating/adapting G. Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion for the Cinema- Rewriting Coarse Language in the Dialogues.*' Bryan Mackell M. Austria then spoke on '*Politicians' Speeches: Linguistic Manipulation Strategies and Impressions.*'

Dr. Válmí Hatje-Faggion was the chairperson for the sixth session in which the problems dealing with Studies on Language and Education were discussed. In the session, we had Dr. Hajime Mochizuki of Japan speaking on '*Real Word Statistics and End of Sentence Expressions in Japanese Closed Caption TV Corpus.*' Prof. Dr. Md. Azizul Baten of Bangladesh who was an active participant in the conference spoke on '*Efficiency of Secondary*

Level Schools by ICT Intervention in Bangladesh: An Estimation using Stochastic Frontier Analysis. Then, Dr. Sibusiso C. Ndlangamandla from South Africa made a study of *'Diversity and Transcultural Flows in Computer-Mediated Communication: Exploring Digital Language and Literacy Repertoires in English as a Multilingual Franca.'*

In the afternoon, we had a panel discussion on *'The Challenges & Issues in Educating Marginalized and Vulnerable Children in the Post-Pandemic Context.'* Dr. S. Ramaratnam, who was the moderator, pointed out that technical deficiencies prevented the marginalized people from getting the best of education during the pandemic situation and so the gap between the haves and the have-nots widened in the post-pandemic scenario. The panelists, Alison Rodrigues of UK, Dr. Darwin A. Sarandi of the Philippines and Megan Asri Humaira also of the Philippines expressed their views on several aspects of the challenges faced by all the stakeholders of education in dealing with the problems of the post-pandemic situation.

The Concluding session of the conference was held in the eighth session. Dr. S. Ramaratnam expressed the hope that the participants would carry with them fond memories of the conference. All the participants would have become richer in knowledge as they would be leaving for their respective places at the end of the conference. Dr. Kenneth Tan wished the participants a nice time. Dr. Prabhath Patabendi expressed the wish that all of the delegates would be participating in the next conference to be held in Bangkok in 2023. With this, the two-day conference came to an end.

Dr. S. Ramaratnam,

Academic Chairperson LLL2022

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Dialectal vs. Standard Arabic Formant Frequencies as Potential Forensic Phonetics Parameters

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Abstract

Formant frequencies are among the most commonly used and reliable parameters for forensic phonetics (FP) analysis (Lindh, 2006; Loakes, 2006), and they continue to be preferred to other parameters such as segment duration despite an ongoing debate as to which formants are the most robust. However, most previous work on the use of formants for FP examines data from languages with a relatively crowded vowel space, such as English, which exhibits vowel closeness more than languages with a tri-vowel system, such as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). The current experimental study investigates the carry-over of formant frequencies from two distinct Arabic dialects, Najdi Arabic (NA) and Hejazi Arabic (HA), in the production of MSA by the speakers of those two respective dialects. This provides insight into the potential for utilizing the formant frequencies and formant spacing of long vowels as parameters in Arabic FP analysis. Forty single-gender (male) participants were divided into two numerically equal groups based on their dialectal background, NA vs. HA. The participants were asked to record a list of tokens that were carefully selected and judged to occur in both HA-NA dialectal Arabic and standard Arabic, albeit with barely recognizable phonological divergences. The data were gathered in two separate sessions (dialectal production and MSA production) for each group, with a lag period of three weeks between the two sessions. The findings show that the F1 and F2 of long vowels are promisingly robust in their ability to differentiate between NA and HA speakers producing their shared standard variety (i.e., MSA). Formant spacing in particular can thus be utilized as a potential parameter for Arabic FP profiling. As anticipated, formants for all three vowels, particularly the formants of /a:/ and /u:/ in NA and the formants of /a:/, /u:/, and /i:/ in HA, appeared to be carried over from the dialects to MSA production. This indicates that, despite the limited number of participants and dialects covered in this explorative study, there seems to be potential for utilizing formant frequencies as an FP parameter for MSA speakers' dialect profiling.

Keywords: Modern Standard Arabic, dialectal Arabic, Formants, Forensic Phonetics

Introduction

Forensic phonetics (FP) is the integration of phonetics and forensic science; specifically, FP is the application of general knowledge stemming from phonetics to law enforcement procedures, in which forensic evidence is collected from speech samples (Jessen 2008). Various FP domains have been utilized in law enforcement procedures as well as in academic research. *Forensic speaker identification* is probably the most significant domain in FP (Broeders 2001; Jessen 2008; Nolan 2007; Rose 2002). The feasibility of performing FP analyses and obtaining fruitful outcomes relies on the essential theory of forensic speaker identification, which states that every individual human's speech is unique and can be distinguished through FP analysis (Rose 2002). Vowel formants (F1, F2, F3, and F4) have been the most commonly used phonetic parameters in forensic speaker identification and have been a widely studied and documented feature in forensic phonetics (FP) analysis (e.g., Rose 2002). The first four formants of a vowel seem to be the most important formants in speaker identification, whereas higher formants than F4 might not be as effective as the lower ones (Lindh 2006). However, these claims have been challenged and debated. For instance, Rose (2002, p.231) argued that higher formants (F3 and up) are the most informative in speaker identification because they better reflect the unique characteristics of a speaker than lower formants. According to him, F3 provides useful information about vocal tract length, while F4 and F5 can provide information about a speaker's voice

quality. However, Gold and French (2011, p.753) in a survey of international forensic speaker comparison/identification practices, reported that among forensic phoneticians who undertake vowels formant examination in their practice, 100% of them measure F2, 86% measure F1 as well as F3, and only 18% measure F4. Based on this survey, we can infer that F2 is the most effective and robust formant utilized in FP analysis, followed by F1 and F3, and F4 and above may not serve the desired FP outcome. Recently, Aldholmi (2022) observed that emphaticness (i.e., emphatic consonants) in Arabic presents a challenge for forensic linguists performing talker gender classification because emphatics appear to bias listeners' (especially native speakers') perception to the male voice.

Numerous studies in FP have been conducted, particularly in forensic speaker identification with data from various languages, each of which has been studied with special focus on its unique linguistic properties. However, to the best of our knowledge, the Arabic language still lacks such research, and studies that support Arabic FP scholarship are desperately needed. Researchers in the Arabic FP domain could thus target the *unique properties* of the Arabic language that have potential to provide insights into the utilization of Arabic phonetic features as a special parameter for forensic analysis. One of these features is Arabic's diglossia phenomenon, in which there is both a common Standard Arabic and regional dialects distributed among various Arab communities. This feature prompts an interesting inquiry about the possibility of some linguistic features being carried from a dialect to the standard counterpart. Hence, this study aims to investigate the inter- and intraspeaker variation of certain vocalic features in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as parameters in forensic speaker identification. Specifically, the study aims to investigate whether the variation of the acoustic features of F1, F2 and F3 formants in MSA spoken by Najdi (henceforth, NSA) or Hijazi (henceforth, HSA) can be attributed to speakers' dialectal background. This information can be obtained by evaluating and comparing the acoustically measured vocalic information of MSA to that of the target dialects. The findings should provide implications for forensic MSA speaker profiling. The proposed Saudi dialects in this study are two frequently studied dialects in the linguistics literature, NA and HA. These dialects also have large communities in Saudi Arabia, which means that the current research will serve as an unprecedented foundation for speaker profiling in Saudi Arabia.

Methodology

Stimuli

The stimuli consisted of 12 target CVCVC imperfective verbs that are commonly used in both MSA and the target dialects. These items were controlled in terms of both syntactic and phonetic environments that might affect the vowel quality being analyzed. The items were inserted into a carrier sentence (carrier stimulus) twice in two fixed positions, i.e., sentence-initially once and sentence-finally once. This approach allowed the researchers to control for prosodic factors that might affect vowel quality. The carrier stimulus is structured as follows (note that the blank indicates the position of the target words):

- (1) Carrier sentence for the target words in the initial position:

_____ hija ?a:χir/u kalimah/t-in samištuhā: fi
 lmuka:lamah
 _____ it last-NOM word-F-GEN heard-1P-it in the-phone
 call

_____ 'is the last word I heard in the phone call.'

- (2) Carrier sentence for the target words in the final position:

?a:χir/u kalimah/t-in samištuhā: fi lmuka:lamah hija _____
 last-NOM word-F-GEN heard-1P-it in the-phone call it _____

'The last word I heard in the phone call is' _____.

The target words are CVCVC forms, in which the target vowel is always the second one, such as /taχa:f/ 'you fear', /tafu:z/ 'you win', /taɪi:b/ 'you are absent'.

Forensic phonetics (FP) is the integration of phonetics and forensic science; specifically, FP is the application of general knowledge stemming from phonetics to law enforcement procedures, in which forensic evidence is collected from speech samples (Jessen 2008). Various FP domains have been utilized in law enforcement procedures as well as in academic research. *Forensic speaker identification* is probably the most significant domain in FP (Broeders 2001; Jessen 2008; Nolan 2007; Rose 2002). The feasibility of performing FP analyses and obtaining fruitful outcomes relies on the essential theory of forensic speaker identification, which states that every individual human's speech is unique and can be distinguished through FP analysis (Rose 2002). Vowel formants (F1, F2, F3, and F4) have been the most commonly used phonetic parameters in forensic speaker identification and have been a widely studied and documented feature in forensic phonetics (FP) analysis (e.g., Rose 2002). The first four formants of a vowel seem to be the most important formants in speaker identification, whereas higher formants than F4 might not be as effective as the lower ones (Lindh 2006). However, these claims have been challenged and debated. For instance, Rose (2002, p.231) argued that higher formants (F3 and up) are the most informative in speaker identification because they better reflect the unique characteristics of a speaker than lower formants. According to him, F3 provides useful information about vocal tract length, while F4 and F5 can provide information about a speaker's voice quality. However, Gold and French (2011, p.753) in a survey of international forensic speaker comparison/identification practices, reported that among forensic phoneticians who undertake vowels formant examination in their practice, 100% of them measure F2, 86% measure F1 as well as F3, and only 18% measure F4. Based on this survey, we can infer that F2 is the most effective and robust formant utilized in FP analysis, followed by F1 and F3, and F4 and above may not serve the desired FP outcome. Recently, Aldholmi (2022) observed that emphaticness (i.e., emphatic consonants) in Arabic presents a challenge for forensic linguists performing talker gender classification because emphatics appear to bias listeners' (especially native speakers') perception to the male voice.

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quality. The carrier stimulus is structured as follows (note that the blank indicates the position of the target words):

- (3) Carrier sentence for the target words in the initial position:

_____ hija ʔa:χir/u kalimah/t-in samiʕtuha: fi
 _____ lmuka:lamah
 _____ it last-NOM word-F-GEN heard-1P-it in the-phone
 call
 _____ 'is the last word I heard in the phone call.'

- (4) Carrier sentence for the target words in the final position:

ʔa:χir/u kalimah/t-in samiʕtuha: fi lmuka:lamah hija _____
 last-NOM word-F-GEN heard-1P-it in the-phone call it _____
 'The last word I heard in the phone call is' _____.

The target words are CVCVC forms, in which the target vowel is always the second one, such as /taχa:f/ 'you fear', /tafu:z/ 'you win', /taχi:b/ 'you are absent'.

Participants

All participants were either current or former university students, with ages ranging between 19 and 35. The participants were divided into two experimental groups according to their dialectal background (NA vs. HA): The first group consists of 20 native NA speakers, and the second group consists of 20 native HA speakers. Such division was assumed to make it possible to implement the MSA profiling experiment. During the recruitment procedure, the experimenters targeted participants who share as many characteristics as possible, such as age and monolingualism vs. bilingualism. All NA speakers were from the Riyadh region, having been raised and lived in the urban area, i.e., Riyadh city. This approach ensures that all speakers were native NA speakers who speak the urban, rather than the Bedouin, NA. Similarly, all HA speakers were from the Makkah region, having been raised and lived in the urban cities of Jeddah and Makkah, and thus they all speak the urban version of HA.

Data collection

The data collection was conducted in two groups: 1) NA participants and 2) HA participants. The recording of speech samples was performed in two sessions for each group. In the first session, we presented the dialect stimuli (the carrier sentence with the target words) to the participants. Each participant (individually) was asked to read the stimuli sentences aloud three times and was recorded via a high-quality recorder in a quiet room. In the second session, the same process was repeated using the MSA stimuli. The process began with the dialect to ensure that the presentation of MSA, which is the formal language variety, would not have a carryover effect on participants' production when recording in their dialects. We also allowed for a substantial period of time (lag) between the two sessions to avoid any sequential effects. We segmented all target words and extracted each vowel within the target words in the stimuli, using Praat software (Boersma & Weenink 2020). Then, we measured the F1, F2, and F3 frequencies for the dialects and MSA. The comparative analysis between NA and HA was implemented based on the frequencies and the formant spacing between F1 and F2, as well as between F2 and F3. Each formant's value was the frequency mean value calculated automatically by Praat. Finally, these measured data were analyzed statistically to obtain quantitative results, using a repeated-measures ANOVA.

Results and general discussion

NA vs. NSA results

The overarching results showed that within both NA and NSA, the formant means for each vowel were similar across the two varieties. For means comparison, the data were separated by *vowel*

type and *formant type*, because these two factors play a major role in the determination of formant frequency values. Hence, for F1, the NA means are as follows: /a:/ ($M = 622.79$, $SD = 28.16$) /u:/ ($M = 376.05$, $SD = 27.30$); /i:/ ($M = 348.43$, $SD = 36.17$). NSA appears to have similar F1 means: /a:/ ($M = 621.74$, $SD = 29.50$); /u:/ ($M = 377.14$, $SD = 32.76$); /i:/ ($M = 352.59$, $SD = 30.91$). The F2 means for NA are as follows: /a:/ ($M = 1327.84$, $SD = 69.30$); /u:/ ($M = 1118.40$, $SD = 90.36$); /i:/ ($M = 2225.10$, $SD = 147.24$). For NSA, the F2 means are as follows: /a:/ ($M = 1329.93$, $SD = 71.52$); /u:/ ($M = 1123.50$, $SD = 88.03$); /i:/ ($M = 2221.95$, $SD = 143.51$). Both varieties also show a degree of similarity. Lastly, the F3 means for NA are as follows: /a:/ ($M = 2413.68$, $SD = 112.09$); /u:/ ($M = 2470.07$, $SD = 119.69$); /i:/ ($M = 2771.89$, $SD = 178.91$). Again, the F2 means for NSA are similar: /a:/ ($M = 2415.92$, $SD = 108.34$); /u:/ ($M = 2475.78$, $SD = 123.21$); /i:/ ($M = 2777.14$, $SD = 175.63$).

The main and interaction effects were tested by performing a repeated-measures ANOVA after ensuring that the test assumptions were met. The test reveals a main effect for *language variety* (NA vs. NSA) but with a small effect size, $F(1, 19) = 6.349$, $p = 0.021$, $\omega^2 = 0.250$. However, this interim result still necessitates further investigation to include *vowel type* and *formant type* factors. This is done by testing the three-way interaction between *language variety*, *vowel type*, and *formant type*. The test demonstrates a significant interaction among these factors, $F(4, 76) = 3.588$, $p = 0.010$, $\omega^2 = 0.159$. This three-way interaction result (*language variety*, *vowel type*, and *formant type*) must undergo further investigation regarding where specifically the significant interactions lie because this interaction contains a three-level vowel type factor (/a:/, /u:/, /i:/) and formant factor (F1, F2, F3). Therefore, we performed a repeated-measures *contrast* test. The test indicates that the significant interaction among *language variety*, *vowel type*, and *formant type* derives from the interaction between two vowels, namely, /u:/ (Level 2) and /i:/ (Level 3), which interact at all formant levels, i.e., between Level 1 (F1) and Level 2 (F2), $F(1, 19) = 11.915$, $p = 0.003$, $\omega^2 = 0.385$, and between Level 2 (F2) and Level 3 (F3), $F(1, 19) = 8.812$, $p = 0.008$, $\omega^2 = 0.317$. However, the vowels /a:/ (Level 1) and /u:/ (Level 2) showed no statistically significant interaction at all formant levels, i.e., between Level 1 (F1) and Level (F2), $p = 0.419$, and between Level 2 (F2) and Level 3 (F3), $p = 0.159$. This result means that NA and NSA share similar formants (F1, F2, and F3) within the vowels /a:/ and /u:/.

HA vs. HSA results

The result of the formant means for each vowel in both HA and HSA (combined) indicated that there is a degree of difference between these varieties; each vowel is simply different, which was predicted as each vowel is a phoneme in both HA and HSA. In contrast, when we compare HA results to HSA, the two varieties seem to show a proximal similarity. Below is the means comparison.

The F1 means for HA (/a:/: $M = 677.51$, $SD = 37.07$; /u:/: $M = 427.09$, $SD = 30.87$; /i:/: $M = 345.78$, $SD = 39.30$) showed close results to those for HSA (/a:/: $M = 678.20$, $SD = 34.82$; /u:/: $M = 423.93$, $SD = 32.23$; /i:/: $M = 343.08$, $SD = 43.74$). The F2 comparison means for HA (/a:/: $M = 1288.43$, $SD = 88.96$; /u:/: $M = 988.31$, $SD = 73.88$; /i:/: $M = 2254.39$, $SD = 115.16$) were also close to those for HSA (/a:/: $M = 1291.35$, $SD = 93.63$; /u:/: $M = 985.07$, $SD = 78.94$; /i:/: $M = 2251.15$, $SD = 119.69$). The last formant, F3, was also similar between HA and HSA. Compare the results for HA (/a:/: $M = 2477.15$, $SD = 76.74$; /u:/: $M = 2378.95$, $SD = 126.48$; /i:/: $M = 2787.56$, $SD = 177.52$) with those for HSA (/a:/: $M = 2474.48$, $SD = 81.29$; /u:/: $M = 2382.37$, $SD = 130.74$; /i:/: $M = 2792.22$, $SD = 171.92$).

To test the main and interaction effects, we performed a repeated-measures ANOVA. The test showed that *language variety* had no main effect, $p = 0.462$. This result suggested that there is no statistically significant difference between HA and HSA, but further investigation that includes the three-way interaction between *language variety*, *vowel type* and *formant type* factors is still needed, as these factors play an essential role in creating any potential difference. The results showed no statistically significant interaction, $p = 0.130$, indicating that HA and HSA likely share similar formants values; this result corroborates the initial results that showed an absence of a main effect for *language variety*.

Since our main focus is on language variety in relation to vowel type and formant type, the three-way interaction result must be investigated further, since it comprises three levels in the *vowel*

type factor (/a:/, /u:/, /i:/) and in the *formant type* factor (F1, F2, F3). Accordingly, we performed a repeated-measures *contrast* test to investigate any possible level of a significant interaction effect. The test confirmed the initial result and showed no statistically significant interaction at all levels. Specifically, there was no significant interaction between the vowels /a:/ (Level 1) and /u:/ (Level 2) at all formant levels, i.e., between Level 1 (F1) and Level 2 (F2), $p = 0.387$, and between Level 2 (F2) and Level 3 (F3), $p = 0.207$. Furthermore, there was no significant interaction between the vowels /u:/ (Level 2) and /i:/ (Level 3) at all formant levels, i.e., between Level 1 (F1) and Level (F2), $p = 0.087$, and between Level 2 (F2) and Level 3 (F3), $p = 0.214$. This result indicates that the formants F1, F2, and F3 of the vowels /a:/, /u:/, /i:/ appear to have similar values in HA and HSA.

NA vs. HA comparison results

The comparison between NA and HA aimed to determine whether they differ in terms of long vowels' formants. This data provides us with provisional information about the possibility of using long vowel formants as a parameter in FP, specifically, in FP profiling. To do this comparison, we measured the formant spacing between F1 and F2 (known as compact-diffuse in the literature, e.g., Kent & Vorperian 2018) and between F2 and F3, and then implemented the comparison based on these variables.

The first formant spacing (F1-F2) overall means for NA ($M = 1107.397$, $SD = 97.15$) were similar to those for NSA ($M = 1108.369$, $SD = 96.35$), whereas they appear to differ for HA ($M = 1027.284$, $SD = 80$), which is very similar to its standard counterpart HSA ($M = 1027.378$, $SD = 79.21$). To test the first formant spacing difference between NA and HA dialects, we performed a repeated-measures ANOVA test that used NA vs. HA as a between-subject independent factor and formant spacing value as a dependent variable. The test showed a statistically significant difference between NA and HA with a medium effect size, $F(1, 38) = 22.836$, $p < 0.001$, $\omega^2 = 0.375$. A within-subjects test also showed a statistically significant effect for the interaction between vowel type and NA vs. HA with a medium effect size, $F(2, 76) = 18.497$, $p < 0.001$, $\omega^2 = 0.327$. This result indicated that the two dialects differ in terms of vowel-type formants, which adds a positive indication to the previous between-subjects test.

The second formant spacing (F2-F3) overall means for NA ($M = 997.40$, $SD = 127.46$) were similar to those for NSA ($M = 996.75$, $SD = 128.13$), and the means for HA ($M = 1036.92$, $SD = 139.17$) and HSA ($M = 1037.82$, $SD = 138.34$) reflected a slight difference from NA and NSA. The difference between NA and HA in terms of the second formant spacing was tested with a repeated-measures ANOVA, using the same between-subject and within-subject factors as above. The test revealed no statistically significant difference for second formant spacing, $p = 0.142$. The within-subjects test revealed no significant interaction between vowel type and NA vs. HA, $p = 0.107$. This result confirmed that F2-F3 formant spacing does not create a significant difference between NA and HA.

General discussion

The study investigated the three formant frequencies F1, F2, and F3 of the long vowels /a:/, /u:/, and /i:/ in each dialect and compared the findings to each one's MSA counterpart through the appropriate statistical tests. Formants have been studied extensively in a number of languages and have shown promising results; therefore, they appear to be the most favorable parameter in FP (e.g., Kent & Vorperian 2018; Lindh 2006; Loakes 2006; Nolan 2002; Rose 2002).

The current study found that NA speakers produce similar long vowel formants when they speak MSA. Nonetheless, the significant main effect for *language variety* and the significant interaction of the three-way factors – *language variety*, *vowel type*, and *formant type* – necessitated contrast testing for the sake of precision. The contrast test revealed the origins of the differences and similarities and showed that the similarity between NA and its MSA came from /a:/ and /u:/. Accordingly, /i:/ formants should be excluded from the NA FP profiling of MSA speakers. HA speakers also demonstrated similar formant frequencies when they speak MSA. Moreover, there were no significant interactions between

the *language variety*, *vowel type*, and *formant type* factors, nor did the contrast tests show any significant interactions. These results thus confirm that HA speakers produce similar formants of the three long vowels when they speak MSA.

A comparison was then performed using the more sensitive variable of formant spacing. According to Kent and Vorperian (2018, p.91), this dynamic parameter can be more informative. The first formant spacing (F1-F2) revealed a significant difference between NA and HA, whereas the second (F2-F3) did not. Thus, F1-F2 spacing is an effective parameter that could successfully differentiate between NA and HA speakers, which can be explained by the fact that vowels are universally captured by F1 and F2 (Leuzzi et al. 2016). Moreover, Kent and Vorperian (2018, p.81) stated that F1 and F2 are the most commonly used formants in speech science studies. Alghamdi (1998, p.6) compared the vocalic information of three Arabic dialects and concluded that in terms of vowel quality difference, F1 was the main parameter that captured the significant difference among the three dialects and thus could have positive implications for dialect identification. In addition, numerous FP studies have emphasized the potential of the F2 formant as a parameter. Gold and French (2011, p.753) stated that F2 is the most widely used parameter in FP. Likewise, Nolan (2002, p.78) argued that F2 is the most effective FP parameter in terms of robustness. The current finding corroborates the well-established notion of the importance and effectiveness of F1 and F2 formants in the field of FP.

In this study, the formants of the long vowels in the two dialects appeared to extend to the standard variety, i.e., MSA. The phenomenon of dialect-to-standard traces has been discussed in some studies, which have claimed that regional dialects can penetrate the standard variety and leave certain linguistic traces on it, most of which are phonetic (e.g., Grondelaers, Hout, & Steegs 2010; Harst, Velde, & Hout 2014). This interesting aspect should be further investigated by including other Arabic dialects as well as other phonetic parameters in studies that seek to determine which phonetic parameters are carried over to MSA and to what extent they are significant. Such studies will contribute to the under-researched field of Arabic FP studies. In an attempt to be as precise and cautious as possible and to be consistent with the FP parameter requirements suggested by Nolan (1983, p.11), we may draw a generalization that works for both dialects that incorporates two key findings. First, F1 and F2 appeared to be the significant variables in difference between NA and HA. Second, /i:/ showed a degree of variability between NA and NSA, meaning that it is prone to change and not sufficiently robust for FP and thus should be excluded. This leaves us with the following preliminary conclusion: The promising effective formant parameters in NA and HA FP profiling and comparison are F1 and F2 of the vowels /a:/ and /u:/.

Conclusion

The parameter used was formant frequencies of long vowels (F1, F2, and F3), which was motivated by the promising potential of formant parameters in FP found in other studies. The observed differences between NA and HA and the standard variety (MSA) led to the following hypotheses: a) that there might be specific vocalic information that is sufficiently unique to each dialectal variety to make it a promising FP parameter candidate, and b) that there might be an aspect of dialect-to-standard phonetic carryover that could be a good FP profiling parameter. Overall, the conclusion that arises from this study is that long vowel formants are promising candidates since they successfully differentiated between NA and HA, and both dialects carry over their formant measurements to the standard variety, MSA. More specifically, the promising effective formants parameters were F1 and F2 of the vowels /a:/ and /u:/. This finding suggests that FP practitioners and researchers should pay attention to the potential of utilizing the F1 and F2 of long vowels to yield significant outcomes.

It is recommended for future studies to extend the current study to include other formants as well as other dialectal varieties of Arabic. Moreover, it would be ideal to conduct similar studies with a larger sample size to produce more robust results and, consequently, a generalizable conclusion.

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Politicians' Speeches: Linguistic Manipulation Strategies and Impressions

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Abstract

This research aims to determine the linguistic manipulation strategies and respondents' impressions on the selected politicians' speeches. The researchers utilize a descriptive method by gathering information through open-ended interview questions to distinguish the respondents' impressions on the politicians' speeches. In this study, videos from Facebook and YouTube are utilized to demonstrate political discourse, which aids in the achievement of the study's objectives, which include determining the effect of language manipulation strategies employed by political figures. The content of the questionnaires determines the respondents' perceptions of how the politicians employed their language throughout their speeches. Following the collection of all of the data, it is subjected to content analysis and then explained narratively in accordance with the qualitative nature of the study conducted. The findings of this study reveal that each respondent has their own impressions about the language used by political personalities in their speeches. The researchers discovered four types of verbal manipulation tactics used by the political figures: conversational, rational, authoritarian, and emotive manipulation strategies, all of which are applied by the political figures. As a result, it is concluded that one's credibility in teaching and learning is influenced by one's linguistic proficiency. Because it is difficult to foresee whether the majority of the audience will react positively or adversely to language usage, it is critical to use appropriate language when discussing a certain context and scenario in a specific setting.

Keywords: *Content Analysis, Impressions, Linguistic Manipulation, Political Figures, Speeches*

Introduction

Language is culturally transmitted; people learn it through social interactions. Most people learn their first language from their parents. The media, other family members and friends can influence their vocabularies, choices of language and how they view things based on their comprehension. Language was used to analyze and explain occurrences based on their context. Political discourse is participatory at all times, whether through interruption, dispute, or negotiation. Furthermore, political vocabulary is frequently ambiguous, similar to the words of a horoscope, allowing the electorate free to interpret what is stated however they like. Given the importance of political discourse, stressing that in political language should serve as a reminder to be vigilant and critical of the language used the next time a person sees a politician deliver a speech and attempts to discern what is genuinely being said. Politicians are renowned for fostering this electorate consciousness in the population. Manipulation of elections is one of the most conspicuous and distinctive characteristics of political speech. This function is crucial because it has the capacity to either win or ruin political subjects' pre-election campaigns via a cannonade of linguistic tactics used to construct what is referred to as "language manipulation." Manipulation of the public's political ideals and information by these politicians has the ability to sway them in either direction. In a tense political climate, the term "politically conscious" is frequently used to refer to individuals who have identified their correct political stance, their genuine identity. In these instances, "consciousness" refers to truth or destiny. These uses of political consciousness are typically laden with political overtones. Additionally, the combination

of a politician's motions and movements is targeted at a certain audience based on their words and attitude. The public is caught between reality and manipulation, between truth and deception, and between the public's perception of politics and its phantom image.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the linguistic manipulation strategies and respondents' impressions of the selected politicians' speeches. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the impressions of the respondents on the language used by the political figures?
2. What are the linguistic manipulation strategies used by the politicians according to the respondents?
3. What are the pedagogical implications of the linguistic manipulation strategies and respondents' impressions in language teaching?

Theoretical Framework

Individuals might describe language manipulation in a variety of ways. Numerous hypotheses and investigations have been undertaken on this subject. With the assistance of these studies and theories, this research sought to ascertain the various linguistic manipulation tactics applied by different political personalities and their impact on the impressions of a particular audience. According to Tabarak (2020), an associate professor of English at the University of Wasit, language is employed for a number of objectives in addition to communication under the Linguistic Manipulation Theory. It serves a manipulative purpose. Manipulation is a linguistic phrase that possesses great creative potential, which is especially pertinent in the context of linguistic manipulation theory. Language manipulation functions generate a hidden, masked layer of linguistic data that is difficult to separate from informative content. Manipulative language exists in the gray area between two polar opposites - a falsehood and valid (full, true) information. A lie and manipulation are diametrically opposed to distinct types of truth: a falsehood is adversarial to "semantic truth," whereas manipulation is antagonistic to "pragmatic truth." Manipulation is a pragmatic term that refers to the situation in which the listener is uninformed of the speaker's underlying intentions behind the words stated. When a speaker manipulates, he or she deliberately adopts an utterance style devoid of direct indications of his or her intended condition. Manipulation accomplishes its objectives in this manner without the verbal intention being readily apparent. Negatively, manipulation is considered as a social psychological phenomenon that has a harmful impact on both individuals and society. Language becomes manipulative due to a variety of variables, including association with the speaker's goals, the ambiguous influencing nature of the speech, and the settings of communication (social context), rather than through the use of specific lexical or grammatical elements. Despite several theories and research, we still lack a study that examines how various political personalities manipulate language in order to influence their audience's perceptions in society. This theory contributed to the researchers in aiming to understand the manipulation strategies used by some politicians.

Method and Materials

The Politicians' Speeches: Linguistic Manipulation Strategies and Impressions is a qualitative type of research that utilized descriptive research design, which is to be done by open-ended interview questionnaire. The process started with composing generative questions—neither static nor restrictive—that served as a guide for the whole research process. Through open-ended interview questionnaires, the researchers discovered the insights and impressions of the respondents. Coding is also utilized by the researchers to categorize qualitative data and articulate the consequences and details associated with these

categories. The respondents of this study are from the age bracket of 18 to 50 years old. Most of the respondents are college undergraduates and have access to television and social media to update themselves about the news and issues. Additionally, the inclusion of demographic information (Age, Sex, and Occupation) in the questionnaire enabled researchers to develop a deeper understanding of their respondents' backgrounds and determine if this impacts their perceptions of the different political speeches. The main platform used to gather data is Google form in which open-ended interview questionnaire is indicated. Google Form is a web-based application for creating data collection forms. Together with the questions, there are five (5) selected politicians' speeches videos from YouTube that are also indicated on Google form. The collected pieces of information are automatically entered into a spreadsheet. After the approval of the study, the researchers conducted the study with the respondents by giving them the open-ended interview questionnaire via Google form to answer. The respondents were required to watch the resource videos from well-known politicians/government officials linked in the Google form before answering the following open-ended questions. When the survey was completed, the data gathered from the respondents' answers were analyzed through the process of content analysis wherein data is analyzed narratively in line with the qualitative nature of the study. The presentation and interpretation of data were done through the process of coding and descriptive analysis. This analysis of the researchers served as the basis of the findings of this research.

Results and Discussion

The four linguistic manipulation strategies: Conversational, Rational, Authoritarian, and Affective reveal that the politicians' use of language can provide different impressions to the audience. Linguistic manipulation strategies are established based on how people perceive verbal messages regarding the issues presented to them. Based on the narrative of the respondents, most of them emphasized that the politicians in the videos they have watched discussed their ideas naturally using common words, which became convenient for the listeners to understand. While according to some respondents, some speakers incorporated logic and their credibility to manipulate their language. Also, some respondents perceive that the words of a high-ranking government official are very powerful, and some speakers manipulated their language through emotions, sincerity, genuineness, honesty, and conviction to their statements that can affect the people.

Furthermore, the respondents' awareness about the politician's manipulation of language is also evident. Their impression is manifested that this kind of phenomenon is needed to communicate efficiently with the people. Language is the foundation and key to achieving a particular goal: whether the politician is naturally communicating, using logic, being powerful with their words, or showing different emotions when speaking in public. Hence, a politicians' ability to influence people by their language is crucial to be effective and successful in their speech.

Pedagogical Implications of Respondents' Impressions on Political Speeches in Language Teaching

The pedagogical implications derived from this study are as follows: On the respondents' impression in political speeches, it is found that in learning to speak, the students followed specific strategies in their communication to conceal their linguistic inadequacy. Among all the respondents' impressions, it explains the influence of speakers in language speaking and its impact on the listeners to improve their speaking styles. Furthermore, the trace in the link between language and politics has obtained a connection between effective communications skills. Additionally, the informal language learning environment emphasizes teaching in an informal language learning setting to communicate extensive language learning. Similarly, in language learning, a formal register is the type of discourse used when the

teacher is concerned with articulation, word use, and sentence construction. Incorporating formal and informal registers into classroom interaction proved effective action for vocabulary expansion and context teaching opportunities for English learners. Also, utilizing appropriate language use while teaching enables teachers' professionalism, action planning, set targets, and accreditations resulted in good language teaching performance. Lastly, the significance of dialogue in education has concentrated on studying the learner's language conversation to shed light on the types of experiences that efficiently stimulate higher-order thinking skills.

On the linguistic manipulation strategies, this study establishes that the strategies are consistent with the rhetorical appeals employed to elicit approval or agreement from an audience by appealing to natural human inclinations or shared experience. These rhetorical appeals are vital factors in a Rhetoric that aims to examine the techniques writers and speakers use to inform, persuade, and motivate specific audiences in particular situations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are five impressions of the language used by politicians, and they are inappropriate, colloquial, informal, pertinent, and formal. Politicians also use four types of linguistic manipulation strategies, namely conversational, rational, authoritarian, and affective. The four linguistic manipulation strategies reveal that the politicians' use of language can provide different impressions to the audience. The pedagogical implication of the linguistic manipulation strategies and respondents' impressions in language teaching utilize communication strategies and correlate communicative abilities and strategies in classroom teaching. Accordingly, it provides opportunities in the teaching and learning field for communicative interactions to improve and teach language to have an extensive vocabulary for continuous learning. It is also revealed that the four linguistic manipulation strategies are consistent with the rhetorical appeals. Teaching rhetoric by emphasizing rhetorical appeals present in the linguistic manipulation strategies found in this study elucidates the existing reality of public speaking in the country. Thus, it is beneficial for students to be honed as effective speakers.

Based on the conclusions made, the following are hereby recommended: I. Student speakers can emphasize rhetorical appeals in the linguistic manipulation strategies by appealing to natural human inclinations or shared experience to ensure that a specific speech can be delivered effectively. II. Teachers can relate all the language impressions to be part of the communicative interactions. III. Communication courses can apply timely linguistic manipulation strategies in secondary schools. IV. Future researchers can add or discover additional manipulation strategies that politicians utilize, such as conversational, rational, authoritarian, and affective. V. A similar study may be conducted with professionals as respondents. This study can also be further researched on by tapping into the nontechnical part of linguistic manipulation strategies in a discourse, since this study focused on impressions, which may include the thought process of the speaker, ideology, and agendas in public speaking that may influence their speech as a whole.

Acknowledgments:

For the completion of this research, the researchers want to express their profound and sincerest gratitude to the following:

- Foremost, praises and thanks to the Almighty God for His ultimate blessings He provide and shown throughout this research writing.

-To their thesis adviser, Prof. Lynn M. Besa, for the consistent support to this Undergraduate Research and most especially her patience, knowledge and motivation. Without her positive advice and guidance, this research would not have been possible.

-To the Panel Members, Dr. Susan Dominguez, Prof. Amor Caranto, and Prof. Richard Parcon for their recommendations and suggestions for this research study that helped pile up more data and realize the actual aim of the research.

-To all their respondents who helped them and cooperated by answering the questions for the successful findings of this research.

-To their families, Austria Family, Balingbing Family, Dela Punta Family, Dongor Family and Zamora Family, for unconditional support throughout their lifetimes.

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Language Crossing and Networked Multilingualism in Asynchronous Online Discussion Forums

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Abstract

Online discussion forums (ODFs, a type of Computer-Mediated Communication) are sites of language crossing and networked multilingualism, where students may learn English in web-forum communities. Limited research has been conducted on the multilingual practices of students learning English for Academic Purposes (EAP) through ODFs. Drawing on interactional analysis and Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA), this paper explores language crossing in one large university course. Students show agency by using languages in creative, artful, and ritualistic ways when crossing into various African languages and multilingual online communities. I argue that peer and student-to-student negotiation of norms is an important principle for online discussion forums that allow language crossing and networked multilingualism. Language crossing reveals the maintenance of local African online and offline communities. Universities have yet to implement multilingual pedagogies that include the majority who do not speak English as a first language in the South African context.

Keywords: *Computer-Mediated Communication, Online Discussion Forums, Networked Multilingualism*

Introduction

This research is located in the relatively new field of multilingualism and the Internet. The ubiquity of online communication calls for an investigation of various forms of social interaction and ‘networked multilingualism’ (Androutsopoulos 2015). Both technology and the Internet are central in Open Distance eLearning (ODEL) at the University of South Africa (Unisa). An under-researched area at Unisa is multilingualism in the context of language and technology (e.g., Saxena 2011). A growing body of research on multilingualism has explored computer assisted language learning (CALL). This paper investigates multilingualism and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), and previous research has focused on multilingualism and social media (e.g., Saxena 2011). I explain the importance of language crossing based on ‘networked multilingualism’ as an analytical concept below.

Online discussion forums in the context of Unisa courses

This paper is based on an online English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course offered by the Department of English Studies at the University of South Africa (Unisa). The module is one of the largest in the university and is meant for diverse disciplines and qualifications. A majority of the students are multilingual. Online Discussion Forums (ODFs) group together topically related threads and provide a permanent record of both teaching and learning. Unlike face-to-face conversations, they are easily available for sociolinguistic research. In my view, by giving students ‘unregulated spaces’ (Saxena 2011) to express themselves, the forum becomes a rich site for language practices and discursive identity construction. Saxena (2011, 277) describes how young Bruneians ‘articulated both local and globalized identities through their digital and multilingual literacy practices in “unregulated spaces”, such as on the internet or SMS messaging with members of their peer group’. Participants in the Unisa ODFs are pre-selected by

administrators when they meet particular criteria—perhaps contrary to the idea of ‘regulated/unregulated spaces’ (Saxena 2011). I therefore describe my ODF context as ‘semi-regulated’.

The ODFs are asynchronous, the posts vary in length, and replies to previous posts may include the quotation of the original post or cross reference to the initiator. Since these are not live or occurring in real time like online chatrooms (synchronously), students can post messages responding to new or old topics over several days, weeks, and months during a semester of about 28 weeks.

Research questions

- The main research questions for this paper are: How do the discussants alternate between English and African languages online and between styles in English, and for what purposes?
- What are the connections between the linguistic features as an index of multilingualism online, and what role does language crossing play in such contexts?
- How do communities of practice draw upon their linguistic resources to fulfill their communicative goals, including the educational goals of the course?

CMC and multicultural discourse

This paper seeks to engage with cultural diversity and multicultural discourses that are part of multilingualism in the Global South. Shi-xu (2016) explains the importance of non-western scholars in re-discovering, re-claiming, and re-inventing the voices, identities, and paradigms of research. Prah 2010, cited in Shi-xu (2016, 5), observes that there is a free and fresh atmosphere in most African urban centers evincing increased multilingualism contributing to interaction and integration. In the Global South, Cultural Discourse Studies (CDS) has to engage with access to education, Internet, and technology. Social Network Sites (SNS) and CMC play an important role in the developmental context counteracting hegemonic discourses from the Global North of English monolingualism. Bouvier (2015, 149) argues that more research is needed on multicultural discourse and how ‘language, identity, cross-cultural social relations and power play out in the rapidly evolving landscape of social media’. Crossing codes overlaps with crossing discourse boundaries that are reinforced by monolingualism as opposed to multilingualism. In the case of students of EAP, there are boundaries laid out for them.

Language crossing and CMC

Recently, Rampton et al. (2018, p. 3) state that language crossing entails a strong sense of social or ethnic boundary transgression and raises questions of legitimacy and entitlement. They observe that ‘Crossing can be mocking, admiring, an end-in-itself or the first step in a longer journey, and it may strengthen boundaries, undermine them, or assert their irrelevance’ (p. 3). Rampton (2005, 273) argues that crossing is ritualized, unlike code-switching, and in addition it is ‘participant-related, discourse-related, and the language selected carries social meaning’. This paper investigates code-crossing in order to understand ‘networked multilingualism’ among students learning English as a Second Language via online discussion forums/CMC. This research is intended to explore the extent to which networked multilingualism is aiding language crossing.

(Networked) Multilingualism in the context of CMC at Unisa

I borrow the analytical concept of ‘networked multilingualism’ to describe this unique online language crossing context. Androutsopoulos (2015, 188) coined the term to refer to two interrelated processes: ‘being *networked*, i.e., digitally connected to other individuals and groups, and being *in the*

network, i.e. embedded in the global digital mediascape of the web'. ... 'Networked multilingualism encompasses everything language users do with the entire range of linguistic resources within three sets of constraints: mediation of written language by keyboard-and-screen technologies (digital literacy repertoires), access to network resources (Network resources), and orientation to networked audiences (Networked audiences)'. Network resources include sociolinguistic processes like metrolinguism, polylinguaging, and language crossing (Otsuji and Pennycook 2010, 246-247).

Networked audiences are unique in ODFs when compared to social network sites such as Facebook (Androutsopoulos 2015), where account holders can choose their own audience. On the other hand, ODFs have preselected, registered members forming the audiences. Tagg and Seargeant (2014, 181) also examine audience design and language choice and describe trans-local communities based on multilingual practices. The concept of networked multilingualism is useful to exploring 'how language resources can be appropriated, combined, juxtaposed and displayed to a networked audience' (Androutsopoulos 2015, 191).

This paper is situated at the intersection of the fields of ODeL, CMC, and sociolinguistics. The following section describes the data collection and analysis conducted to explore language crossing in networked multilingualism.

Research methodology

In this paper, I analyze ODF discussion threads using computer-mediated discourse analysis and interactional analysis in relation to the online student profiles. My main research methodology is computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) combined with interactional analysis. CMDA is described by Herring (2004, 2) as an approach for researching online interactive behavior by analyzing 'logs of verbal interaction (characters, words, utterances, messages, exchanges, threads, archives, etc.)'.

¹Data collection consists of online discussion forum threads. The period was between February 2018 to August 2018, during the first semester. The course website becomes available to the students from the beginning of February. Students can create their own topics on the platform. The total number of students who were enrolled for the module in the first semester of 2018 was 22,140. The students who participated on the ODFs were less than 30% of the total registration. As a background, the module ENN103F has two assignments contributing 30% of the formative assessment in the final semester mark. The formative and summative assessments of the module invariably influence the topics listed above and the subsequent findings below. The online discussion forums consisted of the following topics and posts.

Table 1: Web page showing the list of topics and number of posts

Topics	Replies	Author names	Last posting
General Discussions	1558	MyUnisaAdmin	2018-10-18 17:40 by SM
Struggling to locate "The Rules of Surviva" by Laurence Gonzales on the prescribed book. Please help am stuck	1375	Hawu	2018-10-18 09:39 by JM
Audience for the Rules of survivals"	468	Thula	2018-10-11 17:18 by AM
Assignment 1	1086	Cembi	2018-06-28 01:36 by PWM

¹ Ethical clearance for this study was granted by the University of South Africa. No actual names of students are used in the discussion, but rather pseudonyms have been utilized to protect the identity of students and ensure anonymity.

No guidance in tutorial letter or study guide	120	Musa	2018-06-03 12:56 by ZOG
Assignment 2	369	Jabu	2018-09-26 20:17 by VCS
E-Tutor	302	Emphi	2018-10-17 20:22 by NR
Assignment One: 100 word rule, Question 2 and 3.2 Assistance.	649	Ruri	2018-05-27 19:15 by VNM
Link to join WhatsApp group for ENN301F	902	Bhuti	2018-12-15 06:52 by MR
Study group in Pietermaritzburg Campus UNISA	3	Nene	2018-09-26 09:23 by SJS

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of three of the topics listed above: General Discussions (1558 replies or posts), No guidance in tutorial letter or study guide (120 replies), and Assignment 2 (369 replies). The total number of the replies was 2047. I chose these topics because they frequently bother students, as observed through my experience of receiving emails, visits, queries, and telephone calls from students. I extracted some of the ‘replies’ for the sake of this paper. The topics of the discussions all bear resemblance to studying through ODeL, such as Assignment 1, Assignment 2, etutor, and so on.

An estimate of the total number of replies in Table (1) would be 6832, less than 30% of enrollment, a significant percentage of which was by regular individuals. I read through the replies, exploring the use of African languages, language crossing, multilingualism, and networked multilingualism to answer the research questions. The following extract (1) illustrates language crossing consisting of netspeak, English, and an African language to establish private solidarity among group members by a student named Bonke.

Extract 1: Code crossing for private solidarity among online community members

ODF thread topic: [General Subject Related Discussions: Assignment 2]

OP-Bhatia: *Hi my name is Bhatia. I wanted to know if we must show our planning and First draft in assignment 2. (2018-02-09 12:27:16)*

Zakhe: Will my assignment be marked if I didn't attach a declaration form? (2018-04-04 21:06:20)

Bonke: Hy guiz ngicel usizo ngenwad o nge essay 4 assessment plc bafe2 nansi email yam xxx@gmail.com (2018-04-05 14:30:14)

Bakhe: I mean 4 assessment 2 (2018-04-05 14:31:20)

Mandla: Hi, I a bit confused about assignment 2 on how I'm supposed to write it. Because it says, I must find 5 articles. Then am I supposed to write an essay about the or use the topics that are given Below? (2018-04-05 16:34:43)

Menzi: Hi my name is Ben Menzi and did not receive marks for assignment 1 and 2 please assist. (2018-04-07 08:19:52)

[.....]

Jonah: hi .my name is Jonah I just want to know when can we get the assignment 2 RESULTS? (2018-05-18 10:09:48)

Muzi: m also waiting for my assignment 2 marks 😞 (2018-05-21 10:30:02)

In the discussion thread above, Bhatia asks a question to initiate the discussion as an opening post (OP) on the forum. This is followed by a question from another student, Zakhe (1). This develops into a sequence of questions and would therefore be a ‘question-question’ in terms of initiation and response. The theme of this exchange does not focus on one topic but has multiple topics. The question has to do with ‘attaching a declaration form’ as part of the requirements for acknowledging ownership and citation rules for writing

essays.

A third student, Bonke (3), posts a request in a language variety/code based on isiZulu. What is interesting is that she not only crosses to another language, but also uses a multilingual version of English, isiZulu, alpha-numerically representing words in both English and Zulu. Bonke joins the discussion with a personal request translated below:

- (2) Bonke: Hy guiz ngicel usizo ngencwad o nge essay 4 assessment plc bafe2 nansi email yam xxx@gmail.com (2018-04-05 14:30:14)

English translation:

(Hi guys, I am asking for help about the book or the essay for assessment, please brothers, here is my email address xxx@gmail.com (2018-04-05 14:30))

This is an instance of language crossing using isiZulu and netspeak to ask for help from other students. This student appears not to have the prescribed book and thus asks her fellow students to contact her privately to share the textbook for the module. Moreover, her crossing is an act transgressing the rules of prescribed books. Her posting indicates that this is a request for the prescribed textbook or ‘assignment’ two, though she mistakenly calls it ‘assessment’ two. Students are expected to buy the books from booksellers sanctioned by the university. In terms of the goals of the module being English as an Academic Language, this student alters the code and style to appeal to those who can understand Zulu. The request is made in a multilingual code, signaling ‘privacy’, social solidarity, and friendship/online multilingual networks. In fact, it is done to create friendship networks on email, outside the ODFs, in other words to create ‘out-groups’. It is a creative use of language crossing displayed through networked multilingualism.

In the following extract (2), students exchange information in various styles requesting to be added to WhatsApp groups. However, one student, Ted, reprimands the group by asserting regulations for the online discussion forums.

Extract 2: Code crossing and negotiation of norms for online discussion forums

- (1) Gugu: EY GUYS AM NOSIZWE LOOKING FOR STUDY MATES AROUND PRETORIA SUNNYSIDE CAMPUS, MA TEENS ARE ²(...) (2018-02-21 14:12: 10)
Linda: WhatsApp group link: <https://chat.WhatsApp.com/leTT2RYVazjHcRBL9uutUy> (2018-02-21 15:33:26)
Lunga: Add me please (...) Thanks (2018-02-22 08:54:46)
Ted: THIS IS SO IRRITATING 😡 Every topic you go into thinking maybe you’ll find help on the same question asked instead is FILLED with phone numbers to ‘ADD ME’. Please guys can this be done on one page. (2018-02-22 09:06:24)
Onke: hi, am EUNICE, KINDLY ADD ME TO THIS GROUP. (...), THANKS (2018-02-22 20:33:39)
Gumbi: Please add me on WhatsApp group (...) (2018-02-24 19:04:54)

The conversation is initiated by Gugu, who makes an ‘announcement’ looking for students in the neighborhood of Sunnyside, around Pretoria, the capital city of SA. She starts with a particle followed by a slang word: ‘EY GUYS’. The expression ‘EY GUYS’ may have originally belonged to English but is frequently used by speakers of most of the African languages found in South Africa. Sunnyside Campus is one of the Unisa regional centers where students can register to attend voluntary classes and use the library.

² Cellphone number omitted for anonymity.

The appeal to a physical location for them to meet ‘offline’ is another indication that students use the ODFs as a transition to other social networking spaces (SNS) or offline encounters/communities. This is revealed through the practice of ‘sharing’ personal details, emails, cell phone numbers, and location. Sharing is a significant language practice of SNS and online language practices and has its own affordances. Linda responds by posting a web-based link to a website for joining a WhatsApp group. This copying and pasting is part of the ‘networked resources’ drawing on polylinguaging according to Androutsopoulos (2015). Polylinguaging is therefore an element of language crossing in online multilingual communities. Similarly, this request is made by other students also wishing to be added to the group. Instead of using the link or http, they opt to post their personal numbers in the hope that Linda will add them to the WhatsApp group. Ted is irritated by this. She does not want to join the WhatsApp group but wishes the students would dedicate the forum to the purpose of the module and offer help. She expresses this in anger: ‘THIS IS SO IRRITATING 😡’, using caps for emphasis and a red emoticon to accompany the illocutionary force of the utterance. Vandergriff (2014) explains that emoticons can enhance or complement the verbal message by expressing the sender’s emotions and/or attitudes; they can modify the verbal message but not change its valence; and they are generally affiliative. He observes that very little research has been done at the discourse level to describe how they are used in context, and this is where this research makes a contribution.

ODF norms are left to the students because neither tutor nor lecturer is a moderator of this group. In terms of language management theory, this is an effective bottom-up strategy of managing online groups (Svelch 2015). As a leader of the module, I have been reluctant to monitor or regulate how students run the forums; as mentioned above, they provide an ‘unregulated space’ (Saxena 2011) for student interaction.

However, within the same module and in other ODFs, e-tutors use various instructions and language management instructions to control the groups: For example, the following message comes from an e-tutor addressing one of the groups:

May I remind you to please use proper English at all times on this discussion forum. Do not use SMS language or ‘u’ instead of ‘you’ and ‘i’ instead of ‘I’ (which means you as a person), etc. 😊
From ENN103F-18-S2-1E (etutor group).

I view such a prescriptivist approach as a hindrance to multilingual repertoires, language crossing being one such repertoire.

Discussion and conclusion

The interactional analysis concerns the crossing practices of online multilingual communities in an EAP educational context. Each language crossing extract reveals rich online language practices. A variety of language crossing practices from African languages based on digital literacies, network resources, and networked audiences signaling multilingual communities are discussed. The ODFs are asynchronous, resulting in particular affordances. In terms of digital literacy resources, evidently, polylingualism is useful because of the character and nature of the language. Two strategies of language crossing are discussed below.

1. Crossing as a strategy for privacy and solidarity

Linguistically the crossing is shown through a combination of isiZulu and netspeak to ensure private conversation through technology (or digitally). The post by Bonke is addressed to an online multilingual community in order to exclude others. Code crossing is used to sustain the community of practice, as students may then contact each other and maintain relationships of studying something together through technology in ODeL. The student is inviting a more intimate, private relationship through email.

The crossing practices enhance the switches between technologies, e.g., ODF and email, and at other times other SNSs like WhatsApp and Facebook. Crossing is used as a strategy to exclude the majority and identify private company over a topic that transgresses some of the rules of the module, such as only posting in English and not exchanging prescribed books.

2. Crossing practices and the negotiation of ODF norms

Crossing is displayed when students appeal to the formation of online friendship groups by using youth slang in order to request to be included in the WhatsApp groups, for example, 'EY GUYS'. This infuriates one of the students, who commands them to stop it and use dedicated pages for it instead. (As seen in the list of topics in Table 1, there is such a topic and dedicated page, but students do not adhere to it.) This student is trying to maintain the norms for the groups, as discussion appears to be digressing from the initial topic, Assignment 2. As mentioned above, this forum is 'semi-regulated'. The lecturers' intention is to allow students freedom to interact and encourage multiple semiotic resources unhindered by rules. As a result of this semi-regulation, it appears that the norms and authority are negotiated by the students among themselves. This leads to a bottom-up establishment of norms in managing the ODF. Svelch argues that 'language management theory' together with more extensive research in online contexts can help us see what is and what is not considered a deviation from a norm and whether and how language norms are changing online (Svelch 2015, 173).

To fully appreciate the norms and the semi-regulation, one has to appreciate the educational context where the students are usually given instructions by e-tutors. For example, one of the e-tutors appeals to the students to use 'proper English'. Though this is vague, it has many connotations in an EAP module where students are taught to adhere to standard versions of English grammar; ironically, after saying not to use SMS language, the e-tutor proceeds to use an emoticon/smiley for frowning/winking, which probably sends a contradictory message to the students. This admonition from the tutor excludes African languages, varieties, and codes that have been shown so far above. It is prescriptive and appeals to notions of norms and standards that the data for this paper refute. Gibbs et al. (2008) examined social interactions during computer-mediated communication in an online learning environment and found that 'enabling students to govern their own conferences can be useful and a viable means for them to support one another within a learning context'.

Conclusion

In this paper, the African languages are addressed to local communities and often for private purposes. The codes, styles, and varieties that are expressed through networked multilingualism are diverse. They consist of slang, African languages, netspeak, emoticons, and some of the three elements of networked multilingualism. Thorne (2011, p. 305) observes that 'L2 students participate intensively in mediated environments that support vibrant and often plurilingual social networks. Online communities practice styles and cross into multilingual varieties of English that are excluded in Anglophone norms. The research questions posed above are answered through the interrelationship between language crossing (verbal ritual, artful performance during special moments, solidarity, group norms) and online multilingual communities.

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Audience Engagement and Participation on Social-Media: Language Usage in the Ghanaian Media

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Abstract

As concerns about the legitimacy of media language continues to rise, some experts attributed these rapid changes to the advent of social media. While social media may be a great tool to proximate news to audiences, give a better understanding, allow for engagement and participation, it is necessary to examine the manner in which media houses use language to achieve these results. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the language used by media houses to increase audience engagement and participation on social media platforms. The study was qualitative research that examined the social media metrics of media houses. The social media platform used for the study was Facebook because it is largely used by media houses in Ghana. The results showed that audience engagement varies across news categories like politics, entertainment, educations, public interest and economics, Media houses used direct speeches used by sources or subjects of news as headlines and some specific words were used frequently. This study allows practitioners to understand the effects of language on social media engagement and participation thus sharpening their craft.

Keywords: *Language, social media, audience, engagement and participation*

Introduction

Language has great influence on how individuals understand and communicate their feelings, thought and emotions (Maia & Santos, 2018). It is also used by various industries to create brand awareness, give information and make sales. The media industry has always been keen on the use of language in publications and production. The manner of use of language in the media determines its professionalism hence given much attention. Over the years, media conglomerates have shown dominance through the use of language and how well words are written. How news items are written determine the tone and what is to be communicated (Van Spanje, & De Vreese, 2014). Small media houses are also making deliberate efforts to gain and stay relevant through the publishing of facts written in good grammar and the right words.

Recently, the case is different. The inception of the internet has changed how the media uses language particularly on social media platforms. Professional journalistic norms and daily practices are being redefined in this technology-driven media environment, along with the organization and structure of newsrooms, the content of news, and the relationships between journalists, their readers, and their sources (Fisher, 2018). There is a shift from normative journalistic language to one that is engineered through the use of social media. An unending shift which seems to represent the future of journalism involving increased audience engagement and participation. The use of social media for news dissemination is incorporating jargons, pidgin, hashtags and casual language on a daily basis. This has seen audiences liking, commenting on, tagging and sharing media posts.

Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have evolved into powerful channels for the media to deliver information, find sources and story ideas, promote contents, and increase traffic to their websites (Thurman, 2018), as well as other means to reach, communicate, interact, and engage with their audiences (Al-Rawi, 2017). Studies have shown that Facebook users accessing the platform for news increased from 47 percent in 2014 to 63 percent in 2015 (Gottfried & Shearer, 2016). Newman et al (2016) add that Facebook has been cited as the most used platform for finding, watching, reading and sharing news. As mobile users seek short and up-to-date news, media houses ought to create intrinsic formats that are tailored to these information usage patterns, characterized by rapid delivery and promptness (Wolf & Schnauber, 2015). But, should the media address the needs of modifying their production models without considering normative journalistic standards?

Literature Review

The concept of audience engagement has become a populous term in journalism and media practice altogether (Ford & Green 2013). Scholars have used audience engagement to try to understand what motivates audiences to engage posts by sharing, liking, tagging and commenting on media posts (Lawrence et al 2018). While understanding the concept of engagement may not be a burdensome task, Nelson (2018) states that concerns have arisen about a definite definition of engagement. Hill (2019) proposes a pragmatic definition of engagement as a term used to portray how audiences interact, experience media content, artifacts, and events, ranging from participation in live performances to social media engagement or media participation itself. We agree with such an audience-centric understanding of engagement, but somehow it only accounts for one possible perspective of engagement in journalism. It is thus difficult to state where engagement begins, ends and spreads. Engagement is specific to geographical and socio-cultural settings. The same news causes different levels of engagement in different settings (Nelson, 2018).

Reader (2018) posits that if journalists will deliberately cultivate mutually beneficial bonds with audiences, the gesture will be reciprocated more positively. As the media relies heavily on quantification (Ferrer-Conill 2017), user metrics have become the focus of various newsrooms. The recent dominance of metrics and analytics to understand audiences makes the concept of audience engagement a powerful tool in media practice. With the hopes of driving traffic and gaining audience attention, Batsell (2015) argues that media houses pursue audience engagement due to market competition. Thus, creating content to engage audiences is crucial to media revenue creation. Because engagement is experiential, such an open approach casts it as a shaky concept, suggesting concrete forms of activities and interaction, as well as expression leading to a subjective relationship with the media.

Bolin and Velkova (2020) studied Facebook users who were exposed to the Facebook Demetricator plugin which removes metrics such as likes, shares and comments. The results showed that the removal of these metrics caused emotional stress and confusion among Facebook users as to how to respond to posts. It was also revealed that the number of likes, shares and comments were essential in determining the value of posts. Lawrence et al (2017) show in their study of initiatives by newsroom that engagement could be democratized by involving users in producing news. Thereby, modifying production to reach a larger audience founded on analytics.

This paper therefore determines the levels of engagement by exploring the language used in Facebook posts. To determine whether language significantly increases audience engagement, the following hypothesis were formulated.

Hypothesis 1 – Audience engagement varies across different news categories

Hypothesis 2 – The language used in Facebook posts increases audience engagement

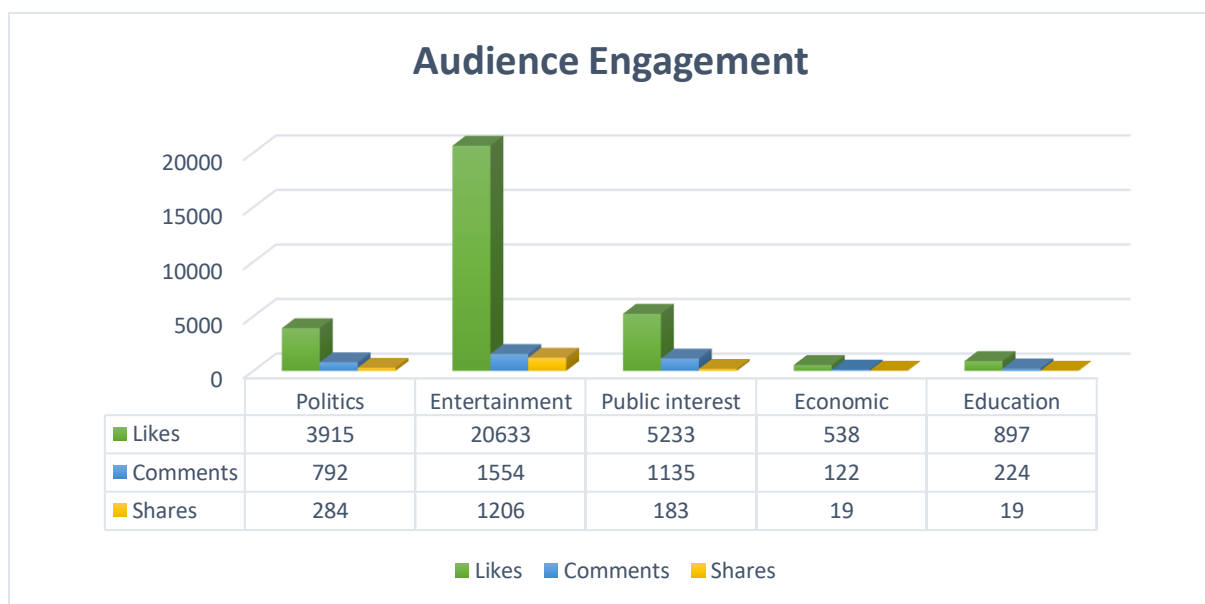
Methodology

The research seeks to ascertain whether language used by media houses on Facebook increases audience engagement and participation. A qualitative research approach was therefore explored to describe, interpret, contextualize, and gain deeper insight into Facebook posts. The research gathered data from Facebook posts of Multimedia Group (Joy News), Media General (TV3) and Despite Group of Companies (UTV). Textual analysis was used to analyze posts. The data was evaluated to determine the content of the posts, predict patterns, and track changes in engagement and communication in three main categories: likes, comments and shares. The data included the cumulative number of original articles, engagement posts, engagement metrics per post and engagement metrics per page. News articles were grouped in categories such politics, education, entertainment, human interest and economics and their averages taken to determine the articles that have more participations and engagement.

Results & Discussion

The first hypothesis states that audience engagement varies across different news categories. To test this, the average engagement was taken for politics, entertainment, public interest, economic and education categories across three media houses, TV3, UTV and Joy News. The results from figure 1 shows that entertainment posts had an average of 20,633 likes, 1,554 comments and 1,206 shares. Public interest posts followed with an average of 5,233 likes, 1,135 comments and 183 shares. Politics had an average of 3,915 likes, 792 comments and 284 likes. Education averages 897 likes, 224 comments and 19 shares. Economics comes in with average likes at 538, 122 comments and 19 shares.

Figure 1: Averages of engagement metrics



Based on these results, the first hypothesis is confirmed. This suggests that audience engagement varies across news categories like politics, entertainment, educations, public interest and economics. From

figure 1, it can be seen that entertainment has the most engagement from audiences. Ghanaians like to be entertained and have fun. Politics was the third least engaged category. It had some considerable likes, comments and shares. Although Ghanaians usually have public discourse on political issues, they do not engage political posts as much as shown in figure 1. This may be an indication that discussions from the public sphere are not carried on. People prefer to discuss the matter and leave it behind them. The engagement of education posts were neither high nor low. Although audiences may be interested in education posts, it is not an area they pay particular attention to. Even if they do, they hardly pay attention to educational reforms and pay little to no attention to government and consequently not holding them accountable. It may also be that most people do not understand the reforms that may be happening in that sector hence prefer not to react to them. While Ghanaians may complain about the economy of the country, results from figure 1 indicate that audiences rarely engage economic posts. Given Ghana's economy during the time this study was conducted, it is rather a revelation to find that people are less interested in economic stories despite the economic downturn. Most economic complains have fallen on deaf ears so the posture Ghanaians have assumed thereby causing low engagement on economic posts is not surprising. Public interest also had quite some engagement. Although the level of engagement may not be as high as entertainment, public interest posts rake in the second highest engagement after entertainment. The interest in such posts is as a result of the Ghanaian culture. The communal aspect of the Ghanaian culture allows for people to empathize and celebrate with neighbours in all situations. It is therefore not out of line with the findings shown in figure 1 that the Ghanaian feel closer to their neighbours through interactions which extends to the virtual space as well. As Nelson (2018) aptly puts it, it will be difficult for media houses to know which news category to prioritize. However, this does not come easy as media houses may have to focus on less priority areas such as entertainment. While Reader (2018) makes clear that journalists should deliberately cultivate mutually beneficial bonds with audiences, it is not clear to what extent these bonds should go.

Turning to language usage, some patterns were discovered. The media houses under review used direct speeches used by sources or subjects of the news as headlines indicating a less normative way of writing headlines; examples are “Victims of Ponzi schemes are mostly security personnel- Bank of Ghana”, “Dev’t Bank Ghana is one of the several policies to develop Ghana – Akuffo-Addo”. From figure 2, it is seen that the media houses studied used direct quotes of sources as headlines. While this is not the norm, it has gained popularity due to the familiarity it creates amongst audiences. The use of direct quotes as headlines evokes the emotions of audiences thereby causing them to react.



Figure 2: Direct Quotes in Headlines

The use of less formal (casual) writing was also detected from the various headlines as shown in figure 3. “Exclusive: Akrobeta interviews Borussia Dortmund legends”, “Black Sherif becomes first

Ghanaian to reach 100m Boomplay streams” for instance were less formal, more expressive, and addresses the audience directly. Making personalities the focus of news on social media drives engagement. Most people have become attached to personalities they admire. Van Spanje, & De Vreese (2014) assert that how news items are written determine the tone and what is to be communicated. Studies have shown that individuals feel associated with personalities by trying to know everything about them and following their social media handles. People have an attachment whether positive or negative for people who they may like, dislike, draw inspiration from and also admire. For the fact one may not have access to know these persons closely, it makes sense to want to engage posts that will make them know more about that person. This satisfies their needs and brings them a step closer to knowing more about the person they are attracted to. It is on this that media houses run sometimes. By making a personality the center of the story, they already have audiences who are attached and will engage the post without really knowing its content.



Figure 3: Posts Centered on Personalities

The study also notices how words such as ‘assaulted’, ‘stranded’, ‘trapped’ were used in articles frequently. Figure 4 shows that words such as assaulted, trapped and stranded evoke the emotions of audiences to engage posts by liking, sharing, tagging or commenting. This thus questions what really should be termed as sensationalism. Maia & Santos (2018) put it rather simply, language has prominent impact on how individuals understand and communicate their feelings, thought and emotions. Human beings have been socialized to recognize some words in a certain manner. Some words will be recognized as strong, others soft and others plainly rude. A word may evoke anger, fear, anxiety or even happiness. The media has leveraged on this to evoke emotions of audiences by using inducing words. The use of these words show the extent to which a situation may be serious or not.



Figure 4: Posts using specific words

Conclusion

Findings suggest that audience engagement and participation have become necessary and media houses are thriving on their language footing to drive traffic to their sites. Generally, the language pattern of social media posts in Ghana were the usage of direct quotes of sources, making a personality the center of news articles and the use of specific words in headlines. The data consist of mainly headlines as social media posts sought to engagement audiences with little in the shortest time. While writing style may influence engagement, this strategy may not be much useful in the future as audiences are increasingly turning to social media to gratify their needs. Hence, there may not really be the need to strategize much when it comes to social media except for framing and priming news more.

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Production and Perception of Word-Final Gemination in Modern Standard Arabic

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Abstract

Cross-linguistically, medial (chiefly intervocalic) gemination has been examined in a mass of literature, while word-final gemination has been generally overlooked. Existing scholarship on Arabic dialects in particular primarily addresses word-medial gemination (Hassan, 2002 for Iraqi and Khattab & Al-Tamimi, 2008 for Lebanese) with far fewer studies investigating gemination word-finally (Al-Tamimi, Abu-Abbas, & Tarawnah, 2010 for Jordanian). Hence, the current two-experiment study examines word-final geminates and pre-geminate vowels in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as produced (in Experiment 1) and perceived (in Experiment 2) by Saudi speakers of MSA in order to determine if a word-final singleton-geminate contrast is preserved in MSA, and to explore what consonantal and/or vocalic cues are utilized in the perception of word-final geminacy in that variety of Arabic. In the production experiment, ten participants were recruited and instructed to record twenty CVCVC minimal pairs of words in which the word-final consonants (singleton vs. geminate) and their preceding central vowels (short [a] vs. long [aa]) both contrasted in length. The words were each recorded at a normal speech rate using a carrier phrase. We then measured the temporal acoustics (i.e., duration) of the word-final consonants and their preceding vowels. In the perception experiment, we first carefully removed the final segment from each of the recorded stimuli used in Experiment 1 and presented the altered words auditorily to twenty-five participants who were instructed to predict the original word. The results from the production experiment show that consonants contrasted in length word-finally and that both short and long vowels were lengthened only pre-geminately in MSA. The results from the perception experiment demonstrate that short vowels triggered geminate responses and long vowels triggered singleton responses in their respective conditions, and that geminates and singletons were accurately perceived when preceded by short vowels and long vowels, respectively. The findings indicate that word-final geminate-singleton contrast is preserved in MSA and that vowels are lengthened pre-geminately, a cue used by listeners to perceive geminacy. Together, the findings from both experiments should not only have theoretical implications regarding the relationships between speech production and perception, but also methodological implications for language learning, teaching, and assessment.

Keywords: *singleton vs. geminate, Modern Standard Arabic, consonant vs. vowel duration*

Introduction

Gemination is a phenomenon that appears in some languages such as Arabic (e.g., Frej 2021), Cypriot Greek (Tserdanelis and Arvaniti 2001), Maltese (Hume, Darcy, and Spagnil 2014), Bengali (Lahiri and Hankamer 1988), Swiss German (Kraehenmann and Lahiri 2008), Italian (Esposito and Di Benedetto 1999), Japanese (Tsukada 2009), and Swedish (Engstrand and Krull 1994). Cross-linguistically there is an order of commonality of gemination with intervocalic geminates being the most common, followed by final ones, while the least common are initial ones (Thurgood 1993). Peripheral geminates have not been as heavily investigated as intervocalic ones cross-linguistically. Arabic is no exception, as most of the work conducted on different dialects investigated mainly intervocalic geminates such as in Iraqi dialect (Hassan

2002) and Lebanese dialect (Khattab and Al-Tamimi 2008). A few studies such as Al-Tamimi, Abu-Abbas, and Tarawnah (2010) and Frej (2021) investigated word-final geminates in dialects (Jordanian and MSA spoken by either Lebanese or Moroccan, respectively).

Pre-geminate vowels may interact with their adjacent consonants. For instance, vowels preceding geminates are shortened in languages such as Norwegian (Fintoft 1961) and Italian (Esposito and Di Benedetto 1999) and lengthened in other languages such as Japanese (Takeyasu 2012). Hassan (2002) indicated that vowel shortening in a pre-geminate context is a universal tendency that Arabic follows, a claim that was later supported by Al-Tamimi et al. (2010). However, both studies examined dialectal Arabic, and the results they uncovered may not be overextended to MSA. Recently, Ferrat and Guerti (2017) examined the production of vowels preceding and following intervocalic geminates in MSA as pronounced by Algerian native speakers and reported a decrease in the duration of vowels preceding the geminates and an increase in that of the vowels following geminates. From a perception perspective, consonant (but not the preceding vowel) duration has been previously found to be a reliable cue in the perception of singleton-geminate contrast (Obrecht 1965). Meanwhile, Hassan (2002) and Al-Tamimi et al. (2010) made claims that shortened vowels enhance the perception of gemination, but their claims were based on assumptions that still necessitate empirical evidence.

Thus, this study seeks to investigate the production and perception of word-final geminates in MSA and answer three interrelated questions as follows. 1) *Is word-final geminate vs. singleton contrast maintained in MSA?* 2) *Is there any temporal compensation between word-final geminates vs. singletons and their preceding short vs. long vowels in MSA?* 3) *Do MSA speakers perceive a word-final geminate vs. singleton contrast based on the consonant length, on the preceding vowel duration, or on both?* Two experiments were designed and implemented to answer the aforementioned research questions. In the production experiment, both durations of consonant (geminate vs. singleton) and pre-geminate vowels (long vs. short) were quantified. In the perception experiment, vowel and consonant durations were used to examine the perception of final singleton-geminate contrast.

Production Experiment: Methods and Results

Methods

We first prepared a list of 20 minimal-pair CVCaC MSA words with final singleton-geminate consonants (10 stops, 7 fricatives, 2 nasals, and 1 lateral) and with pre-geminate short-long vowels (/a/ vs. /aa/). The list was presented to the participants on computer screen in four sequences: CVCaaCC, CVCaaC, CVCaCC, and CVCaC (where /aa/ represents a long vowel and CC represents a geminate consonant). Following the procedure in similar previous studies, the stimulus items were presented in a carrier phrase in the form of /gul-tu ____/ “I said ____”. Ten single-gender (female) native Arabic speakers (age mean= 33) from the central region of Saudi Arabia were recruited to record the list at a normal speech rate. The edges of the target consonants and vowels were marked on Praat (Boersma and Weenink 2022), and then the duration of each segment type was extracted in a separate file. Then, the data were structured and prepared for statistical tests.

Results

As shown in Table 1, there are consistent differences in the duration means between segment length types. The first difference is between the means of both consonant length type (geminate vs. singleton) in that geminates are almost twice as long ($M = 0.304$; $SD = 0.0863$) as their corresponding singletons ($M = 0.164$; $SD = 0.061$). The second difference is between the means of both pre-consonant vowels. The difference is that pre-geminate vowels have a longer mean ($M = 0.278$; $SD = 0.084$) than pre-singleton vowels ($M = 0.145$; $SD = 0.034$) in both length types (long and short).

Table 1: Duration means of final consonants (singleton vs. geminate) and preceding vowels (short and long).

Segment Type Length Type	Consonants	Vowels	
		Pre-Geminate	Pre-Singleton
Geminate/Long	0.304	0.278	0.233
Singleton/Short	0.164	0.145	0.131

To test the main and interaction effects between the segment types and their duration, a repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was performed. The duration of segment type was fitted into the test as the dependent variable, with segment length type (geminates vs. singletons; long or short) and pre-consonant vowels as the independent variables. The test revealed that consonant length type has a significant main effect on its duration ($F [1] = 89.3$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.908$). Furthermore, within the consonant length types, the pair-wise test of the estimated marginal means showed a significant difference between the duration of geminates and their singleton counterparts. Thus, word-final geminates are significantly longer than their singleton counterparts ($F = 1877$, $p < .001$). Moreover, the test revealed that pre-geminate vowels—either long vowels ($M = 0.278$; $SD = 0.027$) or for short vowels ($M = 0.145$; $SD = 0.009$)—are longer than both pre-singleton long vowels ($M = 0.145$; $SD = 0.009$) and short vowels ($M = 0.131$; $SD = 0.009$).

Perception Experiment: Methods and Results

Methods

The recorded stimuli in the production experiment were altered and used for eliciting force-choice tasks in the current perception experiment. The final consonant of each stimulus was removed and replaced with a beep noise. Then, a convenience sample of twenty-five normal-hearing participants (age mean= 35) from the same region as those in the production experiment were recruited in the perception experiment. The participants were presented with the stimuli in a random order and in a self-paced manner through an online platform and were asked to judge if the original word had a final singleton or a geminate consonant. Each participant was provided with two practice trials that were ultimately excluded from the results.

Results

As indicated in Table 2, there is a difference in the percentages of participant responses affected by segment length type. The participants associated short vowel and consonant length type (geminate) with geminates with a percentage of roughly 65%. On the other hand, long vowel and consonant length type (geminate) had less effect on singleton responses with a percentage of up to 44%. In the condition of long vowels and consonant length type (singleton) cues the participants responded with a singleton 55.60% of the time.

Table 2: Response distribution according to segment length type.

Segment Length Response	Geminates		Singletons	
	Long vowel	Short vowel	Long vowel	Short vowel
Geminate response	43.60%	64.80%	44.40%	49.60%
Singleton response	56.40%	35.20%	55.60%	50.40%

To test the effect size of segment length type cues on participant responses, a repeated-measure logistic regression model was performed. The participants' responses were fitted into the test as the predicted variable, while segment length types were the predictor variable. The model stated that vowel length types have a statistically significant main effect on the participant response (Wald $\chi^2(1) = 6.710977$, $p = .010$). This indicate that, in general, vowel length types contribute to the participants' choices. More specifically, short vowels reported a significant value in terms of affecting the responses (Wald $\chi^2(1) = 9.033$, $p = .003$), while long vowels did not reach the threshold of significance (Wald $\chi^2(1) = 0.719$, $p = .379$). In terms of consonant length types, the main effect was not statistically significant with regard to the participant responses (Wald $\chi^2(1) = 3.000$, $p = .083$). This indicates that no mentionable effect of consonant length types can be reported with regard to the responses. However, geminate consonants revealed a significant effect on responses (Wald $\chi^2(1) = 6.704$, $p = .010$). This shows that geminates affected the participants' responses more than singletons, which displayed a non-significant value of $p = .893$.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the production and perception of word-final geminates and their preceding vowels in MSA as spoken by native speakers of NA in two successive production and perception experiments. The acoustic results from the production experiment revealed that consonant length type contrast in final-word position is realized in MSA. This agrees with the findings of previous studies of word-medial geminates in Arabic, such as in the case of Iraqi Arabic (Hassan 2002), Lebanese Arabic (Khattab and Al-Tamimi 2008), and MSA (Ferrat and Guerti 2017). It is also in keeping with the findings reported with regard to word-final geminates in Jordanian Arabic (Al-Tamimi et al. 2010), and Lebanese and Moroccan versions of MSA (Frej 2021). In this current work, there is disagreement with previous assumptions that geminate vs. singleton contrast is neutralized over time (Ghalib 1984). The duration ratio between word-final geminates and singletons is not small, indicating that the contrast in MSA is far from neutralizing in production. This neutralization can occur when some languages, which were reported to have had a word-final geminate vs. singleton contrast, have lost this contrast over time. Regardless, there is a great difference in duration between geminates and singletons. The indications are clear and in line with previous work on word-final geminate vs. singleton contrasts in other languages such as in Cypriot Greek (Tserdanelis and Arvaniti 2001), Maltese (Hume et al. 2014), Bengali (Lahiri and Hankamer 1988),

Swiss German (Kraehenmann and Lahiri 2008), Italian (Esposito and Di Benedetto 1999), Japanese (Tsukada 2009), and Swedish (Engstrand and Krull 1994).

The results with regard to pre-consonant vowel duration showed that the interaction between the final consonant length types and their preceding vowel is significant. This demonstrates a temporal relationship between vowel duration and consonant length type. That is, in both conditions (long vs. short), pre-geminate vowels are significantly longer than pre-singleton vowels. These findings are at odds with Hassan's (2002) conclusion that Arabic follows the universal tendency to shorten pre-geminate vowels. Furthermore, Al-Tamimi et al. (2010) on word-final geminates in Jordanian Arabic and Ferrat and Guerti (2017) on word-medial geminates in MSA, reported the same findings as Hassan. There seems to be a lack of symmetry in the literature on this matter. For instance, in languages such as Bengali (Lahiri and Hankamer 1988) and Maltese (Hume et al, 2014), there is a tendency to shorten vowels preceding geminates, while in Japanese (Idemaru and Guion 2008), the tendency is to lengthen vowels preceding geminates. One possible explanation for the vowel behavior in this study is that, theoretically, the duration of pre-geminate vowels is not surprising, since in MSA word-final geminates are always found in superheavy syllables preceded by stressed vowels (Halpern 2009). Since our stimuli were limited to monosyllabic words, it is not a surprising finding that the vowels are longer in stressed syllables.

The perception results with regard to word-final geminate based on vowel length type (long vs. short) and consonant length type (geminate vs. singleton) cues, showed that native MSA speakers are able to perceive geminacy based on both vowel and consonant length type cues. The findings from the vowel length types portion partially disagree with Obrecht's (1965) conclusions relating to his investigation of geminate word-medial perception on the part of Arab native speakers, whereas the results in terms of consonant length type do agree with his conclusions. Specifically, he found that the length of the consonant is the most salient cue of geminate perception, and no other cues were reported to affect perception. The results indicated that consonant length type (geminate) is the best cue for geminates vs singletons contrast perception, which is in line with Obrecht's work on word-medial geminates. On the other hand, Hassan (2004) and Al-Tamimi et al. (2010) both agreed that vowel cues assess in the perception of word-final geminate vs. singletons contrast in the respective preceding varieties of Arabic, a conclusion that was supported by our results. However, more differentiation between long and short vowels was obtained in the following respect; short vowels had a significantly more noticeable effect than long vowels triggering responses in terms of geminates, while long vowels triggered singleton responses. This may be due to the tendency for the Arabic language to place geminates after stressed vowels (Thurgood 1993) which results in listeners being perceptually more sensitive to lengthened short vowel.

The overall conclusions suggest that geminate vs. singleton contrast in MSA word-finally is preserved, and there is a temporal relationship between word-final consonants and their preceding vowels. Furthermore, vowel and consonant length types are reliable cues to word-final geminate vs. singleton contrast in MSA. More specifically, short vowels and geminates trigger geminate responses more than do long vowels and singletons, while long vowels and singletons trigger singleton responses to a greater extent.

One drawback of this study was the limited number of participants in the experimental process. Another limitation is that both experiments were self-administered due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. In addition, only durational cues were investigated in the areas of production and perception. Furthermore, in the production study, the work was conducted on careful speech. Future work should focus on non-durational acoustic cues and the articulatory characteristics of geminate vs. singleton contrast and should examine authentic data from natural causal speech. Moreover, a comparative study of all types of geminates in MSA (initial, final, medial) would be helpful.

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Designing Lessons to Create Empathetic Learners

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Abstract

One important task as an educator is to contribute to students' growth into morally responsible adults. Part of this is ensuring that the students become more empathetic. The purpose of this study is to investigate how humans learn empathy and, as there is also evidence of empathy leading to better language skills, how that knowledge can be applied in the EFL classroom. The literature provides definitions of empathy and an explanation of why being empathetic is necessary. Language activities and exercises that help students gain empathy are provided and explained.

Keywords: *EFL, empathy, lesson planning*

1 Introduction

In 2008, US president Barack Obama said, “The biggest deficit that we have in our society and in the world right now is an empathy deficit. We are in great need of people being able to stand in somebody else’s shoes and see the world through their eyes (Conroy 2017).” Since “[empathy] is not an innate ability present more naturally in some people than others, but rather a skill that can be taught and nurtured through a supportive educational environment (McLennan 2008),” this places educators in a crucial role to provide the instruction and circumstances for their students to become empathetic human beings. In the following sections definitions of empathy and its importance will be offered. Proven methods of teaching empathy will be shown, and finally, ideas for lesson planning will be suggested.

2 Definition and Importance of Empathy

2.1 What is empathy?

The modern Oxford Dictionary defines empathy as “the power of mentally identifying oneself with (and so fully comprehending) a person or object of contemplation (Brown 1993).” Research has been documented showing empathy to be “a sense of understanding between people – an area of common ground, a sharing of feeling and emotion, an ability to feel and see things through the eyes of others – an understanding that, while it is difficult to define and measure, it is too important for human relationships to ignore (Cooper 2011).” *Sympathy* is understanding another’s feelings and perhaps feeling concern or pity for them. Whereas *empathy* is sharing the same emotions and perspective as the other (Burton 2015). For this study, the definition of empathy will be the ability to understand and feel the emotions of another, to see from their perspective, and to respond in an appropriate way.

2.2 Why empathy and teaching empathy are important

To build positive relationships between people and societies, empathy is a necessary tool. In his book, *The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World*, Jamil Zaki, director of the Social Neuroscience Lab at Stanford University, collected research and cases of people using empathy to improve both personal relationships and the well-being of their communities. In his research he noticed that learning to have empathy for even just one person who is from a different group can result in having empathy for that other person’s entire group (Zaki 2019).

Paul Bloom, a professor of psychology and cognitive science at Yale University, points out the weaknesses of empathy. According to him, people tend to have empathy for only those like themselves and over-identifying with someone may get in the way of helping them. He believes empathy is only useful if paired with rational action (Vickers 2017). However, in spite this plausible shortcoming, empathy is necessary to inspire humans to love and assist others (Decety and Cowell 2014). Also, as the previous paragraph explained and the following section will show, there are ways to teach empathy for others in outside groups.

One reason for educators to include empathy training in their courses is the documented loss of empathy in young people. A study done on the empathy levels of university students in the United States between 1979 and 2009, found that empathy had declined (Konrad et al. 2011). In October of 2018, as a pre-test for an experiment in teaching empathy, the author administered a translated version of the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ) to 69 first-year university students at Tokyo Woman's Christian University. The median score (39.1) was 13% lower than TEQ's suggested average empathy level of 45 points and 15% lower than the mean of Spreng's three studies of Canadian university students (Miller 2018; Spreng et al. 2009). Even considering cultural differences and conceivable translation issues with the questionnaire, this result indicates that Japanese students could be significantly lacking in empathy.

What will happen when these American and Japanese students become adults who are unable to empathize? Simon Baron-Cohen, professor of developmental psychopathology at the University of Cambridge, says that having low empathy does not necessarily mean they will harm others. However, it does make them less sensitive to others who are in pain (Baron-Cohen 2011). Inhumane practices are more easily perpetrated when not enough people possess adequate empathy to counter them. This underscores the importance of teaching empathy.

3 Teaching and using empathy

3.1 Evidence

Empathy in foreign language education is not a new concept. Almost fifty years ago, H. Douglas Brown, professor emeritus at San Francisco State University, began looking at the effects empathy has on language learning. He recommended role-playing and group work in foreign language classes to strengthen students' empathy (Brown 1973).

More recent literature also suggests influencing empathy through role-playing, teamwork (Chen 2008), and authentic instances of communication (Daewele 2011). Researchers found that when students role play, they gain greater empathy for the kind of people they act as (Varkey et al. 2006). Empathy can be taught in situations where a character in a story or video is upset, and the teacher talks with the students about how they think the character feels (Pizarro and Salovey 2002). An experiment showed that when students think about how another person is feeling, they showed more likeliness to help that person (Sierksma et al. 2015). Using any type of narrative, actively discussing the characters' thoughts, beliefs, wants, and feelings trains students to think about others (Dunn et al. 1991). One experiment discovered that students in a reading program who had discussed the emotions of the characters in the stories showed increased empathy even after six months (Ornaghi et al. 2014). Two psychological experiments proved that reading about people from different backgrounds caused the students to better understand others and helped eliminate stereotyping and prejudice (Johnson et al. 2014). In addition, schools that taught about multiculturalism showed an increase in their students' empathy (Le et al. 2009; Chang and Le 2010).

Not only can the study of foreign language increase empathetic behavior, but empathy in turn also helps improve foreign language acquisition and use. Research has shown empathy contributing to accuracy (Dewaele and Wei 2012), pronunciation (Guiora et al. 1972), and aiding in comprehension and expression of emotions (Dewaele 2011). Having empathy also has been shown to improve overall academic performance (Le et al. 2009; Chang and Le 2010).

3.2 Lesson planning

3.2.1 Role playing

Role-playing exercises ask the students to take on another persona which requires them to try to understand someone else's thoughts and feelings. For a speaking class, create role-playing cards with characters who have different opinions about a topic. Give time for the students to read, think about their character, and get into the characters' minds. In the example in Appendix 1, the students read an online article about the situation of young people in Italy. The teacher created many different character cards based on real comments readers had made on the article website. After reading the text and answering comprehension questions, students briefly write their opinions about the issue. Then they are given one of the role-playing cards and are asked to read it and imagine they are that person. They think about not only their character's opinions and feelings, but why those characters might think the way they do. The students are then assigned teams that include different characters, are given discussion questions, and are asked to have a discussion acting as their assigned character. As a wrap-up exercise, they are asked to write about their opinion and if/how acting out and hearing about several different perspectives changed their own thoughts about the issue and how it relates to their personal lives.

3.2.2 Thinking about how others feel and finding similarities

Exercises where students imagine others' emotions and perspectives are effective with listening and reading exercises that have a narrative and characters. As a warm-up, give the students an introduction to the story and have them think, write, and/or talk about the main characters' feelings, hopes, and beliefs then share their ideas with the class. After the listening/reading, do not limit the comprehension check to fact-checking questions. Include questions that ask them again about the characters' emotions and perhaps ask them to predict the characters' future actions or what the students themselves would do in the same situation. Follow-up activities could include writing a short essay from a character's point of view or a dialogue between several characters where feelings are shared.

As mentioned in the previous section, including material where the characters have significantly different backgrounds from the students is important for learning how to empathize, especially when the students are encouraged to find commonalities as opposed to differences. This can be seen in the listening lesson example in Appendix 2.

4 Conclusion

This essay shows the importance of empathy and several ways language teachers may assist their students in becoming more empathetic individuals. Educators are encouraged to include empathy-building exercises in their curriculum. The consequences of a world society that lacks the will or ability to try to understand the "other" are disastrous. Opportunities for further research include experimenting with different methods of empathy training that include not only students, but also teachers, scholars, and administrators.

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Appendix

1

You are:

Salvatore, 25 years old, artist

"I agree that older people control everything in Italy, but I disagree with moving abroad to find something better. We should try to improve things ourselves. For two years, I begged a museum to show some modern art made by local young people. They allowed me and some friends to have a small exhibition there. It was so successful that they now have a permanent exhibition showing new art by local artists! The city just opened a modern art gallery and inside there is a studio where university students teach art to children, tourists, juvenile delinquents, and the homeless. Changing my hometown's attitude about modern art and young people wasn't easy, but I realized the youth have to be persistent in order to improve society and their own lives."

Think about why you (Salvatore) have this opinion. How did you feel for the two years you begged the museum to show your art? How do you feel now? What do you think you will do in the future? Be prepared to explain and defend opinion to your group.

2

Background: Sandra Tsing Loh is a writer and actress from California. She was raised by her rather strict Chinese father. This radio program is a true story about something quite shocking and very funny she found out about her father

Predict: What do you think the relationship between Sandra and her father is like? How do you think Mr. Loh feels that his daughter knows his secret?

Listening: What did she first think when she heard about her father? Imagine you are Sandra; how would you feel? What is similar between you and Sandra?

What do the two young men say about how they felt when they first met Mr. Loh? Have you ever looked up to someone before? What is similar between you and the young men?

How does Sandra feel at the end? How would you feel? How do you think she can improve her relationship with her father? What is similar between your relationship with your parents and Sandra's relationship with her father?

Post Listening: Imagine yourself in Sandra's position. How would you feel if you found out something funny and surprising about one of your parents? How would you try to improve the relationship with them?

The Buddha in Sophocles' Tragedy, *King Oedipus*: An Intertextual Analysis

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Abstract

Academics argue that Greek myths and legends have had influence on Buddhist stories: Jataka tales, Theri Gata (Psalms of older Buddhist nuns) and even Mahavamsa (a Sri Lankan historical chronicle). However, this article asserts that there is evidence in Sophocles' King Oedipus to argue that the Buddha's life story and key Buddhist concepts have influenced pre-Christian Greek philosophy and literature, especially Sophocles' King Oedipus. When reading the play with the notion that there could be an intertextual relationship (or new texts are built on the existing texts and discourses), the reader may see that Sophocles' play contains incidents that remind them the special occasions of the Buddha's life-story, his utterances and the key Buddhist concepts such as the truth of suffering, cessation of suffering, the three poisons (greed, hatred and delusion), and finding the truth within one's own self. The present intertextual study explored only the special occasions of the Buddha's life to make the exploration more focused. The study found that Sophocles alludes to the Buddha's life story in his attempt to raise a moral culprit to a moral hero with higher moral values. This article, however, acknowledges that one needs to cross-check the other historical and philosophical references when claiming that Sophocles had had influence from the Buddha's life story when composing King Oedipus.

Keywords: *Buddhism, The Buddha's life story, King Oedipus, Greece, Sophocles,*

1. Introduction

When analytically reading and discussing the Sophoclean play *King Oedipus* (429 BC), the reader may identify an intertextual relationship between *King Oedipus* and the Buddha's life story (624 – 544 BC). This intertextual relationship varies from having references in the text in terms of special occasions in the Buddha's life to the central Buddhist concepts: truth of suffering, the causes of suffering (three poisons: craving, hatred, ignorance), cessation of suffering and finding the truth within one's own self. The allusions to the Buddha's life story and the Buddhist concepts occur in the play in terms of plot structure, characterization, and thematic development (Ranaweera, 2001).

When reading between the lines, the reader can trace allusions in the play to the Buddha's life story. Buddhists believe that Asitha, a sage, at prince Siduhath's (The Buddha's name before his enlightenment) naming ceremony declared that if Siduhath would remain at home he would become a powerful monarch whereas if he would leave home, he would become the Buddha. One can hear a similar incident in the Sophoclean play, *King Oedipus*. Buddhists also believe that the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and his passing away occurred on a full moon day. Similarly, evidence in Sophocles' play suggests that Oedipus' birth, discovery of his identity and his symbolic death, occurred on a full moon day. Finally, Buddhists believe that the Buddha asked his first followers to walk from one village to another guiding other human beings to cross the sea of samsara. He practically enacted his talk by walking from village to village, guiding people until he breathed the final sip of breath, at the age of 80. One can see the Buddha's motto of life being symbolically suggested when Oedipus says to Teiresias, "To help his fellow-men / With all his power is man's most noble work" (314-315). One needs to cross-reference with historical, philosophical and

archaeological sources to see whether it was Sophocles who had had inspiration from the Buddha's life stories or it was the Buddhist writers (in the 5th century AD and thereafter) who had influence from *King Oedipus* when developing the Buddhist literature. Though one may argue for both sides of the case, it would not be rational to argue that the key concepts of Buddhism (i.e., the four wheels of truth) were developed in Buddhism with the influence from Sophoclean play.

The following questions were raised to focus the exploration of the influence of the Buddha's life story in Sophocles' play, *King Oedipus*:

- a. What are the probable allusions to the Buddha's life story that one may find when reading Sophocles' play, *King Oedipus*?
- b. Who got inspiration from whom: Is it Sophocles or Buddhist writers, or both?
- c. If there are any allusions to the Buddha's life-story what could be the probable reasons why Sophocles uses such allusions?

2. Reciprocal Influence

There is lack of research on the influence of Buddhism or the Buddha's life story on Pre-Christian Greek literature or philosophy, especially Sophoclean play, *King Oedipus*. There are vague references that the 5th century BC Greek philosophers' (i.e., Thales, Pythagoras and Plato) teachings represent some thoughts that were alien to the 5th century BC Greek thoughts (Knighton, 1945; Seldeslachts, 2007). By comparing some concepts by Thales, Pythagoras and Plato with the Buddhist concepts, Knighton (1845) vaguely argues that those key Greek philosophers should have learned Buddhism in Egypt.

Similarly, some Sri Lankan stories (including Jataka tales, Psalms of Buddhist nuns, and even *Mahavamsa*, the Sri Lankan historical chronicle) are found to have been influenced by Greek myths, including the Oedipus myth (Peris, 1980/81, 2011). The story about Mata (an older nun) that Uppalavanna tells, while expressing her pleasure at being a Buddhist nun, is a replica of the Oedipus tale (David, 1909). Mata's tale sounds more similar in its structure to the Sophoclean play than the popular Oedipus myth because Mata's tale is well-crafted to evoke the listeners' deep emotions and to convince them that they are wallowing in delusion. The Oedipus-type Mahadeva, an Indian Mahayana Buddhist monk, is a much-quoted tale (Mair, 1986). While Mata's tale closely resembles the pathos and higher moral values that Sophocles develops in his play, Mahadeva is depicted as a criminal, imposter and a charlatan (Mair, 1986). One may also see Oedipus' influence on *Mahavamsa*, Sri Lanka's historical chronicle and some Buddhist Jataka tales. (Peris, 1980/81, 2011; Obeysekere, 1989). Though Peris (1980/81, 2011) asserts more about how Greek myths have had remarkable impact on Asian and particularly Sri Lankan texts, there is a limited number of research papers that discusses the influence of Buddhism on pre-Christian Greek philosophy or plays (Ranaweera, 2021).

3. Intertextuality

This study used intertextuality or text-to-text relationship as a methodological tool for the exploration of the Buddha's life-story in *King Oedipus* because textual evidence suggests that new texts and discourses are built on the existing texts and discourses (Johnston, 2013). The term, intertextuality, refers to different forms of relations between two or more texts (Leslic-Thomas, 2005). They may vary from "most direct repetitions to most indirect allusions" to existing or previous texts or discourses (Johnston, 2013). What it means is that when reading texts, one can hear "new discourse echo[ing] past

discourses” (Johnston, 2013). The reader can see Hemingway (1952), for example, effectively playing with intertextuality in *The Old Man and the Sea*. The reader can trace allusions to Homer’s *The Iliad*, Sophocles’ *King Oedipus*, Aristotle’s *Poetics* and the *Bible*. The text itself is complex in its form because one cannot identify the *The Old Man and the Sea* as a novel nor a short story. Hemingway gets help from *The Iliad* in terms of the style of language. Instead of long, complex sentences, the reader can see simple, or compound sentences joined with coordinating conjunctions, reminding the reader of the oral quality of language that they can see in Homer’s *The Iliad* that was meant for listening by the general interlocutors. Interestingly, Hemingway uses Jesus Christ as the central symbol throughout the story.

Moreover, even the reader’s conceptual understanding builds on the existing knowledge or prior schemas (Carrel & Eirsterhold, 1983). Oedipus had been conceived by the 5th century Greeks as a moral culprit, but Sophocles portrays him to be a moral hero. Therefore, his fifth century BC Greek spectators needed a living moral hero at the time as a model to build their conceptions of Sophocles’ unconventional moral hero. The Buddhist world knows about a similar unconventional moral hero, Angulimala, whom the Buddha raised to the status of a great moral hero. Provided that the 5th century Greeks had trade relations with people in the East, the reader can assume that Greeks had been well-aware of the Buddha’s life story and the key concepts in Buddhism. The initial metaphor that Wordsworth uses in “Daffodils” is an example of how poets help readers to move from familiar/concrete to abstract understanding. In the initial line, “I wandered lonely as a cloud,” Wordsworth uses a lonely, isolated cloud that floats without any destination to go as a metaphor for the reader to comprehend the speaker’s psycho-emotional status. Without this real-life reference, the reader may find it rather abstract to understand the significance of the scene (a host of daffodils) to the speaker. Similarly, Sophocles should have got help from such references or allusions to other previous or existing texts (stories about famous people, beliefs, philosophical concepts) to build on his tragic hero in *King Oedipus*.

4. Buddha’s Life Story & Plot Structure

A close exploration of the plot structure in Sophocles’ *King Oedipus* may suggest to the reader that either Sophocles or the Buddhist scholars have had inspiration from either Buddhism or Sophoclean play. The play’s central plot structure focuses on Oedipus’ attempt to find the killer of Laius. First, he finds the killer outside, then inside and soon he tries to find his own identity. Oedipus’ attempt to find the killer in the external world can be considered as a symbolic act. What he truly finds is the truth, yet he begins his search, as any truth seeker would do, in the external world while having instructions from the expert others. However, soon he realizes that truth does not lie in the outside world but within his own self. His conversation with Jocasta over the prophecy and Laius’ death encourages him to turn inside and explore his own self. This scenario resembles the Buddhist concept of exploring the world within one’s own self. His journey of self-discovery symbolizes one’s quest of truth, which is a well-known concept to the Buddhist world. Additionally, when closely reading and analyzing the Sophoclean play’s plot structure, the reader can see several close references to the Buddha’s life.

4.1. Corinthian Messenger & Asitha’s Forecasts

Asitha declared that prince Siduhath would become an all-powerful monarch in the whole island of *Dambadiva* if he would remain a laity. If Siduhath would leave the palace, he was predicted to become the Buddha. Similarly, the Corinthian Messenger in *King Oedipus* reveals that Corinthians have decided to make Oedipus the king “of all the isthmus” (Sophocles, 1947, 936). What Messenger says suggests to the reader that Oedipus would become a powerful monarch only if he would move back to Corinth. What

brings you your birth; / and brings you death” (Sophocles, 1947, 437). This statement suggests to the reader that Oedipus is going to hear about his birth, and he is going to die the same day. Oedipus blinds his own eyes, or he metaphorically dies immediately after discovering his identity. Buddhists celebrate the Buddha’s birth, becoming the Buddhahood and passing away on the same day, the full moon day of May every year. Even the Theban elders say that they are going to celebrate Oedipus’ birth while thanking Cithaeron, a mountainous place, for facilitating his assumed birth. Their act of singing and dancing in veneration of the mount Cithaeron is ironic and strange because Oedipus was not born on Mount Cithaeron. He was born in the palace of Thebes but later was discarded for death in Cithaeron. One may take this as a distant hint to assume that even Siduhath ought to have been born in such a mountainous grassland.

4. 2. 1. Oedipus’s Self-Discovery

Sophocles develops self-discovery as the central plot in the play. In the beginning, the playwright uses Oedipus’ act of finding the assassin of the former king, Laius, as a symbolic quest, which soon turns to a quest of self. In other words, Oedipus tries to find the killer (his own identity or the truth) within himself. The conflict of this self-discovery develops to its climax in the conversation between Jocasta, Messenger and Oedipus. In order to discard Oedipus’ fear of marrying his mother, Messenger reveals that Polybus, and Merope are not Oedipus’ true parents. He further reveals that Oedipus (as an infant) was given to him by one of Laius’ shepherds. The Theban elders say that Jocasta should know the shepherd better. Realizing the hint of Oedipus’ identity, Jocasta implores Oedipus not to continue his quest, and she leaves the place in a frenzy since she fails to stop Oedipus. There is a reference to one of the Buddhist concepts in how Jocasta acts here and says, “Such things / Must be forgotten, if life is to be endured” (Sophocles, 1947, 981-983). Buddhism, similarly, asserts that living in the present moment (rather than worrying about the past or future) is a better option for peaceful living (Rahula, 1959). Immediately after she leaves, Oedipus says the following to show that he is determined to get the truth unravel at any cost:

Let all come out,
However vile! However base it be,
I must unlock the secret of my birth.
The women, with more than woman’s pride, is shamed
By my low origin. I am the child of Fortune.
The giver of good, and shall not be ashamed.
She is my mother; my sisters are the Seasons;
My rising and my falling march with theirs.
Born thus, I ask to be no other man
Than that I am, and will know who I am. (Sophocles, 1947, 1075-1085)

Oedipus’ determination reminds Buddhists how Siduhath sat under the Bodhi tree with determination that he would not get up until he discovered the truth or would become the Buddha. Buddhist writers personify Siduhath’s psycho-emotional conflict at the foot of the Bodhi tree by enlivening those emotions as an army of evil forces that stood against him ceasing the cycle of birth and rebirth. Buddhists believe that Siduhath sacrificed all his material wealth, personal comfort and pleasure for spiritual achievement. At this moment, the reader knows that Oedipus would lose his crown and human relationships that he has acquired for fifteen years if he is proved to be a slave born. However, as Siduhath did, Oedipus is determined to find the truth at any cost. This is not the first time that Oedipus rejects the crown. When he left Corinth, he left everything: his parental love, emotional comfort, security and his right to the crown. When the Corinthian Messenger comes with the message that Corinthians have decided to make him the

king, he refuses it, saying that he cannot go back to Corinth until his mother lives. On the first two occasions, he refuses the crown for fear of committing sins or harming others. This time, he refuses the crown over his true identity or finding the truth. What is more important for him is not material wealth but truth. Similarly, Siduhath refused the crown and all his material wealth, pleasure and comfort and started living as an ascetic. In Siduhath's tale, Asitha predicted that Siduhath would become a *Sakvithi* (an all-powerful monarch) and Suddhodana (Siduhath's father) took all measures to keep him happy and make him strive to become a great king. However, Siduhath sacrifices everything, as Oedipus does, for the sake of truth or attaining the Buddhahood. On this occasion, therefore, the reader does not find any difference between Oedipus' determination to discover his true identity and Siduhath's determination to attain enlightenment or to find the truth.

Immediately after Oedipus declaring his determination to find the truth about himself, the Theban elders (Chorus) begin to sing:

If my prophetic eye fails not, **tomorrow's moon**
Makes known to all the earth
The secret of our master's birth
Cithaeron's name shall fill
Our song; his father, mother, nurse was she,
And for this boon
To our great King, praised shall Cithaeron be
Phoebus our Lord, be this according to thy will. (Sophocles, 1947, 1086-1093)

While Watling (Sophocles, 1947) uses the word, "moon," in some other translations, "moon" is written as "full moon" (Sophocles, 1942, 1962). Thus, Theban elders' song suggests that Oedipus was born on a full moon day. Similarly, the conversation between Oedipus, Corinthian Messenger and Laius' Shepherd, Oedipus' determination and the Theban elders' song suggest that Oedipus discovers the truth on the same day, a full moon day.

4. 2. 2. Oedipus's Death

The reader may assume that Oedipus' symbolic death occurs on the same day, a full moon day, because they know that Oedipus blinds his own eyes immediately after his self-discovery. Being a truthful man, Oedipus considers death as a meaningless option. In response to the Theban elders' utterance that "It would have been better to die than live in blindness," (Sophocles, 1947, 1369), Oedipus says:

No! Hearing neither! Had I any way
To dam that channel too, I would not rest
Till I had prisoned up this body of shame
In total blankness. For the mind to dwell
Beyond the reach of pain, were peace indeed (Sophocles, 1947, 1385-1389)

His response may take the reader to a different plain, beyond the physical world that is known to them. If he had any means, he says, he would blot out the channel of hearing, too, and prison his whole body in "total darkness". If the reader take what Oedipus says at this moment by isolating it from the underlined philosophical implications, they may identify it as a meaningless utterance. However, what Oedipus says next, "For the mind to dwell / Beyond the reach of pain, were peace indeed" (Sophocles, 1947, 1388) sounds

very much like the Buddhist concept of *nirvana*. Teiresias' forecast in the scene of *agon* or conflict suggests that Oedipus is to die on the day that he discovers his birth. The whole scenario implies that Oedipus' birth, discovery of identity or self-realization and (symbolic) death occur on the same day, a full moon day.

4. 3. Parental Love

The following conversation between Oedipus and the Theban elders reminds the Buddhists of a conversation between the Buddha and Suddhodana over Rahula's (Sidhath's eight-year-old son) ordination as a monk.

Oedipus: O and again
 That piercing pain,
 Torture in the flesh and in the soul's dark memory.

The Theban Elders: It must be so; such suffering must needs be borne
 Twice; once in the body and once in the soul. (Sophocles, 1947, 318-321)

In this conversation, Oedipus reveals that pain begins in his physical body and then it pierces through flesh, cartilage and pins his heart. In Suddhodana's rebuke to the Buddha, he says something very similar. The Buddha's response to Suddhodana also sounds very similar to what the Theban elders say in this conversation.

4. 4. Philosophical Motto of Life

The Buddha told the first congregation of Sangha or his first gathering of followers to go from village to village, guiding people to cross the sea of suffering. He practically walked his talk for forty-five years from the day of becoming the Buddha until his passing away by spending every minute to guide and help the needy to cease the three poisons (*thumbiya*): greed, hatred and delusion. Sophocles' play begins with a plague (hunger, death and fear from evil spirits), the symbolic three poisons (*thumbiya*). Oedipus soon promises the Thebans that he would do anything to help them and, in his conversation with Teiresias, he declares his motto, "To help his fellow-men / With all his power is man's most noble work" (Sophocles, 1947, 313-314). From this moment onward, Oedipus does everything possible to free the Thebans from the plague: suffering, the *samsaric* plague. He sacrifices his crown, his bodily and emotional comfort, close human relationships and finally his own eyes to liberate the suffering.

5. Discussion

This article, in its finding section, sought a response to the first question, **a)** What are the probable allusions to the Buddha's life-story that one may find when reading Sophocles' *King Oedipus*?

This section discusses in detail the question, **b)** "Who got inspiration from whom: Is it Sophocles or Buddhist writers, or both?" Sophoclean play was written in 429 BC or about 116 - 120 years after the Buddha's passing away. Therefore, it is probable that Sophocles would allude to the special incidents in the Buddha's life (the utmost moral, intellectual, spiritual, philosophical hero in the world at the time) in his attempt to elevate Oedipus, a known moral culprit, to a higher level of morality. Marilai (2018) argues that Pericles (Athenian political leader at the time) has been embodied in Oedipus' character. However, the reader may not find a tyrant in Oedipus' character.

If there are only allusions to the Buddha's life story, one may assume that it is the Buddhist writers who have alluded to Sophocles *King Oedipus* when writing the Buddha's life story in the 5th century AD and thereafter when writing *Mahavamsa*, *Jataka* stories or *Theri Gatha*. There is assumed evidence that *Mahavamsa*, *Jataka* tale or *Theri Gatha* writers have alluded to Oedipus in their compositions (Peris, 1980/81, 2011; Obeseykere, 1989). However, there are allusions in plenty to the Buddha's life story and some key Buddhist concepts in *King Oedipus*, and those allusions that the reader finds in the Sophoclean play contextually reveal the infiltration of the Buddha's life-story into the play.

Additionally, one cannot claim that the countries in the far East and the fifth century BC Greece had been two distinctly different worlds that stood far apart, not known to each other. There is written evidence that the two worlds had some trade relations using the sea silk route (Munasinghe & Fernando, 2016). Even Egypt had been a trade zone where traders from the far East met with the traders from the Greek world (Knighton, 1848). Sophocles himself had been a widely travelled, educated elite who held a higher post in the state (Marilai, 2018). Therefore, he should have met those traders from the East or heard the heroic tales about the Buddha who had lived only a century ago.

The other question that needs to be responded to is c) "If there are any allusions to the Buddha, what could be the probable reasons why Sophocles uses such allusions? This question raises the reader's attention to whether Sophocles alludes to special occasions of the Buddha's life and whether it has any impact on the meaning of the play. One cannot consider the events used in a play as isolated, meaningless ones that are restricted to particular occasions of the text. The reader considers that every incident in a play is special, and those events shed light on characterization, plot and thematic development.

The 5th century BC Greek playgoers had been fully aware of the Oedipus legend that Sophocles used as the subject matter of the play. Therefore, they would not have wanted to see Sophocles enacting the Oedipus myth/legend on the stage. Instead, they should have wanted to see how Sophocles would interpret the legend in relation to the word that had been known to them.

The character portrayal, thematic and plot development become meaningful when they are related to the incidents or characters that the spectators are familiar with. For example, when the spectators feel that Oedipus' birth, discovery of self-identity and physical death remind them of incidents of a known person they feel pleasure of seeing the scenes. The incidents, characters or ideas get meaningful when they are somehow related to the spectators' personal, social, geopolitical and philosophical experiences.

Moreover, Oedipus in the legendary tale had been identified by the spectators as a mean, abominable, wretched man. Sophocles protests the social judgement by reasoning out why and in what conditions Oedipus had happened to commit those crimes. By questioning, he elevates Oedipus to the status of a hero with the highest moral values. When raising him to such a high status, Sophocles could use a similar person with higher moral status at the time so that he could convincingly convey the intended meaning to the spectators. There was at the time such a person with higher moral values. That was the Buddha, and Greek spectators should have heard about him in their sea travels.

6. Conclusion

If there were one or two similar incidents in the play, the reader can assume that they are coincidences because two people in two different locations may have the same thought simultaneously.

However, the exploration of this study through the lens of intertextuality suggests that there are several direct references as well as indirect allusions to the Buddha's life story. Messenger's encounter with Jocasta suggests to the reader two special incidents in the Buddha's life. One is Kisagotami's recitation of *nibbutha* verses and Asitha's prediction that Siduhath would either become an all-powerful monarch or he would become the Buddha. Oedipus' birth, discovery of self-identity or exploration of truth and his physical death occurred on a full moon day. The Buddha's birth, becoming the Buddha and his passing away occurred on a full moon day. Moreover, Buddhists celebrate these three occasions on the full moon day of May in every year. Similarly, the Thebans celebrate Oedipus' birth by singing and dancing. Finally, following the Buddha's motto in his life, Oedipus declares that helping other human beings is the motto in his life too.

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An Analysis of Intertextuality in News Texts of Covid-19 Epidemic

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Abstract

From 2020, more and more news reports concentrate on the Covid-19 epidemic, for it partly changes the way people live. The New York Times is regarded as the highly influential media, whose reports are worth analyzing. Combined with the theory of intertextuality and the theory of interpersonal function, this study adopts quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis, selecting 40 texts from The New York Times and then exploring three aspects including the interpersonal level as well as the intertextual level. It has been seen that in the interpersonal level modal operators clearly reflect the value of reports' attitudes. In the intertextual level, the objectivity of news discourse is enhanced by dominant specific sources but the credibility is vitiated by the small proportion of semi-specific sources. This study explores linguistic features of news reports on the Covid-19 epidemic and American social conditions influenced by the Covid-19 epidemic, advancing the research on public health discourse analysis.

Keywords: *Intertextuality, Modality, New Texts*

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 epidemic disrupts the development of the world, and many governments have commenced to look for congruent strategies to dispose of virus transmission. The United States, as a world power, has attracted widespread international attention to its prevention and control. *The New York Times* is one of the most influential media in the United States, so its reports can reflect the American social conditions in the real way, which means discourse existing in these reports is of great value. News discourse is usually considered as the carrier of disseminating real information to the public, but this is not necessarily the case because some subjective factors are often hidden in news discourse. This study will utilize the theory of intertextuality combined with the theory of modality to dissect American social conditions influenced by Covid-19 epidemic.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Previous Research on Intertextuality

The intertextuality theory can be traced back to the 1960s. Kristeva (1980) argues that a discourse can be referred to as the arrangement, intersection, and neutralization of fragments separated from other texts. Fairclough points out that the focus in contemporary societies is to understand how changing discourse practices relate to wide socio-culture. Intertextuality is an important concept of analyzing discourse practices, which makes people better understand the complexity of discourse events determined by discourse meaning, form, and style (Xin, 2021). Hence, intertextuality is a hot topic in the field of discourse analysis. Ngai et al. (2020) conducted a comparative study of intertextuality in corporate leaders' messages. The results indicate that intertextuality is a prevalent feature of leader messages. However, striking cross-cultural differences are noted since corporations in China often draw on direct quotes in messages whereas indirect quotes and recognizable business-specific phrasing are preferred by corporations from the US. Deng Liming et al. (2021) tried to explore the intertextuality in advertorial discourse. The results showed that direct reporting strategies of intertextuality are heavily employed in advertorials and the utilization of intertextual references exhibits some specific interconnection between a particular text and a genre.

2.2 Overview of Previous Research on Critical Discourse Analysis

Widely accepted in the field of linguistics, three-dimensional theory is one of the important models of critical discourse analysis. However, it does not form its final system the first time Fairclough establishes it but experiences a series of evolution, which is worth discussing. To begin with, in the book *Language*

and Power, Fairclough reveals the inherent relationship between language and power, the inequality between language use and power, and the relation between language and society (Wang, 139). Based on his improved model in the book *Discourse and Social Change*, the word “text” at the bottom of the framework remains its original form, while phrases of the middle-level and the high-level change into discursive practice and social practice, which symbolizes that the final system is established. Based on two measurable advantages that on the one hand views concerning the action are clearly included and on the other hand processes of social events become more specific, Fairclough’s three-dimensional model gradually plays a prominent role. Furthermore, Fairclough mentions three stages of analysis including description, interpretation and explanation in his book *Language and Power* (26), which are often viewed as analysis strategies of his model. However, there still exists a problem that three-dimensional model is too abstract for researchers to grasp its comprehensive meanings so that it is not easy for researchers to utilize it to delve into fields other than linguistics.

Chinese scholars have made great achievements in the field of critical discourse analysis. Since the 20th century, many researchers, such as Xin Bin, Wang Zhong, Wu Jianguo and Ji Yuhua, have further elaborated the connotations of critical discourse analysis and applied its theoretical framework to economic and political news reports. In 2016, Chinese scholar Guo revealed in detail scientific and objective natures of critical discourse analysis. Through a combination of defining concepts and giving examples, he specifically analyzed five principles and six analytical steps that should be followed in critical discourse analysis based on Fairclough’s three-dimensional model, concretizing the analysis process and providing detailed ideas for future Research (Guo, 69-77).

Fairclough’s theory satisfies actual requirements, particularly for the analysis of news discourse. As a result, many researchers have recently shifted the focus of their analysis towards combining critical discourse analysis and news discourse, which brings about the new development of Fairclough’s three-dimensional model.

2.3 Overview of Previous Research on News Texts

News report is often regarded as the aggregation of objective facts of recent events disseminated to readers through the news media. However, based on the theory of Van Dijk, the news is a kind of ideological mode of discourse mixed with social factors (9). Therefore, news discourse is to a certain degree with some subjective moods. What appears to be objective and impartial may be in fact a subtle expression of ideology which indirectly influences readers’ judgements. Xi Bin, one of distinguished linguists who specializes in critical discourse analysis and functional grammar, explicated the concept of news sources, reporting modes and reporting verbs with specific examples from Financial Times and International Herald Tribune, proving that there is an inextricable connection between language and power (9-14). However, there is a defect of the analytical method existing in their paper that relationships between discursive practice and social practice are cut off.

3. Methodology

This study analyses news texts on the Covid-19 epidemic from three dimensions including interpersonal level, intertextual level and social level. The specific questions are as follows:

- (1) What functions do modal operators have when they are used to organize news discourse?
- (2) How are features of news sources manifested from *The New York Times*?

For guaranteeing the accuracy of the news, the author collects articles with reporters’ names as analytic targets. The corpus is composed of 40 news reports on the Covid-19 epidemic from *The New York Times*. In addition, 40 texts including 43952 words in total are chosen from January to December in 2020, with 3-4 articles per month. Every report chosen encompasses 1000-1200 words. Due to the abundant samples, randomness can be effectively avoided, and results are objective and convincing.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Modality

Modality is one of significant parts of the interpersonal function erected by the prominent linguist Halliday. The interpersonal function is comprised of three main components including tone, intonation as well as modality and the representation of personal intentions can be effectively achieved by the grammatical system “modality”. The value of modal operators as a part of modality system can be classified into three categories: high, medium and low (Halliday, 116). The table 1 shows the distribution of the three values of modal operators in the 40 selected news reports.

Table 1: The Distribution of Modal Operators

Value	Model Operators	Frequency	Total	Percentage
High	must	6	69	11.33%
	have/has/had to	37		
	cannot	20		
	couldn't	5		
	may not	1		
Median	will	89	334	54.84%
	would	163		
	should	51		
	won't	8		
	wouldn't	10		
	shouldn't	13		
Low	can	78	206	33.83%
	may	27		
	could	66		
	might	35		

From the data obtained, the highest proportion is modal operators of median value which account for 54.84%, while the lowest proportion is modal operators of high value which account for 11.33%. Generally speaking, median value means a neutral attitude of reporters towards events, while sometimes the words “will” and “would” in many cases indicate possibility. Among modal operators of high value, the most frequent is “cannot”, which suggests to some extent that reporters use words of certainty to express what they think needs to be forbidden when it comes to affairs of the Covid-19 epidemic. Although the proportion of modal operators of low value is not as high as modal operators of high value, it plays a pivotal role in texts. Reporters manage to utilize them to show their concerns about whether the prospect of the Covid-19 epidemic will be promising.

The following are specific examples of modal operators.

(1) Bars, restaurants and gyms across the state must close nightly at 10 p.m. starting Friday, and that private residential gatherings should not exceed 10 people.

(2) In Brunswick, Ga., lab technicians are working around the clock. Machines churn out results in 50 minutes to four and a half hours, but there are so many orders that the labs cannot keep up. Regular shipments of chemicals needed to test for the virus do not last even a week, so pathologists have begun to carefully dole out their supplies.

The two sentences selected encompass modal verbs of high value. In the First case, the word “must”, as a positive modal verb of high value, expresses a powerful force, demonstrating that commercial activities must comply with relevant regulations out of necessity, which represents the mandatory policy of the epidemic prevention and control from the American government. The reason why the second wave of the

outbreak started is that officials relaxed their vigilance when the harsh situation only changed a little, which leads to such serious consequences. This sentence shows that the US government is finally willing to learn from Chinese strategies of confronting the pandemic, which can lay the groundwork for preventing the American second wave of the epidemic. In the second case, degree of affinity of the word “cannot” is very congenial to the proposition that “testing is not quick enough”, which is also the title of this report. Using the word “cannot”, the writer reflects the fact that administrative inefficiencies and inadequate preparation lead to excessive pressure on basic scientific units despite some deployment of testing by the US government. The writer anticipates that the US government will make emergency plans as soon as possible rather than just put forward so-called preventive suggestions.

(3) Ms. Porter said she feared that even after the pandemic ends, her children will struggle to escape the cycle of poverty and community violence that has scarred their young lives.

Both “would” and “will” appertain to modal verbs of median value with positive connotations which theoretically prove that the reporters hold a favorable attitude towards an upcoming event. However, most “would” that occur in news report on the Covid-19 epidemic in *The New York Times* do not reflect such a positive future but often show an imminent and negative impact or elicit a pressing and harsh action. The third example is derived from the statement of an American civilian. If readers only observe her usage of the word “will”, they will be likely to assume that the woman is looking forward to a better life after the epidemic. However, this is not the meaning of the sentence at all. The woman reckons that her family is so badly affected that her children will still be in constant distress during the post-pandemic period. A clear thought has been engraved into Americans that many residents of the United States will continue to be in danger and restoring the economy and safeguarding human rights in the post-epidemic era are very onerous. Opinions from the public is the revelation of a certain fact that the Trump administration always keeps making solemn promises but fails to deliver.

(4) So certain public health staff, already overtasked during the pandemic, have to reconcile differences manually.

(5) There may be a therapeutic option that could help keep you out of the hospital.

“Could” and “may” in the above sentences represent typical modal operators of low value, while the phrase “have to” needs identifying whether it appertains to low value or high value. In the fourth sentence, “have to” has a slightly negative connotation with the sense of being compelled to do something due to uncontrollable factors. Surveillance of the Covid-19 epidemic in the United States is carried out mainly by mail and paper records. However, diverse methods used in different states result in distinctions of aggregated statistics. This event shows that for one thing, a strong sense of responsibility and dedication to work is embodied by the phrase “have to” and, for another thing, reporters are frustrated with severe dislocation of measures for the Covid-19. The meaning of the fifth example is very vague. Both the subject of the sentence and the appositive clause of the subject include uncertain messages. The modal verb “may” in the main clause reflects the fact that a systematic treatment model perhaps exists and that no conclusion is definitive. “Could” in the subordinate clause manifests the possibility that there is perhaps no guaranteed cure for patients infected with the coronavirus even if industrious and intelligent scientists find such an efficacious method. Modal verbs “may” and “could” enunciate a kind of incredulity on the validity of the so-called treatment, furthermore, implicitly demonstrating the reporters’ wish for the government to seek out congruent therapies as soon as possible.

According to the above quantitative and qualitative analysis, it can be found that modal operators combined with meanings of sentences in the selected discourses have an overall slightly negative tendency

4.2 News Source

In news reports, when a reporter quotes someone’s words or views, he or she often introduce where they come from. Generally speaking, news sources can be classified into three types (Zhang, 85-93). The

first one is called “specific source”, which means clear identity information is cited by reporters. For example, “Mr. Cuomo said...”. The second one is called “semi-specific source”, which only manifests some vague identity information of speakers. For example, “Public health officials say that...”. The third one is called “unspecified source”, which does not show any information of speakers at all. We only know these sentences are from uncertain reports. For example, “There are reports that...”. The following table reveals the feature of distribution of news sources.

Table 2: The Distribution of New Source

	Specific Sources	Semi-specific Sources	Unspecific Sources	Total
Total	528	124	0	652
Percentage	80.98%	19.02%	0.00%	100.00%

In the table 2, it is clear that specific sources predominate, for they are conducive to enhancing the authority of news reports and showing respect for interviewees. In the text eighteen, the proportion of specific sources is 100% because this article is about viewpoints and proposals from American civilians and experts on the expensive Covid drug. Therefore, specific identities are required to be shown, which proves that many real people yearn for cheap medicines so that the possibility of cutting the price of Covid drugs will increase. Furthermore, despite the scarcity of semi-specific sources, they play a crucial role in texts. According to the analysis of selected articles, words in semi-specific sources mainly include “officials”, “experts” and so forth. These words, in which not every person’s name can be enumerated one by one, represent the concept of groups. Expressions which stand for an individual such as “an expert” and “an epidemiologist” also appear several times in the articles. Using these nouns without clear information, reporters, on the one hand, intend to protect the privacy of interviewees, preventing them from being persecuted for telling negative news. On the other hand, it is convenient for reporters to integrate their own opinions into sentences, thereby influencing readers’ judgements.

The following are specific examples of news sources:

(6) *Judd Deere said, “President Trump and his bold actions from the very beginning of this pandemic stand in stark contrast to the do-nothing Democrats and radical left who just complain, criticize and condemn anything this president does to preserve this nation.”*

(7) *Saskia Popescu, an epidemiologist at George Mason University, said closing businesses at the neighborhood level could work to tamp down on the virus, but that it would not be easy.*

Above cases include specific sources. In the sixth case, Judd Deere focuses on two themes. One is that the Trump administration does not ignore the Covid-19 epidemic and the other is that the radical left does nothing meaningful so that it has become an obstacle for the United States. Judd Deere, a White House spokesman, represents the official government at all times so his words will be credible for many people at home and abroad. However, the evident fact is that he deliberately exaggerates achievements of the Trump administration and belittles the rival party. On the one hand, the Trump administration does not take any decisive actions throughout the whole event. On the other hand, “do-nothing” in the sentence is an overly absolute word that reflects the purpose of degrading the Democratic Party. If readers only analyze the sentence alone, the reporter’s purpose of quoting it might be to shape a positive image of the Trump administration. However, it can be shown that the real purpose of the reporter, based on the context, is to disclose that the White House distorts the truth and deliberately politicizes the epidemic prevention and control.

In the seventh case, the reporter provides more details about the source, not only recording the speaker’s name but also showing his identity, which can clearly demonstrate the authority of the news report

and make it more convincing. The epidemiologist deems that a commercial moratorium can to some extent make a difference to the epidemic prevention and control but that it is not an easy rule to follow. The reason for difficulties in obeying this kind of policy can be summarized as the value of individual freedom deeply rooted in every American, which lead to a consequence that it is hard for them to tolerate any restrictions. Through authoritative words of the expert, the reporter sends a message to readers that they hope the public will temporarily restrain their desire for freedom and firmly implement the words of experts. In this way, the era of the Covid-19 epidemic will soon pass and then people will breathe the air of freedom and health with delight.

(8) Federal officials, who have cited projections indicating that the virus could ultimately kill more than 100,000 people nationwide, warned that the next few days could bring a ghastly uptick in the number of deaths and infections.

(9) Local leaders said that surge was driven by denialism, wishful thinking around herd immunity and misinformation spread by President Trump, who in 2016 carried some precincts in these neighborhoods with more than 80 percent of the vote.

The two cases above encompass semi-specific sources. In the eighth case, the identity of the Federal officials appears to be very official and authoritative, thus seemingly possessing considerably persuasive power. However, it is indisputable that the source of the information is relatively indistinct. Using Federal officials as a vague expression, the reporter attempts to instill into readers a sense of warning from seemingly large numbers of officials although it is unclear how many federal officials really have, which makes people doubt whether the group is large enough. Besides, the impact and the credibility depend upon whether these federal members have sufficient official status, which is not also manifested in this sentence. Problems above cannot be resolved in the sentence. Therefore, the ambiguous statement here makes the piece of news less valuable. In the ninth case, local leaders denounce President Trump's inaction, arguing that he is doing a disservice to those enthusiastic supports he received from many American civilians. The use of the semi-specific source by the reporter is not only for the purpose of protecting the privacy of the interviewee as information involves a negative assessment of the authority but also to potentially convey to readers a viewpoint that the US government is confronting the epidemic with great indifference by showing them many leaders' dissatisfaction.

The above analysis demonstrates that the usage of news sources can both effectively integrate language, social and cultural relations, corresponding with reporters' attitudes towards the Covid-19 epidemic on the whole.

5. Conclusion

Based on the theory of intertextuality combined with the theory of modality, this study delves into linguistic features of news reports on the Covid-19 epidemic and American social conditions influenced by the Covid-19 epidemic. In the interpersonal level, modal operators, as the important part of the interpersonal function, can reflect the value of reporters' attitudes towards the Covid-19 so that readers can feel how reporters express concerns for the epidemic prevention and control and identify what kind of judgement reporters make on the prospect. In the intertextual level, dominant specific sources can directly show the identity of officials or suffering people, enhancing the authority and objectivity of news discourse. Although the proportion of semi-specific sources is small, they play a vital role that reporters can implicitly express their own views by using vague information of interviewees. However, it is incontestable that semi-specific sources impair the credibility of news discourse. Although this study analyzes intertextuality from different three aspects, limitations still exist that reporting verbs are not considered as a research point. In the future, researchers can combine reporting verbs with appraisal theory so that attitudes existing in the news discourse will be further manifested.

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