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ABSTRACT
        This issue contains seven articles, including the following:
"Dictionary, Systemicity, Motivation" (Tom Bartlett); "The Nature of the
Initial State Zulu L2 Grammar and Subsequent Interlanguage Development"
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of the English Article System in Persian Speakers" (Ardeshir Geranpayeh);
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(Tony Lynch); "Features, Cobwebs, or Clines: Towards a Possible Model of
Lexical Retrieval in Bilingual Readers" (Valerie Waggot). (References appear
at the end of each article.) (KFT)

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Preface

EWPAL provides a (normally) annual update on some of the work being carried out in applied linguistics and language pedagogy by students and staff of the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics (TAAL) and Institute for Applied Language Studies (IALS), both in the University of Edinburgh. Articles in this issue range widely in topic – second language acquisition, comprehension by bilinguals, testing, lexicography, literary translation, language and politics.

I apologise to readers and contributors for the late appearance of EWPAL 10. It was intended that Keith Mitchell would be the sole editor of this issue, but for personal reasons he was unable to complete the task, and I took over for the final stages, in November 2000. The gathering and initial editing of articles is, however, entirely to the credit of Keith and his team of reviewers. My thanks go to all these reviewers – Alan Davies, Elizabeth Black, Gibson Ferguson, Lesley Gourlay, Tony Howatt, John Joseph, Ray MacKay, Mits Ota, Hugh Trappes-Lomax, and Keith Mitchell himself.

Thanks also go to Michele Bain for turning contributors' 'final' versions into these published papers, and to Alan White and his colleagues at the University Printing Office, who have taken over the final stage of production.

Brian Parkinson

November 2000

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Contributors' and editors' addresses appear at the end of this volume.

DICTIONARY, SYSTEMICITY, MOTIVATION

Tom Bartlett (TAAL)

Abstract

Recent lexicographical work, especially in dictionaries aimed at the TEFL market, has tended towards a functional grouping of vocabulary items in thesaurus format, rather than the traditional alphabetical approach of dictionaries. One reason for this, stemming from a more communicative approach to language teaching, is the idea that words are best understood and distinguished when presented as part of a meaning system rather than in isolation. However, this approach fails to capture the unity of meaning inherent in individual lexemes that is, or can be, demonstrated within the traditional lexeme-based approach.

This paper argues that both a lexeme's place within a meaning system and the connections between the different senses of each individual lexeme constitute integral parts of its meaning and are essential for a full understanding of the item in question. It concludes that dictionaries should attempt to capture both sets of relationships within their format and examines ways in which this might be possible, presenting sample entries for the modal auxiliaries CAN, COULD and SHOULD.

1. Introduction

In 1924 Otto Jespersen stated that:

> As a natural consequence of the difficulty of a systematic arrangement of all these special facts [concerning interlexical relations] most dictionaries content themselves with an arrangement in alphabetical order which is completely unscientific, but practically convenient...on the whole no thoroughly satisfactory system is conceivable in the dictionary part of the language.
>
> (Jespersen 1924:34)

Recently, however, vocabulary materials aimed at the learners' market have eschewed this "unscientific" alphabetical approach in favour of a format which groups together clusters of words related by topic, pragmatic function or semantic field. Within these last two groupings, which are considered in this paper, the meaning and nuance of each lexical item is enhanced through its status as a purposeful choice between paradigmatically-related items, that is from within a **systems network**. Contrasts and connections between words can be more fully explored and highlighted, giving the learner finer distinctions in meaning to enhance understanding, and the chance of greater accuracy in production.

However, while this format may enable learners to appreciate the distinctions between words, it denies them the possibility of understanding the **motivation** within lexemes (Swanepoel 1992 *passim*, after Lakoff and Johnson 1980), the shared semantico-pragmatic aspects linking one meaning/usage to another. This will not only hinder a full understanding of the lexeme in question, presented as various discrete sense units, but could give rise to unintentional and undesirable ambiguities in production.

6

In the following two sections I hope to show that both systemic contrast and motivated definition are not optional extras, but essential elements in defining lexemes. I will look in particular at the modal auxiliaries CAN, COULD and SHOULD, as modality is an area where both systemicity between and motivation within lexemes are particular strong and where much communicative value is "at risk" (cf. Hasan and Perret 1994:221).

2. Motivation

My contention here is that most polysemous words, and modals in particular, comprise a nebulous "core meaning" which is expanded, modified and restricted to form subdivisions of meaning and which informs any interpretation of the given lexeme in each context of utterance, while the context of utterance, in turn, slants the interpretation in a particular direction. For example, the sentence

1. *You can go now.*

can be interpreted, depending on context, as giving permission, expressing a curt order, or simply stating that an obstacle to leaving has been removed. However, it is also clear that in each interpretation the meaning of "can" has remained constant inasmuch as it states that the addressee is now in a position to leave, that their leaving is possible. This idea of "*possibility*" would, then, appear to be the core meaning of CAN (though such a hypothesis would have to be backed up by evidence from the corpus). The various interpretations of the utterance are due to either an extension of this core meaning, with meaning becoming more "delicate" (possibility > permission), or to the cultural implications of context (if someone in authority grants permission this can be taken as an order, but not vice-versa). In other words the lexeme CAN has "meaning potential" (to reinterpret Halliday's term, which is discussed below) which can be restricted and shaped, made more delicate, according to the context of utterance. But what is common to these extensions, restrictions and shapings is that in each case the extension or amplification of meaning/usage (which will often have become conventionalised in the everyday language) is neither totally arbitrary nor fully predictable "but motivated to some degree and in various respects" (Swanepoel 1992:296). While this section examines the predictability aspect of motivation, the section dealing with systemicity considers its arbitrary aspect.

As an example of motivated subdivision in the sample entries we can look at the following example from CAN A.2 (q.v.):

2. *How can you be so stupid?*

The motivation behind this meaning/usage can be traced through the entry as

CAN>possibility>naturally possible>inherent qualities> surprise>example of usage: *How can you be so stupid?*

where each increased level of delicacy would be signalled and the motivation explained within the dictionary entry creating a cumulative, general understanding of CAN and facilitating a particular interpretation in this instance of utterance (cf. Master 1994:245).

It is surely, then, the task of a dictionary to signal and explain these forms of motivation within the entry for an individual lexeme for, by doing so, the entry becomes, rather than a disconnected list of seemingly unrelated meanings, a coherent description of the vitality of the lexeme in question related to the cultural mores of the target language group. Such a description should aid the learner in remembering the meanings and usages of a particular lexeme while at the same time giving a broader and deeper understanding of it, and this should both encourage confident production and reduce the chance of unintended ambiguity.

A further advantage of the motivated approach to definition is concerned with "fuzzy semantics", the idea that the edges between one meaning and another are not always well defined and that pockets of Meaning X may appear in what seems to be Meaning Y, stranded like linguistic Ceutas and Melillas. Given the motivated approach, however, it becomes clear that meaning divisions are not always discrete but rather follow a continuum. Therefore, while it might be difficult to assign:

3.   *Taxis should cost about £3.50.*

to one particular final sense division of SHOULD (usually based on a division between epistemic and deontic modality), it clearly belongs within a superordinate, less delicate division with a label along the lines of "what is to be expected" (see SHOULD meaning A below) and would be interpretable with reference to such an entry.

The labelling of sense divisions brings into question the use of formal logic within language and the notions of epistemic and deontic modality themselves. I have preferred to use cultural terms such as "appropriate" as I believe these more accurately capture the essence of the modals and are more in tune with commmunicative approaches to language teaching. For example, the sentence

4.   *The train should be here at ten.* (the timetable dictates)

is, in formal terms, deontic; while

5.   *The train should be here soon.* (in my estimation)

is epistemic. But what of:

6.   *The train should have been here by now.*

Does this "should" imply "according to my previous estimation" or "because the timetable dictated"? The problem seems to be in the interrelation between expectation and compulsion: is something probable (epistemic) because it is socially enforced (deontic) or enforced because it is the norm?

Similarly, the example sentence

7.   *Muskie should have won by a huge margin.*

seems to hover somewhere between an epistemic interpretation (i.e. according to my now clearly erroneous calculations) and a deontic one (i.e. Muskie has no one to blame but him/herself, cf. *You should have done your homework before supper.*). On the other hand,

8.   *She left at eight, so she should be home by now.*

is clearly epistemic. Yet both examples 7 and 8 seem to fit into my "non-formal" division of "what is to be expected" into "appropriate behaviour" (SHOULD A1) and "natural course of events" (SHOULD A2), and are so grouped together in the latter.

To sum up: lexemes have a central or "core" meaning when there is a semantico-pragmatic component inherent in all their possible sense divisions. (In contrast, the sample entry for SHOULD has no single core meaning as none seemed appropriate or useful, historical derivation notwithstanding. However, meanings A and B are core to their respective subdivisions.) This core meaning must be neither "counterintuitive" nor "so vague as to deny any sense of explanation" (Perkins 1982:246). Divisions by sense are motivated extensions, restrictions and shapings of this core meaning (reflecting neither Bolinger's (1977) claim that a word is essentially a number of words with different meanings, nor "meaning-minimalism", where contextual factors do the bulk of the interpretative work through a pragmatic interpretation of a single sense). These divisions can, therefore, be represented in systems networks such as the following for CAN (fleshed out and exemplified in the sample entry for CAN at the end):
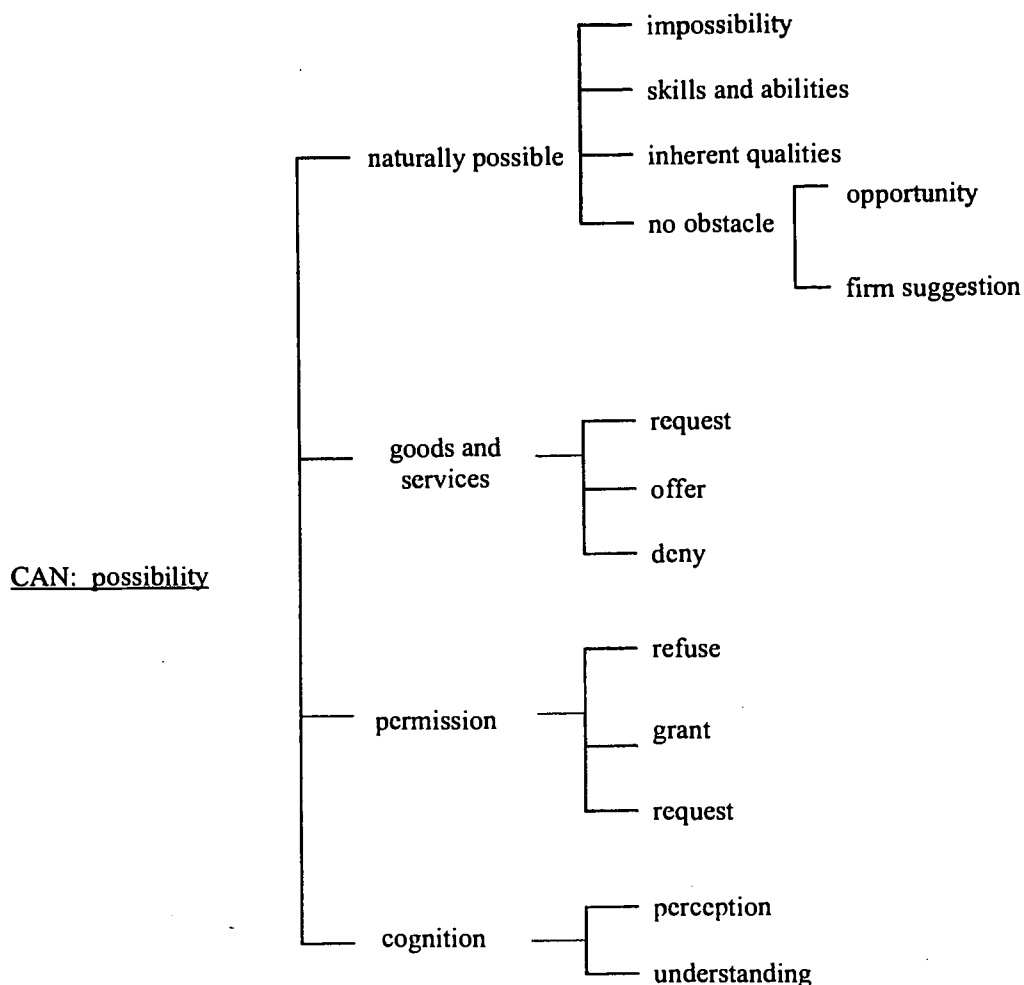
CAN: possibility

- naturally possible
  - impossibility
  - skills and abilities
  - inherent qualities
  - no obstacle
    - opportunity
    - firm suggestion
- goods and services
  - request
  - offer
  - deny
- permission
  - refuse
  - grant
  - request
- cognition
  - perception
  - understanding

Figure 1. Lexeme-led system network for CAN

Within this network every sense of CAN is motivated by its superordinate meaning, with all meanings/uses eventually deriving from the core meaning of *"possibility"*. This contrasts with the presentation in the leading TEFL dictionaries, which are to a large extent frequency-led, and the new breed of thesaurus, which are topic-based. In the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE 1995) the order of entries is very unmotivated with a grouping of similar senses (according to shared semantico-pragmatic components) something like 1,4; 2,3,8; 5,7,9,10; 6, with the implied difference between senses 1 and 4 being far from clear. In the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD 1995) the ordering of senses is motivated, but the range of meanings and functions in sense 1a is too broad not to require further motivational information and sense 6 appears superfluous as a result. In COBUILD English Language Dictionary (COBUILD 1995) the ordering is highly motivated to begin with but less common usages (which are possibly those that require most motivation for a good understanding) tend to get divorced from their immediately superordinate meanings. The grouping is something like 1,2,3,6,7 (+8,9,10?); 4,5; 11. The Longman Language Activator (1993), conversely, has the meanings/uses of CAN spread over the communicative categories CAN 1-5, LET/ALLOW 3&5, POSSIBILITY 1&2, and TRY TO DO OR GET SOMETHING DONE.

3. Systemicity

The flipside of internal linkage through motivation is the external comparison of lexemes with others within the same semantic field, that is, within the same systems network. Whereas above we dealt with the meaning potential of a lexeme, we now turn to Halliday's (1973 *passim*) use of meaning potential as the scope for linguistic behaviour within a given situation. Again we are interested in notions of delicacy, in this case in how more complex situations demand increasingly sensitive lexicogrammatical realisation, in both semantic and pragmatic terms. It is this agentive capacity of the speaker, their choice within the system, explicitly opposed to the stimulus-and-response of behaviourism, that makes language truly verbal behaviour:

> If by way of demanding a service one always *had* to produce a direct command, then no specific significance could be attached to this form of demanding service, and language would have to be seen simply as a set of mandatory rules which must be followed mechanically. The possibility of choice removes this mechanical determinacy from language, and imbues the alternatives – the terms of the system – with value. The value of any one option is determined by its relation to the other options that were "available" in the system at that point.

> (Hasan and Perret 1994:190)

If, then, we accept that a term's "value" is an integral part of its meaning, and I think this is undeniable, and that this value is "determined by its relation to the other options that were "available" in the system at that point", then it follows that this relation to other options is an integral part of meaning and is essential within any definition of the word that hopes to be of genuine communicative value.

To bring in a cultural/geographical analogy: would it be possible to understand the concept of *"Poland"* without knowing that it borders both Germany and Russia? Similarly, Poland's borders have been very flexible over the last century, expanding here and being restricted there. This is also the case with words as core meanings spread to cover new communicative areas as society creates new ideational concepts and interpersonal relationships. This spread, while clearly motivated, is also in some respects arbitrary, as it is usually the case that more than one modal or modal form, for example, would have been able to adapt to cover the new concept. This is shown by a cross-language comparison where the notion of theoretical possibility is covered by the conditional COULD BE in English, whereas Spanish uses present tense PUEDE SER. In English this tense would correspond only to what I have labelled "inherent qualities" in figure 3, e.g.

9.   *It can be cold here in winter.*

Given this level of arbitrariness, it becomes essential to mark the limits of extension of each lexeme, and this can most effectively be done my marking its boundaries with other lexemes and explaining the differences in meaning and nuance between these choices. In so doing, the user is also provided not only with a more accurate and delicate understanding of the lexeme in question, but also with useable alternatives that have been productively contrasted, in much the same way as with the thesaurus approach. This approach also caters for fuzzines between lexemes as opposed to within them. Compare the following sentences:

10.   *You should go go to the Bahamas for your holidays.*

11.   *You could go to the Bahamas for your holidays.*

In most TEFL dictionaries (COBUILD: COULD 8, SHOULD 1; LDOCE: COULD 5, SHOULD ?; OALD: COULD 4, SHOULD 2), both examples would be labelled as making suggestions, yet there is clearly a difference in the type of suggestion being made in each case which none of these dictionaries presents (and to compound matters, LDOCE: COULD 5 defines this usage as "used to suggest what you think

someone *should* or might be able to do", my emphasis). Adopting a contrastive approach, however, we could include in the entry for e.g. COULD:

> Sometimes this form is used to <u>suggest</u> that something is a possible choice, **in contrast with** SHOULD, which is used to say that something is the appropriate action: *Perhaps we could discuss this after dinner./You could always drop them a line./You should explain.*

Such a presentation is innovative in the context of an alphabetical dictionary in that it breaks the convention of not citing examples for lexemes other than the headword. This is justified, however, on the grounds that, combined with the explicit comparison given in the definition, the example brings into relief the semantico-pragmatic differences between suggesting with COULD and with SHOULD. As an alternative to this explicit information, the motivational build-up to the "suggestion" sense should in each case indicate the type of suggestion being made, and this is the approach taken with SHOULD (q.v.).

These examples should make one point very clear with regard to a systemic definition of lexemes: if a learner does not know the difference between the meanings of two lexemes then they do not know the full meaning of either. Hence, a lexeme's place in the system is an inherent part of its meaning and cannot be ignored or relegated to external pragmatics boxes, as is the case with LDOCE and OALD, where systemic comparison is presented as supplementary to internal definition and appears only for selected modals and in a limited array of contrasts (with LDOCE again compounding the error, in an otherwise extensive systemic description of CAN, by glossing *I can swim now* with *I am able to swim now*).

To return to the idea of meaning potential: what we have is a network of situations, becoming increasingly delicate, where the most delicate meaning is realised by the choice of lexeme and structure (lexicogrammar). Such a network is almost the inverse of my lexeme-led system: where, in that representation, each realisation represented a different social context for the use of the lexeme CAN, in the following concept-led figure each realisation represents a lexicogrammatical distinction expressing variations within the superordinate conceptual category of "*possibility*" (as realised through the modal auxiliaries CAN, SHOULD and COULD: it is not exhaustive). It should be noted here that the endpoints in the systems network below are generated by (and therefore restricted to) those that are lexicogrammatically distinct within the natural language. In other words, the endpoints of the systems network for the concept "*possibility*" below are not derived from an extralinguistic formal logic and then matched with lexicogrammatical realisations; rather, it is the system of lexicogrammatical choices that is the starting point for the representation, working backwards, as it were, to the generic concept "*possibility*" through a process of recursive superordination (where the superordinate concept is a shared component of meaning/usage and "*possibility*" is seen as the ultimate common conceptual component). The systems network below, therefore, derives ultimately from a linguistic not a formal logic and is quite different in appearance from usual such diagrams (particularly in Systemic Functional Linguistics; see Hasan and Perret 1994:211 for a specific example in relation to modality).

'*possibility*'

judgment
- evidential
  - *level of certainty*
    - certain
      - yes
      - no
    - uncertain
      - probable
      - neutral
      - improbable
  - *nature of evidence*
    - theory
    - fact
      - supposition
      - % chance
  - appropriateness
    - suggestion*
    - edict

existing potential
- naturally occurring
  - skills & abilities
    - real
      - past
        - fulfilled
        - unfufilled
      - present
    - hypothetical
      - future
      - present
  - inherent qualities
  - no obstacle
    - suggestion*
      - weak
      - firm
    - opportunity
- culturally given
  - permission
    - neutral
    - authoritarian
  - goods and services
    - neutral
    - formal

cognition
- understanding
- perception
  - new
  - ongoing
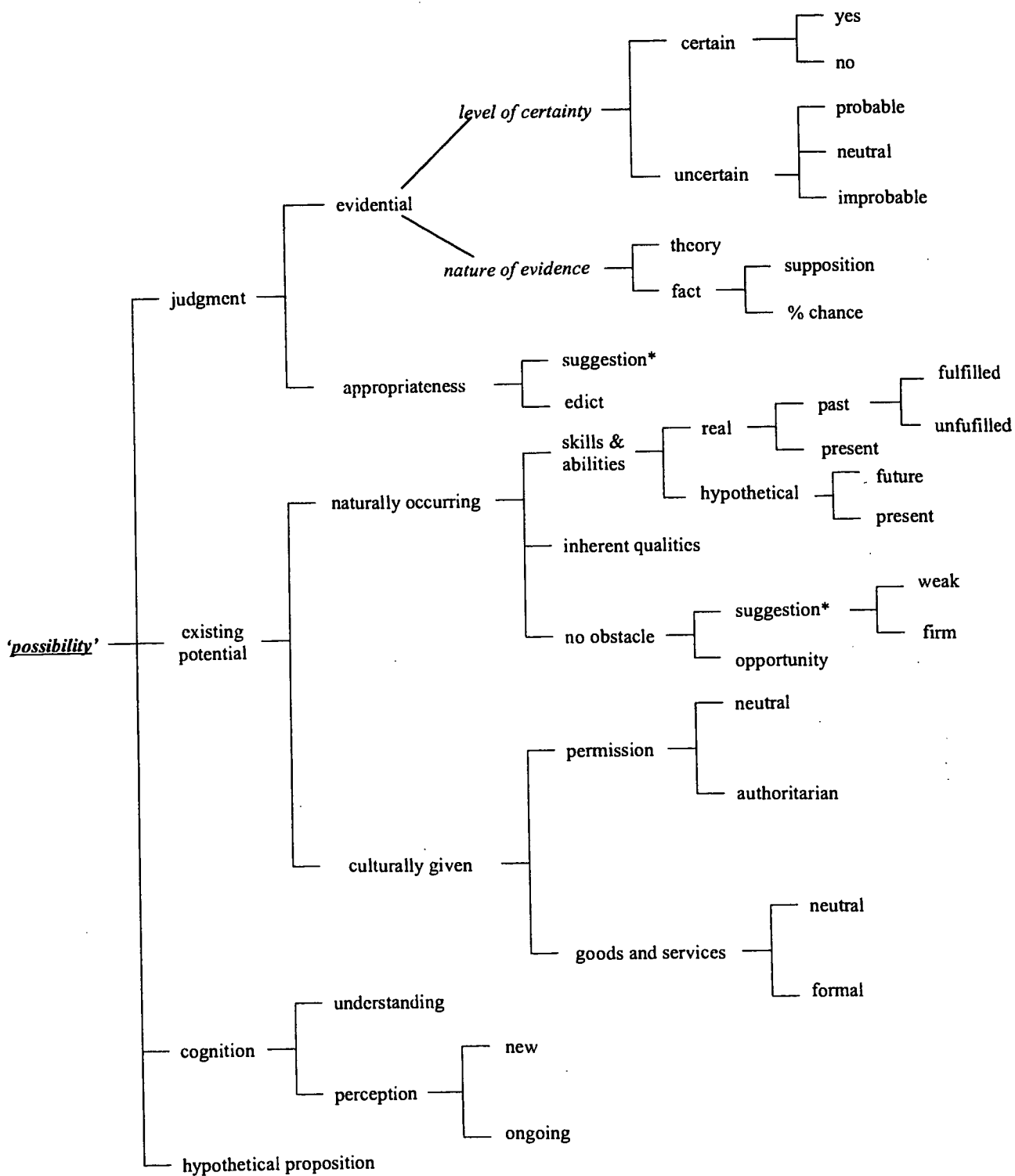
hypothetical proposition

Figure 2. Situation-led system network for "possibility"

7 12

In other words, we have operating simultaneously a lexeme-led system (based on my lexemic meaning potential) and a situation-led system (based on Halliday's [situational] meaning potential). It is in the interaction of these two systems that the complex nature of, in this case, modality becomes clear.

4.   Where meaning potentials meet

Figure 3 shows how each of the lexicogrammatical constructions which in figure 1 were shown as endpoints within a system of lexemic meaning potential (LMP) realise, as linguistic behaviour, social situations that themselves constitute the endpoints of a systems network of situational meaning potential (SMP). This represents a change from the method whereby situational meaning potential diagrams are constructed "logically" and where each endpoint is then given a distinct (if sometimes contrived) lexicogrammatical realisation. At times the natural language will not distinguish at the level of delicacy, nor according to the modes of logic, prescribed by such systems networks. If we accept that language is in a state of what Halliday calls "semiogenesis", i.e. LMPs are constantly being developed and modified according to changing SMPs, then it follows that at no time will a "logically" complete representation of meaning potential exist in the language (nor, of especial importance to communicative language teaching, will either SMP or LMP systems be universal). My approach favours beginning with language-in-use and discovering which situations a society truly differentiates between (an approach which also seems truer to the communicative approach in language teaching).

We can recognise so many endpoints of SMP by their differing lexicogrammatical realisations (the endpoints of the constitutive LMPs), which reflects the societal need to realise to a greater or lesser degree of delicacy the meaning potential of situations: SMP and LMP are respectively cause and effect of semiogenesis. This means that, synchronically, there is total overlap between the endpoints of the SMP and the LMP: only those situations that are distinguished lexicogrammatically (including differences in intonation and Mood, e.g. question forms and negatives) will be recognised as distinct situations, while only those senses/uses of a lexeme that relate to different social situations will be recognised. This is exemplified in simplified form in figure three, which relates the SMP of *"possibility"* to the LMP of CAN, COULD and SHOULD (and, to simplify things further, without levels of delicacy shown for verbs of cognition as realised by CAN and COULD).
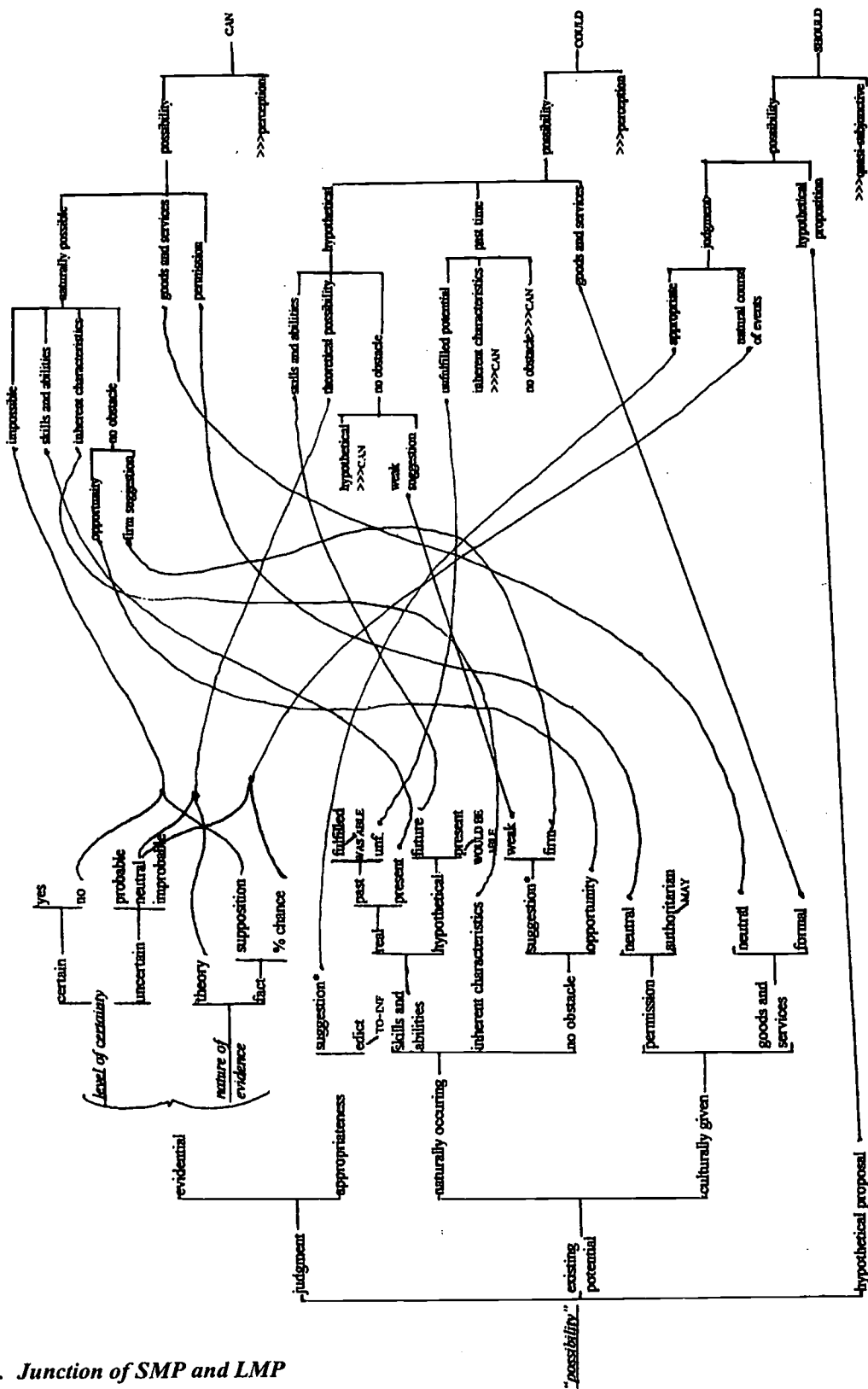
13 8

Figure 3. Junction of SMP and LMP

9 14

5. Lexicographical presentation of SMP and LMP

The above view of meaning potential and the links between motivated meaning within lexemes and systemic relations between lexemes has consequences for lexicographical presentation. One of the benefits of a motivated series of definitions is that, with regard to figure three, we can see not only what lexicogrammatical structure realises which SMP, but also *why* it does. It is important therefore that a dictionary entry also reflects this information. If a learner understands why a word means what it does and is used as it is, then this should lead to greater ease of acquisition and more accurate usage. As a consequence, in my sample entries each node within the LMP diagram is described in such a way that it is motivated by its mother node and motivates its own descendents. This can be achieved at various levels: with daughters being separate subdivisions where major usage/meaning differences are introduced; within subdivisions, for closely related usages; and through contrastive examples to capture the more nebulous relations and differences within what has been deemed a single sense or subsense.

Similarly, in order to present an appropriate level of systemic contrast, for the reasons discussed above, it will be necessary to highlight the differences in use/meaning between endpoints of the SMP that are sisters, as these are the areas that share the most characteristics, i.e. they have a common mother and are differentiated only by a single feature of delicacy, and are therefore most likely to be confused. Additionally, in figure 3 it will be seen that distant cousins may also share characteristics, i.e. the two endpoints labelled "suggestion" (asterisked in the figure). It is therefore also necessary to clarify and contrast the nature of *"suggestion"* in each case, with specific reference to the endpoint's SMP cousin, as has been exemplified with COULD above, or through implicit derivation from its LMP antecedents, as is the case with SHOULD below. Such contrast can be within the body of individual subdivisions using explicit information and examples of the contrasting features, or by use of crossreferencing, though this should be kept to a minimum.

6. Conclusion

I have argued that in order to obtain the understanding of a lexeme necessary "if one is to be accepted by the linguistic community as knowing the meaning of the word in question" (Geeraerts 1987:6, after Rosch and Putnam) a learner must know how its different senses are related through a core meaning and how it is related to and distinguished from other lexemes with similar semantic content: in other words, meaning is both inherent and contrastive. The tools I have used to exemplify these complementary characteristics are **motivation** and **systems networks** respectively . I have shown how the systems networks for lexemic meaning potential and situational meaning potential are interconnected, and asserted that different situations are best identified by their lexicogrammatical realisation and not vice-versa. Below are sample dictionary entries for the modal auxiliaries CAN, COULD and SHOULD that attempt to transfer the insights from these methods into a dictionary format aimed at learners within a TEFL environment. It should be noted that the following sample entries are not designed for any concrete teaching level or situation: the level of metalanguage is fairly advanced, yet one of the basic premises of this paper is that definition through motivation and system is a basic and essential aspect of lexis, not a specialisation or refinement. These samples are, then, no more than a theoretical representation of my conclusions in a lexicographical format, a basis which genuine teaching materials might adopt and adapt to particular needs and purposes.

7. Sample entries

The following sample entries are modifications of those presented in my M.Sc. thesis, simplified to exemplify the ideas of motivation and system while omitting other aspects of syntax, modality and meaning.

can

core meaning: CAN suggests that something is <u>possible</u> for various reasons. CAN'T and CANNOT mean that something is not possible.

meaning A: CAN means that something is <u>naturally possible</u>. It can be used:

1. – to talk about a person's <u>skills and abilities,</u> permanent or otherwise: *Can you swim?/I can't drink any more.*

2. – to say that something <u>sometimes happens</u> because of <u>inherent or natural qualities</u> of people or things: *Can white be green?/Sore breasts can be really painful.* It is used in the interrogative to express surprise that something is possible: *How can you be so stupid?/ Can he really be in London?/How can you expect me to believe your promises? In contrast with* COULD, MAY and MIGHT, which refer to a situation that you think is possibly true at the moment, CAN refers to something that is sometimes but not always true. If the doctor told you: *This disease might be fatal.* it would worry you more than: *This disease can be fatal.* **Compare with meaning E.**

3. – to say that <u>nothing prevents something from happening</u> at the moment or that you have the <u>option</u> of doing something: *You can smile again./I can barely afford to pay the rent./the statue which can still be seen in the British Museum* This form is sometimes used to <u>insist forcefully</u> that something will happen: *They can have their tea at home! – They can, but they're not going to!*

4. – CAN'T is used to say that in your opinion something is <u>not possibly true</u> at the moment *in contrast with* MUST, which means you are sure it is true, COULD, MAY and MIGHT, which mean you think it is possibly true, and MAY NOT and MIGHT NOT, which mean you think it is possibly not true: *He can't be there yet./He must be there by now./He might not survive the operation.* **Compare with meaning A2.**

meaning B: CAN is used in the interrogative form to make a <u>request</u>. It is not formal, *in contrast with* COULD and MAY in the same situation: *Can we have a copy?/ Could I possibly try some?*

meaning C: CAN is used to make an <u>offer</u>, occasionally on someone else's behalf. It is not formal *in contrast with* COULD in the same situation: *What can we do for you?/ Can my brother help?/ I can pop into the shops for you tomorrow, if you like./I could lend you my car.*

meaning D: CAN is used to <u>give or request permission</u>. It is a neutral term, though some people think it is informal. CAN implies that the person is able to do something themself, while MAY, *in contrast*, is more authoritarian and shows that the person giving permission is in control: *Can I ask you a question?/May I leave the room?* Sometimes this form is a rude way of telling an inferior to do something: *You can go now.* CAN'T, *in contrast*, is a more forceful way of asking for something: *Can't I have a biscuit?* Sometimes <u>society in general allows</u> something to happen or not, or you use CAN'T or CANNOT to say you think society must not let it happen: *You can't have a drink with your ex-wife./It is an intolerable situation and it cannot be allowed to go on.*

meaning E: CAN is used with verbs of <u>perception</u> and <u>understanding</u>. With verbs of understanding the meaning is the same as with the present simple; with verbs of perception CAN implies an ongoing situation *in contrast with* the present simple, which implies that the perception is new: *I can see the bruise on your chin./ I see him now!/We can all remember it.*

could

core meaning: COULD suggests that something was or would be <u>possible</u> for various reasons. COULDN'T and COULD NOT mean that something was not or would not be possible.

meaning A: COULD means that something is <u>hypothetically possible</u>, or possible in an imagined situation. It can be used:

1. – to talk about someone's imagined <u>skills or abilities</u>, permanent or otherwise: COULD refers to a possible <u>future</u> ability, *in contrast with* WOULD BE ABLE TO, which refers to a hypothetical ability in the present. **Refer to ABLE, meaning X**: *If you taught me, I could swim by Christmas./ If you had taught me, I would be able to swim by now.* It is also used in exclamations to say that it would be possible for you to do something because of high emotions: *I could strangle her!*

2. [**grammar note**: this form is potentially ambiguous with **meaning B2. Refer to this.**] – to say that you think something is <u>possibly true</u> at the moment, *in contrast with:* MUST, which means you are certain that something is true and CAN'T or COULDN'T, which mean you are certain that something is not true. CAN is used to say that something is sometimes but not always true, and SHOULD is used to say that you think that something is probably true because it is the natural course of events: *That's a Japanese dog isn't it? – It could well be./Could it happen again?/ He must be in – his light's on/She couldn't possibly be home yet./He can't be serious!/Sore breasts can be really painful./She left at eight, so she should be home by now.* COULD HAVE is used to refer to a past event that you think is possibly true: *He could have been there a week./It could have been anything that started that off./I could hardly have been up a tree!*

3. – to say that <u>nothing would prevent something from happening</u> in a particular situation: *We could allow him access to anything that's not copyright./You could never lie to me could you?/Could you fly from Ireland to Honduras?* COULDN'T is used to say you are not going to do something because you find it offensive, unfair or morally wrong – or simply impossible: *I couldn't do that to my own brother!/ I couldn't possibly have any more!* COULD HAVE is used to say that something was possible in the past, but that the event did not happen: *I could have gone for longer./You could have been sitting in here./I could have cried!* Sometimes this form is used to <u>suggest</u> that something is a possible choice, *in contrast with* SHOULD, which is used to say something is the appropriate action: *Perhaps we could discuss this after dinner./You could always drop them a line./You should explain.* Sometimes this form or is used to <u>complain</u> that someone is not doing or did not do something: *You could try and help!/Could you tidy up after yourself?/You could have told me!*

meaning B: COULD means that something <u>was possible</u>. In these senses it is a past form of CAN, meanings A. It can be used:

1. – to talk about a person's past <u>skills and abilities</u>, permanent or otherwise: *†I could speak French as a boy./I couldn't stop thinking about her.* *In contrast with* COULD, which refers to a continuing state, WAS ABLE TO refers to an action that was actually carried out. **Refer to ABLE, meaning X**: *He asked me if there was anything he could do./It was the least we could do/What could they say?/I could not talk to them the same as before./I could almost touch it with my own hands./I'd tried everything that I could think of to get these people to move./I was able to escape while the guard was asleep.*

2. [**grammar note**: this form is potentially ambiguous with **meaning A2. Refer to this.**] – to talk about <u>inherent or natural qualities</u> of people or things in the past or <u>the way the world was</u>: *Asthma could be deadly when I was young./He could be very pleasant when he wanted to.* It is also used in the interrogative form to express surprise that something is possible: *How could you be so stupid?/How could you have lied to us all these years?* COULD refers to something that was sometimes but not always true *in contrast with* COULD HAVE, MAY HAVE and MIGHT HAVE,

which refer to a situation in the past that you think is possibly true at the moment: *His light's off – he could have gone to bed.*.

3. – to say that <u>nothing prevented</u> something from happening at a particular time or that someone had the <u>option</u> of doing something: *Once he had gone I could get on with my normal life.* The interrogative negative form is used with WHY to express annoyance that someone did not so something: *Why couldn't he tell me straight out?*

meaning C: COULD is used to make <u>polite request</u> or <u>offers</u>, occasionally on someone else's behalf: *Michael, dear, could you come down for a moment?/I don't suppose my friend could borrow your car, could he?/ Could you help me, please?/I could pop into the shops for you tomorrow, if you like./My dad could help you.* This form is also used for <u>polite imperatives</u>: *Could we do this a little later, do you think?* COULDN'T, *in contrast*, is a more forceful way of asking for something: *Couldn't we finish the lesson now?*

meaning D: COULD is used with verbs of <u>perception</u> and <u>understanding</u>. Here it is the past tense of CAN, meaning F. With verbs of cognition the meaning is the same as with the past simple; with verbs of perception COULD implies an ongoing situation *in contrast with* the past simple, which implies that the perception was new: *I could see the bruise on your chin./Suddenly I saw him!/He could recognise some of the circumstances./We could all understand her problem.*

should

meaning A: SHOULD is generally used to say that you think something is <u>to be expected</u>, either because it is considered <u>appropriate behaviour</u> by the speaker or society as a whole or because it is, in the speaker's opinion, <u>the most natural course of events</u>. SHOULD is used:

1. – to say that you think something is or would be <u>appropriate behaviour</u>: *Ideally this should be objective and give quantitative data./The manager thought that I should not leave.* Often SHOULD is used in <u>giving or seeking advice</u>: *You should also edit the final copy./I should go if I were you./I should forget it./You should not be such a sceptic!/Should I call the police?* **In contrast**, if we wish to say that something is necessary, rather than just advisable, we use MUST; if we think that an action is neither good nor bad we can use the expression MIGHT AS WELL, and if we think there might be unpleasant consequences if the advice is not followed we use HAD BETTER, sometimes as a threat: *You must stop smoking if you want to avoid a heart attack./I might as well leave it till tomorrow./You'd better not come round here again!* SHOULDN'T can be used to make a suggestion less forceful: *Shouldn't you switch it off first?* SHOULD HAVE is usually used to suggest an appropriate situation when you think something wrong has happened, but it can also be used to say that you think that what happened was appropriate: *I should have been more disciplined./I should not have spoken./He acted exactly as he should have.* It can also be used to say that someone missed something that you think they would have enjoyed: *You should have heard what Harold told me!*

2. – to say that you think something is seen as the <u>natural course of events</u>. *She left at eight, so she should be home by now./He reckons I should get £650./Roses shouldn't really grow in this climate – but they do!* SHOULD HAVE means that something was the natural course of events, usually when it has not happened or when you do not know if it has happened: *Muskie should have won by a huge margin./Dear Mom, you should have heard that I am O.K. by now.* **In contrast**, COULD is used to say that you think something is possibly true, and WILL or PROBABLY are used if you are fairly sure of something but do not know for certain that it is true: *Could it happen again?/I'll probably be home at five./ That'll be John at the door.*

meaning B: SHOULD can be used to talk formally about <u>imagined or hypothetical events or ideas</u>.:

1. – instead of WOULD in conditional clauses after I or WE: *What would you do if it were denied? – I should sit here just the same. /I should appreciate it if you could all be quiet.*

2. – after IF to show that an idea is not very likely: *Do you know what it would mean if these pictures should ever fall into the hands of the newspapers?* [**grammar note**: In formal language SHOULD and the main verb can be inverted to form the conditional clause. In this case the negative is formed by placing NOT between the subject and the main verb]: *They will go to the top of Division One should they win at Nottingham Forest./ Please feel free to call should you not hear from us within 15 days.* These usages suggest that the events involves are unlikely and are being discussed as no more than ideas.

3. – after a THAT clause to express somebody's attitudes or feelings towards the idea that something has happened or might happen: *She was anxious that we should know something about the arts./It's funny that we should get there this season./There's no reason why it should be so funny./He suggested I should apply to Lara.* **In contrast**, the proposal is less definite either in the informal *He suggested I applied to Lara.* or the formal *He suggested I apply to Lara.*

meaning C: SHOULD is occasionally used in reported speech as the **past tense of SHALL, meaning A. Refer to this**: *They promised that he should have an ice-cream when he got home.*

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THE NATURE OF THE INITIAL STATE ZULU L2 GRAMMAR AND SUBSEQUENT INTERLANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

A notable feature of developing interlanguage grammars is the apparent optionality in those areas of grammar where optionality is not characteristic of stable state grammars. In the Valueless Features Hypothesis (Eubank 1993/4, 1994, 1996) it is proposed that the appearance of apparent optionality in the very early stages of interlanguage development is due to the "partial" presence of functional categories at the initial state of non-native language development. This paper reports on a study of the acquisition of verb movement in Zulu by English native speakers. The results indicate non-optionality of verb movement at the initial state, an intermediate stage of interlanguage development wherein optionality sets in as a result of grammar competition and an 'expert' stage in which verb movement has been fully acquired. The paper concludes by suggesting that, contrary to the claims of the Valueless Features Hypothesis, initial state L2 grammars have a full inventory of functional categories transferred from the L1. Subsequent interlanguage development is, therefore, from absolute L1 influence to optionality at intermediate stages and the resolution of optionality at ultimate attainment.

1. Introduction

The acquisition of verb movement has long been a topic of interest in Romance and Germanic languages, amongst others. It has been suggested that verb movement determines the position of the adverb, negator and quantifier in quantifier float in relation to the finite main verb (Pollock 1989). Verb movement, then, is directly related to the surface word order. A minimal assumption made is that movement, whether overt or covert, must be expressed in terms of the features of functional heads. Covert movement is driven by strong features, i.e. features that are visible and potentially illegitimate. On the other hand, overt movement is driven by weak features. With regard to verb movement, it is suggested that for the verb to overtly raise the V features in T must be strong.

In second language (L2) acquisition research, verb movement has been of particular interest as it bears directly on the projection of functional categories together with their feature values and is thus potentially informative on the extent to which the first language (L1)-based functional geometry is represented at L2 "first syntax" (see Paradis & Genesee 1997). The availability of verb-movement or, more aptly, syntactic phenomena that imply verb movement in the early grammar, might be suggestive of the presence of a functional head (i.e. INFL) and its feature values.

In addition, current SLA theories hold that L1-based functional categories are either present in early L2 grammars (Full Transfer/Full Access hypothesis of Schwartz & Sprouse (1994, 1996), absent from them completely (Minimal Trees Hypothesis of Vainikka & Young-Scholten 1994, 1996a, b), or "partially" present (Eubank 1993/4, 1994, 1996). Eubank states that while L1 functional heads and their projections transfer, there are limits to the transferability of the L1-based functional geometry. Eubank proposes that L1-based strength of inflection does not transfer, leading to syntactic optionality in those areas of grammar dependent on strength of inflection. One such area of grammar affected by non-transfer of feature values is syntactic movement. With regard to verb movement, the VFH suggests that movement of the finite main verb to INFL is optional at first. This gives rise to apparently optional syntactic movement which is not permitted in mature state grammars.

Optionality, then, is accounted for in terms of the *partial presence of INFL* at the initial stage of non-native syntactic knowledge.

Within this context, this paper brings up L2 acquisition data that have not been the focus of attention in generative L2 research. The paper examines the L2 acquisition of the placement of adverbs, negators and floating quantifiers in Zulu, an African Language. The article reports on an experimental study investigating the L2 acquisition of verb raising by English speaking learners of Zulu with specific emphasis on the placement of adverbs, negators and floating quantifiers vis-à-vis the finite main verb, given that it is with finite main verbs that the position of adverbs, negators and floating quantifiers differ in the two languages.

Current syntactic approaches maintain that finite main verbs raise overtly in languages like Zulu, but not in English-type languages. The raising of the main verb is attributed to the strength of V features in T. The claim is that the verb raises overtly in languages like Zulu because the V features in T are [+strong] while in English the V remains *in situ* because the V features are [-strong]. In view of the above, the question this paper asks is whether or not English speaking L2 learners of Zulu will have a preference for non-verb raising structures at the early stages of L2 development or, whether they will evidence syntactic optionality as predicted in the Valueless Features Hypothesis. The main research question is: will English speaking beginner learners of Zulu distinguish in acceptability between grammatical verb raising and ungrammatical non-verb raising sentences?

2.   Syntactic Background

2.1   Verb movement in Zulu

A significant parametric difference between Zulu and English syntax regarding the placement of adverbs and the negator is verb raising in the former and not in the latter. This is evident in (1a) and (2a) below. The same phenomenon applies in quantifier float, as shown in (3a).

(1a) Abafana ba li   shaya *njalo* ikati.   (SVAO)

  Boys   AgrS-AgrO-beat *often* cat[1]

  (* The boys beat *often* the cat.)

  The boys *often* beat the cat.

(1b)* Abafana *njalo*   ba shaya ikati.   (SAVO)

    Boys   *often* AgrS-beat cat

    (The boys *often* beat the cat)

(2a) Abafana   a[2] ba li   gibela *nga* ihhashi.   (SVNcgO)

    Abafana Neg-AgrS-AgrO[3]- ride   *Neg* horse

  (*The boys ride *not* the horse)

    (The boys don't ride the horse)

(2b) * Abafana a *nga* ba gibela ihhashi.   (SNegVO)

   (Boys   Neg Neg AgrS ride   horse)

   (The boys *not* ride the horse)

   (The boys don't ride the horse).

(3a) Abantwana be nkosi ba   li   dlala *bodwa*[4] ibhola.   (SVQO)

   Children   of king AgrS-AgrO-play *alone/all* football

  * The king's children play *all* football.

   (The king's children *all* play football.)

(3b) *Abantwana benkosi *bodwa* ba   dlala ibhola.   (SQVO)

   Children of king   *alone/all* AgrS-play football

   (The kings children *all* play football)

Following Pollock (1989), the syntactic difference between Zulu and English in the placement of adverbs, negators and floating quantifiers evident in the above examples is a reflex of verb movement. In Pollock's account, the word order variation shown in (1a)-(3a) and (1b)-(3b) can be explained in terms of the richness of verbal morphology of Zulu as opposed to the meagre English verb morphology. In languages like Zulu, rich agreement permits transmission of theta roles to verbal complements leading to overt syntactic raising of the finite main verb whose tense feature must have scope over the VP at LF. In contrast, in English-type languages, lexical main verbs cannot raise because impoverished agreement blocks theta role transmission. These languages resort to *do*-support and I-to-V lowering of inflection, hence the tense feature which must govern VP only raises covertly to INFL at LF.

To derive the word orders SVAO (1a), SVNegO (2a) and SVQO (3a), permitted in Zulu, the V must raise overtly to INFL leaving the adverb as in (1a), the negator as in (2a) and the floating quantifier as in (3a) between the inflected verb and the verbal complement. This explains the ungrammaticality of examples (1b-3b). In these sentences the V has not been raised and the resultant sentences are ungrammatical. However, in English the SAVO, SNegVO and SQVO word orders are permitted because the finite main verb cannot raise to INFL but remains *in situ* following adverbs, negators and floating quantifiers. Thus, Zulu and English have similar base-structures but vary in the type of verb movements they permit. Zulu allows overt raising of lexical verbs while in English the verb can only move covertly.

As already indicated, the notion of syntactic movement is expressed in terms of feature strength (Chomsky 1995). Syntactic movement is obligatory and not optional. Features whose values are [+strong] must be checked off before LF so that the derivation does not crash. Strong features require overt raising of lexical items to satisfy the requirement of morphological feature checking. On the other hand, weak or [-strong] features prohibit overt raising of lexical items. Feature values can either be [+] or [-] strong. They cannot have both values or remain unspecified.

In view of the above, the difference between English and Zulu in so far as the placement of adverbs, negators and floating quantifiers is concerned is a reflection of the variation in strength of inflection in the two languages. The raising of the lexical V in Zulu indicates that the value of the V feature in T is [+strong], hence the finite main verb raises overtly to check off [+strong] V features. In English the V feature in T is [-strong] and there is no overt raising of the lexical V. The raised verb in Zulu leaves behind the adverb, negator and floating quantifier, while in English the adverb, negator and

quantifier remain to the left of the *in situ* verb. The resultant SVAO, SVNegO, and SVQO word orders in Zulu (see 1a-3a) are a function of overt movement which is driven by [+strong] features while the SAVO, SNegVO and SQVO word orders are a function of covert movement or [-strong] V features. In this analysis, verb raising is a syntactic correlate of [+strong] V features in T while the syntactic correlate for [-strong] V features is non-verb raising.

3.   **Valueless Features Hypothesis**

The Valueless Features hypothesis (VFH) argues against the strong view of full transfer of the L1-based functional geometry into the L2 initial state grammar. Eubank suggests that morphological feature values instantiated in the L1 grammar do not transfer. The initial state L2 grammar is characterised by 'valueless' or 'inert' morphological features, i.e. features whose values are unspecified. The claim in the VFH is that these unspecified features lead to syntactic optionality in the early developing interlanguage grammar[5].

Eubank adopts the view that verb-raising depends on the strength values of inflectional features (Pollock 1989, Chomsky 1993). The main thrust of the VFH model is that acquisition of overt verbal morphology of the target language (TL) leads to the determination of TL feature values. Once feature values have been determined, the relevant correlate syntax is instantiated. The syntactic correlate cannot be instantiated consistently before the acquisition of overt morphology of the TL is complete[6]. Thus, features act as a trigger to the correlate syntax. The VFH also predicts that subsequent interlanguage development consists of the resolution of optionality evidenced at the initial state. Optionality is resolved once the inflectional paradigm of the target language has been acquired. Thus intermediate/advanced interlanguage grammars will either have obligatory movement or non-movement depending on what is required by the TL. The resolution of optionality suggests that the grammar of advanced L2 learners will converge with that of native speakers[7].

Eubank's empirical evidence for the VFH comes from verb-movement in the interlanguage data (reported in White 1990/91, 1991, 1992) of native speakers of French learning English as an L2. The early learners use SAVO and SVAO word orders, suggesting optional verb movement in their early interlanguage grammar. Eubank proposes that the word order pattern in evidence in early French-English interlanguage does not resemble that in the learner's L1. Eubank points out that if [+strong] V features in T instantiated in French had transferred, then the syntactic correlate of these features would have been verb raising, giving rise to an obligatory SVAO word order obtainable in their L1. Given that English [-strong] V features in T have not yet been acquired, and [+strong] features of French do not transfer, the initial state grammar is "valueless". The apparent syntactic optionality in the use of SVAO and SAVO is then attributed to a lack of specification of the feature value of the head of the functional projection TP (or IP) dominating VP[8].

Schwartz (1998) suggests that the VFH can be falsified if non-optionality is in evidence in the very early stages of interlanguage development. For instance, if it can be shown that obligatory movement or non-movement operations instantiated in the learner's L1 are also realised as such at early L2 syntax, this would indicate that L1-based feature values transfer. In fact, Dube (1997, 1998) provides damaging counter-evidence to the VFH claims. In Dube's studies, English-speaking L2 learners of Zulu obey subjacency in their acquisition of Zulu base-generated topics. As the topics are base-generated *in situ*, subjacency does not apply and yet English learners impose a subjacency constraint, indicating transfer of [+strong] wh-like features instantiated in their L1. Similarly, Green (1996) reports instances of transfer of [-strong] features from Chinese L1 to early L2 English. Chinese L2 learners of English continually show their L1 base-generated topic structures in English. In the English-Zulu IL data reported in Dube (1997, 1998) obligatory movement in the learners' L1 is in evidence at early L2 syntax while in Green's study it is obligatory non-movement operations in the learners' L1 which are realised as such in the very early stages of L2 development. In both studies there is evidence of non-optionality of syntactic movement suggesting that, contrary to the claims of the VFH, feature values also transfer.

3.1 Hypotheses and Predictions

The aim of this study is to determine the nature of the initial state Zulu L2 grammar with respect to the availability of L1-based feature values. The question addressed is whether or not the L2 initial state grammar is valueless. According to the VFH, L1-based feature values do not transfer, hence initial state grammars have unspecified (i.e. valueless) features. Unspecified features supposedly lead to syntactic optionality in those areas of grammar that require syntactic movement. With respect to English speaking L2 learners of Zulu acquiring verb movement, the prediction the VFH makes is that beginner learners will not distinguish in acceptability between grammatical verb raising from the ungrammatical non-verb raising sentences in Zulu. In other words, the VFH predicts that English beginner learners of Zulu will accept verb raising and non-verb raising sentences to the same degree.

Related to the question of the nature of the initial state L2 grammar is that of subsequent interlanguage development and the knowledge representation shown at ultimate attainment. In this regard, the question is whether the type of knowledge representation in evidence at ultimate attainment is: (1) complete/convergent (Birdsong 1992, Ioup et al. 1994, White & Genesee 1996) (i.e. a knowledge representation that approximates that of native speakers of the target language), (2) divergent (i.e. consistently different from both the target language and the L1) (Sorace 1993) or, (3) incomplete (i.e. it lacks certain properties of the target language). The VFH predicts that at subsequent stages English-speaking L2 learners of Zulu will have determinate judgements with a significant preference for the 'correct' (in the target language) verb raising sentences. Put differently, the VFH predicts that development in the interlanguage grammar will be from optionality at the initial state to an 'abrupt' resolution of optionality at subsequent stages.

The null hypothesis in this study is that L1 influence is absolute[9]. It is, therefore, predicted that English speaking beginner learners of Zulu will transfer [-strong] V features instantiated in their L1 to the L2 initial state. Thus, beginner learners will distinguish in acceptability between grammatical verb raising and ungrammatical non-verb raising sentences by showing a significant preference for non-verb raising sentences.

It has been suggested that while L2 learners start with the L1 grammar, change to L2-like structures is triggered by L2 input that cannot be processed on the basis of the initial L1 grammar. Developmental change is only predicted in the interlanguage (IL) grammar if the L1 and the L2 differ (Schwartz 1998; Schwartz & Sprouse 1994, 1996; Montrul 1996, White 1996). As already shown, there is a parametric difference between Zulu and English regarding verb raising. This structural difference will therefore motivate restructuring in the English-Zulu IL grammar with the possibility of a convergent (i.e. complete) competence at ultimate attainment.

It is predicted that subsequent interlanguage development will be from absolute L1 influence to optionality at intermediate stages and the resolution of optionality at ultimate attainment.

4. The Experimental Study

A cross-sectional study of acceptability judgements of English speaking L2 learners of Zulu was conducted using a timed rating measurement scale. The rating scale was used to elicit subjects' absolute judgements with regard to isolated sentences. In the rating task, acceptability judgements were elicited on a 5-point scale with (1) representing the least acceptable sentence while (5) represented the most acceptable sentence. The rationale in using a 5-point scale was that, unlike a binary or dichotomous scale such as a yes/no or either/or answer, it creates possibilities for capturing intermediate judgements. In addition, a 5-point scale allows for a wider scale through which acceptability may be expressed (cf. Russell & Gray 1994). In fact, it has been suggested that scales that include more than 3 points are statistically more reliable and have better resolution (Sorace 1996a).

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The sentences for judgement were presented to the subjects using an auditory and a visual stimuli[10]. There was a time limit during which sentences appeared on screen and on the time available for making the judgement. Each sentence appeared on screen for 10 seconds and subjects were allowed a further 5 seconds to make the judgement[11]. The time limit was meant to elicit immediate judgements thereby not giving subjects time to access their metalinguistic knowledge of the relevant structures. By being timed, the task aimed at tapping immediate and spontaneous judgements.

As part of standard experimental control techniques (see Derwing 1979, Schutze 1996), sentences were presented in a random order so that two consecutive sentences testing the same syntactic structure did not succeed each other. Sentences were controlled for length, sentence length ranged from four to six words. To control for vocabulary difficulty, vocabulary booklets which contained all the vocabulary items that were used in the experimental sentences were provided to all potential participants four months prior to the commencement of the research. As a result, even the most elementary group had already used the vocabulary items that were used in the test sentences. However, subjects were not allowed to consult the vocabulary booklet during the experiment.

4.1 Subjects

The experimental subjects were drawn from English speaking learners of Zulu from various backgrounds. One group of native speakers of Zulu were used as controls. There were 38 native speakers who served as controls. The native controls were students of Law and Engineering at the Universities of the Witwatersrand and Natal in Durban.

The experimental subjects were 151 native speakers of English learning Zulu at various stages as well as those who were working in Zulu-oriented jobs. The 151 learners included students studying – and teachers teaching – Zulu at primary and high schools in the Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg area. The experimental group also consisted of native speakers of English working in Zulu-related jobs such as TV personnel, including news readers, journalists and senior editors.

L2 proficiency was determined on the basis of scores on a cloze test which was administered to all subjects, including the native controls. The reason for using the cloze as an independent test was that there was a lot of variation amongst subjects in terms of the quality and quantity of input they were exposed to, such that the criterion of years or months of exposure to the TL would not have been useful. Some of the subjects had lived in a Zulu speaking environment, while others had private tutors, some had been taught by native speakers while others had always been taught by non-native speakers, thus suggesting that the quality and quantity of input there were exposed to differed greatly.

Based on the scores of the cloze test, the subjects were divided into five proficiency groups (excluding the native controls). The experimental subjects were grouped as follows; group one consisted of the most elementary learners or the beginner group (nns1). Group two is the low intermediate group (nns2) while group three is the high intermediates (nns3). Group four consisted of the advanced non-native group, i.e. the near-natives (nns5). Group six is the native speaker (Ns) control group. After dividing the subjects into groups, the arithmetic mean of the group scores was calculated (see Table 1 in Appendix 2).

4.2 Test Sentences

Three constructions related to verb movement are represented in the design. These are adverb placement, placement of the negator and quantifier float. For each construction, four sentences were constructed, corresponding to two syntactic variants of the basic construction. For example, for adverb placement, there were two sentences with verb raising (i.e. SVAO word order which is grammatical in Zulu) and two sentences without raising (i.e. SAVO word order). There were thus 12 sentences represented in the design. The syntactic variants were constructed by varying a single binary-valued syntactic feature (i.e. +/-strong V). Thus, in the three constructions the syntactic features varied are the presence/absence of verb movement giving rise to either a grammatical verb

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raising sentence or an ungrammatical sentence with an *in situ* verb. Two lexical versions of the materials represented in the design were prepared. The sentences used in the design are illustrated in Appendix 1.
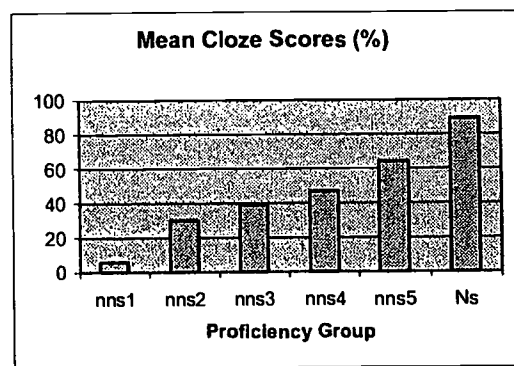
4.3 Analysing the Data

The data was analysed as follows: first descriptive statistics were used to calculate the arithmetic means (see Tables 2, 3 and 4 in Appendix 2). This was followed by a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with repeated measures in order to determine which of the effects were significant. Where effects (i.e. main as well as interaction) were found to be statistically significant, post hoc Tukey tests were conducted to make pair-wise comparison of means in order to determine which of the means differed significantly.

5. <u>Results</u>

5.1 Cloze data

Figure 1 shows that the mean cloze score increases significantly from one level to the next for all adjacent levels. One way ANOVA with the scores in the cloze test as a dependent variable shows that the mean scores of the six groups differ statistically highly significantly ($F_{(5,189)}$ = 1682.9186, $p<0.0001$). In Tukey tests, the results of the pair-wise comparison of means show that all the six groups differ significantly ($p<0.001$) which suggests that the six groups had been drawn from six different proficiency populations.

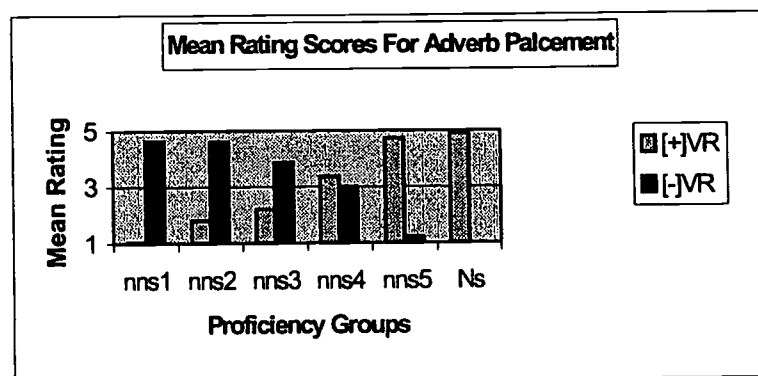*Figure 1: Group Means of the Cloze Test (%)*

5.2 Judgement Data

Recall that all sentences with verb raising are grammatical in Zulu. The equivalent sentences are all ungrammatical in English. The equivalent non-verb raising sentences are grammatical in English.

5.2.1 Adverb Placement

Figure 2 shows that the majority of learners except the advanced groups reject the grammatical verb raising SVAO word order, preferring the ungrammatical non-verb raising alternative. This preference persists until the high intermediate stage after which it is reversed. This difference in acceptability of the two sentence-types by the different groups is confirmed by a statistical highly significant main effect of level of language development ($F_{(5,187)}$ =18.12, $p<0.0001$). Tukey tests show that the most advanced non-native speaker group differs significantly from all other non-native groups ($p<0.05$). The native speaker group differs significantly only from the least advanced learners, also at $p<0.05$.

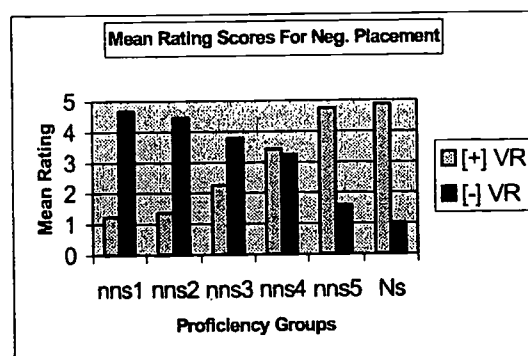*Figure 2: Mean Acceptability Rating For [+/-] V-Raising In Adverb Placement*

Key: [+] VR -- sentence with raised verb, [-] VR – sentence with verb in situ.

The main effect of raising is also significant (F $_{(1,187)}$ = 10.36, p<0.001). The interaction between the effects of level of language development and verb raising is statistically highly significant (F$_{(1,5)}$ =19.82, p<0.0001). In post hoc Tukey tests, within-group comparison of means indicate that the first three non-native groups have a statistical significant preference for the ungrammatical non-verb raising sentence (p<0.05). Although the advanced group has a preference for the grammatical verb raising sentence, this preference is not statistically significant, suggesting that learners at this level do not distinguish in acceptability between the verb raising and the non-verb raising sentence, i.e. their intuitions are indeterminate. The most advanced non-native group, the near-natives and the native control group show a clear, statistical highly significant preference for the grammatical verb-raising sentence (p<0.05).

5.2.2 Placement of the Negator

The results of the group judgements of sentences related to the placement of the negator resemble those already observed in the adverb placement sentences. Figure 3 shows that low level learners have a preference for the ungrammatical non-verb raising sentences, i.e. SNegVO word order. This preference is reversed in the advanced groups. The difference in preferences by the groups is confirmed by a statistically significant main effect of level of language development (F$_{(1,187)}$ = 18.94, p<0.0001). Tukey tests show that the difference is between the low level learners and the most advanced groups (p<0.05). Very advanced learners differ significantly from all the other non-native groups.while native speakers differ only from the least advanced learners (p<0.05).

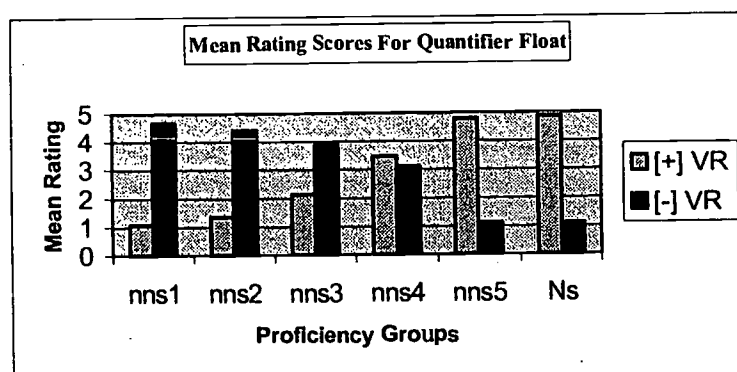*Figure 3: Mean Acceptability Scores of [+-] V-Raising in Sentences with Negator.*

Key: [+] VR—sentence with raised verb; [-] VR—sentence with verb in situ.

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The effect of verb-raising is significant ($F_{(1, 187)}$ =10.88, p<0.0001). The interaction of the main effects of level of language development and verb raising is statistically highly significant ($F_{(1,5)}$ =11.72, p<0.0001).Tukey within-group comparisons show that the first three non-native groups have a significant preference for the ungrammatical non-verb raising sentence. Although the advanced group has a preference for the grammatical verb raising alternative, the preference does not reach significance level. Thus the advanced group's intuitions are indeterminate. The near-natives and the native control groups have a significant preference for the grammatical verb raising sentence (p<0.05). The intuitions of the near-natives coincide with those of native speakers. In fact, a similar developmental scenario was observed in the judgements of adverb placement sentences.

5.2.3 Quantifier Float

Figure 4 shows that low level learners judge verb raising in quantifier float to be unacceptable. The preference for the non-verb raising sentence persists until high intermediate level. Very advanced learners show a preference similar to the native control group, i.e. they prefer the grammatical verb-raising sentence over the ungrammatical sentence with an *in situ* verb. The differences in preferences by the different groups is confirmed by a statistical significant main effect of level of language proficiency ($F_{(5,185)}$ = 18.81, p<0.0001). Tukey tests show that the mean preference scores of the native speaker control group differ significantly from the low, high and advanced non-native speaker groups and between the advanced non-native speaker group and the near-natives.

Figure 4: Mean Acceptability Scores of [+/-] V-Raising in Quantifier Float.

Key: *[+] VR—sentence with raised verb, [-] VR—sentence with verb in situ.*

The effect of verb raising is significant ($F_{(1, 185)}$ =12.90, p<0.003). The interaction between the effects of level of language development and verb-raising is statistically significant ($F_{(1,5)}$ = 14.60, p<0.001). In post hoc Tukey tests, within-group comparisons of means show that the first three non-native groups have a significant preference for the ungrammatical sentence over the grammatical verb raising sentence. The advanced learners have a preference for the grammatical verb raising sentence but this preference is not significant, indicating indeterminacy in their intuitions. Very advanced non-native speakers show a significant preference for the grammatical verb raising sentence like the native control group. Their intuitions coincide with those of native speakers.

In summarising, the results from the three constructions related to verb movement show that in judgements of the acceptability of sentences in Zulu with raised verbs, English speaking low level proficiency learners prefer the ungrammatical sentences without verb raising to the grammatical sentences with verb raising. This preference persists until a fairly advanced stage after which it is reversed. The advanced learners evidence optionality of verb movement in that they accept both sentence-types (i.e. those with and those without verb raising) to the same degree. The intuitions of advanced learners are indeterminate. This indeterminacy is evident in the three constructions. At the

extreme end of the proficiency scale, the near-natives have exactly the same preferences as the native controls, i.e. they significantly prefer the grammatical sentences with raised verbs to ungrammatical ones without raised verbs. Thus, in the three constructions related to verb movement, verb raising reaches categorical status at the near-native level. We consider the implications of this outcome in light of the claims of the Valueless Features hypothesis.

6.   Discussion

The purpose of the present investigation was to establish the extent to which the Valueless Features Hypothesis (VFH) captures the nature of initial state interlanguage grammars with respect to transfer of functional categories instantiated in the learners native language. The aim of the study was to test the prediction made by the VFH concerning non-transfer of feature values and subsequent interlanguage development. In other words, the study set out to establish whether or not the initial state English-Zulu interlanguage grammar had valueless features and if not, whether the specification of the features in evidence at the early stages of interlanguage development coincides with those instantiated in the L1 final state. The study also sought to establish how the interlanguage grammar develops from this initial state to subsequent stages.

Since verb movement is directly related to the surface word order, it was assumed that a systematic and significant preference of one word order type (i.e. raising vs. non-raising) over the other could indicate whether the initial state interlanguage had specified features and if so, whether the specification of those features resembles that in the L1 grammar. By focusing on the acquisition of verb movement by English speaking L2 learners of Zulu, the study hoped to falsify or defend the claims of the VFH by using L2 acquisition data that heretofore have not been the focus of attention in generative L2 research.

In order to answer the question of whether feature values transfer, it was necessary to make an important assumption about the L2 initial state. In this regard, the absolute L1-influence hypothesis, i.e. the Full Transfer/Full Access hypothesis (Schwartz & Sprouse 1994, 1996), which proposes that L2 learners start with their L1 grammar and that exposure to the target language input data forces them to restructure their interlanguage grammar, was adopted. Although the subjects involved in the experimental study were not at the *ab initio* stage, they were, to a very large extent, beginner learners. It is most common for researchers in this area to extrapolate backwards and posit an initial state grammar to be represented by some hypothetical stage 0 (see Schwartz & Sprouse 1994, 1996; Robertson & Sorace 1998). In the present study the initial state grammar is represented by the beginner group. This is based on the observation that most of the learners in the beginner group had been exposed to Zulu, in a formal classroom situation, for a period no longer than three months. It is therefore reasonable to assume this is as initial a state as one could ever get. If L1 effects are found at this 'later' stage of development, it is plausible to assume that the L1 could have been the starting point.

On the basis of the Zulu interlanguage data presented here, the question of whether or not L1-based feature values transfer to L2 first syntax can be answered unequivocally. The results show that all the low proficiency groups systematically and significantly accept a non-verb raising alternative in the three constructions related to verb movement which formed the basis of this inquiry. As non-verb raising is instantiated in English, the subjects' L1, it is reasonable to assume that the non-verb raising analysis used at the Zulu L2 initial state had been transferred from English. Since non-verb raising is a reflex of [-strong] V features in T, the results suggest that the knowledge of the specification of these features must have been transferred from English to the Zulu L2 initial mental representation. The findings on the English-Zulu interlanguage data show that non-movement operations which are obligatory in the learners' L1 are also realised as such at the initial or early stages of L2 development. More importantly, there is no optionality of verb movement at the initial stage of Zulu L2 development. In fact, the significant preference of the ungrammatical non-verb raising sentences by the low proficiency learners indicates non-optionality in the early interlanguage grammar. The results of the present study suggest, in line with Schwartz & Sprouse (1996), that once feature strength has

been instantiated in the native language, it becomes an abstract syntactic property of the L1 which is as much subject to transfer effects as any other property of the L1 grammar. By and large, this outcome is damaging to the claims of the VFH.

6.1 Subsequent Interlanguage Development

On the basis of the experimental evidence reported here it is possible to posit an 'intermediate' stage in the interlanguage development of English learners of Zulu when verb raising and non-verb raising are accepted to the same degree, i.e. when optionality sets in. This stage comes prior to the "expert" stage where non-verb raising is rejected in favour of the 'correct' (i.e. grammatical for Zulu native speakers) verb raising sentences. In the judgements of verb movement constructions advanced learners do not distinguish in acceptability between grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. Instead, subjects at this stage exhibit indeterminate judgements not evident in the early stages or at the most advanced stage of L2 acquisition.

On the assumption that the initial interlanguage grammar is characterised by non-verb raising transferred from the L1, the judgements of the advanced group reflect a watershed or, a transitional phase from a predominantly L1-based grammar (evidenced in the low proficiency groups) to a target-like grammar in evidence at the next developmental stage, the near-native level. Thus, the kind of optionality in evidence at this 'intermediate' stage is developmental. It is, largely, due to grammar competition rather than a lack of specification of feature values. The two competing analyses are non-verb raising transferred from the L1 and the newly acquired Zulu verb raising analysis.

Since the starting point of L2 acquisition has been shown to be the learners' L1, it would seem the kind of developmental optionality evidenced in the Zulu interlanguage grammar is a result of the weakening of the L1 knowledge system in accounting for L2 input data. With more exposure to L2 input, the L1-like initial L2 grammar is restructured and this leads to loss of determinacy in the learners' interlanguage intuitions. At the level of mental representation there is some missing piece of evidence as to which knowledge system is the correct one, hence the learner uses both systems (cf. Henry & Tangney 1996). The old form, i.e. the form based on an L1 analysis (i.e. non-verb raising) is not quickly discarded once the new form (i.e. the Zulu verb raising analysis) enters the grammar. Instead, "the 'new grammar' must gradually win over the old grammar by a system which gradually strengthens or weakens a form according to its occurrence in or absence from the input data" (Henry & Tangney 1996:326). Thus, the intermediate grammar is a kind of 'hybrid grammar' characterised by forms drawn from the L1 and those created on the basis of L2 input.

The results also indicate that optionality is resolved at near-native level. In fact, the judgements of the near-native speakers are consistent and determinate. Near-natives distinguish in acceptability between grammatical verb raising and ungrammatical non-verb raising sentences in the three constructions. The subjects at the near-native level make preferences identical to those of native speakers which might be an indication that their intuitions coincide with those of native speakers. Thus, with respect to verb movement, the mental representation at ultimate attainment is complete (cf. Sorace 1993).

To some extent, the results of the intermediate/advanced group also challenge the predictions of the VFH model. While the VFH predicts that development in the interlanguage grammar is from optionality to an abrupt resolution of optionality at intermediate/advanced stages, the Zulu data suggests otherwise. The Zulu interlanguage data indicates that subsequent interlanguage development is from "absolute" L1 influence to optionality at intermediate stages and the resolution of optionality at ultimate attainment (cf. Montrul 1996).

6.2   L2A of Verb Movement in Zulu: Developmental Stages

On the basis of the experimental evidence on the acquisition of Zulu verb movement, it is possible to identify three discrete stages in the interlanguage grammar corresponding to each stage. Stage 1, the L2 initial state, is the L1 final state. As indicated, the initial state grammar is the L1 final state non-verb raising with [-strong] V features in T. Stage 2 is the intermediate stage which can be characterised as the optionality phase. It is a stage where optionality sets in as a result of grammar change, i.e. the L2 is replacing another (the L1) grammar used at the initial state. Stage 3 is the survival from optionality phase. This stage is the mature state grammar where the L2 parameter-defining values have been reset and optionality has been resolved. The most advanced non-native speakers show the same preferences as the native controls. At least with respect to the acquisition of verb movement, the English-Zulu interlanguage grammar at ultimate attainment closely approximates the target language grammar. This suggests that native speakers of English reset the properties related to Zulu verb movement.

In sum, the findings of the present study provide damaging counter-evidence to some of the claims of the VFH. While the VFH proposes non-transfer of L1-based feature values, the Zulu data shows L1-like feature values at the very early stages of L2 syntactic development. The Zulu interlanguage data shows that the initial state IL grammar is neither valueless nor characterised by optionality of syntactic movement. Optionality sets in at subsequent stages as a result of competition between coexisting grammars. Thus development in the IL grammar is from absolute L1 influence to optionality at the intermediate stage and the resolution of optionality at ultimate attainment.

7.   Conclusion

The goal of this paper has been to demonstrate that feature values transfer from the L1 grammar to the L2 initial mental representation. In support of this claim, experimental evidence showing that English speaking L2 learners of Zulu exhibit an early stage of interlanguage development in which feature values instantiated in the native language predominate was presented. The consistent and significant preference of the word order patterns that implicate feature values instantiated in English suggests that transfer of these features occurred in the initial stages of L2 syntactic development. The paper also showed that optionality evident at subsequent 'intermediate' stages cannot be attributed to a lack of specification of feature values but rather, to grammar competition wherein L1-based [-strong] V features in T co-exist with the newly acquired [+strong] V features in T of the target language.

On the basis of the experimental evidence presented here, it is plausible to conclude that the initial state interlanguage grammar has specified features with feature values having been transferred from the L1. Thus, the early L2 grammar does not develop from a grammar with optionality of syntactic movement to a grammar with obligatory movement. Instead, subsequent interlanguage development is from absolute L1 influence to an "intermediate" stage of optionality of verb movement. The third and final stage is the "expert" stage, that is, ultimate attainment when target-like verb raising has been acquired.

Notes

1.   The following abbreviations will be used: AgrS for subject-verb-agreement, AgrO—object agreement, Tns—tense, S—subject, O—object, V—verb, Q—floating quantifier, A—adverb, Neg—negator.

2.   The negator *a-* in Zulu functions more or less like French *ne*. Following Pollock (1989), Dube (1999) suggests that *a-* is the head of NegP in Zulu, while *nga* is its specifier, i.e. it occupies its Spec position.

3.   In general AgrO is not used together with the object in Zulu. It only becomes an obligatory constituent of the inflected verb if the lexical object has been moved from its position adjacent to the verb (cf. Demuth & Harford 1999).

4. In Zulu there are two quantifier stems; the inclusive quantifier –*nke* which expresses "the whole of" and the exclusive –*dwa* which expresses only/alone/all by oneself. The inclusive quantifier can occupy three positions in a sentence, i.e. it can precede or follow the noun it quantifies, and it can also be in a quantifier float position (after the verb). For example Ibhokisi *lonke* liwele emanzini/ *Lonke* ibhokisi liwele emanzini/ Ibhokisi liwele *lonke* emanzini. (The whole box fell into the water) are all grammatical sentences in Zulu. The exclusive quantifier, on the other hand, can only be in a floating position. It may follow a subject in a sentence but in such cases the noun is used as a copular and the verb of the sentence changes to a relative construction. For example, Abantwana basele *bodwa* emzini (The children all remained in the village) would be Ngabantwana *bodwa* abasele emzini (It is the children alone who remained in the village).

5. As Schwartz (1998) rightly suggests, it is not clear why syntactic movement should be optional if the features values are inert. It would have been more plausible to assume that inert values lead to 'no movement' at all.

6. Green's study (1996) suggests that optionality is not resolved even after the acquisition of the "morphemic grammatical system" of the target language. If Green's analysis is correct, this could mean that the acquisition of syntax occurs independently of that of overt morphology. In fact, this seems to be the case in L1 acquisition as shown by Verrips & Weissenborn (1992).

7. There is anecdotal evidence that optionality may not be resolvable in the most advanced stages of L2 acquisition. Some researchers have shown that optionality can be a permanent feature in the IL grammar (see Borer 1995, Sorace 1996a, Schwartz & Sprouse 1996).

8. Schwartz & Sprouse (1994) argue that the data captured in these studies does not reflect L2 first syntax. They suggest that the Francophone L2 learners of English were not true beginners hence optionality evident in their grammar is a result of grammar competition in later IL stages.

9. The term 'absolute L1 influence' is used in the same sense in which it is used by Schwartz & Sprouse (1996), i.e. the influence of the abstract properties of the native language is not limited as suggested in the Minimal Trees and the Valueless Features Hypotheses. It is not meant to suggest that the interlanguage grammar is entirely constrained by abstract properties of the L1 grammar.

10. See Cook (1993) for the importance of providing both stimuli.

11. It had been established during the pilot phase of the study that the allocated times were most reasonable for both beginner and most advanced learners.

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APPENDIX 1: List of Test Sentences

Lexical Version 1

(a) *Adverb Placement*
1. UThoko uzigeza *njalo* izingubo zabantwana.
2. *UThoko *njalo* uzigeza izingubo zabantwana.
3. UmaMkhize ubugaya *kahle* utshwala basekhaya.
4. *UmaMkhize *kahle* ubugaya utshwala basekhaya.

(b) *Neg Placement*
5. Abafana bakwaKhumalo abaligibela *nga* ihhashi lami.
6. *Abafana bakwaKhumalo a *nga* bagibela ihhashi lami.
7. Isithumywa asiyidla *nga* inyama yembuzi ebisclc.
8. *Isithunywa a *nga* sidla inyama yembuzi ebisele.

(c) *Quantifier Float*
9. Abantwana benkosi balidlala *bodwa* ibhola.
10. *Abantwana benkosi *bodwa* badlala ibhola.
11. USandile uzohamba *yedwa* edolobheni ngempela sonto.
12. *USandile *yedwa* uzohamba edolobheni ngempela sonto.

Lexical Version 2

(a) *Adverb Placement*
1. Ugogo uzithuka *kakhulu* lezingane zakwaThema.
2. *Ugogo *kakhulu* uzithuka lezingane zakwaThcma.
3. UThabile ubugaya *kabi* utshwala basekhaya.
4. *UThabile *kabi* ubugaya utshwala basekhaya.

(b) *Neg. Placement*
5. Isalukazi asiluphuza *nga* ubisi Iwakho.
6. *Isalukazi a *nga* siphuza ubisi Iwakho.
7. Amadoda awazithenga *nga* izinkomo zakwaButhelezi.
8. *Amadoda a *nga* wathenga izinkomo zakwaButhelezi.

(c) *Quantifier Float*
9. Umkhulu ulitshove *yedwa* ibháyisikili likaMenzi.
10. *Umkhulu *yedwa* ulitshove ibhayisikili likaMenzi.
11. Izinja ziyikhonkotha *zodwa* inkomo KaThema.
12. *Izinja *zodwa* ziyikhonkotha inkomo KaThema.

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APPENDIX 2

Tables of Means

Table 1: Mean Scores and SDs of the Cloze Test.

Proficiency Group	N	Mean Score	SD
nns1	36	5.6667	4.8580
nns2	23	30.0000	3.5929
nns3	36	38.7222	1.2331
nns4	34	46.9412	4.4650
nns5	22	63.9545	5.5590
Ns	38	89.0000	4.2107
All	189	45.8889	27.9501

Table 2: Mean Rating Scores for Adverb Placement Sentences.

	nns1	nns2	nns3	nns4	nns5	Ns
+VR	1.0266	1.8136	2.1811	3.3641	4.7222	4.8988
−VR	4.6399	4.6066	3.8666	3.0008	1.2311	1.0011

Table 3: Mean Rating Scores for Neg. Placement Sentences.

	nns1	nns2	nns3	nns4	nns5	Ns
+VR	1.2344	1.3589	2.2446	3.4111	4.7445	4.8666
−VR	4.6581	4.4333	3.7885	3.2333	1.6026	1.0213

Table 4: Mean Rating Scores for Quantifier Float.

	nns1	nns2	nns3	nns4	nns5	Ns
+VR	1.0634	1.3344	2.1306	3.4633	4.7888	4.8666
−VR	4.6666	4.3889	3.8879	3.1112	1.1112	1.0812

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TRANSLATING THE FOLK

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Abstract

This paper looks at issues affecting Robert Garioch's translation into Scots of a sonnet from Belli's romaneschi collection. It begins with a discussion of the problems involved in writing in dialects with no settled written standard. This 'standardising' poetry is then looked at in terms of translation and theories of the 'impossibility' of translation. It is argued that the problems facing the translator/poet are much the same as those which the dialect writer comes up against in writing the original. A brief comparison is made at the level of lexical equivalence between the two texts in order to illustrate some of these issues.

Er Caffettiere Fisolofo

L'ommini de sto Monno sò ll'istesso
che vvaghi de caffè nner mascinino:
c'uno prima, uno doppo, e un antro appresso,
tutti cuanti però vvanno a un distino.

Spesso muteno sito, e ccaccia spesso
er vago grosso er vago piccinino,
e ss'incarzeno tutti in zu l'ingresso
der ferro che li sfraggne in porverino.

E ll'ommini acussì vviveno ar Monno
misticati pe mmano de la sorte
che sse li gira tutti in tonno in tonno;

e mmovennose oggnuno, o ppiano, o fforte,
scnza capillo mai calcno a ffono
pe ccascà ne la gola de la Morte.

<div align="right">(Giuseppc Gioachino Belli: from Sonetti 1833/1978)</div>

The Philosopher Café Proprietor

Men in this warld, whan aa's said and duin
are juist like coffee beans in a machine:
first yin, anither, and ae mair, they rin
til the same destiny, that's easy seen.

They keep aye checngin places, a big yin
shothers its wey afore a smaller bean:
they croud the entrance, fechtan their way in
syne the mill grinds them doun and throu the screen.

Sae in this warld ilka man maun boun
Intill fate's neive, thair to be passed and passed
frac haun till haun and birlit roun and roun;

and aa thae folk, aye muvan slaw or fast,
maun gang, unkennan, til the boddum doun,
and faa intill daith's thrapple at the last.

<div align="right">(Robert Garioch 1975)</div>

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1. Transcribing/translating the plebs

> il poeta dialettale tende a realizzare artificialmente questa intensificazione pseudo poetica della lingua nei parlanti in rapporto non puramente strumentale, e trasferisce dentro gli schemi letterari interi pezzi di quella realtà di lessico, di gergo, come per una documentazione.

(Pasolini, 1952)

Garioch's translations of Belli's sonnets are an example of Schleiermacher's notion of bringing the author to the reader. Indeed, if we consider Belli's work in the light of Pasolini's comments, then it may be possible to speak of bringing the people of Rome of the early nineteenth century to the reader of modern Scots poetry. Belli in his introduction to his sonnets comments:

> Nel mio lavoro io non presento la scrittura de' popolani. Questa lor manca;... La scrittura è mia, e con essa tento d'imitare la loro parola. Perciò del valore de' segni cogniti io mi valgo ad esprimere incogniti suoni.

(Belli, 1978: 9-10)

How seriously can we take such a claim to represent a people? The poet offers himself as translator between the illiterate masses and cultured readers: "tramite una complessa ed intricata operazione di supplenza culturale e tecnica, di vigile e sorvegliato mimetismo, di continua traduzione dal popolano al colto e, quindi, di ri-traduzione dai linguaggi della cultura e della poesia..." (Merolla: 1995: 190). Not only does Belli suggest that he will imitate the word of the people, but also, in one collection of sonnets, he intends to create a written standard for the Roman dialect: "*cavare una regola dal caso e una grammatica dall'uso, ecco il mio scopo.*" (Belli: 1978, 6).

We needn't necessarily accept that the mimetic ideal is anything other than illusory, however. The manifesto set out in Belli's introduction may be a mask of sorts for an agenda more to do with literary experimentation than folkloric documentation.

These are complicating questions for the issue of translation for a number of reasons. For Belli language represents a "magic key" (Joseph 1996) into the traditions, even into the psyche of the Romans. Belli in considering his poetry this way belongs to an illustrious line of thought. As Steiner points out, in this tradition there is a notion that "language (is) the defining pivot of man and the determinant of his place in reality...But so far as each human tongue differs from every other, the resulting shape of the world is subtly or drastically altered." (1975: 81-82) In the poems, the Belli original and Garioch's translation, the language used is at the core of distant cultures that share no more than a superficial historical resemblance. Is translation possible between the two?

The politico-linguistic debate around Scots has its own manifesto and similar claims that there are things that can be can be worded only in the Guid Scots tongue:

> E'en herts that ha'e nae Scots'll dirl richt thro'
> As nocht else could – for here's a language rings
> Wi' datchie sesames, and names for nameless things.

(MacDairmid:'Gairmscoile')

In Belli the work represents the "genius" of the people of Rome, which can only be expressed in the Roman tongue. Relativism in a very similar guise has been and is being used as the rallying cry to put Scots back into writing and to re-animate the language across Scottish culture in general. Just as Joyce, with his linguistic inventions, 'captured' the soul of the Irish nation, so Scottish writers justify atavistic dictionary dredging in the attempt to resuscitate a moribund literary tradition. But can a

language so closely bound to the 'genius' of a nation be used to translate other literatures, other cultures?

There is indeed a paradox in translating Belli and perhaps also in translating into Scots. It is, however, the paradox of translation in general. In Schleiermacher's terms Garioch's task is an impossible one in that he attempts to make a nineteenth century Roman poet sound like a modern speaker of Scots. The task is made to seem even more unlikely by the fact that both writers are simultaneously engaged in the standardisation of the language or dialect in which they are writing. Belli has the normative role of committing a particular sociolect of Roman speech to writing and transforming it into art. Garioch is taking part in the recreation of a new Scots tongue while also "deciding to interpret someone in one way rather than another [which] is intimately tied to normative judgements." (Putnam, 1988: 14)

Translation as part of the emerging tradition that is attempting to put Scots back onto the literary agenda has a number of functions. For MacDairmid, 'free adaptations' of Alexander Blok woven into the text of *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* are a statement of modernist credentials. For Garioch, on the other hand, translating Belli is perhaps an attempt to escape the fact that "the language that enables us to communicate with one another also encloses us in an invisible web of sounds and meanings, so that each nation is imprisoned by its language." (Paz, in Schulte, 1992: 154) Or, in more positive terms, translation widens the net of Scots: "*The bringing forth of language is an inner necessity of mankind. ...[Each speech form] is a foray into the total potentiality of the world.*" (Steiner, 1975: 83, quoting Humbolt)

2.   Vulgar Insularity

For Garioch translation provides reproof against the accusation of insularity sometimes levelled at writers of modern Scots. Both Belli and Garioch are urban writers, they give poetic form to a style of language dubbed in recent times by Halliday as anti-language. An anti-language is the extreme form of a social dialect and as such the antithesis of a standard language: "A social dialect is the embodiment of a mildly but distinctly different world view." (1978: 179) The *translation* of the world-view of the *plebeo* Romano, or Napoletano, or Milanese into literary form was not until recently accepted as 'literature' in Italy and as such was possibly only accepted as an anti-language of anthropological interest. As Merolla points out "La riscoperta dei grandi valori poetici dei *Sonetti romaneschi* è stata piuttosto tardiva e di fatto può farsi risalire solo agli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta.."(1995: 188) For Garioch then, Belli might represent a kind of father figure in the *International* of urban dialect writing.

Are such affinities not an illusion, a spin off from the rhetoric of international socialism? Can a reader of Scots empathise with the Roman café proprietor of 1833? The assumption in Garioch's work is that Belli's 'meaning' is not only interpretable for a Scot but also that that interpretation can be translated into modern Scots. Implicit in such an assumption is the presupposition that "linguistic utterances point to something beyond themselves, which can also be pointed to (in) wholly different utterances in 'another language.'" (Joseph: 1999) How can we justify such assumptions? There is no question of Garioch deconstructing the Belli sonnets back to an 'essential' meaning and then working outwards into Scots. If it were possible to posit such an 'essential' meaning we would be forced to question whether Belli's *mentalese* should be characterised as a semantic primitive based on standard Italian, and then question how many layers of translation precede the process of writing in Romanescho.

For Garioch what makes translation possible and desirable is the *ideal* notion that, although meaning is not independent of culture as in the Platonic model, the schema or context of situation described in Belli can fit into the world knowledge of modern Scots readers. There is an urban 'reality' that crosses national and linguistic borders. In Hogan's words, this type of stance counters the idea of linguistic relativism: "if there are striking differences between people's idiolects within languages or cultures and striking similarities across languages and cultures – if all this is the case, then there is and can be no special problem of intercultural or historical interpretation." (1996: 27) Such a set of 'shared' notions makes the writing of Belli, even considering distance over time and location,

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relevant to Garioch and therefore, he must have assumed, to his readers. As Bonnefoy states "At its most intense, reading is empathy, shared existence."(in Schulte, 1992: 188)

3. The two poems

Up to a point, each translation is a creation and thus constitutes a unique text

(Paz, in Schulte,1992: 154)

Stylistically Garioch sticks very close to the original. The development of the copular metaphor that is central to *Er Caffettiere Fisolofo* is handled using the same progression of the elements of the coffee-grinder schema. The rhyme scheme, which splits the sonnet into two parts – development and conclusion – is replicated. Garioch does not depart at all from Belli's structural organisation. It is difficult to make a metrical comparison between the two poems as the underlying rhythm in each is based on dissimilar principles: the Romano is syllable timed while the Scots is stress timed. It is noticeable, however, that in both cases the 'natural' rhythm of speech and a simple progression of syntax preclude any obvious emotive or rhetorical metrical effect.

In terms of lexis it is probably paradoxical to speak of how the texts diverge in meaning as a result of any item of vocabulary. Nonetheless, there are areas where the text of the translation strays outside the bounds set by Nabakov in his injunction: "[the translator] has one duty to perform, and this is to reproduce with absolute exactitude the whole text, and nothing but the text." (in Schulte, 1992: 132) Garioch's verb phrase *maun boun* (*must make (their) way*) implies either outside imposition or wilful surrender into the hands of fate, while Belli's *vviveno ar Monno* carries no such implication and is in fact relatively empty in semantic terms.

Of course, lexical equivalence is an illusion in all parts of the translation. Take the translation of Belli's word: *vvaghi*. In Italian editions of Belli the noun is glossed in Italian as the plural of *chicco*. The Italian word has a much wider application than *bean*, the word which Garioch uses in translation. It can also correspond to *grain* or *seed* and as such is likely to trigger a wider set of associations. This type of lexical 'impoverishment' is central to the idea that the translation of poetry is impossible: the polysemy of poetry cannot be reproduced even in texts written in the same 'language', never mind in a foreign tongue. Translation is impossible not only because of conceptualising differences between cultures, but also because of the essential idiosyncrasy of every unique utterance. No translator, however, sets out to recreate the same utterance, the same words, the same context and the same ideal addressee, just as conversationalists tend not to rely on memorised stretches of speech.

4. Concluding Remarks

Claiming that there is a divergence of meaning between the two texts is dependent on the assumption that there is determinacy of meaning in both of the languages concerned. As Joseph points out "the meanings of words are so *weakly* determined by the language that we can never expect any two speakers to conceive of them in the same way." (1998: 93) We can see this in the translation of the following phrase (line B represents a word-for-word gloss in English):

A)   ss'incarzeno tutti in zu ll'ingresso (Belli, 7)

B)   (they) press (themselves) in on the entrance

C)   they croud the entrance, fechtan their way in (Garioch, 7)

Garioch's reading of this section certainly concurs with the pessimistic theme of Belli's poem, but his *fechtan* is an interpreted addition. Garioch here is visible in his role as interpreter. Of course, this role must precede that of translator. But, at various points in this translation, Garioch seems to surrender the translator's cloak of anonymity. The lexical choices are probably made in an attempt to follow Belli in increasing the expressive power of the visual metaphor for the concluding section. Garioch the creator sticks his head out from his *objective* position as translator as a result of the desire to retain holistic meaning.

In a sense this brings us full circle. Critics have claimed that Belli used the mask of dialect writing to present controversial views. The speakers of his *Sonetti* are the ordinary folk; thus Belli accomplished the trick of distancing himself from the probable repercussions his radical views were likely to incur. Garioch also achieves the trick of internationalising Scots through translating a writer involved in a similar 'struggle' against a dominant language. But in terms of re-creating Belli his translations are a set of illusions. Such illusion is at the heart not only of the translation, but also Belli's boast of mimetic representation. Perhaps the only difference in the writing process of these two poems is that Belli began with an empty page.

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THE ACQUISITION OF THE ENGLISH ARTICLE SYSTEM
BY PERSIAN SPEAKERS

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Abstract

It has been argued that the acquisition of the English article system is delayed for most L2 learners until the very final stages of learning. This paper examines the difficulties of the acquisition of this system by Persian speakers. It will be argued that no single available theory can account for the causes of the learners' errors but a combination of contrastive analysis and an analysis of these errors might be illuminating. English and Persian differ in that the former uses definite markers, while the latter uses specific markers. It will also be shown that syntax has a major role in the use of the definite marker in English, whereas semantics has that role in Persian. It is predicted that if any transfer from L1 were to occur, it would most likely happen where the NP carrying the article appears in subject position. An analysis of the subjects' performance on two article elicitation tasks suggests that Persian L2 learners of English have problems identifying the English definite marker when it is in subject position.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Second language acquisition (SLA) has been the focus of many studies in applied linguistics during the last three decades. The literature in this regard is so rich that it has been considered as a separate field from that of applied linguistics. Sharwood Smith (1992), for example, maintains that they are two different disciplines and their relationship is that of two *good friends*. Whether they are friends, sisters, divorced, or separated, the research into the acquisition of L2 brings fruitful insights to the practitioners engaged in teaching foreign languages.

Amongst important issues in SLA research is the significance of the learner's errors. Where do they come from? Are they due to the transfer of L1 structures/lexicon into the L2, or are they induced due to some interlanguage (IL) grammar? Are L2 errors the same as L1 errors? Answering these questions will bring about an understanding of the nature of these errors and their probable causes, which in turn may facilitate the practice of second language teaching.

The writer of this paper has long been interested by the problems of L2 learners of English, in particular Persian speakers. He has observed that amongst the problematic areas of English for native Persian speakers is the acquisition of the English article system: errors persist even in advanced learners and are probably subject to fossilisation. What is peculiar about the article system, which makes it so difficult to learn? Is there any specific complexity within the English article system, or a contrastive element in Persian, which plays a role in the acquisition of the English article system? The research described below sought to explore possible answers to these questions.

We begin by reviewing the major theoretical frameworks in the field: the Contrastive Analysis (CA) Hypothesis, the Error Analysis movement and the contributions of these to the development of Interlanguage Theory. We then briefly discuss the acquisition order hypothesis and revisit the literature to establish a practical framework for Error Analysis. A detailed contrastive analysis of the English article system and its counterpart(s) in Persian will then be proposed. An Error Analysis of Persian

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speakers will be reported and the results analysed. Finally, conclusions are drawn and suggestions made for further research.

1.2 The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

The role of the first language has long been considered that of villain in second language learning; perhaps it is the main obstacle to successful learning of the target language. The Contrastive Analysis hypothesis, which held sway over the field of applied linguistics for over two decades, took the position that the learner's L1 will interfere with his/her acquisition of L2. On the one hand, the Contrastive Analysis hypothesis held that *'where structures in the L1 differed from those in the L2, errors that reflected the structure of the L1 would be produced'* (Dulay et al., 1982:97; Lado, 1957:2). These errors were believed to be due to the influence of the learner's L1 habits on the L2 production and were labelled *'negative transfer'*. On the other hand, if the structures of the two languages were similar, it was predicted that there would be an automatic use of the L1 structure in the L2 performance resulting in a correct utterance. The latter process was labelled *'positive transfer'*. The Contrastive Analysis hypothesis was based on the contemporary theoretical frameworks in the fields of psychology and linguistics. The hypothesis maintained that language learning, like other forms of learning, was a matter of habit formation. In this behaviouristic view errors were unwanted and had to be avoided. So it was crucial to identify the potential problematic area of the target language for specific learners' L1 background so as to enable the teachers to avoid unwanted utterances before a right set of habits was established.

The theory was so appealing to researchers and teachers that a large body of data challenging it was ignored for years. Gradually linguists began looking at real data from language learners. Many of the errors that were found could not be attributed to interference, as they resembled errors which learners from other language backgrounds made in learning the same language. In fact, as the inquiry extended, most of the Contrastive Analysis predictions were disconfirmed. The challenging data resulting from a decade of psycholinguistic research has revealed that: the majority of the learner's grammatical errors do not reflect the learner's L1; there are a number of errors in areas of grammar that are similar in both L1 and L2; learners make grammatical errors which they would not have made had they used the rules of their first language; there is more L1 influence on phonological errors than on grammar errors. In short, attentive teachers and researchers noticed that a great number of student errors could not possibly be traced to the native language of the learner (see Dulay et al., 1982; Schumann and Stenson, 1974).

1.3 The Error Analysis movement

During the 70s, arising from the failure of Contrastive Analysis to account for the learner's errors, applied linguists began to look elsewhere for explanations of interference in SLA. The approach which emerged again followed the lead of current theories in psychology and linguistics. With the rise of Chomskyan linguistics and Piagetian psychology, errors were viewed in a different way. Errors, in this perspective, are considered to serve two main purposes. Firstly, they provide data from which one can make inferences about the language learning process. Additionally, they indicate *'which part of the target language students have most difficulty producing correctly'* (Dulay et al., 1982:138). The new movement tried to follow an inductive approach, that is, to draw inferences about difficult areas from studying actual errors. The analysis of errors, as Corder (1974) suggests, proceeds as follows: 1) selection of a corpus of language deciding on the size, medium, and homogeneity of the sample; 2) identification of the sample; 3) classification of the errors; 4) explanation of the causes of errors; and finally 5) evaluation of the errors. Like any other approach, Error Analysis has advantages as well as weaknesses. The description of errors, the product aspect of learning, is the advantage of Error Analysis in comparison to Contrastive Analysis. While Contrastive Analysis is prescriptive in nature, the descriptive aspect of Error Analysis makes it more plausible as well as acceptable. Error Analysis classifies errors according to directly observable characteristics that each error has. Errors are classified on the basis of the proper linguistic element(s) they lack. For instance, if some elements are omitted from a sentence, the sentence would be classified under the category of *'omission errors'*; if the

sequence in which the elements of a sentence are tied to each other is misordered, the sentence would be categorised under '*misorder errors*', and the like.

While such descriptions are an important achievement of Error Analysis, the explanation of errors, the determination of the origin(s) of errors, as Dulay et al. mention, is inadequately dealt with in Error Analysis. The explanation of language acquisition, the process aspect of learning, involves different factors that require to be fully taken into account. Thus, it is not a straightforward task. The reason is that a particular error does not necessarily have a single source; the sources are multiple. Moreover, the specification of an error is not a descriptive task. For this reason, researchers are cautious as far as the explanatory aspect of Error Analysis is concerned.

1.4 Interlanguage Theory

The Error Analysis movement paved the way for an *interlanguage theory*. Trying to justify the explanatory aspect of Error Analysis, applied linguists found that the majority of errors produced by L2 learners had neither the characteristics of the L1 nor the L2. In addition, they found that learners from different L1 backgrounds produced similar types of L2 errors when put in a given contact situation. It seemed that, as Corder (1967) had made explicit, a form of '*hypothesis testing*' similar to that available for L1 acquisition was also in operation when L2 learners tried to approximate the target language system. Corder saw the making of errors as a strategy, evidence of learner-internal processing. Thus, errors were not villains in L2 learning; rather they were signs of language-internal processing which, when put together with hypothesis testing, could indicate improvement towards the target language. This process was considered to be on an interlanguage (IL) continuum and, as Selinker (1972) suggested, operated in five stages: 1) language transfer; 2) overgeneralization of target language rules; 3) transfer of training (i.e. rule enters the learner's system as a result of instruction); 4) strategies of L2 learning; and 5) strategies of L2 communication.

As it stands, IL theory seems to account for a wide range of errors. It starts from the early L1 transfer errors and carries on to advanced strategies of L2 communication. However, Selinker also noted that certain learners might never reach the final ideal L2 competence. That is, they do not reach the end of the IL continuum. The learners stop learning when their IL still contains at least some rules different from those of the target language system. He referred to this as *fossilisation*. IL theory, in short, has three main principles. Firstly, the L2 learner's IL system is permeable, in the sense that rules that constitute the learner's knowledge at any one stage are not fixed, but are open to amendment. Secondly, the L2 learner's IL is constantly changing – that is, there is a constant revision and extension of rules in the process of L2 approximation. Finally, despite the variability of IL, it is possible to detect the rule-based nature of the learner's use of the L2; in other words, language learning is systematic. (See Ellis, 1986:47-63)

1.5 Order of Acquisition

The close association of IL theory with the evidence accumulated from Error Analysis, especially from learners with different L1 backgrounds, appeared to provide a broad perspective that perhaps SLA was in many ways like L1 acquisition. An examination of this position is outside the scope of this study. What is important about the similarity of L1 and L2 learning processes is the introduction of the concept of *acquisition order*. As it is well known, the acquisition of L1 goes through different stages at which certain structures are learnt earlier than others. For example, it is claimed that lexical categories are learnt first by the child acquiring L1; functional categories are acquired much later (e.g. the acquisition of the article system). Is the same order of acquisition which exists for the L1 applicable for the L2 acquisition? The answer is *yes and no*. There are many factors involved in L2 learning such as age, motivation, attitude, experience of the L1, which make the acquisition of one element easier or more difficult. As Dulay et al. point out, '*certain structures in English, such as articles, are particularly susceptible to variation across subjects*' (1982:202). That is, if there is a natural or universal order in which L2 learners acquire *certain* syntactic and morphological structures, there is also variety between subjects.

To sum up the discussion of the significance of the learner's errors, one may say that the strong version of the Contrastive Analysis hypothesis, which claims to identify the problematic area of the target language, is untenable. However, this is not to exclude the possibilities of L1 interference. Indeed, there is evidence for such an interaction. A weak version of the same hypothesis, which predicts that *marked* areas of the target language are good candidates for difficulty and are subject to possible transfer of L1 *unmarked* structures, is tenable (Eckman, 1977). Hence, it seems that a contrastive analysis may still be useful for the explanatory aspect of this research.

On the other hand, in order to describe the problematic areas of difficulty in L2 learning, we seem to be in need of an analysis of the learner's errors. By doing Error Analysis we can observe the real problems occurring in a learner's utterance and probably identify the IL stage in which s/he is. In this way we, as practitioners, can help our pupil in selecting the right strategy to develop their IL.

2.   Contrastive Analysis of English and Persian

As mentioned in 1.1, among the most common errors of L2 learners of English are errors in the article system. Inappropriate article usage is perhaps one of the most easily noticed markers of *'foreigner language'*. Even learners of many years' standing, who arc fluent in all othcr aspects, can be recognised as non-native speakers through occasional inappropriate article (in broader term, *'determiner'*) usage. At the same time articles are extremely frequent in English: in one frequency count, the definite article appears in first place and the indefinite article in fourth (Carroll et al., 1971 cited in Berry, 1991). Many writers have noted that this area of grammar is a source of grcat difficulty for learners (Pica, 1984; Willis, 1990). The problem seems to remain for most learncrs up to the end of their learning; in many cases the acquisition never finalises and remains as a fossilised IL structure. What is specific about the acquisition of the English article system, which makes it so difficult to achieve for L2 learners, in this case Persian speakers? This research aims to explore reasons for this problem and if possible pinpoint the causes of this difficulty. To do this, a contrastive analysis of the English article system with its equivalent counterpart(s) in Persian is required.

2.1   The English article system

Articles are usually divided into definite (**the**) and indefinitc (**a** or **an**). Although the morphological forms of the article are very limited, their frequent occurrences in the language convey a variety of functions essential for the syntactic coherence of the discourse.

We will begin with the definite article. The concept of definiteness has been the subject of a vast number of studies (see Hawkins, 1978). There have been differcnt viewpoints in this regard. However, for the purpose of this paper we will only focus on the core features of the definite article.

Halliday and Hasan maintain that

> the definite article has no content. It merely indicates that the item in question is specific and identifiable; that somewhere the information necessary for identifying it is recoverable (1976:71).

That is to say, **the** has no independent notional content such as proximity, possession, etc. The *'identifying'* role depends on the circumstances in which it occurs. Circumstances have been classified using different taxonomies. Quirk et al. (1985), for example, enumerate eight situational-type occurrences of **the**: immediate situation, larger situation, direct anaphoric reference, indirect anaphoric reference, cataphoric reference, sporadic (institutional reference, logical use with certain adjectives and reference to body parts in propositional complements), as well as **the** used in generic sentences and proper names. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976) there are two broad functional uses for **the**: endophoric reference to items within the text (cataphoric for forward-pointing, anaphoric for backward-pointing reference); and exophoric reference to items outside the text (reference to particular or unique item(s)/subclass/class in specific situations). A wider classification is proposed by Hawkins based on

his *Location Theory*. His category for definite article includes the anaphoric use (signalled by various linguistic devices e.g. direct repetition, use of synonyms, associative anaphora, etc.).

The proposal of Hawkins assumes that the referent set is uniquely identifiable by the hearer (or assumed to be so by the speaker) through a complex interaction of various pragmatic parameters. The parameters could be reduced to the knowledges shared by the interlocutors: knowledge of the context, knowledge of the situation/context of utterance, specific localised knowledge, general and schematic knowledge within the wider universe of discourse. A word of caution: the speaker's possession of any of these knowledges does not mean that the learner necessarily has specific previous knowledge of such definite referents, but merely that at the time of utterance s/he is assumed by the speaker to have access to sufficient information through contextual references to the above knowledges to recognise the existence of the referent set, to locate and uniquely identify it within the relevant set of entities or the relevant schematic set. Pragmatic abilities of the interlocutors enable them to apply various types of knowledge. In some cases, this is anaphoric discourse knowledge of some type (e.g. *A girl was attacked as she was playing in a wood near Inverness. The attack took place as the girl was....*). In other cases it is knowledge of the immediate situation (e.g. *Open the window , please);* or specific localised knowledge (e.g. *Turn left when you get to the inn, and go along...*). Other examples are wider general and schematic knowledge within the universe of discourse (e.g. *She looked up but was blinded by the sun.*), or combinations of the foregoing, for instance, anaphoric with schematic or localised knowledge (e.g. *I went to a football match last night. The referee was hopeless*). In the case of the hearer's lack of knowledge (e.g. *I telephoned the Registrar's this morning. The man I spoke to was very helpful. Can you pass me the letters on that table? The end of a holiday is always the worst time.*), the cataphoric element locates the referent so as to avoid uttering unnecessary anaphoric reference to an indefinite NP. There are of course more restrictions in the use of **the** which are outside the scope of this paper.

The indefinite article a occurs in an indefinite singular NP environment to denote the countability of the noun phrase. This special syntactic distribution of a, however, signals an important conceptual meaning such as individuating or particularising. The basic core function of a can be stated as: to introduce a single indefinite, individuated entity into the discourse and to relate that entity to the wider general set of entities denoted by the head noun. The use of a indicates that there must exist other referents of the same general set that are not included in the particular act of reference. This function is often called its *instantial* use or *specimen of a category* use (Hewson, 1972:87).

The relationship of the single, individuated instance or specimen to the wider general set is determined by the degree of specificity/genericness assigned to the entity by the context of utterance. Thus when the contextual reference is totally generic, the relationship of the single, individuated entity to the general set is foregrounded and can be viewed as that of a stereotype representing an implicit superordinate general class (e.g. *A kettle is a device for boiling water.*) In such generic cases, a + **noun** takes on the meaning roughly of *one, representing every one of its class or group.* Where the reference is to a totally specific entity, the relationship of the single, individuated entity to a superordinate general set is in the background; the singleness, individuateness aspect of the reference is uppermost and the relation-to-set aspect is weakest (e.g. *I dropped a kettle on my foot this morning*). In such cases, the meaning of a + **noun** might be characterised as *one, meaning this particular one of its class or group.* In non-specific and non-generic examples, the strength of the relationship of the single individuated entity to the general set varies according to the pragmatic restrictions of the context, sometimes appearing stronger, sometimes weaker, depending on the degree of specificity/genericness assignable to the entity as it is shown in the following examples.

1. *I decided to buy a kettle yesterday.*

2. *Choose a kettle from our range, madam.*

3. *I'll have to buy a kettle when I go shopping.*

As with the definite article there are more restrictions on the use of the indefinite article than can be discussed within the scope of this essay.

2.2   Definiteness/Indefiniteness in Persian

When we study Persian syntax we can observe that there is no definite marker as such, rather there is a kind of *specificity* marker. So in Persian there is a contrast between specific and non-specific marker. Figure 1 illustrates specificity with respect to definite, indefinite, and generic NPs.
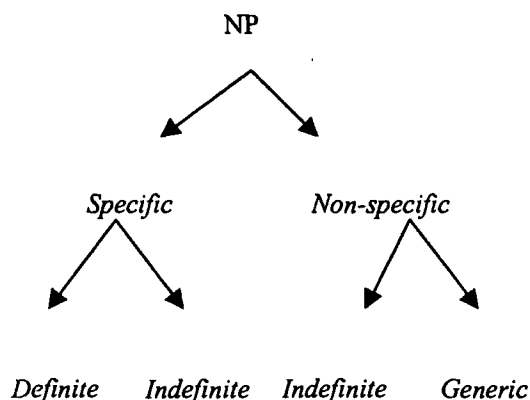
NP

Specific   Non-specific

Definite   Indefinite   Indefinite   Generic

Figure 1: Specificity/nonspecificity in Persian

As Figure 1 illustrates, *definites* are always specific, whereas *indefinites* are ambiguous with respect to specificity. Generics, on the other hand, are always non-specific.

Specific noun phrases, definite or indefinite, have one feature in common: they denote a specific individual. In other words, they pick a certain type of individual out of a set of individuals. The difference between the definite NPs and specific indefinite NPs is that the former are presumed to be known to the hearer, whereas the latter are not. Figure 2 will help the reader visualise these facts.
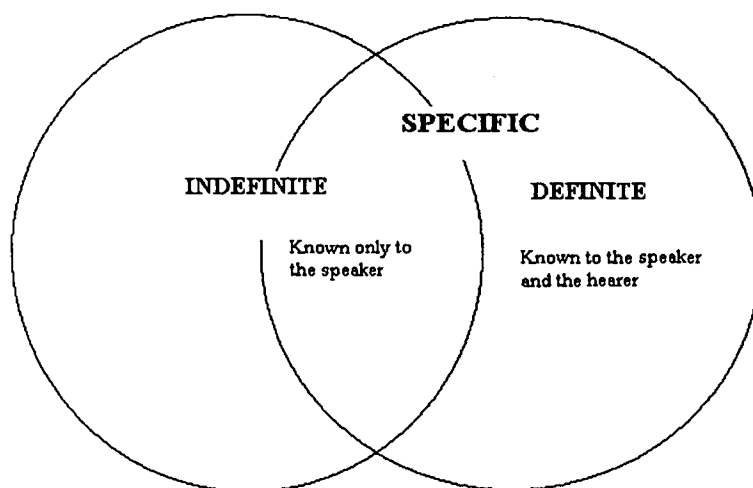
SPECIFIC

INDEFINITE   DEFINITE

Known only to   Known to the speaker
the speaker   and the hearer

Figure 2: Specificity vs. definite/indefinite

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The set of indefinite NPs overlaps with the set of specific NPs, as illustrated by Figure 2, since only some of the indefinite NPs are specific.

Figure 2 also shows that definite NPs are the subset of specific NPs. Karimi (1989) suggests that,

> *universal grammar (UG) has a single category of specific/definite (= presumed known) whose interpretation can differ from language to language, but which may play a role in every language (1989:62).*

This is due to the fact that every language has either a definite or a specific marker, but not both. For example, Persian, Turkish, Albanian have a specific marker, while English, German, French have a definite marker.

In Persian specificity is usually marked by a particle called **ra** (or -o- the spoken equivalent). Karimi argues that specific NPs in direct object position are always marked by **ra**. She offers several examples and concludes that there is overwhelming evidence suggesting that **ra** is present following a direct object if and only if that NP is specific. The following examples given by Karimi (1989:60-70) should illustrate the point.

First, any relative clause modifying an NP adds to its descriptive content. Therefore, it is set up to favour a specific reading, as in (1).

1. *ketab-i -ro   ke diruz   darbar -as harfmi-zad -im xarid -am*

    book-REL -**ra** that yesterday about -it talk PRES-hit we bought I

    'I bought the book we were talking about yesterday'

The absence of **ra** from the example in (1) results in an ill-formed string.

Second, **ra** is obligatory when the direct object is a proper noun as in (2). It is well known that proper nouns are specific.

2. *a. husang-o did -am*   *b. *husang did -am*

    'I saw Hushang'

Third, **ra** is obligatory when the direct object is a pronoun as in (3). Again, it is well known that pronouns are always specific.

3. *a. un   -o did -am*   *b. *un did -am*

    him/her -ra saw -I

    'I saw him/her'

Fourth, the pronoun **it** translates a phrase followed by *ra*, whereas **one** translates a generic NP.

4. *a. ramin prihan xarid man ham yeki xarid -am*

    Ramin shirt bought   I   also one bought -I

    'Ramin bought a shirt, I bought one, too'

    *b. *ramin pirhan xarid man ham un -o xarid -am*

    Ramin shirt bought I also that -**ra** bought I

5.   *a. man mi -xast   -am pirhan -e sabz -o be -xar -am amma ramin un -o zud -tar xarid*

    I PRES-wanted -I shirt -EZ green-**ra** SUBJ-buy-I but Ramin it -**ra** soon -er bought

    'I wanted to buy the green dress, but Ramin bought it first'

    b. *man mi-xast -am pirhan -e sabs -o be -xar -am amma ramin yeki zud -tar xarid

The noun phrase *pirhan* 'shirt' in (4) is generic. Therefore, it may only be replaced by *yeki* 'one' as in (4a). The pronoun **it** in this case will result in an ill-formed string, as in (4b). The NP *pirhan-e sabz* 'the green shirt' in (5), however, is specific. Therefore, 'it', not 'one', is an appropriate interpretation, as illustrated in (5a) and (5b).

Finally, as one might expect, the presence of **ra** is obligatory when the NP is headed by a demonstrative determiner, since demonstratives always indicate a specific reading. This is illustrated in (6).

6.   *a. in   sib -o mi -xor-am*

    this apple -**ra** PRES -eat -I

    'I eat this apple'

    b. * in sib mi -xor -am

The place of a specifier within a noun phrase can be shown as in Figure 3.
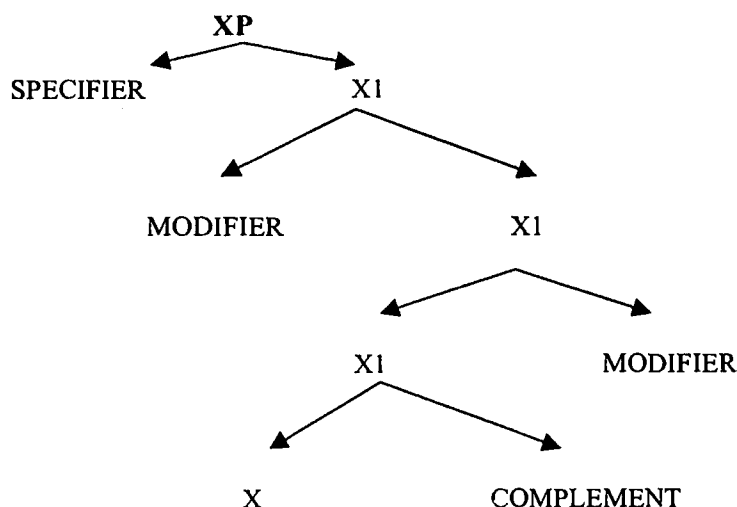

Figure 3: Specificity marker of the noun phrase

It is interesting to note that since Persian has a free word order, in the sense that the direct object can freely move to the subject position without necessarily changing the voice of the sentence into passive, the specificity marker **ra** will also move to the subject position as in (1), (2), and (3) above. In the cases where the specific NP has a subject function, there would be no specific marker; instead, the specificity may be marked by the next modifier in the hierarchy. For example, in the case of anaphoric references the specificity will be marked by means of demonstratives. Where there is cataphoric reference, the specificity is marked by addition of a spoken form 'i' to the head noun. This specificity marker has different functions as illustrated in (7) and (8).

7.   *ketab -i ke diruz   xarid -am*

    book -REL that yesterday bought I

    'The book I bought yesterday'

8.   *hagh -i bayan*

    right-EZ expression

    '*The right to express*'

Where specificity is understood by a wider unive.se discourse, there would be no specificity marker as in (9).

9.   *xorsid bala amad*

    sun   rose

    '*The sun rose*'

Definiteness/indefiniteness in Persian, unlike English, is not heavily governed by syntax, rather it is the semantics of the discourse which determines the use of the appropriate specific marker in a given context, if any marker is necessary. As one can observe, unlike English syntax, which dictates the use of indefinite article (determiner in broader sense) before singular countable nouns regardless of the semantic interpretation of the sentence, Persian syntax is quite flexible in this regard. Depending on different interpretations of the sentence, Persian may/may not use an indefinite marker in a noun phrase. For example, in (4) above *'pirhan'* **shirt**, which has, to some extent, a generic sense, is used without any indefinite marker. If, however, an indefinite marker is used before the same head noun, it implies a shift of focus on the number of shirts one may have bought as in (10).

10.   *ramin yek pirhan xarid*

    Ramin one shirt bought

    '*Ramin bought a shirt*'

If an indefinite marker is added after the head noun, it implies the greatest indefiniteness of the head noun as in (11).

11.   *ramin pirhan -i xarid*

    Ramin shirt -EZ bought

    '*Ramin bought a shirt*'

There is a difference between the use of indefinite -i in (11) and that of the definite -i in (7) and (8). The -i in (11) is called '*Yaye vahdat*' which means the sign of singularity and is very frequent in Persian (see Windfuhr, 1979).

Having compared the definite/indefinite structures in English and Persian, one may observe that it is very difficult to apply markedness theory to this area of syntax in these two languages. Apparently the two languages have different realisations for definiteness: while syntax plays a major role in determination of definite/indefinite markers in English, semantics seems to have the main role in the case of Persian. The analysis can predict that if any L1 transfer happens in the acquisition of the English article system, it would probably occur in structures where the NP carrying the article is placed in subject position. However, one may notice that the Contrastive Analysis conducted here can also give us insights about the explanations of the source of difficulty Persian speakers may face in learning the English article system. For instance, how would different specific referents (e.g. anaphoric, cataphoric, etc.) cause difficulty for Persian speakers ? Or how might specificity affect the performance of the learners in dealing with the indefinite article? These are questions we will shortly address.

3. Error Analysis of Persian speakers

3.1 Method

Two different tasks were constructed to elicit the errors of Persian speakers in using the English article system. Fifteen postgraduate students who were studying in Edinburgh and Newcastle in various disciplines were asked to do the tasks. They were all assumed to have reached the minimum threshold English proficiency required by UK universities. However, for the purpose of this research they were classified into advanced and intermediate learners. Advanced learners (N=7) were those who at the time of the study had already spent a few years living in the UK, while the intermediate group (N=8) were students who had spent only a year in the UK.

A general text concerning education was adapted and transformed into two tests (see Appendix). Test 1 was a gap-filling test, where subjects were required to fill the missing articles. In order to control the general layout of the test, some unnecessary gaps were also created. The subjects were asked to fill the gaps only if it was necessary. The purpose of this test was to lead the students to the potential areas of syntax where articles are plausible, so that by consciousness raising we could observe how they could recall the omitted articles. The second test was a kind of error correction task, in which the subjects had no clue to the potential area of error. The purpose of this test was to see how sensitive the subjects were to the English article system. Tables 1 and 2 illustrate how items functioned in the discourse of each test.

Table 1: Specification of Articles in Test 1

Items	Definite			Indefinite	
Syntactic Position	Anaphoric	Cataphoric	Universal	Specific	Non-specific
SUBJ	4	1	-	-	-
OP	2	1	1	1	1
DO	-	1	-	1	-
PRED	-	1	-	1	-
ADV	-	-	-	-	1
Total	6	4	1	3	2

SUBJ=Subject   OP=Object of Preposition DO=Direct Object PRED=Predicate   ADV=Adverb

Table 2: Specification of Articles in Test 2

Items	Definite			Indefinite		
Syntactic Position	Anaphoric	Cataphoric	*Inap.	Specific	Non-specific	*Inap.
SUBJ	3	-	1	-	-	-
DO	1	1	-	-	2	-
PRED	-	1	1	-	1	1
OP	-	2	1	1	-	-
Total	4	4	3	1	3	1

* Inappropriate use of article SUBJ=Subject DO=Direct Object   PRED=Predicate   OP=Object of Preposition

The tests were given to a native speaker of English for completion. The native speaker's responses for test 1 showed no variation from the original text. This was not the case for test 2. There were two items in test 2 that were acceptable in their present form according to the native speaker. Therefore, it was decided to exclude the two problematic items from the analysis of results in test 2. The tests were then administered to the subjects and the responses were gathered for analysis.

3.2   Results

Table 3 demonstrates how each group performed on test 1.

Table 3: Percentage of Correct Responses to Each Category in Test 1

Proficiency level	Definite			Indefinite	
	Anaphoric	Cataphoric	Universal	Spccific	Non-specific
Advanced	66%	82%	100%	86%	72%
Intermediate	40%	31%	75%	66%	44%

%: Percentage of correct responscs for cach group of subjects

The mean percentage of correct responses in test 1 is 48% for the intermediate group and 77% for the advanced group. It appears that the subjects performed differently with rcspect to different classes of articles. To put it in another way, some articlcs were more difficult than others for our subjects. Universal articles were the easiest of the articles for all the subjects, while Anaphoric/Cataphoric articles were the most difficult. To examine whether the difference in the difficulty level of articles for the testees was significant, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted (Table 4).

Table 4: Repeated Measures ANOVA for all the Articles

Source	Sum of Squarcs	df	Mean Square	F
Between	50.987	4	12.747	*36.027
Within	19.813	14	1.415	

* Significant at $p < 0.001$

The F value obtained (36.027) is significant at $p < 0.001$ indicating that some articles were more difficult than others for all the subjects.

Table 3 also shows that the advanced learners performed better on test 1. An F test was conducted to see if the difference between the two groups was significant. The F value in Table 5 is significant at $p < 0.001$, indicating that advanced grouped performed significantly better on test 1.

Table 5: F Test for the Difference Between the two Groups on Test 1

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between	23.207	1	23.207	*30.383
Within	10.693	14	.764	

* Significant at $p < 0.001$

Table 6 demonstrates how each group performed on test 2.

Table 6: Percentage of Correct Responses to each Category in Test 2

Proficiency level	Definite			Indefinite	
	Anaphoric	Cataphoric	*Inap.	Specific	Non-specific
Advanced	46%	60%	19%	0%	57%
Intermediate	3%	0%	17%	25%	8%

%: Percentage of correct responses for each group of subjects

* Inappropriate use of article

The mean percentage of correct responses in test 2 is 10.6% for the intermediate group and 36.4% for the advanced group.   The intermediate group did not perform well on test 2; therefore, any significance testing seemed to be of little validity, as half of the sample failed to respond to this test. We will come back to this issue in 3.3.

3.3   Discussion

Table 3 reveals interesting results. It appears that the definite NP, which required universal knowledge, was the least problematic area for all the subjects. This can be taken as evidence that Persian syntax was not an influential factor in this case since the Persian equivalent does not require any specificity marker – as is shown in (9) above. Perhaps the fact that Persian specificity depends to a large extent on the semantics of the discourse had its effect on the identification of this definite entity.   Moreover, advanced learners identified more cataphoric references than anaphoric ones (82%/66%), while the intermediate subjects did the opposite (31%/40%); the difference for the latter does not seem to be significant though. It is apparent that advanced subjects had more experience in English, so they could gather more information from the immediate discourse available to them. An inspection of the data reveals that the majority of anaphoric references were, in fact, in subject position. . As mentioned before, Persian does not usually use a written specifier in this position; instead there is a tendency to use demonstratives (the second category in Figure 3). Interestingly, a number of students had used demonstratives in this position, which may indicate a transfer from their L1.

In studying the indefinite categories we find that specific entities were more identifiable, the second least problematic area. The contexts of these NPs reveal that they are all related to members and groups of people. The Persian equivalent structure would also use a specific marker suggesting that perhaps a positive transfer was in order.

The figures in Table 6, however, should be viewed with some caution. The method of the test may have affected the results due to the psychological factors in the structure of the test. Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising to observe that intermediate subjects failed to a great extent in responding to this test; few could detect the errors. Those who did, found specific indefinite articles easier. The advanced students, on the contrary, found non-specific indefinite articles least problematic. They, furthermore, did better on identification of cataphoric errors than that of anaphoric. Since the results of this test might have been affected by the test method, further analysis does not seem to be warranted. Nevertheless, test 2 demonstrates that the English article system is a hidden problematic area from the learners' perspective.

4. Conclusion

We began by questioning the significance of learner errors in L2 acquisition. Several frameworks were reviewed in this regard. We argued that no single available theory could account for learner errors. It was proposed that a combination of Contrastive Analysis and an analysis of the learner's errors might be illuminating. Based on Contrastive Analysis of English and Persian it was found that the two languages differ from one another in that the former uses definite markers, while the latter uses specific markers. It was also illustrated that syntax has a major role in the use of definite markers in English, whereas semantics has that role in Persian. It was predicted that if any transfer of L1 were to occur, it would most likely happen where the NP carrying the article appears in subject position.

The analysis of subjects' performance on two article elicitation tasks suggested that Persian L2 learners of English had problems identifying the English definite marker when it was in subject position. It was also found that subjects behaved differently depending on the distance of specific references from the immediate context of the NP.

Any attempt to generalise from the findings of this limited study should be treated with caution. The conclusions are restricted to the behaviour of the intact group concerned here. Further research may follow the procedures adopted here but with a wider population and varieties of tasks. It will need to use tests of significance if further generalisation is intended. An important objective for such research could be how different categories are recognisable by learners acquiring the article system.

The findings of this research, however, once again supported the idea that the acquisition of the English article system is delayed for most L2 learners until the very final stages of learning.

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APPENDIX

Elicitation Tasks

INSTRUCTIONS

PART A: Here is a short passage. Some words have been taken out of it. You must decide what goes in each blank. 1) Before you write anything, read the passage quickly. 2) Then read it carefully and write a word in each blank *only if it is necessary*. The word must fit the sentence. Write only **ONE** word. 3) When you finish, read over the passage again to see if all your words fit.

Education Otherwise

Education Otherwise is .... support group for families who .... teach their children out of school. ... group, which was started in 1977 by ... small group of parents, wants to ... encourage alternatives to ... school system, and to encourage parents to be responsible for their children's education. It also believes that children should have ... right to express opinions about their own education.

Education Otherwise has ... membership of 1200 families. This is double what it was two years ago and it gets 200 enquiries ... month from parents who are thinking about educating their children at ... home. Jane Everdell, ... enquiries secretary, thinks that ... actual number of children learning out of school is far higher than the membership of ... organisation: 'We lose about 20% of our membership every year, not because ... children go back to school, but because ... families no longer need us. We estimate that there must be 6000-8000 children in ... Britain who are being educated out of school.'

According to *Education Otherwise*, there are several reasons why parents keep their children out of school. Some have strong philosophical or religious objections to ... schools; some think their children are not doing well enough academically. Others think it is ... only answer to ... particular problem, like bullying. In addition, parents are becoming aware of ... effects of government cuts in education spending. In ... past parents took their children out of school when there was a particularly serious problem. Now more parents are choosing quite deliberately to teach their children at home.

PART B: This is the continuation of the previous passage. As you read you will find some grammatical mistakes. 1) Underline the errors. 2) Add your correction at the top of each word.

Example: *Many members thinks that way of teaching.....*

You should write: *Many members thinks that way of teaching....*

Many members think that teaching children only at home is not ideal. They would like to see system of schooling that involves the parents and considers wishes and feelings of children. An alternative school, which includes these ideas, is the Kirkdale School in South London. It was started in 1956 as self-help co-operative of parents, some of whom were teachers, who wanted their children's school to be 'extension of home'. Its main principles are loving relationships, curiosity as motivation for learning, and a self regulation as only form of discipline. School has no head teacher, no compulsory lessons, and uses no punishments. The Kirkdale usually has about 30 pupils, between ages of 31/2 and 12, and has the ratio of one teacher to every eight pupils. Parents are involved in every aspect of the school, from the teaching and management, to cleaning. The children have a full say in what they do. Some of parents use school in combination with home learning.

ORWELL ON LANGUAGE AND POLITICS

John E. Joseph (TAAL)

Abstract

Newspeak, the engineered language of George Orwell's novel Nineteen Eighty-Four, *is discussed in the context of Orwell's wider views on language and politics and the need for linguistic intervention as part of the struggle against tyranny, and of the related or opposed ideas of some of Orwell's contemporaries (Chase, Ogden & Richards) and Saussure.*

Newspeak was the official language of Oceania and had been devised to meet the ideological needs of Ingsoc, or English Socialism... The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible... This was done partly by the invention of new words, but chiefly by eliminating undesirable words and by stripping such words as remained of unorthodox meanings, and so far as possible of all secondary meanings whatever. To give a single example. The word *free* still existed in Newspeak, but it could only be used in such statements as 'This dog is free from lice' or 'This field is free from weeds'. It could not be used in its old sense of 'politically free' or 'intellectually free', since political and intellectual freedom no longer existed even as concepts, and were therefore of necessity nameless... Newspeak was designed not to extend but to *diminish* the range of thought, and this purpose was indirectly assisted by cutting the choice of words down to a minimum. (George Orwell, "Appendix: The Principles of Newspeak", from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 312-13.)

It would be futile to point to this or that event in the life of Eric Blair/George Orwell (1903-1950) as having uniquely shaped his views on language and politics. Certainly, though, a decisive influence was the Spanish civil war, in which he fought on the Republican side in 1936-7 and was shot in the throat. Before the war was over he and his fellow socialists found themselves in less danger from the Fascists they had gone to fight than from their communist 'allies', who accused them of being a Trotskyite Fifth Column secretly in league with the enemy, and ended up slaughtering many of them. Orwell, his wife and a few companions narrowly escaped to France just as the communists were preparing to arrest them.

So controversial were Orwell's critical assessments of socialist policies in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) that his leftist publisher Victor Gollancz, who had commissioned him to write the book, added a Preface apologising to readers and disowning Orwell's arguments. When, a year later, Orwell completed *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), recounting the full story of his Spanish war experiences, he had to find another publisher. By now he was definitively on the road to *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), the two books that secured him a unique and enduring status as one of the most powerful voices in world literature of his or any other century. Even though he never ceased to identify himself as a leftist, the direct target of these devastating satirical portraits of totalitarian regimes was the Stalinist government of the USSR. This was at a time when too many Western socialists were still tending to act as apologists for Stalin in spite of abundant evidence of his ruthless tyranny, which Orwell had had a taste of in Spain.

Leftist faith in the USSR required an idealism alien to Orwell, who had the critical eye of a realist and the deep sensibilities of a traditional, Millsian liberal. Whatever system would allow people the greatest freedom to do and think as they pleased would have his support. While he continued to hope that disparities of wealth between the rich and poor might be limited, he was not willing to let tyranny be the price. Stalin's government, which was progressively lowering people's standard of living while

claiming to do the opposite, was not truly 'socialist' at all, and even more dangerous than its economics were its attempts to distort and control the truth. In this it had a ready-made weapon at its disposal: language.

Orwell was not alone in the fear that language could be manipulated so as to control people's thoughts, while leaving them under the illusion that they were giving voice to their individual wills. Anxiety about propaganda was widespread in the years surrounding the two world wars. Perhaps, however, no one else saw so clearly how easy such mind control would be for *any* state to carry out and justify to itself. The potential lay within the principle of government itself, indeed within society itself, since even in an anarchic state one group would inevitably try to gain control over the others. Still, recent history had shown Orwell that the ⅰ ₁ore radic₁lly a state aimed to perfect society, the more individual freedom of thought and action would necessarily be suppressed in the process.

In 1946, just after the phenomenal success of *Animal Farm*, Orwell's article "Politics and the English Language" appeared in the prominent London literary review *Horizon*. Described as "his most influential essay" by his biographer Michael Shelden (1991: 430), it is interesting for the insight it offers into his process as a writer and stylist as well as in how it anticipates the core problem of language he would address so memorably in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Given that his satirical Newspeak is an engineered language, it may be surprising that the 1946 article opens with an earnest call for conscious action to engineer current English.

> Most people who bother with the matter at all would admit that the English language is in a bad way, but it is generally assumed that we cannot by conscious action do anything about it... Underneath this lies the half-conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes.
>
> ...The point is that the process is reversible. Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step towards political regeneration... ("Politics", 252-3)

The linguistic 'bad habits' Orwell refers to, and the 'clear thinking' he opposes to it, have to do with what comes first in the mind of the speaker or writer, words or images. The healthy way is to start from mental pictures, then find words to describe them. For if one does the opposite, it is tempting to let the words string themselves together in well-worn patterns, which lets the words determine the meaning rather than the other way round.

> ... [M]odern writing at its worst does not consist in picking out words for the sake of their meaning and inventing images in order to make the meaning clearer. It consists in gumming together long strips of words which have already been set in order by someone else, and making the results presentable by sheer humbug. The attraction of this way of writing is that it is easy... ("Politics", 259)
>
> This invasion of one's mind by ready-made phrases (...) can only be prevented if one is constantly on guard against them, and every such phrase anaesthetizes a portion of one's brain. ("Politics", 263)

On one level, Orwell's view is similar to the advice generally offered to students of musical composition. They are warned against working at the keyboard, where it is too easy to let their fingers do the composing by falling into familiar and comfortable patterns. Composing mentally is likelier to produce music that is original rather than derivative, and cerebral rather than emotional. Beyond this, however, Orwell is concerned about the fact that "if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought" ("Politics", 262). If we begin from mental images, those images will be of *concrete*

things, whereas starting from words is likelier to produce purely abstract thinking. Orwell, realist that he is, is not against abstract thinking *so long as it is grounded in observable reality*.

> When you think of a concrete object, you think wordlessly, and then, if you want to describe the thing you have been visualizing, you probably hunt about till you find the exact words that seem to fit it. When you think of something abstract you are more inclined to use words from the start... Probably it is better to put off using words as long as possible and get one's meaning as clear as one can through pictures or sensations. ("Politics": 264)

This discussion has links with the long-standing Western philosophical debate about realism and nominalism – whether what words mean connects to things outside language or not. But where do the 'politics' come in? The answer is that this detachment of language from observable reality is what makes it possible for a political party to maintain an orthodoxy among its followers, and to dupe those whom it wishes to enslave. If the party manages to use language in a way that prevents concrete mental pictures from being called up, people will not understand what is happening to them, and they cannot rebel against what they do not understand.

> In our time it is broadly true that political writing is bad writing. Where it is not true, it will generally be found that the writer is some kind of rebel, expressing his private opinions and not a 'party line'. Orthodoxy, of whatever colour, seems to demand a lifeless, imitative style. ("Politics", 260-61)

> In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible... Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them. (ibid., 261-2)

The linguistic intervention Orwell calls for is not a restructuring of the language, just a change in how its elements are put to use. One should always start with thought rather than words, and with thought about what is concrete and empirically observable, and therefore verifiable. Then and only then can language hope to serve the interests of truth, rather than merely those of power.

Toward the end of the article he makes clear that his call for abstractions to be grounded is by no means to reject them entirely. On the contrary, too great a distrust of abstractions can have catastrophic political consequences of its own.

> Stuart Chase and others have come near to claiming that all abstract words are meaningless, and have used this as a pretext for advocating a kind of political quietism. Since you don't know what Fascism is, how can you struggle against Fascism? ("Politics", 265)

Stuart Chase (1888-1985) was the author of *The Tyranny of Words* (1938), a widely read book that helped to popularise General Semantics, a movement concerned with how metaphysical traps encoded into language lead us into false modes of thought. The fact that Chase encouraged direct intervention into language use in order to produce clear thinking would seem to link him to Orwell's programme. But as the preceding quote suggests, Chase was *so* sceptical about abstract words as to delude himself that their 'tyranny' was more real than Hitler's. Early in his book he writes:

> Abstract terms are personified to become burning, fighting realities. Yet if the knowledge of semantics were general... the conflagration could hardly start...

> ...Bad language is now the mightiest weapon in the arsenal of despots and demagogues. Witness Dr. Goebbels. Indeed, it is doubtful if a people learned in semantics would tolerate any sort of supreme political dictator... A typical speech by an aspiring Hitler would be translated into its intrinsic meaning, if any. Abstract words and phrases without discoverable referents would register a semantic blank, noises without meaning. For instance:

> The Aryan Fatherland, which has nursed the souls of heroes, calls upon you for the supreme sacrifice which you, in whom flows heroic blood, will not fail, and which will echo forever down the corridors of history.

This would be translated:

> The blab blab, which has nursed the blabs of blabs, calls upon you for the blab blab which you, in whom flows blab blood, will not fail, and which will echo blab down the blabs of blab.

> The 'blab' is not an attempt to be funny; it is a semantic blank. Nothing comes through. The hearer, versed in reducing high-order abstractions to either nil or a series of roughly similar events in the real world of experience, and protected from emotive associations with such words, simply hears nothing comprehensible. The demagogue might as well have used Sanskrit. (The Tyranny of Words, 14)

The 'blab' paragraph, which is all the more hilarious for Chase's claim that it isn't meant to be funny, prefigures what Orwell will term 'duckspeak' (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 322). If Chase thought that "Bad language is now the mightiest weapon in the arsenal of despots and demagogues", Orwell had a neck wound to remind him that enormous military-industrial complexes such as Hitler and Stalin possessed were not so easily 'blabbed' away. Hitler's rhetoric and Goebbels' propaganda may have played a key role in the Nazi rise to power, but now that the power was theirs to lose, the way to combat it was not to proclaim their abstractions empty. On the contrary, the urgent need was to show people how the use of abstract words by despots filled them with concrete and terrible meanings.

In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Newspeak is the re-engineered English of Oceania, a country comprising the Americas, the Atlantic islands including the British Isles, Australasia and the southern portion of Africa. Oceania is perpetually at war with one of the world's other two countries, Eurasia and Eastasia. It is controlled by the Party, whose head, Big Brother, is a symbol rather than an actual person. There is an Inner Party of a privileged 2% of the population; a larger Outer Party which does not enjoy anything like the same privileges; and the proles, the remaining 85% whose lives have not changed radically since before the Revolution, except that in material terms they are considerably worse off. The mind control described in the opening quotation from the novel is directed almost entirely at the members of the Outer Party, and is enforced by the Thought Police, which the Inner Party controls. The proles are considered not worth bothering about.

The idea of re-engineering the English language by reducing its vocabulary had already been prominently put into practice by C. K. Ogden (1889-1957). The chapter on Definitions in *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), co-authored by Ogden and I. A. Richards (1893-1979), had led Ogden to formulate the idea of a 'Basic English' that would be capable of expressing anything with a vocabulary of just 850 words (see further Joseph 1999). Orwell was interested in Basic and wrote about it on a couple of occasions in the 1940s. The feature of Basic trumpeted most loudly by Ogden, the fact that it had done away with verbs, has a direct parallel in Newspeak (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 165). Another feature of Basic, its replacement of certain negative adjectives by their positive counterpart preceded by *un-*, is exaggerated to the point of absurdity in Newspeak, where for example the equivalent of the Oldspeak form 'terrible' is *doubleplusungood*.

Like the project for *The Meaning of Meaning* from which it sprang, Basic was an attempt to solve a perceived crisis of meaning in the modern world. In Ogden's view, the First World War was itself the result of the misuse of complex abstract words like *democracy* and *freedom* for purposes of propaganda, and any hope of future world peace depended upon the ability of thinking people to control the meanings of such words so that they could not be abused. *The Meaning of Meaning* opens with a long historical survey of attempts to do this, including the solution proposed by John Locke (1632-1704) (see Harris & Taylor 1997, Chapter 10). Locke classified ideas into the simple and the complex, and among complex ideas he believed that those he called 'mixed modes', including all

moral terms, were the likeliest to create misunderstanding – unless they were always carefully defined in terms of the simple ideas, derived from direct sensory experience, that combined to produce them. For essentially the same reason, Ogden believed that paring down the language to 850 words, a large portion of them referring to concrete substances, would make it virtually impossible to use language in such a way as to deceive people for propagandistic purposes.

But Orwell realised that it might actually have the opposite effect. Propaganda can only be combated by rational analysis and argument. This entails rephrasing propagandistic statements in a different form. If such rephrasing were made impossible through the loss of alternative words in which the same idea might be given a different linguistic shape, then it might no longer be possible to question the truth of any statement. Orwell made this into the precise aim of Newspeak: "to make all other modes of thought impossible". For instance, according to the Party, $2 + 2 = 5$. The hero of the novel, Winston Smith, realises from the evidence of his own eyes that this is wrong, but the Party already has enough control over his thought and language that he cannot put together the argument he intuitively knows would prove its falsity. The same is true with the Party's operation for rewriting history, in which Winston himself is engaged, and indeed with its three slogans:

<div align="center">

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

</div>

Winston's estranged wife Katharine "had not a thought in her head that was not a slogan" (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 69) – that is, a collocation of words and thought pre-packaged by the Party. By reducing the number of words and their possible collocations, the Party strictly limits the occurrence of original thought, whether based on empirical observation or individual reasoning. For Winston, this stranglehold on sensory evidence and creativity in combining words represents what is most evil and oppressive about the Party.

> The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command. His heart sank as he thought of the enormous power arrayed against him, the ease with which any Party intellectual would overthrow him in debate, the subtle arguments which he would not be able to understand, must less answer. And yet he was in the right!... Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall towards the earth's centre. With the feeling that he was... setting forth an important axiom, he wrote:
>
> > *Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows. (Nineteen Eighty-Four, 84)*

It is because of the way his command of language has been controlled by the Party that he could not hope to understand or answer the arguments. At the end of the novel, Winston, his mind broken by torture, signals how completely he has submitted to the Party's doctrine when he traces "almost unconsciously" in the dust on the table: $2 + 2 = 5$ (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 303).

Newspeak is directly connected to the ideas expressed by Orwell in "Politics and the English Language". As the ultimate language for the suppression of thought, Newspeak represents the horrific end of the road Orwell describes English as travelling, the point at which it is too late to get rid of the linguistic bad habits that prevent clear thinking and political regeneration because they have become structurally ingrained. The appeal of Basic, which Orwell himself had felt, is perhaps just a further symptom of how far this development has gone. Originally proposed as a way of grounding language in observable reality, Ogden's Basic aimed to do this by intervening directly into the structure of English, paring it down to a fraction of its traditional form. But wasn't *this* already a form of linguistic tyranny, limiting rather than expanding people's freedom to speak and think as they pleased? If so, Orwell the interventionist in linguistic usage could not support it any more than Orwell the socialist could stomach the excesses of Stalinism.

The point made at the end of the 1946 essay, about excessive distrust of abstractions leading to an inability to recognise or combat Fascism, is echoed in the description of the word *free* in Newspeak (see the citation at the head of this article). It has been limited to just its concrete meaning. "This dog is free from lice" certainly calls up a clearer mental image than do "politically free" or "intellectually free". But again, while abstraction without a concrete anchor remains extremely dangerous, the failure to abstract away from certain key concrete anchors is no less threatening.

In Oceania, only the proles have "stayed human" (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 172), and we see from the occasional glimpses of their dialogue that their language is Oldspeak, as in this conversation about the lottery which Winston overhears in a pub:

> 'Can't you bleeding well listen to what I say? I tell you no number ending in seven ain't won for over fourteen months!'
>
> 'Yes it 'as, then!'
>
> 'No, it 'as not! Back 'ome I got the 'ole lot of 'em for over two years wrote down on a piece of paper. I takes 'em down reg'lar as the clock. An' I tell you, no number ending in seven – '
>
> 'Yes, a seven 'as won!...' (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 88)

Each of the two proles is capable of independent thought, and one of them makes an argument based on historical evidence that would be beyond the ability of any Party member. For its members, the Party is rewriting history every day and making sure they cannot perceive it happening. What is more, the fact that these proles are arguing about numbers contrasts with the inability of Party members to argue about the sum of 2 + 2. And the numerous non-standard features of their 'Oldspeak' cause it to ring with freedom to Orwell's ears. In his book *The English People* (written 1944, published 1947) he wrote:

> ...[P]robably the deadliest enemy of good English is what is called 'standard English'. This dreary dialect, the language of leading articles, White Papers, political speeches, and BBC news bulletins, is undoubtedly spreading: it is spreading downwards in the social scale, and outwards into the spoken language. Its characteristic is its reliance on ready-made phrases – *in due course, take the earliest opportunity, warm appreciation*... – which may once have been fresh and vivid, but have now become mere thought-saving devices, having the same relation to living English as a crutch has to a leg. Anyone preparing a broadcast or writing to *The Times* adopts this kind of language almost instinctively, and it infects the spoken tongue as well. So much has our language been weakened that the imbecile chatter in Swift's essay on polite conversation (a satire on the upper-class talk of Swift's own day) would actually be rather a good conversation by modern standards. (*The English People*, 26-7)

The continuation of this passage introduces a further political (or more accurately socio-political) dimension to Orwell's view of language and freedom. The power of language to promote clear thinking and combat tyranny, as discussed in "Politics and the English Language", is *inherent to the language of the working classes*. The tendencies of language and thought he believes must be resisted are those he associates with the educated middle and upper classes.

> The temporary decadence of the English language is due, like so much else, to our anachronistic class system. 'Educated' English has grown anaemic because for long past it has not been reinvigorated from below. The people likeliest to use simple concrete language, and to think of metaphors that really call up a visual image, are those who are in contact with physical reality... And the vitality of English depends on a steady supply of images of this kind. It follows that language, at any rate the English language, suffers when the educated classes lose touch with the manual workers. (*The English People*, 27)

Part of the reason the proles of Oceania have stayed human is that they have clung to real language. With all its faults, traditional English at least offers the *hope* of free speech and thought, and will do so until these possibilities are standardised out of existence. In the novel, Winston concludes that the only hope for the future lies with the proles, and this conclusion corresponds with Orwell's view on the future of the language as expressed in *The English People*. Through Newspeak, Orwell warns the world of the danger that standardisation of language goes hand in hand with standardisation of thought. In particular, radical attempts to restructure the language, even if aimed at the improvement of thought, could result in tyranny no less than communist revolutions have done. The danger is especially great if, as with Basic, *reduction* of the language is the means by which it is to be brought under control.

The opposition Orwell establishes between the language of different social classes aligns with the difference between empiricist and conventionalist views of language. One well-known modern embodiment of this conflict is Ogden & Richards' (1923) rejection of Ferdinand de Saussure's (1857-1913) conventionalist view of the linguistic sign. Saussure (on whom see Joseph 1999b), in line with one mode of 'relativistic' continental thinking, believed that the meaning of a word is not tied to some physical object in the world around us, but is strictly conceptual and is a part of a given language just as much as is the sound pattern used to signify it. The evidence for this includes the existence of words for abstractions and things like unicorns that do not exist in the world; the vastly different ways in which languages divide up the world, for instance in terms of the colours they do or do not distinguish, and the various categories (noun genders, for example) into which they place words; metaphorical uses of words; and the occurrence of semantic shift and change.

Ogden & Richards, in the British empiricist tradition, carefully considered Saussure's view and rejected it on the grounds that it was self-negating. For if the meanings of words are completely cut off from things in the world, there is no possibility of verifying whether or not anything anyone says is true, starting with Saussure's own statement.

> Unfortunately this theory of signs, by neglecting entirely the things for which signs stand, was from the beginning cut off from any contact with scientific methods of verification. De Saussure, however, does not appear to have pursued the matter far enough for this defect to become obvious. (*The Meaning of Meaning*, 8)

Orwell's position is that the English language in the mid-20th century is in a perilous state because those who speak and write it do so following the model of Saussure, treating words as though they were unconnected to reality and therefore producing meanings that are arbitrary and internal to the language rather than engaging with the world. At least, this is what educated middle and upper-class speakers of 'standard English' do. The extract cited above from *The English People* suggests that the working classes instead follow the Ogden & Richards model, in which meaning is connected to things in the world. True socialist that he was, Orwell believed that the working-class way of signifying was better, healthier, truer than the unverifiable contents of standard English.

No doubt the realist in Orwell recognised the extent to which views such as these represent vast overgeneralisations that romanticise the working class and fail to explain how a middle-class old Etonian like himself could come to understand these things more clearly than any Lancashire coal miner. But such objections would not come to the fore when he felt so strongly the need to make known the dangerous political ramifications of the arbitrariness of language.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell makes manifest his view of the essential difference between standard and working-class English by pushing the tendencies of standardisation to their extreme in the form of Newspeak. Despite taking some of its inspiration from Ogden's Basic, Newspeak is completely Saussurean in that its meanings cannot be verified against anything in the real world. What Orwell wants to suggest is that the best hope for the future of humankind lies in *acting as if* language operates as Ogden & Richards say it must, tying it to observable reality in the way that working-class speakers do, and refusing to be swept up by the conventionalist Saussurean view of

language that, alas, describes all too well the dangerous workings of standard English. He believes we can do this because language is not a 'natural growth', but an institution we control. We need scepticism – just enough of it to keep us on guard against those who would take control over us, but never forgetting that one very powerful way they might do this is to encourage us to be *so* sceptical that we do not even believe we are being controlled. If we want to remain free, we must be sceptical about everything, including, paradoxically, scepticism itself. It can only be meaningful so long as we do not paint ourselves into the corner of being sceptical that two plus two equals four.

This is the corner occupied by members of the Outer Party of Oceania, as well as by "Stuart Chase and others" who cannot struggle against Fascism because their scepticism about language has blinded them to the reality of abstractions. In the same corner are those who would deny that the sum of $2 + 2$ can be pinned down to anything more precise than 'an arbitrary signified', and who find in this ultra-relativism a liberation from the 'tyranny of words' – not as Chase meant it, but in the sense of a language conceived as the embodiment of logic and truth. No one can ever know the whole of logic or truth, the argument goes; therefore they are mythical. Orwell's message is: forget about this all-or-nothing approach to truth and knowledge. Know what you can, for every bit matters. Know it as simply and directly as you can, and tell it the same way. Above all, know that the metaphorical 'tyranny' of words is all that stands in the way of the very un-metaphorical tyranny of Big Brother.

Note

A slightly modified version of this article will appear as a chapter of *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought II: The Twentieth Century*, co-authored with Nigel Love and Talbot J. Taylor, to both of whom I am grateful for comments on an earlier draft.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE REVISED TEST OF ENGLISH AT MATRICULATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

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Abstract

This paper reports a second-cycle validation study of the Test of English at Matriculation (TEAM), following revisions made to the test in 1993. Candidates' scores from four academic sessions (1993-1997) were used to assess the relationship between performance on TEAM at the beginning of their degree course and their eventual academic outcome. Results suggest that (1) the predictive capacity of the revised test is similar to that of other tests of English for Academic Purposes and (2) performance in the Listening section remains the strongest single linguistic predictor of candidates' success in taught Master's degrees. The overall correlation is slightly lower than for the first version of TEAM; possible reasons are discussed in the paper.

1. Background

Applicants to the University of Edinburgh whose first language is not English are required to provide evidence of adequate proficiency in English, which in most cases takes the form of a certified score on IELTS or TOEFL. Most Faculties at Edinburgh now set their acceptance level at IELTS 6.5 overall, with no module score below 6.0; candidates who choose to take TOEFL must also take the supplementary Test of Written English. After acceptance, students are required to take TEAM as part of their matriculation process, in order to identify those who might benefit from in-session language classes - for example, students whose English has fallen away since they took IELTS/TOEFL, or whose score had in fact been boosted by attending one of the many intensive TOEFL or IELTS preparation courses that are popular in a number of countries, especially in East Asia.

TEAM was designed and is administered by the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) section of IALS, and is used to assess which students may be at risk linguistically. TEAM is the third test to have been used for diagnostic purposes in this way; the others were the English Language Battery (ELBA) and ELTS. Students who achieve a TEAM mean of below 50% are required to attend at least two of the ten courses which make up the English Language Testing and Tuition (ELTT) programme - see the Appendix for details. The courses that low-scoring students are required to take provide 42 hours of classes, focusing on grammar (Course 4) and writing (Course 5, for taught Master's students; Course 9, for first-year research students). A system of diagnosis and remedial in-session courses, free of charge, has been in operation at Edinburgh for many years, but the ELTT programme is considerably more extensive than its predecessors.

The original version of TEAM, which I will call TEAM 1 in this paper, comprised four sections: Vocabulary, Listening, Reading and Writing. Its concurrent and predictive validity was investigated over the three academic sessions 1989-92 in an earlier study (Lynch 1994a), and it was found to perform on a par with other established tests. On concurrent validity, overall correlations were satisfactory: 0.72 with ELTS, 0.81 with ELBA, and 0.94 with the English Proficiency Test Battery. As far as predictive validity is concerned, students' average TEAM scores showed a correlation of 0.31 with academic outcome, which is again comparable with 0.35 for ELTS/outcome (Criper and Davies 1988). The most efficient predictor among the four sections was Listening, at 0.32. The other three sections - Vocabulary, Reading and Writing - contributed little to the predictive power of the test.

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The TEAM 1 study raised particular concerns over Reading and Vocabulary. The pattern of students' scores on Reading was erratic and its overall correlation with outcome was low (0.22). We decided to omit that section, given the amount of time required to design an adequate reading test that would effectively filter out the effects that knowledge of topic has on students' comprehension scores. The Vocabulary section in TEAM 1 had been taken from ELBA: a multiple-choice test originally designed for a predominantly European advanced-level audience. While it discriminates well among proficiency levels, it features general rather than academic vocabulary, and some of its 'general' items are relatively uncommon: e.g. *ferns*, *calf love* and *sow* (female pig). We decided to replace the Vocabulary section with a more academically oriented test.

The Writing section was retained, despite its relatively low discriminatory value. This was partly for reasons of face validity, since a sample of a student's written English potentially offers departmental staff 'readable' evidence of their current English level, although it has to be said that it is very rare for IALS to be asked by departments for copies of their students' TEAM scripts. However, on the advice of my IALS colleagues Cathy Benson and Liam Rodger, adjustments were made to the Writing marking scheme in order to extend the range of scores. The previous scheme, based on Jacobs et al. (1980), uses relatively high minimum scores on its five sections, which results in 'bunching' in the 40-50% band and tends to exaggerate some students' actual ability to express themselves in English.

2. Assessing the revised version of TEAM

2.1 Test design

The revised version of TEAM (from here on, TEAM 2), was introduced in Autumn 1993. It consists of three sections and takes approximately 50 minutes to administer:

Vocabulary comprises 25 four-way multiple choice items testing the recognition of core academic lexis, e.g. *evaluate, claim, empirical*, identified by Xue and Nation (1984). Students are allowed 5 minutes to complete the 25 items.

Listening is a once-only dictation of 12 spoken sentences, on the topic of the problems students are likely to encounter in understanding native-speaker English. The sentences range from 7 to 11 words (10 to 17 syllables) in length and together make a complete text of 100 words. The dictation text is recorded on cassette and played through an amplified public address system; the total duration of this part of TEAM is 10 minutes, including the pauses left to allow students to write down what they have heard, and a two-minute interlude for checking. Students' scripts are marked on the basis of semantic acceptability rather than verbatim recall, since competent listeners are known to process for meaning rather than for form (cf. Conrad 1985, Anderson and Lynch 1988).

The Writing section is similar to the data commentary task in the IELTS Writing module. The students are given a bar graph showing tobacco consumption in a range of countries for two years a decade apart, and are asked to summarise the main patterns of change they identify in the data and to suggest possible explanations for the differences in those patterns between countries. The students' instructions list the criteria that will be used to mark their script: content 30%, organisation 20%, vocabulary 20%, grammar 25% and mechanics (punctuation, spelling) 5%. They are allowed 30 minutes for this section.

2.2 Criteria

For the various 'readers' of TEAM scores (the students themselves, the staff teaching their departmental courses, Faculty officers, and ELTT teachers at IALS), a key issue is the extent to which students' scores indicate how well they are likely to do on their academic course. Like the earlier study, this one is based on data on students taking 12-month taught-course degrees (MSc, LIM, MBA, and MTh), because they are thought to run a greater risk of failure in their courses than students

doing research degrees (MLitt, MPhil or PhD), which require them to spend much longer in Britain and arguably increase their chances of improving their English.

In the TEAM 2 study I have retained the three-way outcome criteria from the TEAM 1 study (Lynch 1994a): Master's pass, Diploma pass, and failure. The decision to adopt three categories, rather than two (pass at Master's level on one hand, and Diploma pass/failure on the other), was taken for two reasons: firstly, it follows the methodology of the validation study of ELTS (Criper and Davies 1988), with which I compared TEAM 1; secondly, some organisers of Diploma/Master's courses at Edinburgh, especially of those with a strong 'applied' orientation, regard a Diploma pass on their courses as a positive achievement and not as a concealed failure.

2.3 Method

The data for the study was routinely collected information: TEAM scores at entry and degree outcome. Information on most students was available in Graduation Day booklets produced for the University's degree ceremonies. In the few cases where I was unable to find a student's name in the booklets, I asked the relevant Faculty Office staff to give me information on whether the student had not completed their course. In some cases, students had transferred to a research degree, without taking the Master's qualification for which they had originally matriculated; in others, they had been unable to complete their degree, or had taken the course and failed. Faculty staff were asked to reply using one of six categories, which were based on those used in the data collection for the TEAM 1 study: 'passed at Master's level', 'passed at Diploma level', 'failed the course', 'left before completing the course', 'transferred to a research degree', and 'non-graduating student'. (This last category arises when a student takes the wrong test; IALS runs separate tests - and courses - for non-graduating students such as SOCRATES exchange students, but each year a number of individuals misunderstand which test they should take, and others decide to take both tests, for good measure).

The definitive list of students who had taken TEAM and completed, not completed or failed a taught course comprised 475 individuals for the four academic years: 121 for 1993-94; 88 for 1994-5; 137 for 1995-6; and 129 for 1996-97.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Overall success and 'failure'

Table 1

M.Sc. success / failure rates of TEAM 2 candidates
1993-97

Master's pass	Diploma pass	failure	TOTAL
420 (88%)	32 (7%)	23 (5%)	475

It should be borne in mind that 'failure' covers more than a straightforward Fail. In the case of the two outcomes 'failed the course' and 'left before completing the course', I also asked Faculty staff to indicate any recorded reasons for lack of success. As a result, I was able to identify 10 of the 23 'failures' as ones where problems with English were thought to be partly or wholly to blame. However, I would remind the reader of the point made by Criper and Davies (1988), that even when non-linguistic or non-academic reasons for failure are cited (e.g. homesickness, problems of adaptation), they may have been used to save individual or institutional embarrassment.

So Table 1 shows that 5% of the students came under the category of 'failure', as defined above, and a further 7% were awarded a Diploma pass rather than the full Master's degree. In other words, approximately one in eight of the students who took TEAM 2 in the four years under study did not get their Master's degree. This is a rather different picture than emerged from the TEAM 1 study (see Table 2)

Table 2

Overall success / failure rates of TEAM 1 candidates
1989-92

Master's pass	Diploma pass	failure	TOTAL
230 (79%)	34 (12%)	27 (9%)	291

As that table shows, in the early 1990s one in five (21%) of the students who took TEAM 1 did not get the Master's degree for which they had registered. This may seem high, but is a rate close to the 19% (Diploma pass 12%, and failure 7%) reported for a wider and larger population of postgraduates in Britain in the mid-1980s (Criper and Davies 1988). The rise in the success rate is intriguing. Although it is not the purpose of this study to investigate academic assessment *per se*, it is natural to wonder why there should have been such a change at Edinburgh over a relatively short period, and whether other British universities have experienced a similar fall in the proportion of failures at this level. One possible linguistic interpretation might be that Edinburgh attracted higher-proficiency students in the second period under study, who did better on their chosen courses than their predecessors. There is some evidence for this in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean TEAM scores by year (1993-97)

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	overall
Vocabulary	66.28	72.05	68.24	70.70	69.32
Listening	66.86	68.45	69.26	76.95	70.38
Writing	50.70	55.30	58.29	66.12	57.60
Average	61.26	65.34	65.24	71.23	65.77

Those figures show a rise in the English level, as measured by TEAM, of incoming taught-course graduates, particularly in the case of 1996-97 - a year when some Faculties brought in stricter entry requirements. However, a trend may already have been under way, since the mean scores on the (identical) Listening section in the TEAM 1 study had been 64%, compared with 67% (and higher) from the first year of TEAM 2. There is also the evidence of rising mean scores on Writing over the 1993-96 period.

An alternative and entirely speculative interpretation of the fall in the failure rate (Table 2) is that the creation of the 'new universities' in 1992-93 may have increased competition among all universities to find overseas students for their higher degree courses, and this might be encouraging a conscious or unconscious lowering of standards for Master's and Diploma passes (*pour ne pas décourager les autres*).

3.2 Section performance

The interrelationship among scores on the three TEAM 2 components is of central interest, since this study is intended to evaluate any changes resulting from the replacement of Vocabulary section and the adjustment to the marking scheme for the Writing section.

Table 4

TEAM 2: means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores
Master's course sample 1993-97 (n=475)

	Vocab.	List.	Writing	Ave.
mean	69.32	70.38	57.60	65.77
s.d.	16.48	20.32	14.17	13.90
min.	20	14	17	
max.	100	100	97	

Comparing these figures with those from the earlier study, we can see the extent of the change from TEAM 1; even on Listening, which remained exactly as in TEAM 1, we find evidence of a rise in English proficiency at entry (Table 5).

Table 5

TEAM 1: means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores
Master's course sample 1989-92 (n=291)

	Vocab.	List.	Read.	Writing	Ave.
mean	53.38	63.81	51.68	63.76	59.62
s.d.	14.31	21.26	25.94	16.08	15.03
min.	6	9	0	15	14.00
max.	100	100	100	100	99.00

The students taking the new academic Vocabulary section scored on average 16 percentage points higher than their predecessors did on TEAM 1. This could reflect the in-built bias in academic lexis towards items of Latin and Greek origin, which enable students with European first languages to recognise cognates. The adjustments made to the marking protocol for the Writing section, adopted in order to widen the range of scores, appear to have had their intended effect; the overall mean Writing score fell by approximately 6 percentage points.

What about TEAM 2's capacity to predict? There is initial evidence of the relationship between language proficiency and success on the departmental course in Table 6, in which I have grouped overall average TEAM 2 scores by deciles and compared them with outcome.

Table 6

Distributions of TEAM 2 Average scores and academic outcome
Master's course sample 1993-97

TEAM Ave.	Master's pass	Diploma pass	failure	Total
<40%	7 (46.67%)	4 (26.67%)	4 (26.67%)	15
40-49%	35 (81.39%)	4 (9.30%)	4 (9.30%)	43
50-59%	76 (74.51%)	17 (16.67%)	9 (8.82%)	102
70-69%	107 (93.04%)	4 (3.48%)	4 (3.48%)	115
70% or more	195 (97.5%)	3 (1.5%)	2 (1.00%)	200
Total	420 (88%)	32 (7%)	23 (5%)	475

The failure rate decreases with increasing English proficiency, falling from 27% for students with TEAM 2 scorcs below 40%, to a mere 1% for those with scores of 70% or more. Conversely, Master's pass rates rise from below half of the students scoring less than 40% on TEAM 2 to 97% for those achieving above 69% on TEAM 2. The mean failure ratc of students covered in this study is 5%, so the 'watershed' of bettcr-than-average chanccs in this non-native population of getting a Master's or Diploma pass is around 60% on TEAM 2. This was established in our earlier study to be the equivalent of IELTS 6.5, which suggests that Faculties setting 6.5 IELTS are wise in choosing that as a 'safe' level.

Having discusscd thc global pattern of TEAM 2 average scores, we now turn to performance on the three test sections (Tablc 7).

Table 7

Mean TEAM 2 section scores (%) by outcome

	Master's pass	Diploma pass	Failure	Overall
Vocabulary	70.46	59.75	61.91	69.32
Listening	72.78	50.03	54.87	70.38
Writing	58.78	46.81	50.91	57.60
Overall mean	67.35	52.22	55.83	65.77

If we compare thc distinction bctwccn Master's and Diploma passcs, wc find that all three sections produce clcar diffcrcnccs in thc scorcs achicvcd by successful and unsuccessful students: a difference of 11 perccntagc points on thc Vocabulary scction, 23 points on Listening, and 12 points on Writing. Howcvcr, the scorcs in thc third column, 'failure', arc all higher than those passing at Diploma lcvel (though still significantly bclow thc values for the Master's pass). This may reflect the fact that, as noted earlier, 'failure' covcrs more than outcome and therefore reflects more than one source of difficulty, of which inadequate English is only one.

3.2.3 Correlations among sections

Table 8 shows the internal correlations among the three components of TEAM 2. It is worth remembering at this point that one can regard low correlation values among different parts of a language test as 'a good thing' in terms of economy, since high correlations indicate that inefficient overlap, to the point of duplication.

Table 8

Correlations among TEAM 2 sections

	Vocabulary	Listening	Writing
Average	0.77	0.86	0.81
Writing	0.47	0.59	--
Listening	0.43	--	--

As in the TEAM 1 study, it is Listening scores that come closest to representing an 'overall' measure of English proficiency. Interestingly, the association between Listening and Writing is closer than that between Listening and Vocabulary. Recently there has been discussion of the links between lexical knowledge and aural comprehension (Nattinger and De Carrico 1992), and it has even been claimed that vocabulary is the key to listening in a second language, above a threshold level of competence (Kelly 1991). However, we should remember that the type of listening tested in TEAM is highly specific (dictation) and also taps writing skills and grammatical knowledge. Writers such as Oller (1976, 1979) have argued that dictation is not a 'pure' listening test, but much more - an effective probe of the learner's expectancy grammar, providing insight into general language competence. This would help explain the strength of Listening's contribution to TEAM performance overall.

How does TEAM 2 compare with the original version when it comes to predictive validity? Table 9 sets out the association between the respective tests and academic outcome.

Table 9

Correlations between TEAM sections and outcome
1989-92 and 1993-97

	1989-92	1993-97
Vocabulary	0.24	0.17
Listening	0.31	0.29
Writing	0.19	0.20
Average	0.32	0.28

In all cases $p < 0.05$

TEAM 2 scores show a slightly weaker predictive relationship overall. The measurable predictive power of TEAM remains at approximately 0.3. Although that may seem on the low side (representing less than 10% of variance in degree outcome), it is comparable with the correlation values established in other studies of the relationship between English scores at university entry and eventual success: 0.35 for ELTS/outcome (Criper and Davies 1988), and 0.32 for TEAM 1/outcome (Lynch 1994a). Ferguson and White (1994) found higher correlations - 0.39 for IELTS/outcome and 0.49, for TEAM 1/outcome - but their qualitative study involved a smaller sample of University of Edinburgh students (n=24).

3.2.4 Performance in different Faculties

In the Edinburgh context it is relevant to look for variations in the patterns of achievement across Faculties, which differ in their entry requirements (6.5 IELTS in most; 6.0 in others). Table 10 shows the scores for five Faculties; the numbers of TEAM 2 candidates from Divinity, Medicine and Music were too small to make mean scores meaningful.

Table 10

TEAM 2 section means by faculty 1993-97

	Vocab.	List.	Writing	Ave.
Arts	74.39	80.64	65.42	73.47
Law	66.11	79.44	61.06	68.86
SocSci	70.98	68.91	58.05	66.04
SciEng	69.08	65.30	53.57	62.63
VetMed	68.29	56.83	46.59	57.24

The fact that Faculty of Arts students scored highest overall may come as a surprise to those readers who know that the Faculty has held its entry requirement at IELTS 6.0 for a number of years (although it is being raised for the 1999-2000 session), while other faculties have increased the requirement to IELTS 6.5. However, one strong influence on the mean scores shown in Table 10 is that more than half the Arts students taking TEAM over the period were EFL teachers starting the MSc in Applied Linguistics.

There is also some variation in the extent to which the section scores foreshadow later academic success. Notably, the predictive value of (even) the TEAM Listening section is not significant in the case of students from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (n=46). On the other hand, there are relatively strong and significant values in all sections in the case of Law students.

Table 11

TEAM 2 section correlations with outcome, by faculty

	Vocabulary	Listening	Writing	Average
Arts	0.13	0.25*	0.09	0.19
Law	0.20*	0.35*	0.20*	0.32*
Sci/Eng	0.23*	0.21*	0.13	0.24*
SocSci	0.13	0.27*	0.12	0.23*
VetMed	0.04	0.08	0.11	0.09

$* = p<0.05$

One interpretation of the higher and uniformly significant correlations in Law is that we know (cf. Table 10) that the Law students taking TEAM 2 had relatively good English to begin with, so it could be that in general their performance on their degree course reflected that initial level. Interestingly, not a single Law student in the 1993-97 data fell into the 'failure' category; the only Law student who was identified by her TEAM scores as being at linguistic risk later transferred to a research degree.

In Veterinary Medicine, on the other hand, the mean level of TEAM scores was lower, but to compensate for that, students from the Faculty are among the most regular attenders of the in-session ELTT courses. They may also benefit from the fact that the staff teaching MSc courses - especially at the Centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine - have substantial experience of working in developing countries and communicating with non-native students and colleagues. This, coupled with the fact that on some Veterinary Medicine courses the majority of students are non-native, may mean that they are able to exploit, in the positive sense, the discourse modifications made by academics used to native/non-native communication (e.g. Ready and Wesche 1985; Lynch 1994b).

4. Conclusions

As in the earlier study, Listening shows the strongest predictive association with students' eventual success. This may seem odd; one might have expected that, since the assessment of performance on postgraduate courses is based predominantly on written assignments (essays, projects, examinations and dissertation), measures of text skills (reading and/or writing) would reflect subject course performance better than a test of listening comprehension. Statistically, though, there is a stronger link between Listening and outcome than Writing and outcome.

The *actual* link between a student's academic success and their ability to listen (or, rather, to do well on a dictation test) is likely to be indirect. One factor is access to the subject matter covered in lectures; individuals who, from the very beginning of the first term of a one-year taught course, have difficulty in understanding their lecturers may well fall behind in their grasp of conceptual content. and may never catch up. There is also the role of affective factors, such as confidence and communicative ease, which play an important part in an individual's success in using a foreign language (Lynch 1997). Students who realise they cannot cope adequately in lectures, seminars and tutorials may experience a negative *multiplier effect*: as they lose confidence in their ability to understand spoken English, they become more anxious about lectures and note-taking, and at the same time sense that they are falling behind their peers who are able to follow what is being said. More generally, problems in aural comprehension can represent a barrier that cuts non-native students off from the host culture, and this may in turn contribute to the loneliness and homesickness that can later surface as 'family' and 'medical' reasons for withdrawal from the course.

It is worth recalling that this study has revealed incidental grounds for more general encouragement: the rise in the Master's pass rate among the non-native population studied here will no doubt be welcome within the University (and to the students concerned!), even if TEAM 2 has played no part in that improvement. The students who matriculated in 1993-97 scored higher, even on the unchanged Listening test, than their counterparts in the three years investigated in the TEAM 1 study. Since Listening remains the strongest predictive component of TEAM 2, it is arguable that the Master's pass rate in the TEAM population has risen in part because of this attested increase in students' proficiency in English.

As a predictive instrument, TEAM 2 performs comparably with more complex and labour-intensive external tests, such as ELTS and IELTS. It does so at relatively low cost, both in terms of student time spent at the test session (less than an hour) and of IALS staff time on marking (15 minutes per script). It is true that the revised version has marginally lower predictive power than TEAM 1, but on the other hand it is encouraging that the adjustments to the Writing marking scheme have slightly increased its correlation with outcome. The decrease in predictive power can be ascribed mainly to the new Vocabulary section, which is substantially less discriminating than its predecessor. Further modifications should be made to Vocabulary to make it more demanding, for example, by including more items that are not transparent cognates of terms in other European languages.

In conclusion, TEAM remains a reasonably effective test for its limited purposes, which are: (1) to identify students who have achieved the minimum score required for acceptance by their Faculty at Edinburgh, but whose English proficiency is not yet fully adequate, and (2) to provide University staff (Faculty, department and IALS) with performance data that can be used to recommend specific combinations of ELTT courses for students needing help in particular areas of academic English.

Acknowledgments

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APPENDIX

ELTT PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 1998-99

	Course	Times	Dates	Hours
1	Listening	18.00-19.30	27 Oct-08 Dec	10
2	Speaking	16.00-18.00	27 Oct-09 Dec	14
3	Writing Exam Answers	16.30-18.00	29 Oct	12
4	Essential Grammar	14.00-17.00	30 Oct-11 Dec	21
5	Writing Essays & Projects	9.00-15.30	05 Jan-08 Jan	20
6	Discussion group	16.30-18.00	19 Jan-09 Mar	12
7	Writing Exam Answers	10.00-11.30	16 Jan	12
8	Thesis Writing	16.00-18.00	20 Jan-19 May	16
9	Writing a First-Year Report/Research Proposal	14.00-17.00	22 Jan-05 Mar	21
10	Basic Writing	9.30-12.00	23 Jan-13 Mar	20

Notes

1. **Course 5** is a full-time course, held in the last week of the Christmas/New Year vacation. If you are a Master's student in the 'TUITION REQUIRED' category, make sure you are in Edinburgh for all four days of the course. You must also take Course 4.

2. **Course 8** is for PhD students in their third (or later) year.

3. **Course 9** is for supervised postgraduate graduating students only. (Students doing an MSc by research take Course 5.) If you are an SPG in the 'TUITION REQUIRED' category, you must take this course and also Course 4.

FEATURES, COBWEBS OR CLINES: TOWARDS A POSSIBLE MODEL OF LEXICAL RETRIEVAL IN BILINGUAL READERS

Valerie Waggot (TAAL)

Abstract

This is an investigation of how 120 teenage bilingual Chinese/English readers comprehended a verb and a noun in a Chinese text. The data are parallel translations made by examination candidates, all in the British educational system. A brief justification of the use of the data is given. This is followed by an overview of approaches to the theory of meaning and the mental lexicon. The data consist of a range of interpretations of moni ('to imitate') and zawen ('literary essay').

Evidence from the data and support from the literature lead me to conclude that the comprehension of the meaning of lexical items is influenced to a great extent not only by recovery of meaning from the text but also by personal experience . Able readers are more likely to provide a 'majority' or near dictionary equivalent, which may be regarded as central on a continuum, while less able readers veer towards either end of the continuum.

This paper is based on data I have been using to investigate the cognitive processes of reading Chinese text. My data consist of parallel intuitive translations. In this paper I concentrate on how the readers, as a group, interpreted two lexical items, one a verb and one a noun.

1. About the data

1.1 Making use of translation data

Translation provides a write-it-down protocol for reading. Intuitive[1] translators are not necessarily thinking about style and polish – they are simply getting the message across. In my data, taken from examination answers, the reader/translators know that it is their comprehension of Chinese which is being tested and they are working within a strict time limit, without the aid of dictionaries. They do not know who is marking their papers, so their 'target audience' is unlikely to affect them in the way that it would in a usual translation or interpretation situation i.e. encouraging the translator to say what he or she thinks the target audience wants to hear. These examination candidates simply know that they must demonstrate their optimal understanding of the text. I feel that in this situation there is no risk of 'halo effect' or priming as there would be in an experimental situation. These circumstances combine to provide a body of translations which constitute a kind of 'comprehension corpus' – an on-line record of how these untrained bilingual readers understood the text.

1.2 The subjects and their target texts

The target texts are translations of a short text of 166 characters set as one of the questions in the June 1998 series of the Edexcel London Examinations 'A' Level Chinese examination. The source text was of course in Chinese script (hanzi), but relevant parts are quoted below, for convenience, in Roman transliteration (pinyin). I have analysed 120 translations of this text by examination candidates, mostly Chinese/English bilinguals. The candidates are all in the British (English) education system. They are likely to be aged between 17 and 19, though a very few are adults taking the examination from a further education college. It is impossible to do this examination without a good knowledge of both English and Chinese. (The rubric is in English and there are translations from English to Chinese

as well as Chinese to English.) However, standards are not uniform. Some candidates are obviously stronger in English, some stronger in Chinese. Many are Cantonese speakers, a factor which sometimes shows in their reading and writing of standard Chinese. Candidates are unlikely to have been trained in translation, though they may often interpret informally for family and friends. Given their background, only a few of these readers will be making sophisticated choices relating to style or discourse.

In cases where it was evident that the candidate had either very weak English or very weak Chinese the subject was omitted from the study. The subjects comprise one examiner's allocation, selected randomly by computer by the examination board. The text is an authentic Chinese text about the writing style of the author Lu Xun.

2. Some models of meaning retrieval

2.1 Majority, dictionary equivalent and erroneous interpretations

My aim in this paper is to see how the bilingual readers in the study interpreted the source text, particularly the way in which they accessed lexical items. I am not interested in how they *should* translate – not in what is considered right or wrong by experienced and trained translators – but in how they these young people *do* translate the text. Their unpolished translations are likely to show what is motivating or affecting their understanding of the text. While some readers produce the dictionary equivalent or something very near, which may be regarded as a norm, or 'majority'[2] translation, others differ widely in their interpretation and provide solutions which could be regarded as errors. These erroneous translations may at first glance appear to be incorrect, but on closer inspection of the target texts in their entirety, one can often see that access to the lexical item is affected by many different factors, and may not be as erroneous as first thought. The translation solutions of the group reveal a pattern which suggests that readers do not necessarily access a core meaning, but may access from a range of meanings which form a cline or continuum. My findings suggest a majority interpretation, which may not be the dictionary equivalent, but is a 'core' meaning or very near synonym at the centre of the continuum, through a range of idiosyncratic interpretations and finally miscues which are completely erroneous.

2.2 Core senses

There is never one absolutely correct answer in translation or reading– no direct equivalent. The problems of ambiguity, polysemy and lexical innovation have shown that people activate many of the different senses of a polysemous word even when the meanings are inappropriate. (Gibbs,1994: 41, citing Williams, 1992)

2.3 Radial linking

Many cognitive linguists believe that people have intuitions about the meanings of words which are motivated by their figurative understanding of various concepts and these are interdependent and radially linked, rather than having a core, or literal meaning. Aitchison uses the 'cobweb' metaphor to illustrate this type of network. (Aitchison 1994: 73) The 'competition model' and parallel distribution models exemplify an approach which does not assume core senses, (e.g. Rumelhardt and McClelland, 1986) and is based on the idea of mental processing as a continuous decision-making process, in which possible candidates compete.

2.4 Individual differences

Barsalou (cited by Gibbs, 1994: 50-55) found that there was not only great variety in features between individuals, but also within individual speakers at different times; not only do different people conceptualise categories differently, but individuals' conceptualisation varies over time, and

according to context or situation. Given this variation, Gibbs maintains that long term memory of information for categories is fairly stable and that it is not the knowledge that is stored that is different, but the way in which that knowledge is retrieved from long term memory. Barsalou suggests that different aspects of knowledge are retrieved on different occasions, a notion which I will return to when I discuss my data, and suggest that there may be implications of age and culture involved.

2.5 Idealised cognitive models

Some cognitive scientists now hold the view that our organisation of concepts is based on our knowledge of and theories about the world. So the word, or lexical item in question must have the right 'explanatory relationship' to the theory organising the concept. So, for example, when talking about clouds, grey and black are considered to be more similar than grey and white, while when talking about hair, white and grey are considered to be more similar than grey and black. That is to say, a theory of wet weather applies to clouds, while a theory of ageing applies to hair. According to Lakoff, an ICM (idealised cognitive model) is a prototypical cultural model that people create to organise their knowledge in this way. (Lakoff, 1987)

2.6 A cline between fixity and stability

As Carter points out, 'what may be core in the internal structure of the language is not automatically perceived as core by users of the language.' (Carter, 1998: 46) Carter notes the usefulness of clines of lexical relations (op.cit: 68) but also that many lexical items are either themselves patterns or form part of patterns which are quite fixed and stable and are used routinely in relatively predictable situations. He points out that it may be difficult to distinguish between lexical items of a more fixed, stable nature and those which may be used more creatively. Accordingly, he recommends talking in terms of clines of fixity. (op.cit: 76.)

3. Reading and meaning

3.1 The reader's responsibility

If we assume Carter's theory of clines of fixity, lexical items which apparently have fixed values may, in a text, be negotiated by the reader. This is a well documented phenomenon, and texts are described by writers such as Connor as 'reader responsible' or 'writer responsible.' The 'responsibility' of a text is often seen in terms of its implicitness or explicitness, or the amount of shared knowledge therein, but I would suggest that every lexical item in a text is to a greater or lesser extent open to negotiation by the reader.

Carter among others talks about the dynamic nature of a text, and of meaning being not immanent but textual, and Young similarly describes the reading of Chinese text as 'mutual meaning making.'(Young, 1994: 163). She describes Chinese rhetoric as having a 'one-tiered world view in which things are not discrete entities, but rather, related to and defined by other things' (op.cit: 50), a view which echoes theories of radial linking in the mental lexicon.

4. Evidence in the data

4.1 Introduction to the data

4.1.1 The pilot study

In 1997 I conducted a pilot study, using answers to examination translation questions from the London Examinations. I started out not quite knowing what I would find, and made no statistical analysis. I was amazed at the wide variation in interpretation. The lexical item *yu* (jade), for example, was variously interpreted as 'crystal,' 'marble,' 'sapphire,' 'precious stones,' 'stone,' 'crysoprase,' 'diamonds,' 'gold' and many others, and was also mis-parsed as 'king', probably owing to a visual miscue. My feeling then was that this fitted in with a theory of componential analysis in that inexperienced readers who did not know a direct equivalent in English appeared to access by means of features [+precious], [+hard], [+mineral] and in some cases, [+pretty colour]. A similar pattern emerged with the terms 'horizontal' and 'vertical.'

4.1.2 The main study

In the main study in 1998 I looked at all interpretations of lexical items, not just the 'mistakes.' Here I will discuss readers' interpretations of two lexical items which occurred in the text.

4.2 The data

4.2.1 The context

The whole text is a criticism of writers who blindly imitate the literary style of Lu Xun and a warning to other writers not to. The lexical items which I discuss below are taken from the first sentence:

yi xie mo ni Lu Xun xian sheng za wen de ren wang wang

some   imitate Lu Xun Mr.   essay   people always

wang que le zhei xie za wen chan sheng de shi jian he kong

forget   these   essay produced   time   and place

jian, mu di he dui xiang.

aim   and   target

Some people who imitate the essays of Lu Xun always forget the time and place when these essays were produced, their aim and for whom they were written.

4.2.2 Interpretations of *moni* (dictionary definition: to imitate or simulate)

Majority/dictionary	instances	Erroneous	instances
imitate/simulate	14	learn/study	8
copy	36	admire/like	8
use as model/copy the style	9		
follow	8	**Probably miscues**	
write similar/like	8	collect	1
rewrite	2	don't understand	1
forge	1	suspect	1
mock	1	discuss the bad things	1
pretend to be	1	investigating & exploring	1
modify	1	doubt	1
live on copying	1	talk about	1

Summary

Neutral or core interpretations (imitate, simulate, copy):	50
Positive interpretations (use as model, copy the style, follow, write similar):	25
Negative interpretations:	8
Erroneous interpretations (learn, study, admire)	16
Miscues:	7

(99 categorised responses – remainder of 120 were untranslated or incomprehensible)

4.2.2.1 Discussions of interpretations of moni

4.2.2.1.1 Access in terms of features, cobweb and competition models

These results confirm tendencies observed in the pilot study, suggesting that lexical access might be based on componential analysis.

The majority/dictionary interpretations in the left hand column show features of being like, or doing as i.e., some kind of reproduction. ([+ do similar], [+ do same])

In addition, some of them could be said to have the feature [+positive] e.g. use as a model, while some have the feature [+negative], e.g. mimic, forge.

Some of the interpretations are explicitly concerned with writing or writing style, in other words the reader is aware that this is not simply reproduction, but the more abstract notion of imitating a style ([+stylistic]). It is important to note that not all the readers realised that this text referred to writing – some interpretations involved martial arts, magazine production etc.

The erroneous interpretations (right hand column) show two distinct features – learning and studying on the one hand, and admiration on the other.

The miscues are almost all visual or phonological, at the decoding level.

Apart from the 14 able, probably more experienced readers who achieved a more or less dictionary equivalent, the interpretations of sizeable minorities of readers in this study vary considerably, but show distinct trends. The interpretations could be analysed on a feature basis as I have shown, but they also show a cline, with 'copy' being central, and perhaps neutral, with positive interpretations at one end and negative interpretations at the other.

I would like to suggest that the readers have accessed the Chinese lexical item *moni* partly from the context of the text – about literary style, but mostly from their own experience. Some of these teenagers have grown up within a Chinese cultural milieu where for thousands of years to copy or imitate has been a mark of respect to both copied and copier – hence the positive interpretations such as 'admire and copy.' Those readers who interpret *moni* as 'learn or study' reflect cultural values in that traditional Chinese education relies heavily on top-down rote learning of received knowledge, faithfully reproduced in examinations. However, those brought up in a Western cultural milieu are more likely to regard copying as a negative activity – hence 'forge' and 'mimic.'

Among the idiosyncratic versions, 'discussing the bad things' seems to suggest that the reader is leaning hard on the literary subject matter of the context to produce the nearest s/he knows to 'criticise.'

It can also be seen that these results are not incompatible with the 'cobweb' or competition models of lexical access; 'copy', 'imitate,' 'forge,' 'rewrite,' 'live on copying,' etc., may all be seen as inter-related members of a family, or may also be seen as competitors, from which the reader selects the best suited to the context.

4.2.2.1.2 Access in terms of a cline

However, I would like to suggest that these readers are using an idealised cognitive model based on their knowledge of language conventions, their own experience and the schema triggered by their understanding of the text as a whole. The majority went for the word they are probably most familiar with in school circumstances. The dictionary equivalent was accessed by the largest minority, while small minorities accessed erroneous meanings affected by cultural or perhaps personal experiences. Some readers, perhaps because of visual or phonological miscues, provide a solution which can only be regarded as wrong. I would like to suggest a four point scale on a cline of fixity: homosemes (a dictionary equivalent); proxsemes (nearly right - perhaps a superordinate or a hyponym); telesemes (the reader's idiosyncratic interpretation); and pseudosemes (completely wrong miscues).

4.2.3 Interpretations of *zawen* (dictionary definition: literary essay)

Majority/dictionary	instances	Erroneous	instances
essays (including modifier)	28	text	1
articles (inc. mod.)	12	extract	1
*writings (inc. mod.)	18	*masterpieces	1
*stories/short stories	12	*fractions (fiction?)	1
*works	6	*anthologies	1
passages	5	sentence	1
compositions	4	writer	1
*novels/short novels	3	papers	1
comprehension	2	journals	1
*books	2	rough drafts	1
*poems	2	magazine	1
*literature	2		

<u>Summary</u>

Neutral or core interpretations (essay)	28
*Literary interpretations(excluding essay)	48
Journalism interpretations(excluding essay)	15
Pedagogic interpretations(excluding essay)	14

('writer ' is probably due to misparsing)

106 categorised responses – remainder of 120 were untranslated or incomprehensible.

4.2.3.1 Discussion of interpretations of *zawen*.

This appeared to have been a much easier lexical item to access. There were more 'majority' or dictionary interpretations, and all interpretations related to writing. However, there was still a very wide range of interpretation, again tending to reflect cultural background or experience. As might be expected those solutions which were near majority tended to be general and neutral: for example 'writings' was the most commonly accessed interpretation after 'essay' ([+writing]). Almost half the solutions were literary ([+literary]), and some readers showed a further feature of style in solutions such as 'writing skills', 'masterpieces.' 'Masterpieces' could be regarded as having the feature [+ positive], as discussed in previous sections.

Among those readers who did not reach a majority solution there is a clear tendency to access a meaning which reflects pedagogic types of writing, clearly reflecting teenage readers' school experience, and a similar tendency towards journalistic types of writing, probably reflecting their extra-curricular reading.

4.2.3.1.1. Access in terms of cobweb, competition models and clines

The range of meanings accessed for *zawen* ('essay') produced the pattern: a majority solution, then a dictionary equivalent solution, then minority solutions with more idiosyncratic meanings. In addition to being analysed in terms of features, these results may be analysed in terms of networks of interdependent meanings or competing meanings or clines of fixity. The points on the cline may be seen as homosemes, ('essay') proxsemes, ('writings' etc.) telesemes, ('poems,' 'anthologies' etc.) and pseudosemes ('writer', 'magazine' etc.). I should add the caveat that my analysis is of course only as objective as that of any individual can be and a thorough study would need to include cline rating by Chinese and English readers.

5. Conclusion

Given the overwhelmingly wide range of interpretations for these two lexical items in a group of bilingual readers, it seems likely that any theory of objective, neutral or core meaning does not apply universally to every language user. Carter's suggestion of a cline of fixity seems to be appropriate to these data. With the word ' imitate', some readers comprehend it as some form of reproduction, either positive or negative, while some comprehend it quite differently, as 'learn,' or 'admire.' With the word 'essay', some readers veer right away from 'essay' to 'anthologies' etc., while other readers veer away to 'comprehension passages.' In both cases cited here the majority solution was not the dictionary equivalent, though the majority in the case of *moni* was a superordinate, and the majority of solutions in the case of *zawen* were hyponymous.

This leads us back to two notions mentioned earlier: first, Barsalou's suggestion that different people conceptualise categories differently and that an individual's conceptualisation varies over time and that different aspects of knowledge are retrieved on different occasions; second, the idea of the ICM, or idealised cognitive model. In other words, it seems that those readers who do not hit on the 'core' meaning are applying a negative or positive theory to *moni* ('imitate'), in line with their individual conceptualisations. When it comes to *zawen* ('essays'), the readers who do not hit on a core meaning are applying theories of pedagogic, journalistic or literary writing, again in line with their individual conceptualisations.

The experience and background of the reader or language user shape conceptualisation and provide strong schemata. The reader creates a coherent whole, linking items in the text with each other and with his or her knowledge of the world and examples of use. Even a fairly explicit text may become highly reader responsible for a young or inexperienced reader, who will access lexical meaning according to his or her own experience.

Notes

1.   I use the term 'intuitive' to describe young, bilingual speakers who translate and interpret without the benefit of training.

2.   I use the term 'majority' as a label for the most popular solution arrived at by the readers/translators.

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