

**ACTA  
ACADEMIAE PAEDAGOGICAE AGRIENSIS  
NOVA SERIES TOM. XXIV.**

**REDIGIT:  
TAMÁS PÓCS ET RÓZSA V. RAISZ**

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OF  
ENGLISH STUDIES**

**VOLUME I**

**1996**

**EDITOR: ENDRE ABKAROVITS**

**KÁROLY ESZTERHÁZY TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE  
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## Editorial note

The Department of English Language and Literature at Eszterházy Károly Teachers' Training College is pleased to present Volume 1 of the *Eger Journal of English Studies*. This present volume wants to indicate not only a change in the name of the earlier series of British and American Studies, but it also takes a new approach in several ways. On the one hand, the Department of American Studies has started a series of their own papers in separate volumes (the *Eger Journal of American Studies*), and on the other hand we would like to put an end to the earlier practice of publishing only papers of members of our own department. In the future we would like to invite submissions from established authors both from Hungarian colleges and universities and from abroad. It is a great pleasure for us that in this very first volume of our journal, we have the honour of having four contributors from British universities.

Sadly, one contributor, George Cushing, translator of 'Egri csillagok' ('The Eclipse of the Crescent Moon') has passed away since submitting his paper. By publishing his paper posthumously, we wish to express our gratitude for his activity in fostering and exploring Hungarian-English relations.

We also have the honour of having three contributors from The University of Birmingham. This is additional proof of the ongoing and fruitful cooperation between the Birmingham colleagues and the members of our department. This cooperation has been realized through mutual visits, research work done by our linguists at COBUILD and lectures given by our visitors from the School of English at The University of Birmingham and COBUILD. We offer special thanks to Ramesh Krishnamurty, corpus manager of COBUILD, who has helped us a lot in establishing and promoting this cooperation since the very beginning. We are also pleased to have such highly reputed experts as Geoff Barnbrook and Richard Cauldwell among the authors of this volume. We hope the 'Birmingham connection' will continue in the same productive way in the future, too, but authors from other English and Hungarian institutions of higher education are also welcome to contribute to our future volumes.

The journal will be published annually.

**FROM DESCRIPTION TO PRESCRIPTION AND  
BACK AGAIN: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
MONOLINGUAL ENGLISH DICTIONARY**

**Abstract:** This paper explores the development of monolingual English dictionaries from their earliest origins through to modern corpus-based learners' dictionaries, considering the changes in their approaches and methods and the basic nature of their relationship with the language they document. It has been adapted from Chapter 2 of Barnbrook (1995).

**1 The nature of monolingual dictionaries**

Modern English monolingual dictionaries, especially learners' dictionaries, describe the meanings of their headwords, often together with other information. This paper examines their development and considers the major changes that have taken place in their functions. The overall aims of lexicographers seem to alter during the process of dictionary development from an attempt to describe certain aspects of English, through overtly prescriptive programmes for maintenance and reform of the language, back to a descriptive account of general use of English. This last approach is seen most clearly within dictionaries produced for learners of English.

Within a monolingual dictionary language is used reflexively, to describe itself, and it is important to understand the main complications arising from this fact. Lyons (1977, vol.1, pp.5–6) describes the standard philosophical distinction between reflexive use of language and other possible uses, which assigns technical meanings to the terms 'use' and 'mention' to indicate respectively non-reflexive and reflexive use. He also describes the main problems that can arise for linguists in following this distinction without a clear understanding of what is implied by it, which arise from the fact that

philosophers have found it difficult to distinguish the terms formally. Despite these reservations, the concept provides a useful basis for examining the development of the conventions of monolingual dictionaries.

Piotrowski (1989, pp.73–74) suggests two other ways of considering the meaning of lexical items: ‘entity: concept, notion, prototype, stereotype, or fact of culture’ and ‘activity: skill, knowledge of how to use a word’. These terms seem to parallel the ‘use-mention’ distinction, and are also useful in exploring changes in the nature of dictionaries.

Earlier monolingual English dictionaries generally ‘mention’ the word which is being defined rather than ‘using’ it, and so give information about its meaning primarily as an ‘entity’ rather than an ‘activity’. Any separate examples of usage that they give actually ‘use’ the word (in the technical philosophical sense), and so give information about its meaning as an ‘activity’. As we will see, this distinction is linked with the conflict between descriptive and prescriptive approaches to lexicography.

## **2 The Origins of Dictionaries**

Béjoint (1994, p.92), considering the earliest origins of dictionaries, suggests that they ‘are probably much older than is generally said.’ He argues convincingly that all societies with writing systems, and at least some of those without, have produced dictionaries of some kind, though not necessarily all for the same reasons. These do not always convey meanings in the same way as a conventional modern dictionary.

As an example within English culture it may be worth considering the contents of some of the ‘listing’ nursery rhymes such as ‘The House that Jack Built’, or ‘The Twelve Days of Christmas’. It is at least possible that the relationships between the items on the list constitute devices for acquiring linguistic information. At the very least these songs give catalogues of lexically related groups of words. In the case of ‘The House that Jack Built’ the song also includes primitive defining strategies, best illustrated in the last verse:

This is the farmer sowing his corn,  
That kept the cock that crowed in the morn,  
That waked the priest all shaven and shorn,

That married the man all tattered and torn,  
 That kissed the maiden all forlorn,  
 That milked the cow with the crumpled horn,  
 That tossed the dog,  
 That worried the cat,  
 That killed the rat,  
 That ate the malt  
 That lay in the house that Jack built.

(Opie & Opie, 1951, pp.229–231)

Every line of the cumulative verses of the rhyme, usually accompanied by appropriate illustrations on its first occurrence in printed editions, sets out some of the typical characteristics of the item introduced in the previous line as an integral part of the narrative. Consider the explanation given in *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* (Sinclair, 1987) for sense 1.1 of ‘cat’:

A **cat** is a small furry animal with a tail, whiskers, and sharp claws that kills smaller animals such as mice and birds.

(CCELD p.214)

The line relating to ‘cat’ in the rhyme:

That killed the rat

has significant echoes in this definition. Each line is almost a form of definition, and the cumulative nature of many of these catalogue rhymes in recitation could make them especially suitable for teaching the lexical, syntactic and even semantic properties of the words in their texts. Opie & Opie (1951) suggest that other similar accumulative rhymes, such as ‘The Twelve Days of Christmas’ (pp.119–122) and ‘The Wide-mouth waddling Frog’ (pp.181–183) would be played as forfeit games, with individuals responsible for each verse and paying forfeits for mistakes. The full title of a version of this latter rhyme, quoted by Opie & Opie from *The Top Book of All*, published around 1760, is ‘The Play of the Wide-mouth waddling Frog, to amuse the mind, and exercise the Memory’, an explicit statement of a pedagogic role concealed in the fun.

Early spelling books use similar techniques to distinguish between words which can easily be confused with each other: they place their subject words in a suitable context to provide the necessary information. The following consecutive groups of words are taken

from R. Browne's *English School Reform'd* (1700, pp.68–69), which is arranged in approximate alphabetical order:

Pair of Shooes.

Pare your Nails.

Pear, a sort of Fruit.

Peer of a Realm.

Plot not against the King.

Plod, or Walk.

Pray to God.

Prey, or Covet.

Queen of England.

Quean, a Harlot.

Roof of a House.

Rough, or Course.

Ruff for the Neck.

A similar technique is used in Cocker (1696) to differentiate between 'Words which bear the like Sound, and Pronunciation, yet are of different Signification and Spelling, and are apt to cause mistakes in Writing' (p.100). The entries under 'L' show the general range of techniques used:

*Lick* honey if you *like* it.

*Lock* the door; *Look* for good *Luck*.

*Lanch* the ship; *Lance* the Wound.

*Leash* of hounds; *Lease* of a House.

*Less* than another; *Lest* you suffer for it.

Learn this *Lesson*, not to *Lessen* or despise any.

*Listen*, and you may hear ye *Listed* Souldier.

Look to the *Lamb*, for he is *Lame*.

*Loud* the Oxe *Lowed*.



*Lowr* and frown; *Lower* than before; *Lour*, a *French* Palace.  
*Lot* in *Sodom*; *Loth* and unwilling; *Loath* and abhor.  
*Louse* bites, *Loose* and unty; *Lose* nothing.  
*Lice* and Fleas; *Lies* are often reported.  
*Liturgy*, or Common-prayer: *Lethargy* sleeping.  
*Line* for a Jack: A *Loyn* of Veal.  
*League* of Peace: *Leg* of the body.  
*Lattice* of a window: The Maid *Lettice* fetcht some *Lettuce*  
(Cocker, 1696, p.103)

In most of the examples from both Browne and Cocker the setting of the words in some form of typical context establishes the method of treatment of them as ‘use’ rather than ‘mention’, so that the knowledge being presented relates to the word as ‘activity’, not only as ‘entity’. In some cases given above (e.g. ‘Pear’, ‘Plod’, ‘Prey’, ‘Quean’ and ‘Rough’ from Browne, ‘Lour’ and ‘Liturgy’ from Cocker) brief definitions or equivalents are given, so that ‘use’ and ‘mention’, ‘entity’ and ‘activity’ are mixed. One other important element is exhibited by the set of examples from Browne, two of which, ‘Plot’ and ‘Pray’, act partly as moral exhortations rather than neutral linguistic statements. The inclusion of this moral element is an explicit feature of many of the later dictionaries, most notably and self-consciously Johnson’s.

### 3 English Dictionaries before Johnson

Histories of monolingual English dictionaries normally begin towards the end of the 16th century, and Cawdrey’s *A table alphabetically*, produced in 1604, is usually cited as the first fully recognisable specimen. This work is dealt with in detail in the next section. Glosses and bilingual dictionaries certainly existed before that date, together with spelling books and language manuals which contain some of the information normally associated with monolingual dictionaries.

As an example, Edmund Coote’s *The English Schoole-maister* contains a twenty page vocabulary list in alphabetical order, in which most of the words are given a brief gloss. He describes this as:

a true Table conteining and teaching the true writing and understanding of any hard english word, borrowed from the Greeke, Latine, or French, and how to know the one from the other, with the interpretation thereof by a plaine English word

(Coote, 1596, introductory note 12)

This extract shows its main features:

*Garboile* **hurly burly**  
**garner. corne chamber**  
gem **precious stone**  
gentilitie )  
generositie) **gentric**  
gentile **a heathen**  
generation **offspring**  
**gender**  
genealogie g.**generation**  
genitor **father**  
**gesture**  
**gives fetters**  
**ginger**  
**gourd k plant**

(Coote, 1596, p.84)

A detailed key to the conventions adopted is given in his introduction to the table: Roman letters are used for 'words taken from the Latine or other learned languages', italics for those from French, and 'those with the English letter, are meerly English, or from some other vulgar tongue.' The 'English letter' or black letter is shown above as bold type. Further annotations are 'g.' for Greek and 'k' for 'a kind of' (Coote, 1596, pp.73–75)

The alphabetic arrangement of Cawdrey's work is lacking in most of the other earlier works, but the concept of a list of words arranged with their equivalents is established very early. The most important feature of Cawdrey's book is that it is purely a list of words and definitions and specifically monolingual. However, like its ancestors

the glosses, it deals exclusively with the words which are likely to be difficult to understand.

### 3.1 Hard Word Dictionaries

The title page of the first edition of Cawdrey's book echoes Coote's introductory note:

A table alphabeticall, conteyning and teaching the true writing and understanding of hard usuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French, &c.

With the interpretation thereof by *plaine English words, gathered for the benefit & helpe of Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other unskilfull persons.*

Whereby they may the more easilie and better understand many hard English wordes, which they shall heare or read in Scriptures, Sermons, or elsewhere, and also be made able to use the same aptly themselves.

*Legere, et non intelligere, neglegere est.*

As good not to read, as not to understand

This is a very explicit description of the purposes and the method of the work. It is interesting to note that it is aimed at a very specific market, the word 'unskilfull' presumably describing their lack of knowledge of classical languages, although in practice it seems likely that its full readership would extend beyond the exclusively female examples given. It is also intended both for interpretation and production. In the traditions of the time, much of its contents were, of course, taken from existing works. Starnes and Noyes (1991, p.13) draw attention to his extensive use of Coote (1596) both for general inspiration and for substantial portions of the word-list, definitions and surrounding text. They also stress the information that he incorporated from elsewhere, especially Thomas' Latin-English Dictionary of 1588. The tradition of near-plagiarism as a means of creating new dictionaries is established at the outset.

The defining method adopted by Cawdrey is stated on the title page as using 'plaine English words'. In the examples given below similar conventions are used to those in the extracts from Coote (1596) given in section 3 above: the black letter printing is shown in bold type, (g) after a word means that it is derived from Greek, § before it means that it is from French, and (k) means 'a kind of'. Cawdrey's spelling has been preserved, but no attempt has been

made to show the use of the long form of s or the special character for a doubled o.

abdicate, **put away, refuse, or forsake.**

aggrauate, **make more grieuous, and more heauie:**

agilitie, **nimblenes, or quicknes.**

alacritie, **cheerefulnes, liuelines**

apologie, **defence, or excuse by speech.**

auburne (k) **colour**

§barke, **small ship**

capitall, **deadly, or great, or woorthy of shame, and punishment:**

celebrate, **holy, make famous, to publish, to commend, to keepe solemnlie**

circumspect, **heedie, quicke of sight, wise, and dooing matters advisedly.**

delectation, **delight, or pleasure**

diminution, **lessening**

effect, **a thing done, or to bring to passe**

§enhaunce, **to lift up, or make greater:**

expert, **skilfull**

fabricate, **make, fashion**

foraine, **strange, of another country**

gargarise, **to wash the mouth, and throate within, by stirring some liquor up and down in the mouth**

genius, **the angell that waits on man, be it a good or euill angell**

glee, **mirth, gladnes**

honomimie, **when diuers things are signified by one word**

idiot, (g) **unlearned, a foole**

implacable, **that cannot be pleased or pacified.**

iudaisme, **worshipping one God without Christ.**

laborious, **painfull, full of labour**

magistrate, **governour**

§malecontent, **discontented**

nauigable, **where ships may safely passe, or that may be sailed upon.**

notifie, **to make knowne, or to giue warning of.**

odious, **hatefull, disdainfull**

omit, **let passe, ouerslip.**

palinodie, **a recanting or unsaying of anything**

passeouer, **one of the Jewes feasts, in remembrance of Gods passing ouer them, when he slewe so many of the Egiptians**

persecute, **trouble, afflict, or pursue after.**

pomegarnet, or pomegranet, (k) **fruite**

preposterous, **disorder, froward, topsiteruic, setting the cart before the horse, as we use to say**

racha, **fic, a note of extreame anger signified by the gesture of the person that speaketh it, to him that he speaketh to**

represent, **expresse, beare shew of a thing**

scurrilitie, **saucie, scoffing**

sympathie,(g) **fellowelike feeling.**

transferre, **conceiue ouer**

transparent, **that which may bee scene through**

truculent, **cruell, or terrible in countenance**

veneriall,) **fleshly, or lecherous,**

venerous,) **giuen to lecherie**

§vpbraid, **rise in ones stomach, cast in ones teeth:**

Even in this relatively small sample (50 words) we can see certain characteristics of Cawdrey's defining style. Some words, such as 'barke', 'diminution', 'expert', 'magistrate' and 'malecontent', are given one-word synonyms. Others, such as 'aggrauate' and 'gargarise', are defined by simple phrases which are almost capable of replacing the single word in its normal contexts. Some, notably 'hononimie', 'nauigable' and 'palinodie', have more complex definitions, which would be much more difficult to use as straight substitutes. Some words, such as 'passeouer' and 'iudaisme' are

plainly encyclopaedic entries. Many words, such as ‘abdicate’, ‘capitall’, ‘celebrate’ and ‘effect’ have several senses, which are given as an unannotated list. In the case of two words in the sample, ‘veneriall’ and ‘venerous’, their similarity of meaning is such that they effectively share a dictionary entry.

In considering these examples it must be remembered that this form of definition is still effectively a type of gloss, a list purely of words thought unfamiliar enough to the projected user of the dictionary to warrant inclusion, replaced by the most appropriate ‘plaine English’ word. No examples of usage are given, no guidance is given on selection of meaning where more than one sense is possible. There is a sense, therefore, in which the description of this dictionary and its immediate successors as ‘monolingual English dictionaries’ is inappropriate. Their purpose is to gloss words from a particular subset of English lexis, the new words derived from other languages, using words chosen from the mainstream of commonly used English lexis. Cawdrey in his prefatory address ‘To the Reader’ warns against the possible division of English:

Therefore, either wee must make a difference of English, & say, some is learned English, & othersome is rude English, or the one is Court talke, the other is Country-speech, or els we must of necessitie banish all affected Rhetorique, and vse altogether one manner of language.

(Cawdrey, 1604, p.2 of ‘To the Reader’)

The *Table Alphabeticall* is, of course, a tool designed to help promote the unity of the language under these difficult circumstances. It is simply a description of the new lexis, uninfluenced by the considerations of lexical purity which split linguistic commentators around this period. The general approach used by Cawdrey remained the norm until dictionaries begin to deal with the more general vocabulary of English in the early eighteenth century.

The style of definition used by Cawdrey is, however, by no means confined to the 17th century. Many of its features have been preserved in at least the smaller monolingual dictionaries being published now. Using *The Oxford Popular Dictionary*, a typical pocket-sized general purpose dictionary published in 1993, as an example, it is interesting to compare some modern definitions with Cawdrey’s. Obviously, this is only possible where the word is dealt

with in both dictionaries, and where both the word and the sense have survived relatively unchanged. From the first few entries in the sample of headwords from Cawdrey we find:

**abdicate** *v.i.* renounce a throne or right etc. **abdication** *n.*

**aggravate** *v.t.* make worse; (*colloq.*) annoy. **aggravation** *n.*

**agile** *a.* nimble, quick-moving. **agilely** *adv.*, **agility** *n.*

**alacrity** *n* eager readiness.

**apology** *n.* statement of regret for having done wrong or hurt; explanation of one's beliefs; poor specimen.

**celebrate** *v.t./i.* mark or honour with festivities; engage in festivities; officiate at (a religious ceremony). **celebration** *n*

**circumspect** *a.* cautious and watchful, wary.

**circumspection** *n.*

**delectation** *n.* enjoyment

**diminution** *n.* decrease

There is certainly a little more syntactic information, but the overall amount of detail given and the concept of what constitutes the definition of meaning is almost identical.

The general dictionary model set up by Cawdrey and his predecessors, and indeed their complete entries, continued to be used well into the 17th century: Bullokar's *The English Expositor* (1616), Cockeram's *The English Dictionarie* (1623), Blount's *Glossographia* (1656), Phillips' *The New World of English Words* (1658) and Coles' *An English Dictionary* (1676) all deal with 'hard' or 'difficult' words. There does seem to be a trend towards greater verbosity in the definitions, perhaps in the pursuit of greater precision or a greater usefulness. Starnes & Noyes (1991, p.23) give a comparison of Cawdrey and Bullokar which shows a general tendency to add words to the definitions, often making them less terse and cryptic in the process. As an example, consider Bullokar's definition of 'aggravate' in comparison to Cawdrey's given above:

To make any thing in words more grievous, heavier or worse than it is.

The extra elements in this definition restrict the operation of the word to 'anything in words' and add the concept 'to make worse'. This may not in practice be any more accurate, precise or helpful than Cawdrey's original: what is important is that this tendency to give

more information, especially on restrictions of operation of meanings, continues as the hard word dictionary develops. Alongside the increase in size of entries there is also a steady increase in the total numbers of words included, from around 3,000 in Cawdrey to 25,000 in Coles, who also includes dialect words, but no pretence is made to cover the more usual words of the language. Most modern monolingual dictionaries are more comprehensive, and J.K.'s *A New English Dictionary* (1702), which covers about 28,000 words, is one of the first to attempt this development.

### 3.2 Comprehensive Dictionaries

The title page of *A New English Dictionary* (K[ersey], 1702) explicitly draws attention to the extent of its departure from the hard words tradition:

A New English Dictionary: Or, a Compleat Collection Of the Most Proper and Significant Words, Commonly used in the Language; With a Short and Clear Exposition of Difficult Words and Terms of Art.

The whole digested into Alphabetical Order; and chiefly designed for the benefit of Young Scholars, Tradesmen, Artificers, and the Female Sex, who would learn to spell truly; being so fitted to every Capacity, that it may be a continual help to all that want an Instructor'

Starnes & Noyes (1991, p.71) refer to the fusion attempted in J.K.'s work between the spelling and grammar books, with their lists of ordinary words, usually without definition, and the dictionary, with its treatment only of hard words. The improvement of spelling is the main declared aim of this dictionary, and even the brief summary on the title page makes clear the difference between the treatment of hard words, which are given a 'Short and Clear Exposition', and the 'Compleat Collection Of the Most Proper and Significant Words, Commonly used in the Language'. The common words in the dictionary are often simply listed, as in a spelling book, although attempts are made to put them in a useful and informative context, as with these examples taken from the first two pages:

A-board, as *a-board a Ship*

Above, as *above an Hour*

About, as *about Noon*



A-broach, as *a vessel a-broach*  
*To sit abroad upon eggs, as a bird does*  
*To accustom, himself to a thing*  
A-cross, as *arms folded a-cross*  
An Adamant-stone  
Addle, as, *an addle egg*

These entries ‘use’ the words, dealing with them as ‘activities’. They actually look remarkably like ancestors of the Cobuild explanatory style, especially in their use of a different typeface to highlight the headword within surrounding text, and their insertion of it into something like normal English phrases.

Most of the examples of definitions given in Starnes & Noyes (1991, p. 74) from the revised 1713 edition of J.K.’s *New English Dictionary* are more genuinely definitions, rather than slightly random examples of usage, and the comparison shown there between the earlier and the later edition entries indicates that this is a conscious change of policy. These changes bring them even closer to the Cobuild style:

A *Gad*, a measure of 9 or 10 feet, a small bar of steel.  
The *Gaffle* or Steel of a cross-bow.  
A *Gag*, a stopple to hinder one from crying out.  
A *Gage*, a rod to measure casks with.  
To *Gage* or *Gauge*, to measure with a gage.  
To *Gaggle*, to cry like a goose.  
A *Gallop*, the swiftest pace of a horse.

Only the lack of a connective ‘is’ or ‘means’ prevents most of these definitions from reading almost exactly like the simplest forms of Cobuild explanations, for example:

A **gag** is a stopple to hinder one from crying out.  
To **gaggle** means to cry like a goose.

Slightly more rearrangement of the definition of ‘gaffle’ would produce:

The **gaffle** of a cross-bow is its steel.

While this exercise may seem a little contrived, it seems important to point out that the principles used in this very early inclusive dictionary may have more in common with those applied in the

Cobuild range than either approach has with the dictionaries produced during the 18th, 19th and earlier 20th centuries. At this stage of development the lexicographer's aim seems still to be mainly descriptive.

Some hard word dictionaries were still produced in the early 18th century, such as *Cocker's English Dictionary*, largely based on Coles' 1676 work and other earlier dictionaries, but the trend was now generally towards inclusiveness. Bailey's *Dictionarium Britannicum*, 1730, covers about 48,000 words and gives guidance on stress and details of etymology as well as definitions and examples of usage. This is not the first dictionary to include etymology: Blount provides details of either the original word adapted into English, or, where the word has been adopted without modification, of the source language; even Coote's brief table shows language of origin, as described in section 3 above. It forms the sole subject of some earlier dictionaries: the *Etymologicon Linguae Anglicanae* (1671) deals exclusively with the etymology of English words, and purely etymological dictionaries continue to be produced up to the present day (e.g. Onions, 1966). The degree of importance attached to etymology as a source of information about headwords is, however, greatly increased from Bailey's time onwards, and it needs to be considered in some detail.

### **3.3 The role of etymology in monolingual English dictionaries**

Etymology has a complex and sometimes doubtful relationship with the description of meaning in monolingual dictionaries. It has in the past been given great prominence in general purpose monolingual dictionaries, but seems to be given less importance in modern dictionaries that do not concern themselves specifically with historical descriptions. None of the modern learner's dictionaries comments on the etymology of its headwords, presumably because it is not regarded as useful information for learners of the language. Its main danger, of course, is that it can be seen as providing a 'correct' prescriptive meaning, in a way which does not even need to rely on the lexicographer's intuition.

The origin of the word 'etymology' itself reflects this problem: the Greek word 'etumoc' simply means 'true', and in many cases the original meaning of the source of a word has been considered to be the only possible true meaning of that word. Presumably this is because it can be considered as its first meaning, departures from

which are regarded as a form of linguistic decay. The concept of a fixed, 'real' meaning of a word, central to any prescriptive form of lexicography, means that semantic changes are seen as regrettable departures from an authoritative standard. Such an attitude ignores the whole process of language change, and especially the fact that almost all borrowings into English from other languages shift their meanings significantly as they enter the language, and continue to develop steadily thereafter. It also conveniently ignores the difficulty of establishing a definitive and fixed meaning for the actual or supposed roots of the word in the source language. In practice, even the details of semantic development within English are generally agreed to be clouded in obscurity in most cases.

Despite these significant problems, during the 18th and 19th centuries etymology was seriously treated as a major source of absolute meaning, and the idea is not entirely dead even now. Perhaps its apparent certainty and relative ease of determination, both in practice likely to be spurious, are somehow seen as compensating for its lack of any necessary practical connection with the likely range of current usages. This separation from usage moves the defining method firmly towards 'mention' and away from 'use': the etymology of a word is an aspect of its status as an 'entity' rather than an 'activity'. To see how far this influence affected the nature of dictionary definitions, we need to consider the next major stage in the development of the monolingual English dictionary: Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*, first published in 1755.

#### **4 Johnson**

Lexicographers before Johnson usually make definite claims for the contents of their works once they are published: Johnson is probably the first to state in advance and in detail, in *The Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language* (Johnson, 1747), what he thought his dictionary should set out to do, and how he intended to achieve it. The *Plan* is addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield, and is plainly intended to obtain patronage from him. Despite this, Johnson's statement of his aims and projected methodology provides an extremely valuable insight into the attitudes to lexicography of one of its most influential practitioners. Although, as we shall see, he did not succeed in carrying out all of his objectives, his stated

intentions, generally without the detailed descriptions of the problems that he foresaw in achieving them, have probably had more influence on the aims and approach of later monolingual English dictionaries than the actual dictionary that he eventually published.

#### 4.1 The *Plan*

*The Plan of A Dictionary of the English Language* (Johnson, 1747) states quite explicitly what Johnson wants his dictionary to do, and the reasons for the choices that he intends to make. It covers, in some detail, the principles which he intends to apply to:

- the selection of the word-list
- the choice of an appropriate standard spelling
- the contents of each dictionary entry; and
- the use of illustrative quotations and the basis of their selection.

The value of this to an investigation of the development of monolingual English dictionaries lies in its contribution to our understanding of what lexicographers have thought they were doing when they produced dictionaries.

For a hard word list, which is effectively the same exercise as the provision of a gloss for foreign words, there is little need to consider in detail either the objectives or the method adopted to achieve it. Hard words need to be explained in as much detail as the user needs in simple words, words which the user should already know and understand. For a comprehensive monolingual dictionary the whole purpose of the exercise is much more elusive. Among other questions the lexicographer needs to consider the reasons for including common words, and to devise a method for dealing with them so that their meanings and usage become clearer. The nature of the dictionary's users and the demands that they will make on it are obviously crucial elements in its design, but these factors are by no means straightforward or easy to determine.

Johnson has a definite aim, laid out in the *Plan*. His dictionary is to be the means of fixing the characteristics of a language whose instability caused serious writers embarrassment and reduced its effectiveness as a means of communication. He equates linguistic instability with moral and cultural weakness, and intends to deal with them both by the same process. His dictionary is to be unequivocally prescriptive: even those elements which are not direct comments on

the language, the illustrative quotations, are to be selected for their moral uplift as well as for their appropriateness to the perceived correct usage of a word.

#### 4.2 The *Dictionary*

The Preface to *A Dictionary of the English Language* (Johnson, 1773) shows that, in practice, he did not find the exercise quite so straightforward:

When we see men grow old and die at a certain time one after another, from century to century, we laugh at the elixir that promises to prolong life to a thousand years; and with equal justice may the lexicographer be derided who being able to produce no example of a nation that has preserved their words and phrases from mutability shall imagine that his dictionary can embalm his language, and secure it from corruption and decay, that it is in his power to change sublunary nature, or clear the world at once from folly, vanity and affectation.'

(Johnson, 1773, p.xi)

Despite this retraction, the fundamental notion of the dictionary as a prescriptive and authoritative source of the standard spelling, the correct meaning and even the inherent validity of a word as a piece of English vocabulary seems firmly entrenched in this dictionary and many of its successors, including those being published today. Johnson himself goes on to make a case for an attempt at prescription:

It remains that we retard what we cannot repel, that we palliate what we cannot cure. Life may be lengthened by care, though death cannot be ultimately defeated: tongues, like governments, have a natural tendency to degeneration; we have long preserved our constitution, let us make some struggles for our language.'

(Johnson, 1773, p.xii)

If his dictionary cannot be wholly prescriptive, it will at least exercise as much linguistic conservatism as it can to slow the changes that it cannot wholly prevent.

This attitude means that current usages may not coincide with those that lexicographers wish to fix and preserve in their dictionaries. In Johnson's *Dictionary*, the quotations, examples of the

‘use’ of the words, are chosen to illustrate meanings that he has already selected for the words: they are attestations of authority for that meaning, but do not necessarily form the basis for it. The primary source of meaning is Johnson himself, relying on his own superior grasp of the language and embodying it in the dictionary as part of his ‘struggles for our language’.

This equation of the meaning of a word with the lexicographer’s own actual or idealised usage exposes a major problem of lexicography. Even the lexicographer who relies on etymology for meaning is using an outside source whose authority, doubtful though its validity might be, has at times been generally agreed. The lexicographer who acts not as discoverer of meaning, but as the source of it, risks more than mere inaccuracy. Inaccurate dictionaries may not directly affect the ways in which native speakers use their mainstream vocabulary, but they are capable of misleading language learners, including even the native speaker in search of the meanings of more obscure words.

#### **4.3 Johnson’s definition strategies**

The sample of definition texts below, taken from the fourth edition of Johnson’s *Dictionary*, shows his main definition strategies. It has been stripped of the other elements of the dictionary text - etymology, illustrative quotations, authorial comment etc.

FICKLE. 1. Changeable; unconstant; irresolute; wavering; unsteady; mutable; changeful; without steady adherence.

2. Not fixed; subject to vicissitude.

FICKLENESS. Inconstancy; uncertainty; unsteadiness.

FICKLY. Without certainty or stability.

FICO. An act of contempt done with the fingers, expressing a fig for you.

FICTILE. Moulded into form; manufactured by the potter.

FICTION. 1. The act of feigning or inventing.

2. The thing feigned or invented.

3. A falsehood; a lye.

FICTIOUS. Fictitious; imaginary; invented.

FICTITIOUS. 1. Counterfeit; false; not genuine.

2. Feigned; imaginary.

3. Not real; not true; allegorical; made by prosopopoeia

FICTITIOUSLY. Falsely; counterfeitedly.

The list of meanings given for 'fickle' sense 1 is of interest. Although they are all close in meaning to each other, they are not precisely synonyms. The user of the dictionary is being given a range of associated meanings, all recognisably within the same semantic area, with no indication of a method for differentiating between them. This method is widely used in the other definitions in the sample. Its effect is to give a series of roughly substitutable equivalents of the headword, leaving users to disambiguate from their own knowledge of normal contexts. A comparison with some modern dictionaries might be useful.

*CCELD* (p.529) gives two senses:

1. Someone who is **fickle** keeps changing their mind about what they like or want;
2. If a wind or the weather is **fickle**, it changes often and suddenly.

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Contemporary English* (*OALDCE*, Cowie (1989a)) has only one entry (p.450):

often changing; not constant

which echoes Johnson's list of undifferentiated meanings, although in the usage examples given for the word it includes:

*a fickle person, lover etc.*, i.e. not faithful or loyal

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (*LDOCE*, Summers (1987)) manages to cover both the *CCELD* senses together in one definition (p.377):

likely to change suddenly and without reason, esp. in love or friendship

Hanks (1987, p.120) describes the tendency of Johnson and later lexicographers to construct lists of approximately substitutable terms as the 'multiple-bite' strategy. In terms of Johnson's avowed aims it may be a reasonable thing to do. Johnson is, after all, simply trying to describe the range of meanings over which a word's use is valid. For a modern learner's dictionary such a method seems unhelpful and uninformative, but the legacy of Johnson and his predecessors is obviously very powerful.

## 5 *The Oxford English Dictionary*

*The Oxford English Dictionary* is undoubtedly the most monumental of all the monolingual English dictionaries, although it is, in many ways, a mistake to think of it as being in the mainstream of the development process. Originally conceived by the Philological Society as a supplement to update the major existing dictionaries, such as Johnson's *Dictionary* and Richardson's *A New Dictionary of the English Language*, it became apparent very early in its development that a substantial work would be needed which would actually replace these other works. Trench (1857) laid down the basis for construction of such a dictionary, and a massive reading project was set in motion by the Society to collect data for it.

Under the chief editorship of James Murray until his death in 1915, *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, later *The Oxford English Dictionary*, was published between 1879 and 1928. A supplement was needed almost immediately, and was published in 1933. A further four volume supplement was produced by a completely new editorial team between 1957 and 1986, and a reset, reordered and enlarged Second Edition was published in 1989. A completely revised Third Edition is expected early next century.

The scale of the OED is prodigious and overwhelming, but it is still very much a 19th century dictionary. Although it represents a magnificent achievement for its time, it suffers from the inherent impossibility of the task that its compilers set themselves, at least at the time at which the original work was carried out. Given the full involvement of computer technology the problems involved in its production are likely to be far less intractable, though still by no means easy to overcome. The OED sets out to document the development of the entire vocabulary of English from the 12th century onwards, including as many obsolete and non-standard dialect terms as possible. It attempts to show the entire life cycle of each word sense, from its entry into English, including its ultimate discernible etymological origins in older forms of English and other languages, to either the 'present' day (often the mid-nineteenth century) or to the point at which it became obsolete. In addition to the definitions, past and present variants in spelling are shown and, where possible, dated quotations are given for every sense identified. Senses of the same word form are grouped together to give an



indication of the likely route taken by the word during its semantic development.

This is, then, the ultimate descriptive English dictionary. Whether it is strictly monolingual is another matter: English can hardly be regarded as one language from the 12th century to the present day, and the differences are greater than merely dialectal or varietal. Certainly, the *OED*'s special requirements impose on it a structure more complex than any other dictionary with more modest aims could ever need. The sample of definition texts from Johnson's *Dictionary* in section 4.3 above shows the over-formalisation of entries, often with unnecessary repetition of elements that apply to several forms of the same headword, which can beset dictionaries that try to do too much. The *OED* has no choice: the complexity of its entries is forced on it by the function it is trying to perform. Sweet (1899, p.141), in a discussion of the ideal dictionary for language teaching purposes, says of the *OED* that it 'is not, even from a purely scientific and theoretical point of view, a dictionary, but a series of dictionaries digested under one alphabet.'

The complexity of its structure is not entirely a bad thing. Although there are some inconsistencies inevitable in the construction of such a vast work entirely by manual means, this monument to nineteenth century perseverance performed amazingly well during its computerization. The section of the preliminary material to the Second Edition that deals with the History of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Murray et al., 1989, p.liii) describes the approach adopted to convert the dictionary text to a database:

The structure devised by Sir James Murray and used by him and all his successors for writing Dictionary entries was so regular that it was possible to analyse them as if they were sentences of a language with a definite syntax and grammar.

This regularity allowed the use of an automatic entry parser as part of the conversion process, and the results of that process now allow computer readable versions of the *OED* to be accessed in a wide variety of different ways, providing scope for fairly sophisticated computer analysis<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A brief example of the possibilities can be found in Barnbrook (1996, pp.163–165).

## 6 Learners' dictionaries

Dictionaries designed to help learners of a language obviously have very different objectives from those designed to act as reference books for native speakers, and their strategies would be expected to reflect these objectives. Despite their more limited scope and simplistic approach to definition, the original hard word dictionaries have significant elements in common with learner's dictionaries. It is also true to say that all of the dictionaries quoted so far, with the exception of the *OED*, regard themselves as having a pedagogic role. O'Kill (1990) points out that even Johnson's *Dictionary*, although 'implicitly addressed to a more sophisticated audience' was published in an abridged form and became 'a popular pedagogic tool for many years' (O'Kill, 1990, p.10). Nuccorini (1993) extends the teaching role to all dictionaries:

Ogni opera di lessicografia ha un aspetto didattico. Nel consultare un dizionario si cerca prevalentemente qualcosa che non si sa o di cui non si è sicuri, ed è in questo senso, nel rispondere alle domande o alle incertezze di chi li consulta, che i dizionari insegnano sempre qualcosa, anche se questo qualcosa varia da lingua a lingua, da situazione a situazione, da epoca a epoca, e, soprattutto, da dizionario a dizionario.<sup>2</sup>

(Nuccorini, 1993, p.39)

This places every user of a dictionary in the role of a learner. The crucial question for the consideration of a given dictionary as descriptive or prescriptive must then depend on the nature of 'questo qualcosa', 'this something' which the dictionary provides as an answer to the user's questions. In the case of learners' dictionaries, changes in the nature of 'this something' can be traced to the end of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>2</sup> Every lexicographic exercise has a didactic aspect. In consulting a dictionary you most often seek something which you do not know or of which you are not sure, and it is in this sense, in answering the questions or the uncertainties of those who consult them, that dictionaries teach something, even if this something varies from language to language, from situation to situation, from age to age, and, above all, from dictionary to dictionary. (Author's translation)

McArthur (1989, pp.54–55) identifies a change in the approach to language teaching in Europe and the USA around 1880, mainly as a reaction to three perceived negative aspects of existing methods:

- a) a dependence on the classical languages
- b) a bias towards literary and textual study
- c) the use of formal drills and artificial translation exercises

The leaders of this change, including Henry Sweet, Paul Passy, Otto Jespersen, Wilhelm Viëtor and Maximilian Berlitz, developed a system of teaching by immersion in the target language which helped create the appropriate conditions for the development of the learners' dictionary as a separate specialised form.

Sweet (1899, pp.140–163) lays down the principles on which dictionaries ought to be constructed if they are to be useful for language learning. He deals with the scope of the dictionary, which 'should be distinctly defined and strictly limited' (p.141), the usefulness of separate pronouncing dictionaries (p.144), the need to avoid the superfluity of the contents of some dictionaries, which 'heap up useless material', usually in the form of obsolete words, rare and spurious coinages and encyclopaedic entries (pp.145–146), the need for conciseness to be taken 'as far as is consistent with clearness and convenience'. In the section dealing with meanings he states: 'The first business of a dictionary is to give the meanings of the words in plain, simple, unambiguous language.' (p.148). He also stresses the need for quotations (p.149) and grammatical information relating to the constructions in which words are used.

Modern learners' dictionaries seem to incorporate at least some of these principles. The principles themselves do not guarantee that dictionaries will approach the language descriptively rather than prescriptively, but their emphasis on details of usage of words establish a framework for dealing with them as 'activities' rather than simply 'entities', of 'using' them rather than simply 'mentioning' them, and this makes it more difficult for the lexicographer to impose characteristics on the language which it does not possess.

The ultimate effect on monolingual English learners' dictionaries of this return to the descriptive approach can be seen in their general reliance on corpora, large computer readable samples of real language use. This method of dictionary compilation, pioneered by Sinclair in the development of *CCELD* (see Sinclair (ed.), 1987), is

now also used by *OALDCE* and *LDOCE*, and while it does not absolutely impose a descriptive approach, it establishes the language itself as the starting-point rather than the linguistic prejudices of the lexicographer.

## Summary

This brief exploration of some of the major stages in the development of monolingual English dictionaries has established the shift from description to prescription which took place within the 18th century. As the function of the dictionaries shifted to encompass the entire language, so their aims altered from modest explanations of newly-borrowed lexis to rather grander projects of language maintenance. The *OED*, with its emphasis on the history of lexis, provides the model for the ultimate descriptive dictionary, although one that necessarily lies outside the mainstream of dictionary development. Modern learners' dictionaries, building on the revolution in language teaching methods of the late 19th century and the availability of large computer corpora of the late 20th century, have restored a mainly descriptive approach to English lexicography.

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## **STRESS-TIMING: OBSERVATIONS, BELIEFS, AND EVIDENCE**

**Abstract:** Researchers are in two minds about stress-timing because their studies show that stress-timing does not exist, yet there remain observations which seem explainable only if one continues to believe that stress-timing exists. The belief that stress-timing exists is thus necessary, but goes counter to results of research. Scholars argue that there is a ‘strong tendency’ for English to be stress-timed despite the fact, which they concede, that ‘other factors’ militate against stress-timing being observed. The belief continues (I surmise) because (a) the data focused on consists of short stretches of speech (usually nursery rhymes) which can be made to display rhythmical alignment of stresses (b) perceptions of differences between L1s and L2s in second and foreign language learning (c) teachers and students find rhythm-based exercises useful. There exists no account of rhythm in speech for these observations other than the stress-timing hypothesis. I present an alternative interpretation of findings from the work of three scholars (Roach, 1982; Couper Kuhlen, 1993; Halliday, 1994). I argue that their findings can be reinterpreted to take account of these observations, without having to continue believing in stress-timing. I argue that their research shows that stress-timing is **not** an underlying feature of spoken English. I suggest why the avoidance of stress-timing might be functional.

### **1 Schizophrenia: belief versus evidence**

Linguists and language teachers are schizophrenic about the issue of stress-timing. On the one hand they acknowledge that experimental evidence is against the stress-timing hypothesis; on the other hand they adhere to the belief that English is ‘underlyingly’ stress-timed. In this paper I want to suggest reasons for the existence

of this schizophrenia, and I want also to suggest a way of resolving the discrepancy between beliefs and evidence.

## 2 Stress-timing and syllable timing

Stress-timing (or isochrony) is said to be a characteristic of languages such as English, Russian, and Arabic. It is said that the stresses occur at equal intervals of time, and that as a consequence, syllables vary in length in order to allow stresses to occur at roughly equal intervals of time. In the following example (from Halliday, 1994, p. 293) the syllables after the slash symbols ‘/’ (a foot boundary) are the salient syllables which occur at regular intervals of time:

/James / James / said to his / mother / ‘Mother,’ he / said, said / he

The idea is that the first syllables of each foot occur at equal intervals of time. This would result in the syllables in the the third foot (*said to his*), fifth foot (*Mother he*), and sixth foot (*said said*), being shorter than if the words were to occur on their own. Thus the two syllables of *mother* in the fifth foot are shorter than their counterparts in the fourth foot to allow space for the word *he* to be spoken ‘in time’ before the salient syllable *said*. Thus, it is argued, syllable length varies to allow stresses to occur at ‘roughly’ equal intervals. The issue of how ‘roughly equal’ the intervals can be will be explored below (cf. 5.3).

Syllable-timing is said to be characteristic of languages such as French, Hungarian, and Japanese. It is argued first that syllables do not vary in length; and second that the intervals between stresses vary in order to preserve the constant length of syllables. Take for example the fourteen underlined syllables of the portion from a feminist speech:

Le feminisme est une doctrine philosophique basée sur l'égalité  
de tous les êtres humains **et qui a pour but d'établir l'égalité des**  
**sexes** dans tous les domaines: civile, politique, intellectuel,  
économique et social. (Verone, 1992)



The argument goes that each of the syllables occupies an equal time-frame, as represented in Table 1.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
et	qui	a	pour	but	d'e	ta	blir	l'e	ga	li	te	des	sexes

*Table 1 Syllable-timing*

Imagine that there are stresses in the syllables 5, 8, 12 and 14:  
 et qui a pour BUT d'étaBLIR l'égalITÉ des SEXES

The argument goes that the stresses are unisochronous (i.e. are not rhythmic) because the intervening numbers of syllables varies - there are respectively, two, three, and one intervening syllables between these stresses. It is argued that because the syllables take an equal amount of time to say, the stresses occur at non-regular intervals. Now, I have the recording of this extract and I have listened to it repeatedly, but as I am not a native speaker of French I cannot tell where the stresses do in fact occur.<sup>1</sup> What I can do however is to measure the lengths of the syllables in units of seventy-fifths of a second.<sup>2</sup> These measurements are given in the third row of Table 2.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
et	qui	a	pour	but	d'e	ta	blir	l'e	ga	li	té	des	sexes
10	10	15	18	11	12	15	14	10	10	12	10	08	30

*Table 2 Syllable-timing measured*

Table 2 shows that syllables vary in length between 8 and 30 units: that is from approximately one tenth to four tenths of a second. So the syllables are certainly not 'of the same length'. When presented like this, it is easy to see why nobody takes syllable-timing very seriously – not even by those who take its twin, stress-timing, seriously. A further indication of its improbability can be obtained if you try to read this so that the syllables have the same length, it will sound extremely unnatural.

It is interesting to note with Roach (1982, p. 75 & p. 78) that most research has been conducted by speakers of stress-timed languages.

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<sup>1</sup> For an excellent discussion on why this might be so cf. Roach (1982).

<sup>2</sup> This is because the recording is on CD.

So although (cf. section 4 below) stress-timing and syllable-timing were viewed as a binary distinction, there has been relatively little interest from scholars who speak the syllable-timed languages.

### 3 Three everyday observations

The stress-timing hypothesis arose and is perpetuated because of the common observation that languages sound rhythmically different: for example, language learners who have English as a mother tongue report that the units of French speech (segments, syllables, tone units) have a different relationship to time. Another observation is that it is normal to speak nursery-rhymes in English in such a way that stresses do occur at equal time intervals. The third observation is one often made by teachers who have found that practice of short stretches of language with stress-timing (cf. Underhill, 1994) can improve students' fluency in speaking.

These observations have led to the transformation of the stress-timing hypothesis into the belief that English is, underlyingly, stress-timed. Meanwhile, the fact that stress-timing is part of a binary distinction – it is twinned with syllable-timing – has been conveniently ignored. The schizophrenia has arisen because these everyday observations conflict with the findings of research: research into stress-timing, whether it has focused on the speaker, the sound signal, or the hearer, has failed to provide the desired 'proof' or validation of the hypothesis. In fact it seems quite reasonable to take the view that the research has **falsified** the stress-timing hypothesis, and that it should have been abandoned a long time ago. But the force of the three observations mentioned above (and the lack of an alternative explanation for them) has been so great that researchers have refused to acknowledge this falsification. This is despite the number of papers (e.g. Dauer, 1983) which have argued strongly against stress-timing.

It might be argued that this is a low level schizophrenia with which we have been comfortable for some time, and that it is not really a problem. I would argue that on the contrary it is a problem for two reasons. First, it is intellectually irresponsible to allow a contradiction to exist between experimental evidence and hypothesis. Second, there are practical consequences: if we do not seek to resolve the conflict between hypothesis and experimental evidence

we run the serious risk of confusing students. If we tell them that English is stress-timed and the speech they hear is manifestly not so, then they are going to worry that their ability to learn is deficient because they cannot hear what their teachers tell them they ought to hear. They will thus be disabled from learning to be good listeners.

#### **4 The tradition of belief**

The first person in the twentieth century to put forward the stress-timing hypothesis was Daniel Jones who wrote in 1918 that for English there 'is a strong tendency in connected speech to make stressed syllables follow each other as nearly as possible at equal distances' (1972, p. 237). One of the first to test this hypothesis was Classe (1939). Couper-Kuhlen (1993) reports that 'the results he[Classe] obtained showed strict isochrony only under very special conditions: the rhythmic groups had to have a similar number of syllables with similar phonetic structure and similar grammatical structure in order to be isochronous in any strict sense (1993, p. 11). Couper-Kuhlen quotes Classe's conclusion:

a series of nearly isochronous groups must be rare in English prose, as it may only occur through a complicated system of coincidences. If the necessary conditions have been consciously fulfilled by the writer, we are very near to verse. From the very nature of speech, it is obvious that, in the normal course of events, all the necessary conditions will generally not be present at the same time (1939, p. 85-86)

The last sentence amounts to a refutation of the stress-timing hypothesis. Despite this Classe equivocates sufficiently to hold out a lifeline for those who wished still to cling to the belief that English is stress-timed. Isochrony is still

...a characteristic which always seems to be present and to make its influence felt; although frequently, it only remains as an underlying tendency of which some other factor at times almost completely obliterates the effects (1939, p. 90)

The choice of those following Classe has been to grasp at the pro-stress-timing side of the equivocation rather than the natural consequence of the results. The equivocation allowed others to

continue the tradition of believing in stress-timing. Pike for example (1945, p. 35) distinguishes between stress and syllable timed languages and Abercrombie (1967) asserted that all languages can be categorised as being either stress or syllable-timed:

As far as is known, every language in the world is spoken with one kind of rhythm or with the other. In...*syllable-timed* rhythm ...the chest-pulses, and hence the syllables recur at equal intervals of time-they are *isochronous*. In...stress-timed rhythm...the stress pulses, and hence the stressed syllables, are isochronous.(Abercrombie, 1967, p. 97). [Italics are Abercrombie's]

Abercrombie's implies that the rhythm of speech has physical origins – he mentions 'chest-pulses' and 'stress pulses'. We should note with Dauer (1983) that the hypothesis concerning a link between speech rhythm and physical movements such as chest pulses has been refuted by Ladefoged (1967).

However, much scholarly writing on the rhythm of English continues to associate speech rhythm with observable physical movements. Brown (1990) states

If you watch an English speaker talking you will be able to see, without hearing what he is saying, where the stressed syllables are....there is a tendency for a rhythm to be established in speech...These beats will coincide with other muscular beats of the body. (pp. 43-44)

She then goes on to assert that stressed syllables 'will tend to occur at roughly equal intervals of time', but only under ideal conditions:

'Thus, in general, prose read aloud by a fluent reader has a much more obvious rhythm than conversational speech which may be full of pauses and false starts. Very fluent speakers, who can organize their thoughts well in advance of actually uttering them, also establish a far more obvious rhythm than those who have to search for the right word and keep trying to refine a thought while in the middle of expressing it' (p. 44).

Notice here that she is prioritising a formal speech style (prose read aloud), and (implicitly) denigrating the most common speech style spontaneous, real-time, purpose-driven speech in which

speakers have to ‘search for the right word’ and ‘refine a thought while in the middle of expressing it’.

Thus we have a situation in which there is considerable evidence that stress-timing does not exist, yet the belief is adhered to and the evidence is ignored because of the lack of an alternative explanation for observations about speech rhythm.

## **5 Measurements and tendencies**

In sections 5.2, 6, and 7, I re-interpret the findings of scholars (Halliday, 1994; Roach, 1982; Couper-Kuhlen, 1993). I hope to show that this reinterpretation can resolve the conflict between the three observations and experimental results and thus cure our schizophrenia. Prior to doing so, it is necessary to discuss the nature of rhythm.

### **5.1 Rhythm**

Rhythm can be defined as a series (or pattern) of ‘events’ which occur at (roughly) equal intervals of time. There is also a definition of rhythm, ‘a regular pattern of changes’ (COBUILD, 1995, p. 1428) which has a more approximate relationship to time: this is the sense in which we speak of the rhythm of the seasons of the year. Research into rhythm thus varies from investigation of short equal intervals of time (in which there are questions such as ‘Are intervals of 2.0 and 2.1 seconds perceived as equal in length?’) to investigation of ‘regular patterns of changes’ in which the relationship to time is more approximate. Perceptions of rhythm thus depend first on one’s purpose in measuring, and second the criteria for rhythmicity. If one is investigating changes in the rhythm of the seasons of the year as part of research into global warming, one will have very different criteria from those used if one is measuring rhythmicity of ten seconds of speech. What happens with research into stress-timing is that the criteria for what is, and what is not rhythmic are not tightly drawn.

The danger is that anything which occurs frequently in time can be described as rhythmic (such as the visits of birds to a birdtable) if one allows oneself the luxury of redefining the criteria for rhythmicity whenever irrhythmicity threatens.

### **5.2 Measuring rhythm**

Some indication of the problems of measuring rhythm are illustrated by Halliday. He states:

...the provisional finding is that , on the average, in spontaneous conversation carried on at a constant speed, a two-syllable foot will be about one fifth as long again as a one-syllable foot (i.e. slightly longer, but nothing like twice as long...(1994, p. 293)

He then presents the following series of relationships between numbers of syllables and duration:

no. of syllables in foot	1	2	3	4
relative duration of feet	1	1.2	1.4	1.5

*Table 3 Relative duration of feet with increasing numbers of syllables*

The first row in Table 3 shows increasing numbers of syllables in the foot; the second row gives the proportions of time that each foot would be likely to take. Thus a foot with four syllables will last half as long again (1.5) as a foot with one syllable (1). The implication is that in the following utterance (imagine it is spoken by a considerate boss to an employee who is ill and has been told to go home) *Sleep well and don't come to work tomorrow* the timing would be likely to be

words	<i>Sleep</i>	<i>well and</i>	<i>don't come to</i>	<i>work tomorrow</i>
syllables	1	2	3	4
timing	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.75

*Table 4 relative duration of feet in a fabricated utterance*

Table 4 indicates that *sleep* would last half a second, *well and* would last one tenth of a second longer, and so on.<sup>3</sup> Note that the last foot, with four syllables, is predicted to last half as long again as the first syllable. The very fact that proponents of stress-timing accept that the duration of feet, and therefore the distance (in time) between stresses is variable calls into question the notion of stress-timing. In particular the issue arises of whether the difference of 50% duration between the first and fourth feet in the above example is noticeable

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<sup>3</sup> Remember this is a fabricated utterance, with imagined timings given in tenths of a second.

to hearers. If hearers perceive these feet to have the same duration then this would be some indication that the stress-timing hypothesis has some validity; and the corollary of this would be that if they perceive them to be different in length, then this would be evidence against the stress-timing hypothesis. We will return to the issue of perception in Section 7.

### 5.3 ‘Strong Tendency’

The quotation from Jones (1918) cited above mentioned the ‘strong tendency’ for stress-timing to occur. The theme of the ‘strong tendency’ has been continued by succeeding generations of scholars, of whom Halliday is one:

In natural speech, the tempo is not as regular as in counting or in children’s rhymes. Nevertheless there is a strong tendency in English for the salient syllables to occur at regular intervals; speakers of English like their feet to be all roughly the same length. (1994, p. 293)

The problem with the term ‘strong tendency’ is that makes it possible for scholars to dismiss any counter-evidence by stating ‘I only said it was a tendency’. Because ‘strong tendency’ is unquantifiable, it is impossible to prove or refute this statement. This is therefore a hypothesis which for Halliday and others has become a matter of belief masquerading as a scientific statement.

## 6 Measuring duration of syllables

Roach (1982) sets out to test (amongst other things) the statement by Abercrombie that:

(i) ‘there is considerable variation in syllable length in a language spoken with stress-timed rhythm whereas in a language spoken with a syllable-timed rhythm the syllables tend to be equal in length’ (Abercrombie, 1967, p. 98)

Roach measured duration of syllables in three syllable-timed languages (French, Telugu, and Yoruba) and three stress-timed languages (English, Russian and Arabic). Samples of spontaneous unscripted speech from six speakers, one for each language, were recorded and analysed.

After presenting his results Peter Roach comments that his figures do ‘not appear to support’ Abercrombie’s claim. At the close of his paper Roach concludes with the statement that ‘there is no language which is totally syllable-timed or totally stress-timed—all languages display both sorts of timing’. This is a very important finding, because Abercrombie viewed stress-timing as part of an opposition – a language is **either** one **or** the other – if the opposition is shown to be misguided, or false, as it has been, then one should abandon the contrast, and with it the notion of stress-timing for English. There is a second conclusion which also points towards the necessity of abandoning the hypothesis: ‘different types of timing will be exhibited by the same speaker on different occasions and in different contexts’ (p. 78). An important consequence of this point is that no language can be regarded as possessing an inherent syllable/stress timing mechanism: Roach’s conclusion suggests that it would be better to view languages as ‘speaker-timed’ rather than syllable or stress-timed:

But Roach equivocates sufficiently to allow the believers a lifeline: after stating that ‘all languages display both types of timing’ he goes on to assert that ‘languages will, however, differ in which type of timing predominates’. This ‘predomination’ view seems to go against his other findings and conclusions, it allows people to believe that English is more stress-timed than French.

## 7 Perceptions of stress-timing

Perhaps the most extensive recent study of rhythm in English is that by Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen (Couper-Kuhlen, 1993). She used a two-minute extract from a phone-in programme broadcast on Radio Manchester, which consist of twenty-three turns of varying length between the host and a caller. Two informants analysed the recording for ‘isochronous chains’ – stretches of speech sufficiently rhythmic for them to be able to tap a pencil, or nod their head to. They identified 48 such isochronous chains in the recording. This figure of 48 is important: first because of the simple fact that it is greater than one - not all of the text is contained in one isochronous chain – a fact that any adequate theory of timing would have to explain away; second because it is greater than 23 (the number of turns at speech)



this means that (as Roach noted) speakers changed their rhythm within a turn.

The analysts were allowed to redefine the criteria for rhythmicality as often as they liked: this, as I have mentioned above allows one to find a rhythm for almost anything. Even with this flexibility however, some of the text occurs outside the 48 isochronous chains – 36% of the total number of syllables in fact. This might not matter if these syllables were unstressed (because it is occurrences of stresses which is perceived as rhythmic). However, this is not the case: 17% of stressed syllables occur outside isochronous chains.

It is useful to consider the case of the longest isochronous chain in the recording, the following stretch of twenty-seven (twenty-eight if you count *family* as three syllables):

*privately I agree entirely with you, but when you've been Dick as long as I have because your family* (Chain 9).

Couper-Kuhlen's informants perceived there to be a high order rhythm at the level of the 'intonation phrase' there are 'stresses' in the words *privately*, *entirely*, *where*, *I*, and *family*. But Couper Kuhlen's analysis also identifies other isochronous chains in this same stretch of speech:

<i>privately I agree entirely with you</i>	[Chain 10 Intonation group level]
<i>I agree entirely with you</i>	[Chain 11 Phrase group level]
<i>when you've been Dick</i>	[Chain 12 Group level]
<i>Dick as long as I have because</i>	[Chain 13 Group level]

There are a number of points to be made about this type of analysis. First the analysis is derived from attending to the recording, and the orthographic transcription of it, as if it were a product. This is a luxury available only to the analyst listening to a recording, it is not one available to the participants. It has been subjected to repeated listenings in order to identify these isochronous chains, and it is probable that it is **only through** such repeated listenings that such chains are perceptible. In other words, it is possible they are not relevant to the original speaker and the hearer, who were operating under real-time constraints. It is also unlikely that speakers and

hearers can perceive isochronous chains at more than one level at the same time: notice that the four chains 10–13 all overlap with chain 09, and that chains 12 and 13 (both at the phrase level) share a ‘stress’ on *Dick*.

A Discourse Intonation (Brazil, 1985, 1994) transcription of the recording that Couper-Kuhlen used is given below:

- 01    PRivately
- 02    i aGREE enTIREly WITH you
- 03    but WHEN you’ve been DICK
- 04    as LONG as I have
- 05    because your FAMily STARted it
- 06    ...there’s...
- 07    NO point in ARguing really

Note: Upper case letters indicate prominent syllables, underlined upper case syllables indicate the location of the tone. Tone choice itself, and Key and Termination are not indicated in this transcription.

This is a transcription that attends to meaning, rather than to rhythm. Note that Couper-Kuhlen’s isochronous chain stops half way through tone unit 5: after the onset prominence *family* and before the word *started*. This is a curious place to end a chain because the tonic prominence on *started* represents an important selection of meaning, and is likely to figure strongly in any hearer’s perceptions.

It is now clear that a major failing of this type of analysis is that it attends to the form of an utterance and ignores those features of speech (selections of meaning) on which the attention of speakers and hearers is most likely to be focused, and which are most likely to colour any perceptions they might have of rhythm.

Couper-Kuhlen’s conclusion begins by acknowledging that her findings are largely against the stress-timing hypothesis:

...the passage is not uniformly isochronous throughout. In this sense, those who have been skeptical of finding isochrony in performance are right: English speech is *not uniformly isochronous* over extended periods of time. (p. 48 her italics)

but then comes the lifeline:

But just as significantly, the passage is *not wholly anisochronous* either. In fact, allowing for discontinuities, a large portion of it is isochronous in one way or another (p. 48 her italics)

The last clause allows continued belief in stress timing. What is not made clear is that isochrony is only observable if one allows oneself the twin luxuries of redrawing the criteria for rhythmicity and repeated listenings. There are 48 different isochronous chains in her data, each of which is judged to be isochronous by different rhythmic criteria, and some chains are judged to be isochronous only if one ignores meaning. It would be safer to conclude that English speech is characterised by brief stretches of rhythmic groups, but that it is not isochronous. As preceding scholars have done, Couper-Kuhlen leaves it open for people to continue to believe in stress-timing.

## **8 What if English were stress-timed?**

One question, rarely addressed but productive to consider, concerns what English would be like if it **were** stress-timed in long stretches. It seems to me that utterances in English would be very difficult to attend to as units of meaning. The stress-timed rhythm would draw attention to itself and distract the listener's attention away from meaningful choices: it would, in other words, be English in oblique orientation (cf. Brazil, 1985).

Bolinger commented on this type of speech:

It seems only natural that when you're speaking routinely and mechanically, the mechanical phenomenon of even rhythm would assert itself... (1986, p. 47)

Bolinger goes on to suggest two reasons why purpose-driven spontaneous speech is not 'routine and mechanical': first he states that 'one thing the adjustment is never allowed to interfere [with] is our meaning' (1986, p. 47) and 'the words we want to emphasize are often irregularly spaced, which means that the number of syllables may be radically different from measure to measure' (1986, p. 47).

He concedes that 'stylized intonation' (his example of this is // it's NEver too LATE to MEND //) does have this routine and mechanical feel to it. But 'stylized intonation' is a special case, and is therefore not an appropriate style of spoken discourse on which to base generalisations about everyday purpose-driven speech. He expresses the worry that 'this sort of sing song is just the kind of intonational frame that a classroom drill is apt to fall into' (p. 48), and suggests

that the use of such drills 'has helped to make us see English accentual rhythm as more regular than it really is' (p. 48).

## 9 Why anisochrony is essential

It is possible that a lack of a single regular rhythm is in fact essential, in other words there might be a reason why purpose-driven spontaneous speech is **not** stress-timed. Rhythm in speech is fleeting and ever-changing: short stretches of up to four tone units appear rhythmical, they are followed by moments of irrhythmicality, and then another rhythm may establish itself briefly again before irrhythmicality or a rhythm change occurs once again. If this did not happen, a speaker might find it difficult to hold the attention of the hearer: the hearer instead of attending to selections of meaning would be distracted – by the pattern of an established rhythm – from attending to the communication of meanings which is the purpose of most speech. The **non-occurrence** of a continued rhythm of any sort could therefore be viewed as a necessary feature of any co-operative purpose-driven speech: what matters are the selections of meaning which a speaker makes through the placement of prominences.

## 10 Conclusion

I mentioned earlier that if we abandon the notion that English is stress-timed in favour of one that recognises that English is speaker-timed one has to account for three common observations: (a) differences in rhythm between languages reported by language learners; (b) short natural-sounding samples have stress-timing; (c) the value teachers' place on stress-timing exercises.

As far differences between languages are concerned one need do no more than quote Dauer (1983), who argues that a theory of 'stress-timing/syllable-timing' is not required to explain such perceptions. She proposes that 'rhythmic differences we feel to exist between languages...are more a result of phonological, phonetic, lexical and syntactic facts about that language than any attempt on the part of the speaker to equalize interstress or intersyllabic intervals' (1983, p. 55). Dauer suggests that it is phenomena such as syllable structure, word-accent, and vowel reduction which are the

cause of perceptions of rhythmic differences: not speaker behaviour, nor any underlying feature of language.

The other two points can be taken together, because they both essentially involve the same kind of activity, the reading aloud of short written utterances. Couper-Kuhlen's work has indicated that stretches of speech as long as 27 syllables may possess isochronicity. The value that language learners get from practising stress-timing exercises is that they are practising the mechanics of producing non prominent syllables between prominences occurring at roughly equal intervals. The material they practice with is (generally) short enough for it to remain natural-sounding.

It is only possible to believe in stress-timing if you are happy assuming that it is acceptable to: (a) redraw the criteria for rhythmicality whenever you wish (b) treat speech as a product, and subject it to repeated analyses that ignore meaning (c) regard nursery-rhymes as proto-typical speech. None of these assumptions is acceptable. If patches of stress-timing do occur this is an incidental, patchy effect brought about by fleeting coincidences between time and the occurrence of prominences and word-accent. Speakers time language: language does not time speakers.

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## GEORGE CUSHING

### EGER – BRITISH CONNECTIONS

In a postscript to my article 'Making History Come Alive' I mentioned the Englishman who, having read **Egri csillagok**, visited Gárdonyi in Eger shortly before his death. He was by no means the first Englishman to go there, indeed there have been connections between Eger and Britain for a very long time. Here I shall recall some of them.

**Egri csillagok** ends with the withdrawal of the Turkish army, but that did not mean that Eger was saved from further attacks. The Turks still occupied Central Hungary and might return at any moment. The fortress was rebuilt – though not as completely as Gergely Bornemissza had planned – and the garrison was strengthened, but there was still a lack of large guns to repel a new attack. Nevertheless it was 44 years before the Turks made a new and this time decisive attempt to take Eger. It was important for them to succeed, for a new Sultan, Mehmet III, came to the throne in 1595, and he had to prove himself. So he personally organised the campaign of 1596 and monitored its progress; he also invited the English ambassador to accompany him, and the invitation was accepted, apparently without reference to London. The ambassador was Edward Barton, who was then and had made a name for himself for his work in Stamboul, particularly on behalf of the Levant Company, founded in 1581. John Sanderson, of that Company, had arrived in the Turkish capital not long before the Sultan's invitation had arrived, and Barton left him to report to London on events there. Barton supplied accounts of the campaign to him and to Sir Robert Cecil in London; he took with him a retinue of staff and servants to deliver his dispatches.

The very large Turkish army arrived before Eger at the same time of year as in 1552. Here is Barton's account:

'Our arrival in **Agria** happened the twelfth of September. The thirteenth the inhabitants set all their suburbs on fire ... though they

were well defended with a strong wall, yet the defendants being few in number and distrusting their own strength, left the defence of them and retired themselves within the Castle. The sixteenth ... seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth, they (the Turks) intended to undermine the Castle, and the twentieth, put fire thereto, but not succeeding to their mindes ... they gave courage to the defendants to make issue to mutuall damage. The foure and twentieth the assailants having made another breach, valiantly entered the same, but not being seconded with fresh forces, were repelled yet two houres after, in the same day, taking on them better courage, and more valiantly seconded, gave a new assault, when by chance **a woman in the Castle** setting fire upon a Barrell of Powder, and the souldiers of the Castle thinking it was a Mine fired in the Castle, for fear thereof retiring themselves, gave the Turkes courage to enter a small but strong Bastion, builded for the defence of a weake part of the castle, which they valiantly even to the last defended, and even after, with myning and countermyning, continuall assaults and skirmishes on both parts fighting, to the extreme losse of the defendants. The first of October, **an English Trumpetter** escaped out and fled to the Vice-Roy, requiring life and libertie, and declaring the weaknesse of the Castle, was brought before the Grand Signior, to whom likewise he made like relation, according to whose reports, the next day before Saturday, the Second of October, the Castle was rendered, with compact that all the Souldiers should safely retire whither best they list, and the Inhabitants to remain continuall Inhabitants and owners of their former possessions, the latter of which promises was observed, but the first was broken, because the inhabitants of **Hatvan**, a Castle belonging to the Grand Signior, two dayes journey thence ... assaulted the said souldiers a mile from Agria in their departure, and cut them all to pieces, because Maximilian with the Emperours forces, having a month since taken Hatvan, did most cruelly without eompassion put all the Inhabitants to the sword.<sup>1</sup>

In another letter addressed to the English Consul at Aleppo (Sandy), Barton describes how the defenders made a sudden attack on the Turks, killing some 2000 Janissaries and causing many in the army to flee to 'the Mountaines of Agria', so that it was by no means an easy siege. It was not until 13 October that Eger was taken. On the 19th the Sultan returned to Stamboul; Edward Barton went with him, but died, aged 35, in January 1597 and was buried there. His



eyewitness account contains a mystery: who was the 'English Trumpeter' who betrayed the weakness of the Castle? Hungarian sources concentrate on the indolence of the commander, Nyáry Pál, who allegedly preferred to sleep at night instead of repairing the damage caused by the heavy Turkish guns.

Eger remained in Turkish hands until 1687 and by all accounts was regarded as a civilised and peaceful place to live. It is worth noting that after its recapture a large number of the Turks who settled there continued to live in the town and gradually became assimilated. Meanwhile the name of Eger turns up in a totally different English narrative, the **Relation of Sydnam Poyntz** 1624–1636. Poyntz was one of the many soldiers who left Britain to seek their fortune overseas during this period. Some went merely to witness the wars against the Turks (e.g. Sir Philip Sidney, the poet and Sir Richard Grenville, better known as a mariner, who was at the siege of Szigetvár in 1566, or Captain John Smith, who fought in Transylvania before his exploits in Virginia). Sydnam Poyntz came from a good but impoverished family and left England to escape the boredom of an apprenticeship. He joined the forces of Count Mansfeld in the Thirty Years' War and was in Hungary in 1626. His **Relation** is his account of his adventures and should be read with a degree of scepticism; like a number of similar memoirs, it is probably exaggerated – it was fashionable to tell of being captured by Turks or, if at sea, of battles with Turkish pirates. Poyntz's story is told in elegant English, but his spelling of foreign names and his geographical knowledge are wildly inaccurate, moreover he sometimes contradicts himself. But he does appear to have visited Eger – and he uses the Hungarian form rather than the more usual German **Erlau**, which suggests that for once he is accurate. He describes how he was captured by Turkish troops after Mansfeld's death in 1626 (at Rakovica, near Sarajevo) and taken to Belgrade, where 'they stripped us of all we had, clothes and all, and shaved our heads and put us into a slavish habit.'<sup>2</sup> He was sold as a slave in the market at Buda. 'My master's name was Bully Basha, a Lieutenant of a Turkish troop of horse and also a great Merchant. Being thus a Captive and a Slave, the first thing I was put to was to fetch and carry wood, then to keep the Kine, after that to manure the Vineyards; in processe of time having got a smack of the language I was put to sell water up and down the Towne every day and night

bringing the money to my master, which water I carried upon a horse in leathar bags on either side the horse one.

Before I had lived a whole year in this Slavery, a disease came upon us in the house, whereof my master died and others, which ministered to me (as I thought) good opportunity to get away, and so early one morning I let myself down by a hayrope ... and took my way to Old Buda, a League distant from Budin where my master lived, and swimmied over Danubius the River on that side Pesta lieth, and so I took my next way towards Hungary and thence up to Novigrad: but Fortune did smile but a little while upon me, for at a town called Eger there met me a party of Turks who were sent as Scouts to watch the Enemy's Army, some of them presently knew me and seized upon me, then tying a double bag of filth and earth and stones having thrust my head through the middle tied it with a fast knot, and so drove me before them to the new Buda, where they delivered me to my master's son, who gave me 300 blows upon the soles of my feet; after this he caused weightier stones to be put upon my legs than before and kept me close till I was recovered.<sup>3</sup>

Poyntz was sold again to a certain Dervish Pasha, where he became a groom and also attendant to one of his ladies; then he was resold to Joseph Ogga in Belgrade, but ran away, only to be recaptured and sent to the galleys from which he was ransomed. He eventually made his way north, once again passing near Eger on his way to Vienna after six years of captivity. Presumably he did not have very happy memories of his time in Hungary.

The eighteenth century was a time of rebuilding and consolidation in Hungary, and nowhere more so than in Eger, whose splendid baroque architecture and ironwork date from this period. It would be interesting to know how many of the buildings contained stone from the castle, which was deliberately demolished in 1702 to prevent it from being used by rebels (this was the time of the Rákóczy rebellion). Two successive bishops, Barkóczi Ferenc and Esterházy Károly, played a large part in the building programme. It was in 1793 that the geologist Robert Townson (1758–1822) spent five months on a scientific tour of Hungary. He published his **Travels in Hungary** in London in 1797, and this was quickly followed by a French version. Although much of the book is concerned with his mineralogical discoveries, he describes his experiences in the country with a certain degree of impatience. He could be very irritable, as for

example, in Visegrád, where he was kept awake by fleas, and in Eger too where the wine did not come up to his expectations. He arrived there from Gyöngyös and first went to Felsőtárkány, of which he gives a splendidly poetic description naming it 'a pretty, romantic and retired situation, with murmuring streams and mossy banks, and craggy rocks and gloomy woods and verdant groves: a select abode for Fauns and Silens, and Fairies and Druids and Hermits and Lovers; and Botanists. Here the late bishop (Barkóczy), a man of taste, built an elegant villa, where he often used to retire, more for amusement, it is said, than for prayer. The gloomy, bigoted temperament of the present bishop (Esterházy) prevents him from enjoying the beauties of nature, even of the more serious kind. On his coming to the See, like a Visigoth, he attacked this beautiful environment, and has so completely destroyed it, that the place of its existence is no longer known ...'<sup>4</sup>

Townson also describes the hot springs, but soon returns to the theme of the bishop, this time in connection with the wine he is offered. 'The wine of Erlau is justly famed, and, when good, is little inferior to Burgundy. I had long flattered myself with the hope of drinking here a bottle of the best; and immediately on my arrival I ordered some. The waiter told me I should have **bischoffliche** wine. This raised still higher my expectation, for I thought he meant wine fit for a bishop to drink; and I eagerly tasted what he brought me, but was surprised to find it as bad as that of Bogdon (Dunabogdány). I scolded the waiter; he looked gloomy, and told me, shrugging up his shoulders, that it was **bischoffliche** wine; but the poor man only meant to inform me that it was the bishop's wine, and that he had only the vending of it. I then sent my servant about the town to see if he could not procure me a bottle or two, but it was all in vain, the bishop possessing the exclusive right of retailing wine. So I was, till I had made the acquaintance of dr. D., obliged to drink this vile stuff in a country producing the best; it gave me the colic, which I naturally attribute to the bishop, and I must retaliate the injury.

How **bizarre** is the human character! Will it be credited that the man who exacts his rights with so much severity as to make himself considered by his flock, not as a father and protector, but as a hard, severe, and unjust master ... should have erected a public edifice which would be an honour to a crowned head!

The university, a very fine building, was erected entirely at his expense. It is said to have cost him, including its furniture, 200.000 pounds. The world must not be so uncharitable as to suppose that he has gained this immense sum by the monopoly of wine; nor entertain so high an opinion of his virtues as to think that Heaven, in answer to his prayers, supplied him by miracles with it. No: he is an Esterházy, and his family estate is about ten thousand a year; and the see of Erlau was always considered as one of the richest in the kingdom ...

But to return to the university ... it is a princely building, and has all the requisites for a university. The professors are well accommodated, the lecturing rooms are very good, and the chapel, library, and the hall for the public disputations and for conferring academic honours very elegant. The painted ceilings of the two last are, in my opinion, very fine. That of the library represents the Council of Trent, where the bishop has shown his uncharitable bigotry by bringing down from heaven lightning to strike the heretical writings. On that of the hall, the Sciences are allegorically represented.

They have both an admirable effect, and are far beyond many I have seen of great fame: I think they are superior to any I saw in Italy. The painter was a native of Hungary, and had studied in Vienna: he is since dead. The university is provided with an observatory, and the instruments are from London. A quadrant alone cost fifteen hundred guineas. How common it is for men to be scrupulously exact in the performance of religious trifles and yet to be negligent in the discharge of important moral obligations! Will it be believed that the man who had nearly been prosecuted by the crown for severities shown to his peasants, should have had scruples about the propriety of buying these instruments in England because we are heretics? Yes, I was told that he went so far as to send to Rome to know what he ought to do ...

A museum of natural curiosities was begun to be formed, and many Hungarian birds neatly stuffed were collected; but the negligence of the overseers ... has now nearly reduced the whole into ruins. The Emperor Joseph, who could not like such a man, never seconded the views of the bishop, and this establishment is at present little more than a college for the clergy.

I walked through the episcopal palace; it was poorly furnished and destitute of every mark of social comfort; and chilling gloom and

mournful silence reigned throughout. ... There is nothing in Erlau to detain a stranger, it is in general ill built; almost the only good houses I noticed were those of the canons. Here is a Turkish tower in very good condition. In the town wax is bleached, and not far from it Cordovan leather is prepared: red, yellow and black are made; the first two kinds are chiefly used for women's boots but their colours do not stand.'<sup>5</sup>

Townson is wrong, incidentally, about the Hungarian birth of either Kracker or Sigrist, the painters of the ceilings in the Lyceum. And here too is something of a mystery. Some years later, in 1810, a Russian naval officer, Vladimir Bronyevskij, also visited Eger on his way from Trieste to St. Petersburg. He published his diary there shortly after his return. If certain passages in it are compared with Townson's account, they appear identical – for example this mistake about the painters, the details of the Council of Trent and the remark about the leather for women's shoes. Could Bronyevskij have seen a copy of Townson, either in English or in French?'<sup>6</sup>

In the nineteenth century, with the improvement of communications and the dissemination of guide-books, travel became easier and Central Europe less exotic. It is worth noting, however, that the early editions of Baedeker were totally wrong about Eger: the famous siege was dated 1535 and the building of the Lyceum was attributed to Archbishop Pyrker.'<sup>7</sup> But by that time there were other connections between Eger and Britain. I suspect that very few Hungarian writers (and citizens of Eger too) have had their death recorded so promptly in the English-speaking world as Vitkovics Mihály. In 1830 Sir John Bowring published the first anthology of Hungarian verse in English, entitled **Poetry of the Magyars**. This includes nine poems written by Vitkovics, but that is not all. Bowring's long introduction includes biographical sketches of each poet; that from Vitkovics begins 'While the paper is yet wet which bears these translations from Vitkovics, I receive the intelligence that this interesting poet has ceased to be. He died on the 9th of September 1829.'<sup>8</sup> The poems for translation were not selected by Bowring, but sent to him by Karl Georg Rummy together with a German version from which Bowring made his versions. He did not know Hungarian. The nine poems include **Füredi pásztor dala**, **Cencihez** and **Megelégedés**. But there is also his version of a Serbian folk poem, entitled **Az elváló leány**, which appears in the

section entitled 'Hungarian Popular Songs', and this is something of a curiosity. Rummy took it from the journal **Hasznos mulatságok**, where it was published anonymously in 1823, and appears to be a good Hungarian folksong – a tribute, incidentally, to Vitkovics's genius for this type of verse. The original, however, is Serbian and Bowring had already translated that, also from German, in his **Serbian Popular Poetry** (London, 1827). Apparently he did not notice the similarity of the two versions. (And here we may note that there is another translation in Hungarian too, by Kölcsey Ferenc, entitled **Rác nyelvből** (1814); it was Vitkovics who supplied him with a Hungarian translation. Vitkovics was in fact a remarkable writer and literary organiser who deserves more credit than he is usually given by either Serbian or Hungarian critics, for he was the man who continued the poetic tradition of Csokonai at a time when that was frowned on, and pointed the way ahead to Petőfi. The folk of Eger should be proud to own him — that he was proud of his birthplace can be seen in numerous poems and other writings.

Perhaps the most detailed description of Eger, and its surroundings to appear in English (outside a guide-book) was published in a volume entitled **Rural and Historical Gleanings from Eastern Europe**, published in London in 1854. The author's name was given as 'Miss A. M. Birkbeck', and in her introduction she declares that she is 'indebted for the materials of which it is composed partly to the kindness of a friend, who, during a long sojourn in Hungary, acquired an accurate knowledge of that land, as well as of its inhabitants.'<sup>9</sup> Miss Birkbeck was the daughter of a well-known barrister who in later years was to become Master of Downing College, Cambridge. But her 'friend' was none other than her husband, Mednyánszky Sándor, who was born in Eger in 1816. He had joined the army at the age of 16, but left it in the early 1840s, only to play a very active role in the 1848 revolution. Among other exploits he organized a guerrilla band, mainly composed of prisoners, in the Bakony, and raised a force of 300 volunteers in Eger. When the war was over, Mednyánszky was sent by Klapka to discuss terms with Haynau, and he signed the agreement. Then he left for London, where he lived for 18 years, marrying Miss Birkbeck there. He afterwards went to live briefly with Kossuth in Turin before returning to Hungary in 1869; there he was deputy for Szigetvár till his death in 1875.

The title of his book is accurate, for it contains a mixture of descriptions, historical tales and stories of 1848, ending with a portrait of Klapka. One of the longest chapters is entitled 'Erlau and its vine culture', and in it Mednyánszky describes his birthplace in glowing terms: 'Nearly midway between Pesth and Tokaj, two miles north of the road running along the southern declivities of the rugged Mátra mountains, a smiling valley opens towards the plains; disclosing the vista of an extensive town with glittering spires and cupolas, crowned by the mighty ruins of a fortress. Gentle hills dotted with countless villas enclose that charming spot, which in its picturesque and sequestered nook looks the very type of rural plenty, content and peace. This is Erlau, the capital of the county of Heves, and one of the prettiest provincial towns of Hungary. It rises in terraces from the banks of a small river, arched over by several massive bridges, each ornamented with statues of saints. The peaked-roofed houses are whitewashed and, though of simple construction, display an air of neatness and prosperity.'<sup>10</sup>

He then goes on to describe the cathedral and 'its noble rival the so-called Lyceum. This gorgeous structure with its gilded cupolas and towering observatory, its painted halls and chapel is truly worthy the residence of the mightiest of the sovereigns of knowledge.'<sup>11</sup> He then relates the famous story of the encounter between Joseph II and Bishop Esterházy, when the monarch asked him how many princes had contributed to its construction and the bishop replied, 'Only three unpretending people, the Bishop of Erlau, Count Esterházy and the Lord Lieutenant of Heves.' He also states firmly that the stones for the building of the Lyceum were taken from the fortress ruins, and declares that in his opinion 'the bastions of the fortress first became genuine bulwarks of civilization and humanity when they were transferred to their present destination.'<sup>12</sup> He praises the elegance of the Turkish minaret and the care with which it is preserved, so that 'the Moslem pilgrims who now and then visit the graves of one or other of their holy men interred in Hungary may rejoice at the sight of the Crescent still shining though from a deserted building, with undimmed splendour above a Christian town.'<sup>13</sup> There follows an extended account of the viticulture of Eger, in which Mednyánszky attributes the hospitality and general good temper of the citizens to their acquaintance with wine-making. 'Incessant occupation in the vineyards has endowed the people of Erlau with a rich vein of good

humour, investing all their sayings and doings with an enviable air of freshness and joyousness. Whether they hasten at early dawn with their implements slung across their shoulders, prepared for a hard day's work, or at nightfall bend their steps homeward in picturesque groups, or in their recreations on Sunday afternoons, they are ever to be heard singing their own lays set to pretty melodies also composed by themselves; for the Hungarians are at home with the Muses, and need not seek their inspiration on Mount Parnassus.'<sup>14</sup>

The author then inserts a tale about the guerrilla leader known as Lelkem and his exploits against the Turks in Gyöngyös and Hatvan, and continues his description of the grape-harvest and the vintage festival. Like Townson, he deplores the bishop's monopoly of wine, and notes that during 1848 this was broken for an all too brief time, to be replaced by Austrian taxes on the wine produced. But his picture of Eger in the middle of the 19th century is an attractive one and shows the affection he had for the town.

These then are some of the connections between Britain and Eger since the famous siege. But to this account too there is a postscript. A few years ago I was looking for new music in a London shop and suddenly caught sight of a picture I recognised: it was the organ in the cathedral at Eger. The piece was entitled **Missa Ungarica pro Organo**, by the British composer Bryan Hesford, and it is dedicated 'to my dear friend Father Sándor Simon, Organist of Eger Cathedral, Hungary'. Written in 1981, it includes well-known melodies like **Mennyből az angyal** and **Pásztorok, pásztorok**, which make it splendid music for Christmas.



## Notes

1. Éva Róna, 'Early Travel-books and MSS. on Hungary', *Angol Filológiai Tanulmányok III*, Budapest, 1938, 44–45.
2. *Relation of Sydnam Poyntz*, ed. A. T. S. Goodrich, Camden Society, London, 1908, 50.
3. *ibid.*, 51.
4. Robert Townson, *Travels in Hungary*, London, 1797, 221.
5. *ibid.*, 223.
6. A Hungarian translation of the relevant part of Bronyevsky's diary appears in Haraszti Sándor–Pethő Tibor, *Útikalandok a régi Magyarországon*, Budapest, 1963, 216.
7. Karl Baedeker, *Southern Germany and Austria*, 4th edition, Leipzig, 1880, 314. The errors had disappeared by the 8th edition of 1896.
8. John Bowring, *Poetry of the Magyars*, London, 1830, LXVII.
9. Miss A. M. Birkbeck, *Rural and Historical Gleanings from Eastern Europe*, London, 1854, V.
10. *ibid.*, 227–8.
11. *ibid.*, 229.
12. *ibid.*, 230.
13. *ibid.*, 231.
14. *ibid.*, 232.



# **RAMESH KRISHNAMURTHY**

## **CHANGE AND CONTINUITY AT COBUILD (1986–1996)**

### **1 Introduction**

The COBUILD project was set up jointly by the University of Birmingham and Collins Publishers (now HarperCollins) in 1980 with two main aims: to collect and analyze a large computerized corpus of contemporary English language, and to publish the results in a range of reference and pedagogical books for learners and teachers of English as a Foreign or Second Language.

#### **1.1 Change**

The range and scale of the changes at COBUILD during the past decade have been enormous. Our physical location has moved from a converted semi-detached house to an open-plan office block in the University Research Park. Our personnel has increased from 12 full-time staff to 22. Our organizational status has changed from an externally-funded research unit at the University to a limited company and sub-division of HarperCollins. Our primary orientation has shifted from academic research to commercial publishing. Our use of computer technology has intensified greatly, from part-time use of the University mainframe to running our own network of Unix workstations.

#### **1.2 Continuity**

However, change only represents part of the picture, and it is equally important to recognize the elements of continuity in COBUILD's development. The basic philosophy, of collecting large amounts of data, analyzing the data thoroughly, and presenting the results in a user-friendly way, remains at the core of everything we do. Although many of the original team have left, about half a dozen staff have been involved in the project for over a decade. The change in organizational status has not diminished the close relationship

between Cobuild staff and academics at the University. The note of continuity is particularly evident in our publications. For example, most of the innovative features of the original COBUILD Dictionary (1987) have been retained in the new edition (1995), although many of them have been refined or enhanced.

## **2 Data**

### **2.1 Size**

The 1987 COBUILD Dictionary was based on an initial detailed examination of a 7.3 million word corpus (six million words of written texts, 1.3 million words of spoken texts). This analysis was subsequently enhanced with reference to a 20 million word corpus prior to publication of the dictionary. By 1995, the corpus (now called the Bank of English) had grown to over 211 million words, and provided the evidence for the 1995 edition. During 1996, we anticipate that it will exceed 300 million words.

### **2.2 Vintage**

The 20 million word corpus consisted mainly of data from 1975-1985, whereas the 211 million word corpus data originated largely from 1985-1995. So the new corpus was, of course, more up-to-date and reflected many linguistic and real world changes.

### **2.3 Corpus And Subcorpora**

The 20 million word corpus was stored as one single entity. The 211 million word corpus is held as 16 subcorpora, distinguished by source or text type. This allows finer tuning of the analysis, including contrastive studies of different genres of language, such as informal speech and broadcast speech, broadsheet newspapers and tabloids, etc. We hope to add two new subcorpora during 1996.

### **2.4 Integerization**

Another major difference is not apparent to the user, but has had a substantial impact on the speed of the corpus retrieval programs: the 20 million word corpus was stored as characters, and therefore even the simplest search program had to match each character of the search word with each character of the corpus word. The 211 million word corpus is held as integers (i.e. each word is encoded as a number), so the search program now only has to match one number with another.

## 2.5 Wordforms

The 20 million word corpus gave us information about c. 250,000 wordforms. However, many of these do not constitute valid candidates for dictionary entries. Most proper names need to be excluded. Regular inflected forms (such as plural forms of nouns, comparative forms of adjectives and adverbs, and inflected forms of verbs) that show no semantic, syntactic, or stylistic deviations from the base form, will be subsumed under the entry for the base form. On the other hand, multi-word items (such as phrasal verbs, noun compounds, idiomatic phrases) serve to extend the final inventory. The 211 million word corpus represented a tenfold increase in overall corpus size, but yielded only a two-fold increase in the number of wordforms (c. 500,000). The proportions of proper names and regular inflected forms remained roughly the same.

## 2.6 Frequency

The increase in corpus size should not be considered solely in terms of number of wordforms. The frequency of occurrence of each wordform is also extremely significant for lexicography. However, the increased frequency is of little benefit to the lexicographer in the analysis of the very common words, because they do not vary a great deal in corpus frequency rank or in linguistic usage, but merely reflect the tenfold increase in overall corpus size:

20m corpus (1987)		211m corpus (1995)	
Number of Word occurrences		Number of Word occurrences	
the	1,081,654	the	11,611,078
of	535,391	of	5,359,185
and	511,333	to	5,180,130
to	479,191	and	4,941,561
a	419,798	a	4,537,660
in	334,183	in	3,796,752
that	215,322	that	2,226,871
it	198,578	it	1,954,556
i	197,055	is	1,940,162
was	194,286	for	1,794,630

The top 8 items are exactly the same, except that 'to' and 'and' have changed position. Similarly, the replacement of 'i' and 'was' by 'is' and 'for' is not very significant, and merely represents minor changes of position. However, even here, a word of caution is required. As we shall see below, even frequent words must be constantly reviewed, or subtle changes in usage will be missed.

Most wordforms lower down the frequency order, for which the 20 million word corpus gave insufficient information, are usually much better attested in the 211 million word corpus, and more precise and detailed information can be obtained from the larger corpus.

Very low frequency items are of little use in any corpus, as they do not provide enough evidence on which to base any lexicographic statements (for example, about half of the wordforms in a corpus occur only once: i.e. over 125,000 wordforms in the 20 million word corpus, and over 250,000 in the 211 million word corpus).

### **3 Corpus Access And Retrieval**

#### **3.1 History**

This area has changed most radically in the past decade. Until 1985, we looked at paper printouts of concordances from the 7.3 million word corpus. This meant that only one person could inspect a particular set of concordances at any given time, and that concordances could be easily misplaced, lost, or damaged.

Each page of printout contained 56 concordance lines with a context of 100 characters that were sorted to the right of the keyword, with text references at the left of each line.<sup>1</sup> This gave us reasonable information about the immediate right-hand collocations (nouns modified by an adjective keyword, prepositions governed by verb keywords, etc), but non-adjacent collocations were difficult to spot, and left-hand collocations were even more difficult to identify.

If a particular concordance line contained insufficient context, the relevant context could only be obtained by tracking down concordances for other words in the line, a time-consuming affair

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<sup>1</sup> Looking Up. Ed. by J. M. Sinclair, HarperCollins Publishers, London, 1987. p. 36.

(especially if those concordances were being used by another lexicographer, or had been lost or misplaced).

In 1986, each lexicographer was supplied with a set of all the concordances on microfiche, and this made such searches much easier. Fiches were less easy to misplace, lose, or damage. The fiches also added data from the 20 million word corpus, but only for words of lower frequency in the 7.3 million word corpus.

Also in 1986, a one million word corpus was made available online. This automatically provided longer contexts and the facility to re-sort concordance lines by the word to the left of the keyword.

### **3.2 Lookup**

The 1996 Bank of English corpus is always used online (although printouts can, of course, still be obtained if needed) and has a tremendous array of display options. All the main access and retrieval facilities are integrated into a single computer program called 'lookup'.

#### **3.2.1 Frequency And Subcorpus Distribution**

The 211 million word corpus is held as 16 subcorpora. So whenever we investigate a word or phrase, 'lookup' first gives us some information about frequency and subcorpus distribution. This enables us to see whether a word is more commonly used in speech or writing, in British or American English, and so on.

For example, here are the figures for 'actually' (see Appendix for an explanation and description of the subcorpora) :

Corpus	Total Number of Occurrences	Average Number per Million Words
spoken	21131	1360.5/million
npr	6704	301.1/million
bbc	3944	210.7/million
scbooks	763	190.9/million
mags	5220	173.2/million
american	3360	172.8/million
britbooks	4026	168.1/million
guardian	1449	115.0/million
newsci	429	102.7/million
indy	490	97.3/million

econ	815	93.2/million
times	934	90.2/million
today	1622	89.6/million
wsj	559	89.0/million
oznews	866	84.2/million
ephem	148	78.6/million

This clearly suggests that 'actually' is used more in speech than in writing.

Another example is 'robust':

Corpus	Total Number of Occurrences	Average Number per Million Words
wsj	128	20.4/million
times	156	15.1/million
econ	119	13.6/million
indy	62	12.3/million
guardian	155	12.3/million
newsci	50	12.0/million
mags	344	11.4/million
american	136	7.0/million
oznews	65	6.3/million
britbooks	147	6.1/million
ephem	10	5.3/million
bbc	95	5.1/million
today	84	4.8/million
scbooks	14	3.5/million
npr	70	3.1/million
spoken	30	1.9/million

This suggests that 'robust' is more often used in writing than in speech, and more often in economic texts and broadsheet newspapers than in tabloid newspapers and ephemera.

Multi-word items can be similarly investigated. A search for 'new+broom' yields the following information: it is more often used in British English than American English, and more in writing than in speech:



Corpus	Total Number of Occurrences	Average Number per Million Words
guardian	14	1.1/million
times	10	1.0/million
econ	7	0.8/million
today	10	0.6/million
newsci	2	0.5/million
indy	2	0.4/million
scbooks	1	0.3/million
spoken	3	0.2/million
npr	3	0.1/million
britbooks	3	0.1/million
mags	3	0.1/million
oznews	1	0.1/million
bbc	1	0.1/million
american	1	0.1/million
ephem	0	0.0/million
wsj	0	0.0/million

An interesting feature is brought to light when we look for 'different+than': we may have intuited that it is more favoured by American English than British English, but the data shows that it is also very frequent in British speech, though comparatively rare in British writing:

Corpus	Total Number of Occurrences	Average Number per Million Words
npr	218	9.8/million
american	53	2.7/million
spoken	40	2.6/million
wsj	13	2.1/million
scbooks	8	2.0/million
oznews	9	0.9/million
britbooks	18	0.8/million
mags	17	0.6/million
bbc	6	0.3/million
today	5	0.3/million

newsci	1	0.2/million
indy	1	0.2/million
times	2	0.2/million
guardian	2	0.2/million
ephem	0	0.0/million
econ	0	0.0/million

### 3.2.2 Concordances

Concordances from 'lookup' can be examined with considerable flexibility. In the following example, I have first isolated the lines from the 'spoken' subcorpus, then sorted by two words to the right of the keyword ('node' in current program terminology), so that it is easier to see whether 'than' is followed by a noun group or a clause.

< right.<F01> it would b+ it's	different than	<M01> You've got time then.>
< either actually.<M0X> Well <M0X>	Different than.	<M0X> it's in the grammar >
some American English speakers say	different than	# <M0X> Mm.<M0X> but >
< W+ <ZF0> we don't even recognize	different than	<ZF1> in <ZF0> in the <ZGY>
<derogatory <ZGY> <F0X> Yeah.<M0X>	Different than	<ZGY> view of <ZF1> the >
< I think a theory aspect is very	different than	a practical aspect.<M01> >
< No it's rather <F01> Er no.<M01>	different than	a convent. [laughs # <F01> >
< <ZZ0> Erm was your build-up any	different than	before?<F02> tuts] Oh yes. >
< hospital.<M01> Does sound rather	different than	Edmund Street <F01> Yes. >
< like different to different from	different than	erm again I think erm that >
< <M01> Yeah.<M02> it's so much	different than	from all the other models >
<know he said to me it would be no	different than	having a fag but it was. >
but you will hear different to and	different than.	I mean that's would seem >
< way of approaching it was quite	different than	if you're living with >
< was actually probably not very	different than	it is now only it was far >
< changed. It's all so much	different than	it used to <ZF1> be <ZF0> >
< in that union must have been	different than	it was by the time you >
speak <ZF1> is i+ i+<ZF0> is a lot	different than	it was <ZF1> ten y+ <ZF0> >
is my fault like. That's where I'm	different than	most of 'em.Er so <ZF1> I >
<<ZF1> is <ZF0> is like completely	different than	my idea <ZGY> what sexism >
<erm she thinks she's a little bit	different than	other people.<M01> Mm.<F01>
< Has that come up in B B C data?	Different than.	pause # <F0X> I don't know >
< think [pause] oh is a sticky rim	different than	suction?<F03> Well it's >
< well I thought er Brian you're	different than	that but er [pause] that's >
< <ZF1> I mean <ZF0> I mean er	different than	the rest of Europe I feel. >
< <M01> Er apparently he was much	different than	the previous vice >
solved by the Dutch child is a bit	different than	the problem to be solved by
I think the contemporary family is	different than	the traditional family and >
<It's P E it's just like something	different than	the lessons you have to sit

like it's going to be really a lot	different than	the description it gave to >
< of observing the ocean is so	different than	the atmosphere. The >
< should he be getting treated any	different than	thém. You know what I mean.>
< qualities on that one are very	different than	there.<M01> Well it might >
< fact that erm ice particles are	different than	water particles <M01> Yeah.>
s twenty-six and they are entirely	different than	what this younger one is. >
< then you know. It's something	different than	what we usually do like >
< <M01> But it was certainly	different than	what came afterwards wasn't
< corrupt it's just a completely	different than	what we're used to.pause] >
< development's probably something	different than	what East Anglia means >
< if you judge somebody who's	different than	you so much <ZF1> on <ZF0> >

In fact, concordance lines can be sorted by any word up to five words to the left or right of the node.

### 3.2.3 Collocation

The collocations that had to be obtained manually and somewhat haphazardly in 1986 can now be obtained at a keystroke, accompanied by robust statistical measurements. The top collocates can be displayed as a list. For example, this is a list of the top 24 collocates for 'continuity':

of	678	16.525324
and	451	10.481660
sense	54	7.104089
between	54	6.455226
change	44	6.237443
the	692	5.904582
ensure	35	5.818858
there	79	5.815418
stability	31	5.527369
is	157	5.373034
historical	28	5.228340
announcer	26	5.092955
policy	30	5.084427
maintain	24	4.805348
provide	22	4.411755
lack	9	4.000000
degree	16	4.000000
announcement	23	4.000000
closing	14	4.000000

jewish	8	4.000000
element	8	4.000000
discontinuity	7	4.000000
care	19	3.937419
in	234	3.824960

There are 1222 occurrences of continuity in the 211 million word corpus, and the list tells us that 678 of the 1222 occurrences have 'of' within four words of 'continuity', 451 have 'and' within four words, 54 have 'sense' within four words, and so on (see the second column). The third column is a statistic called 'T-score', which takes into account the corpus frequencies of 'continuity' and 'of' and indicates the statistical significance of the collocation when compared to random distribution.

The list does not tell us where the collocates occurs in relation to the node, before it or after it, one word or three words away, etc. So the collocates can also be displayed in a positionally specific graphic form (called 'picture' in the Cobuild system), up to six words on either side of the node.

For example, here is the 'picture' for 3 words either side of 'continuity', again based on 'T-score'):

there	to	and	NODE	of	the	also
a	of	the	NODE	and	care	world
to	is	of	NODE	in	change	history
sense	provide	a	NODE	announcer	than	foreign
opening	change	for	NODE	with	service	policy
closing	break	provide	NODE	is	consciousn	past
this	maintain	some	NODE	from	stability	and
no	ensure	historical	NODE	between	progressio	there
of	stability	maintain	NODE	rather	this	in
so	lack	ensure	NODE	or	its	from
by	degree	its	NODE	there	one	of
who	announceme	than	NODE	<t>	all	this
start	thread	no	NODE	has	our	life
provide	would	family	NODE	as	been	gulf
can	there	essential	NODE	but	support	continue
some	and	giving	NODE	important	their	training
would	an	needs	NODE	which	education	local
able	some	experience	NODE	here	work	church
makes	lose	both	NODE	point	us	between
important	need	represent	NODE	although	between	whole



### 3.2.4 Expanded Contexts

Expanded context for any concordance line is available at the touch of a key. For example, here is the expanded context for the first line above (note that the text reference is always provided automatically - in case the user wishes to attribute the source):

no single sultan was recognised as sovereign over the others, the nine families agreed to take five-year turns serving as the nation's Agong, or King.

The sultans served as symbols of historical continuity, important for ethnic Malays, who make up about half of the country's population and are at odds with an ethnic Chinese minority that dominates business in Malaysia.

Corpus: oznews Text\_id: <tref id=N0000005348>

### 3.2.5 Text References

Text references can be displayed for each concordance line, at a single keystroke, and full details for each text are available on request. Cobuild lexicographers mainly use them to make sure that the concordances are coming from a reasonable variety of source texts:

ozn N0000005348 of	historical continuity,	important for ethnic Malays, who
tim T0000080892 of	historical continuity	within a modern centralised >
npr N0000050792 where	historical continuity	and intellectual intercourse cast>
npr N0000270492 the	historical continuity,	the Palestinian determination >
mag N0000000505 daily:	historical continuity;	urban architecture and town- >
mag N0000000130 of	historical continuity,	the seal on the unbroached >
ind I0000041090 break in	historical continuity	The entrusting of this role to a >
ind I0000021090 of	historical continuity	in British life" while her powers>
ind I0000011090 of	historical continuity	in British life and (as long as >
bri B0000000850 a long	historical continuity	in migration movements in France.>
bri B0000000719 not the	historical continuity,	of the original Rosicrucian >
bri B0000000564 from the	historical continuity	of his age, however stringently >
bri B0000000560 a	historical continuity	between the British Empire and >
bri B0000000560 of	historical continuity	in the prevalence of long-term >
bri B0000000560 the same	historical continuity	up to the Boer War and beyond, if>
bri B0000000311 for	historical continuity	he assumed his own art was >
bbc W0000001090 of	historical continuity	in British life # Labour's deputy>
ame B0000001074 the	historical continuity	was especially stressed by >
ame B0000001074 the	historical continuity	between the Testaments; the >
ame B0000000428 agent of	historical continuity	that binds the fifty-year-old >
ame B0000000389 the	historical continuity	of Satyagraha.<t> Tolstoy (Act I)

### 3.2.5 Grammar Tags

The word class of the node can be displayed at any point during the search. For example, here are 24 concordance lines for 'report': as is evident, most are nouns (NN or NP), but two are (correctly) tagged as verbs (VB). The tagging is not always one hundred per cent accurate, but errors are usually easy to spot, or are ambiguous even for the grammarian.

NN	spanly obtained supplies, the	report	says. And it urges the United >
NN	brains have been damaged. A	report	from Dick Oliver of our Science >
NN	body, is sceptical about the mps'	report	It addresses itself to >
NP	newsnote for dawn reel amnesty	report	on jordan By Francis Mead </h> <t> NN
	Kashmir Valley and has sent this	report	on the continuing campaign there
NN	to the Cambodian conflict # This	report	from Peking by Simon Long:<h> DESK
NN	today's operation which the	report	said was witnessed by a >
NN	about it later.<t> The race	report	is just as intriguing. Senna had
VB	RUBINSTEIN </b> <t> Sir: You	report	the malodourant results of the >
NN	Mikey Massive <LTH> THIS week's	report	by the Royal Commission on Criminal
NN	Middle East Watch says their	report	is an attempt to break through the >
NN	to Moscow and make some kind of	report	# And I asked Lithuanian officials >
NN	prices for April # March's	report	noted a gain of 2/10ths of a >
NN	successor # Don Gonyea filed this	report	<t> Don Gonyea reporting:<t> The GM
VB	of information.<M01> Mm.<F01>	Report	back to the group and then draw up >
NN	intrusion on others. <t> The	report	came as leaders of different faiths
NN	Monopolies and Mergers Commission	report	into beer supply. <t> Now Camra is >
NN	regulator returned a	report	because 'it wasn't heavy enough, it
NN	<hl> International -- Corporate	Report:	Pioneer Electronic Corp # </hl> >
NN	information. It suggests, in a	report	to be published tomorrow, that the >
NN	away # <t> Almost every recent	report	on residential child care has cited
NN	this week it published a	report	suggesting how this might work.<p> >
NN	arrangement with an employer.The	report	studied a number of investment >

Other online facilities include the ability to view data from one or more selected subcorpora only, and to edit concordance output and re-run frequency or collocation programs on the edited sample. All these facilities have helped the lexicographer to generate a much more accurate and reliable dictionary entry.

### 4 Dictionary Compiling And Editing

This is another area that has changed dramatically since 1986. The original analysis of the 7.3 million word corpus was written on paper slips and then input to a database by keyboarders, and printed out for

lexicographers to revise. In 1996, not only is the analysis conducted online, but the results are simultaneously entered into dictionary files on the computer.

The dictionary files are carefully and rigorously coded, so that all the information can be checked automatically by a validation program. It is also relatively easy to tell typesetters how to deal with the data.

Here are some extracts from the file containing the entry for 'robust':

```
[HWD]robust
[FRQ]2
[PRN]/r&o&!ub*%ust, r*o*!ub&%ust/

[MNM]1
[GRM]ADJ-GRADED
[SYN]sturdy
[ANT]
[DEF]Someone or something that is [CIT]robust[/CIT] is very strong
or healthy.
[EXB]
[X10]More women than men go to the doctor. Perhaps men are more
robust or worry less?...
```

The code [HWD] indicates the headword, [FRQ] the frequency band, [PRN] the pronunciations, [MNM] the meaning number, [GRM] the grammar, [SYN] the synonyms (if any), [ANT] the antonyms (if any), [DEF] the definition (with the headword highlighted by [CIT] and [/CIT]), [EXB] the beginning of a set of examples, [X10] an example selected from subcorpus number 10.

This coding system can also be used to do analyses of the dictionary text, for example to find all the definitions that contain a particular word, all the words with a particular grammar, etc.



## **5 A Brief Comparison Of The Original Cobuild Dictionary (1987) And The New Edition (1995)**

### **5.1 Features**

Most of the important surface features of the original dictionary have been retained: selection of headwords based on corpus frequencies, full-sentence definitions explaining usages in terms of linguistic context (collocations, structural patterns) and social context (style, register, pragmatics), use of real examples from the corpus, and so on.

However, in response to our continuing research and users' comments, some changes have been made:

#### **5.1.1 Superheadwords**

Long entries ('superheadwords') have been subdivided for easier reference either by semantic or syntactic grouping.

#### **5.1.2 Grammar Codes**

The grammar codes have changed from a mixture of formal and functional labels (e.g. V+O; V = verb = formal label; O = object = functional label) into a simple surface description consisting of only formal labels (e.g. V n; V = verb = formal label; n = noun or noun group = formal label). Also, the examples have been ordered so that they match the sequence of grammar codes.

#### **5.1.3 Superordinates**

Superordinates were provided in the 1987 Dictionary, but were not easily understood, and were usually already contained in the explanations, so they have been omitted from the 1995 edition.

#### **5.1.4 Frequency Bands**

Frequency information has been added for every headword: five black diamonds means that the headword is in the 'most frequent' band, no diamonds means that the word is in the 'least frequent' band. About 15,000 headwords have one or more diamonds.

#### **5.1.5 Pragmatics**

Although pragmatic information was an important feature of the 1987 Dictionary, many users commented that it was not clearly signalled, and was therefore easily overlooked. Therefore, in the 1995 edition, a box labelled PRAGMATICS has been introduced into the Extra Column.

### 5.1.6 Examples

A major feature of the 1995 edition is that all the examples from the 20 million word corpus have been replaced by examples selected from the 211 million word corpus. The examples are therefore more up to date and reflect current real world events and personalities.

### 5.2 Coverage

For the 1987 Dictionary, a rough test for inclusion was a minimum of 6 occurrences from 3 different source texts. For the 1995 edition, this was increased to around 15 occurrences. However, because of the increase in corpus size, the number of references has still increased from 70,000 (1987) to 75,000 (1985).

### 5.3 New Words, New Meanings

Many of the new entries in the 1995 edition reflect changes in technology ('camcorder'; 'multimedia') and in society ('PC' meaning 'politically correct'; 'ethnic cleansing'). Other words have become archaic ('baksheesh', 'golliwog') or have been replaced ('Red Indian' by 'Native American', 'Common Market' by 'European Union').

The 1995 edition includes a new noun use at 'take 42': "Someone's **take** on a particular situation or fact is their attitude to it or their interpretation of it". An even more recent glance at the corpus revealed a new business use of the phrase 'take a bath' meaning 'lose a lot of money'; so even common words like 'take' need to be kept under constant scrutiny.

The 1987 Dictionary listed 'the **abandonment** of a place, person, or thing' and 'the **abandonment** of a piece of work, plan, or activity', but the 1995 edition adds a third usage 'the **abandonment** of an idea or way of thinking'.

Similarly, the 1995 Dictionary covers new uses of 'sad' (If you describe someone as **sad**, you do not have any respect for them and think their behaviour or ideas are ridiculous; an informal use.), 'macro' (in computing), 'parked' (If you are **parked** somewhere...) and so on.

## 6 Back To The Future

### 6.1 Using A Corpus

In 1987, Cobuild was the only dictionary to be produced using corpus data. In 1996, all the other major dictionary publishers claim

to be using corpora, not only for EFL dictionaries but also for bilingual and native-speaker dictionaries.

## **6.2 Using Full-Sentence Definitions**

In 1987, Cobuild was the only EFL dictionary to use full-sentence definitions. In 1996, several other dictionaries have adopted this practice.

## **6.3 Using Authentic Examples From The Corpus**

In 1987, Cobuild asserted the importance of using authentic examples directly from the corpus. In 1995, most other major EFL dictionaries claim that their examples are to some extent at least 'corpus-based'.

## **6.4 publishing the data**

COBUILD has created a reputation for innovation and creativity. Several years ago, we began to get requests from users who wanted to see the data on which our publications were based. So we published edited concordance data in our Concordance Samplers for teachers to photocopy and use in the classroom. We also released a small corpus (called the Word Bank) on our COBUILD on CD-Rom. Collocation data for the top 10,000 words was released on another CD-Rom.

## **6.5 Extending Online Use**

Now we are offering an online and email service (COBUILD Direct) for people who want to use our corpus data on a regular basis. We have a Website on the Internet (<http://www.cobuild.collins.co.uk>) where users can access a demonstration model of our corpus, look at our dictionary and other publications, and participate in various competitions and language activities. We encourage feedback from COBUILD users by letter or by email (e-mail: [editors@cobuild.collins.co.uk](mailto:editors@cobuild.collins.co.uk)) on all our publications and services, and take this feedback into account when planning our future activities.

## **7 Conclusion**

I would like to conclude with two quotations which I think are particularly relevant. The first specifically refers to 'graphemes' and

'phonemes', but the general point seems to back up Cobuild's confidence in the use of corpora:

"It is sometimes objected that there is no one-to-one correspondence of grapheme and phoneme, or that the graphemes show irregularities or inconsistencies of use. This is true; but there is consistency in the inconsistencies, and in sufficiently large samples the inconsistencies are leveled out. As the number of chances becomes larger and larger, the effects of each single event become less and less important and tend to cancel out; the final consequence approximates the average with great accuracy." (Joshua Whatmough, 'Language: A Modern Synthesis', Mentor Books, New American Library, New York, 1956, pp 180-1).

The second quotation is taken from Arthur C. Clarke's address to the American House of Representatives Committee on Space Science and Applications on 24th July 1975, and talks about how accurately we can predict the future:

"It's a cliché that we often tend to overestimate what we can do in the near future - and grossly underestimate what can be done in the more distant future. The reason for this is very obvious, though it can only be explained with a certain amount of hand-waving. The human imagination extrapolates in a straight line, but in the real world, as the Club de Rome and similar organisations are always telling us, events follow a compound-interest or exponential law. At the beginning, therefore, the straight line of the human imagination surpasses the exponential curve; but sooner or later the steeply rising curve will cross the straight line, and thereafter reality outstrips imagination.

How far ahead that point is depends not only on the difficulty of the achievement, but also upon the social factors involved." (Arthur C. Clarke, To the Committee on Space Science, ch 23 of *The View from Serendip*, Victor Gollancz, London, 1978).

# Appendix

## Bank of English: Summary of Composition

### April 1995

Source	size (millions of words)	number of texts	percentage of total
BBC World Service	18.7	(500)	8.88%
Independent Times	5.0	49	2.38%
National Public Radio (Washington)*	10.3	79	4.89%
Economist	22.0	729	10.45%
cphemera	8.7	28	4.16%
New Scientist	1.8	837	0.86%
Australian news	4.1	92	1.95%
Spoken (general)	10.2	141	4.85%
Today	15.5	1571	7.36%
American books and newspapers*	18.1	540	8.60%
British books	19.4	273	9.22%
Guardian	27.9	406	13.25%
Magazines (general, popular)	12.6	137	5.99%
Wall Street Journal*	30.0	760	14.25%
TOTAL	6.2	15	2.95%
	210.5	6156	

\* = US English

Additional corpora:

Business English (journals, textbooks)	3.0
Academic writing	1.5
GCSE textbooks	1.0



**THE *-ING* FORM AFTER FINITE VERBS IN THE  
REFERENCE BOOKS OF THE NINETIES**

**Abstract:** The author compared the information offered by some of the most widely-used reference books on the use of non-finite constructions after transitive finites in a paper at the end of the eighties. The findings were rather embarrassing, but as the authors could rely only on their own intuition or on research carried out among a restricted number of native speakers of English at that time, the contradictions were inevitable. After a brief survey of the revolutionary changes that have taken place in the past few years the present paper attempts at comparing the information given by the new generation of corpus-based learner's dictionaries and some new grammar books to see if any improvements have been achieved in this field. Although one would expect a more unanimous picture when the compilers of the dictionaries all claim to have drawn their conclusions from some huge, and consequently reliable database, the present findings are not much less confusing than those a decade ago in spite of the general positive development in lexicography.

**1 Recent developments in lexicography**

In the past ten years there have been revolutionary changes in the field of lexicography. Until 1987 the market of monolingual English learner's dictionaries was dominated by Oxford's Advanced Learner's Dictionary, first edited by A.S. Hornby in 1948. Then a rivalry started between Longman and Oxford. In 1987 the first edition of Collins COBUILD English Dictionary was published, the first dictionary with all the conclusions from the data of their own corpus, 20 million strong at that time. COBUILD broke with the traditional approach of lexicographers, who had invented their own examples, relying on their own intuition. COBUILD has always been

interested only in contemporary English. Different varieties of the written language, transcriptions of the spoken language were put into the database and the data were examined with the help of ever-developing retrieval methods. Nothing was accepted, unless it was supported by data of their own database. They introduced a so-called extra column, first mainly for information on grammar. Looking back from the point of view of today's wealth of data (which I still don't find sufficient), it seems that the first edition was based on a relatively small corpus. The second edition in 1995 saw a tenfold increase in the database. In this way far safer conclusions were made possible than had been in the case of the first edition. By this time other publishers also had to realise that unless they can claim that their dictionary is also based on authentic examples, which had been analysed carefully, they were not able to sell them. Their approach might be different, but by now all major learner's dictionaries claim to have some corpus of their own (or shared with another publisher), even if some of them seem only to use them to illustrate their preconceptions with authentic examples, while others – especially COBUILD – try to deduce all their conclusions from their data.

Besides having a database all publishers try to introduce novelties and the 1995 editions of four major learner's dictionaries competed in offering features not usual until then. (Frequency bands, culture pages, 'false friends', etc.) Along with the new editions of the dictionaries the same publishers also continued bringing out new grammar and usage books. Some of them (again especially in the case of COBUILD) were also the fruits of computer-assisted linguistic research, while others followed traditional methods.

With all these developments I thought it would be useful to return to a topic in which I became interested at the end of the eighties. At that time I examined the occurrence of various non-finite constructions after transitive verbs in the function of the object (complement), as described by 12 major reference books of the time. In that paper I also tried to find out the possibility of the choice between infinitive and *-ing* form. In the present paper I will concentrate only on the latter and the problem of the logical subject of the *-ing* form.



## **2 The treatment of the occurrence of the *-ing* form after finites with or without its own logical subject in between in earlier reference books**

The findings of my research at the end of the eighties were summarised in a table showing information offered by 12 widely-used reference books and they proved that there were a lot of contradictions between the authors. Grammar and usage books offered lists of various lengths, often selecting verbs at random. The richness of information, however, was not in close connection with the bulkiness of the book. Some quite thin dictionaries (like The BBI Combinatory Dictionary) or grammar books offered in certain issues more information than the most revered grammar books of Quirk et.al.

At that time it wasn't technically possible to select a top list of the – let's say – 30 or 50 most common verbs with the *-ing* form, so the usefulness of grammar and usage books depended on the intuition of the authors. It was no wonder that these lists did not coincide. It was less understandable why the dictionaries couldn't pay more attention to these constructions.

At that time I was interested in the issue of whether infinitive and gerund were equally acceptable after the verbs of my list and if a gerund was used, its logical subject could be expressed by both an accusative pronoun / noun in the common case and a possessive pronoun / noun in the genitive case or only by either of these. This latter issue was touched upon by very few books, most reference books described the choice as a matter of style (though some considered it to be rather a matter of individual preference, eg. BBI : xvii) and even sources which attributed some importance to this problem did not offer full information. Most dictionaries did not have a separate pattern for the different constructions, and even those which had, did not use them consistently.

As I still had the feeling that perhaps some reference books dismiss the treatment of the problem as if it were non-existent or at least the standard being the accusative and the possessive belonging to the formal (written) style, suggesting that the former is more common, I decided to check a few of these verbs in the COBUILD database. The following table shows that such generalisations are dangerous and it would be good to know why with some verbs the use of the two forms is fairly balanced, but with others one form is

clearly preferred. The table may prove that we should have some information and explanation whether there is a tendency to prefer one form or they are equally common.

	with accusative pronoun	with possessive pronoun
appreciate	28	34
enjoy	1	13
excuse	7	5
fancy	11	1
forget	6	2
forgive	3	7
imagine	205	10
mind	40	38
miss	9	4
pardon	0	4
remember	481	44

(The table shows figures from the 50 million corpus, which can be reached through subscription. I have chosen to examine only the pronoun form, because finding the 's genitive form of nouns in the corpus is fairly complicated and the occurrence of the genitive noun is even less likely than that of the possessive pronoun.)

### 3 The *-ing* form in the reference books of the past few years

What I was interested in was whether with the development of technology, when it has become possible to gain statistical data and frequency indicators from a computerised database and in this way to come to more objective conclusions, the information of the new generation of reference books has become more unanimous in this respect or not.

I have examined four major learner's dictionaries (Oxford, Cambridge, Longman, COBUILD), which were all published in 1995, along with some other reference books of the same publishers before and after 1995. Here are the results:

The symbols for the constructions:

- 1: verb + *-ing* form
- 2: verb + accusative + *-ing* form
- 3: verb + possessive + *-ing* form

	CGP	CCED	ALEX	LDOCE	OGE	OALD	CIDE
acknowledge	1						1
admit	1		1	1	1	1	1
adore	1					1	1
advise	1				1	1	1
advocate	1					1,(2)	1
allow	1	(1)		1	1	(1)	1
anticipate	1,2		1,2,3	1	1	1,(2),(3)	1
appreciate	1,2		1,3		1	1,2	1
avoid	1,2	1	1,3	1	1,2	1	1
(can't) bear	1,2	1	1,2,3	2	1	1	1
begin	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
begudge	1,2			1		(1),(2)	1
cease	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
chance	1,2					1	1
commence	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
confess		prep		prep	1	prep	prep
consider	1	1	1,3	1	1	1	1
contemplate	1,2	1	1,2,3	1		1,2	1
continue	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
defer	1	(1)	1,3			1	1
delay	1	1	1,3	1	1	(1)	1
deny	1	1	1,3	1	1	1	1
deserve	1				1		1
detest	1	1	1,2,3		1	1,2	1
discontinue	1	(1)	1				
dislike	1,2		1,2,3		1,2	1,2	1
dread	1,2	1,2	1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1
endure	1		1,2,3			1	1
enjoy	1	1	1,3	1	1,2	1	1
entail	1,2	1,2	1	1			1
envisage	1,2	1,2				1,2	1,2
escape	1		1,2,3		1	1	1
evade	1						1
excuse		prep	1,2,3	prep	1,2	(2),(3)	prep
face	1	1	1,2,3	1	1		1
fancy	1	1	1,2,3		1	1,2	1
favour	1,2	1				1	1
fear	1,2					(1)	1
finish	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
forbear	1	prep		prep			
forbid	1			prep		1	(1)
forget	1,2		1		1,2	1	1
forgive		(1)	1,2,3	prep		(2),(3)	prep
grudge				1		1,2	

hate	1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2
(can't) help		1	1,2,3	1	1,2	(1)	prep
hinder			1			(1)	
imagine	1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1,2	1,2	1,2,(3)	1,2
include						1	1
intend	1	1	1		1	1	1
involve	1,2	1	1,2,3	1	1,2	1,2,(3)	1,(2)
justify	1,2			1	1,2	1,(2),(3)	1
keep	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
like	1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1,2	1,2	1,2,(3)	1
loathe	1	1	1	1		1	1
love	1	1	1,2,3	1	1,2	1,2	1
mean	1,2	1	1	1	1,2	1,2	1
mention	1,2	(1)	1,2,3		1,2	(1)	1
mind	1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1,2	1,2	1,2,(3)	1,2
miss	1	1	1,2,3	1	1,2	1,2	1
necessitate	1,2	1	1,2,3	1		1,2	1,(3)
need	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
omit	1						
pardon		(3)	1,2,3	prep		(1),2,(3)	2
permit	1				1	1	1
plan						prep	1
postpone	1	(1)	1,3	1	1	1	1
practise	1	(1)	1	1	1	1	1
preclude	1,2	prep		prep		prep	prep
prefer	1	1	1	1	1,2	1	1
prevent	1,2	2	1,2,3	2	2	2,(3)	2
prohibit	1,2	prep		prep		prep	(prep)
propose	1	1		1	1	1	1
recall	1,2	(1)	1	1		1,2	1
recollect	1,2			1		1,2	1
recommend	1	1		1	1	1,(2),(3)	
regret	1	1	1	1	1	1,(2),(3)	1
relish	1	1				1,(2)	1
remember	1,2	1,2	1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2
repent				1			1
report	1,2	(2)	1	1		1,(2)	1
require	1		1		1	1	1
resent	1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1	1,2	(1),2,(3)	1
(can't) resist	1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1	1,2	1	1
resume	1				1	1	1
risk	1,2	1	1,3	1	1,2	1	1
save	1,2	prep		2	1,2	1,2	prep
shun	1						
(can't) stand	1,2	(1),2	1,2,3	1,2	1	1,2	1,2
start	1	1	1	1,2	1	1	1

stop	1,2	1,2	1	1,2	1,2	1,2,(3)	1,2
suggest	1	1	1,3	1	1	1	1
tolerate	1,2				1,2	1,2,(3)	
try	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
understand			1,2,3	2	2	1,(2),(3)	
urge	1						
visualize	1,2	2		2		1,2	
want	1,2	1	1	1	1	1,2	1

#### Abbreviations:

CGP: Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns

CCED: Collins COBUILD English Dictionary

ALEX: Longman English Grammar

LDOCE: Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

OGEG: Oxford Guide to English Grammar

OALD: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

CIDE: Cambridge International Dictionary of English

Figures in brackets stand for insufficient information in the case of dictionaries. These new dictionaries normally give the pattern illustrated by at least one example, but in some cases either the pattern or the example is missing.

'Prep' means that the use of the *-ing* form is indicated only in the presence of a preposition.

#### 4 Comments on the table

If we compare the individual books, we can find features that are quite common and others that may be different also in the case of the same publisher. The COBUILD dictionary drops the *-ing* construction in the case of quite a lot of verbs, although even its own database shows many examples for the missing pattern. Their more recent book on grammar patterns indicates the *-ing* form with many verbs the dictionary forgot to, but just like the dictionary it does not pay any attention to the possessive/genitive construction, it carefully selects all the examples with the accusative. It is not quite clear why the missing patterns in the second edition of the dictionary were not compensated. The Cambridge dictionary cares mainly for the basic construction and an example of a logical subject in between is quite accidental, even then with accusative forms. ('Necessitate' is the only exception.) Longman is also careful to select only accusative

examples while the traditional Longman English Grammar is the only one which offers relatively rich information on this issue, but as it is the earliest among the books examined, it is the most likely to follow traditional views. Still, it is not likely that the English language has changed such a lot recently that we should suppose that Alexander's lists are unreliable, as the COBUILD corpus figures of the previous table also testify to it.

The Oxford dictionary has no different patterns for the two ways of expressing the logical subject of the *-ing* form, but it does not refuse to give examples with the possessive. It offers however the examples in a fairly inconsistent way, so the absence of the other form does not necessarily mean its non-existence. Here are some examples to show this inconsistency:

### **recall**

(V. *ing*) I recall seeing him there.

(V.n *ing*) I recall **her** giving me the key.

(A form chosen which can be either possessive or accusative.)

### **recommend**

(V. *ing*, V.n *ing*) I recommended (**your**) meeting him at first.

(Giving two patterns with one sentence and only the possessive in brackets.)

### **remember**

(V. *ing*) I remember posting the letters.

(V.n *ing*) I remember **him** objecting to the scheme.

(Only the accusative example indicated.)

### **resent**

(V.n *ing*) Does she resent **me/my** being here? (also V. *ing*)

(Both forms of the logical subject indicated, basic pattern only in brackets.)

### **tolerate**

(V.n *ing*) I will not tolerate **your** behaving in this way.

(Only possessive without brackets.)

Let's see what figures the 50 million corpus of COBUILD Direct gives for the above patterns. (Only examples where the *-ing* form is clearly a non-finite clause have been selected. The relative infrequency of some forms, when considering the millions of the

database, might make the false impression that these are unimportant patterns, but this need not necessarily be the case.)

	possessive	accusative
recall	22	66
recommend	2	0
remember	44	481
resent	27	25
tolerate	8	3

The figures seem to justify the choice of forms for the examples in the Oxford dictionary, but it can also be the result of how the compilers feel instinctively about the acceptability of a form, rather than that of the careful analysis of corpus data, as the indication of possible patterns and their illustration with examples do not show some systematic approach otherwise. It is not the absolute numbers, but the tendencies that matter in the case of the corpus data: a balanced occurrence of both forms or the predominance of one. Of course the relative frequency of certain words and patterns should also be observed when teaching a foreign language.

## 5 Conclusion

The main table of this paper shows a lot of discrepancies among the dictionaries, although all of them claim to have used a corpus. If these corpora were reliable and all compilers used reliable methods, there should not be so many differences. This either proves that the corpora are not big enough yet to draw safe conclusions, or the methods to analyse the corpus data are not sufficiently developed. Besides this, in our case it seems that dictionary compilers are not equally interested in certain grammatical constructions and without examining a grammatical phenomenon carefully, they may dismiss it with some generalization. (Eg. It is only a matter of style which form is preferred.) Overlooking data is not unknown either. Grammarians, who show more interest in these issues, often correct the information offered by the dictionary of the same publisher.

For all initial shortcomings there can be no doubt that the future is that of the ever-growing corpora and I think it is too early to say that they are already big enough.

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## PHRASAL VERBS: AN ATTEMPT AT A SYNTACTIC ACCOUNT

**Abstract:** This paper first looks at the most important syntactic features and possible movements regarding phrasal verbs, on the basis of which it aims to question the validity of the traditional distinction between phrasal and prepositional verbs. Then it puts phrasal verbs into a larger framework of double object constructions proposed by Larson (1988) and tries to investigate the extent to which the linguistic phenomena and properties that phrasal verbs exhibit may be explained through rules and principles that apply to other double object constructions. This more general approach is also believed to shed light on the real nature of the difference between phrasal and prepositional verbs.

### 1 Introduction to phrasal verbs

#### 1.1 Phrasal vs prepositional verbs: grammatical criteria (tests)

The traditional definition of phrasal verbs states that a simple phrasal verb comprises a verb and an adverbial particle. The idea that phrasal verbs really exist, in other words, that the verb and the particle constitute one unit can easily be proven by clefting, a test for general constituency:

General formula: It is \_\_\_\_\_ (single constituent slot) that...

(1a) Drunks would *put off* the customers.

(1b) \* It is *off* the customers that drunks would *put*.

(1c) It is the customers that drunks would *put off*.

The ungrammaticality of (1b) shows that 'off the customers' (=PP) is not a constituent of the VP 'put off the customers'. However, (1c) supports the claim that 'the customers' is a constituent (NP) and thus it follows that *put off* is the other subconstituent of the above-mentioned VP since 'put' and 'off' cannot fall into different constituents, as they are adjacent and there is no constituent boundary between them.

As the example suggests, phrasal verbs are normally compared with prepositional verbs, which look very similar to them but, in fact, they have different underlying structure. Radford's (1988:90–91) analysis observes the evidence from clefting. The main difference is in the role of the particle; in the first case the particle is an 'adverbial' (traditional terminology) that makes up a complex verb with the lexical verb 'put' (phrasal verbs), whereas with prepositional verbs it functions as the head of the PP following the verb in the sentence.

(2) [<sub>IP</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> Drunks] [<sub>I'</sub> [<sub>I</sub> would] [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>V</sub> put off] [<sub>NP</sub> the customers]]]]]

(3) [<sub>IP</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> Drunks] [<sub>I'</sub> [<sub>I</sub> would] [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>V</sub> get] [<sub>PP</sub> off the bus]]]]]

There are a number of other criteria to distinguish between phrasal and prepositional verbs. Let us now contrast the following sentences with prepositional and phrasal verbs as in *A University Grammar of English* (Quirk and Greenbaum 1973:349).

Prepositional verb: *call on* (visit)

Phrasal verb: *call up* (summon)

(4a) They called on the man.

(5a) They called up the man.

(4b) They called on him.

(5b) \* They called up him.

(4c) \* They called the man on.

(5c) They called the man up.

(4d) \* They called him on.

(5d) They called him up.

(4e) They called early on the man.

(5e) \* They called early up the man.

The example sentences isolate some major differences. With the prepositional verb no movement of the preposition to the right of the object NP is allowed, no matter whether it is a real NP or a personal pronoun (4c, 4d). This obviously stems from the fact that we are faced with a PP in which the head (preposition='pre-position') must normally precede its NP complement unless we move the NP out by

NP- or Wh-extraction (stranded prepositions). Also, the adverbial ('early') can be placed between the verb ('call') and the preposition ('on') (4e). On the other hand, no adverbial can be put between the verb and the adverbial particle (5e), which seems to confirm the initial supposition that considers them as a single verb. With the phrasal verb in the example, Particle Movement to right of the object NP is possible in both (5c) and (5d). Moreover, particle movement is compulsory in the case of personal pronouns functioning as the object NP (see (5b)). Before discussing the main issues linked with Particle Movement we must consolidate that a phrasal verb can either be *transitive* or *intransitive* (just like any other lexical verb) and obviously particle movement only applies to transitive combinations because otherwise there is no object for the particle to move around. However, the Particle Movement rule seems to refute our supposition that a phrasal verb can be taken for a single unit since the adverbial particle gets separated from the verb so it is highly unlikely that they can continue to form a single complex (compound) verb in this configuration.

There are also some obvious prosodic differences between phrasal and prepositional verbs. Stress patterns, for instance, play an important part in telling prepositional verbs from phrasal verbs. According to Mitchell (cited in Sroka 1972:164–165): '...the particle component of the phrasal verb can, and does bear a full stress, and when final and not in post-nominal position, is pronounced on a kinetic tone...'. On the other hand, 'It is true that the preposition, by and large, does not normally carry the accent'- Bolinger argues (1971:14). The following pair of sentences will show this contrast:

(6a) Jim is not the person I was *looking at*.

but

(6b) Kim is not the person I was *looking up*.

However, as the main focus of this paper is various syntactic descriptions of the data, I will not investigate phonological differences any further.

## 1.2 Radford's (1988) further analysis

Let us observe the bracketed version of our initial example sentence with the particle moved (Radford 1988:90–101).

(2a) [<sub>IP</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> Drunks] [<sub>I'</sub> [<sub>I</sub> would] [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>V</sub> put] [<sub>NP</sub> the customers] [<sub>PP</sub> off]]]]

(2b) Drunks would put the customers right off.

Radford argues that in the separated case the particle is a PP, because it can be modified by PP modifiers. He also supports his claim by completing the PP with an NP complement (postmodifier) so that 'off' becomes the head of a 'real' PP (see (2d)). Both these arguments seem quite straightforward, although we have to add that completion with an NP is not always possible (e.g. *look sth up what ??* etc.) but premodification is (e.g. *look sth right up*).

However, when the particle is not separated it cannot be considered a PP because it cannot be modified by PP modifiers, neither can it be completed by an NP complement (see (2c)).

(2c) \* Drunks would put right off the customers.

(2d) Drunks would put the customers right off their food.

Particle Movement seems to ruin the clear-cut definitions of phrasal and prepositional verbs since there is a shift from phrasal to 'prepositional' verbs as Particle Movement is applied. It is, therefore, plausible to propose the separated position of the particle (demonstrated as optional in (5c) and compulsory in (5d)) to be underlying, which runs counter to the conventional approach and which is significant in that it eliminates the particle's 'mysterious' status (adverbial) and consequently weakens the theoretical distinction between phrasal and prepositional verbs. Apparently, in such a framework, the movement of the particle would be the opposite of what is traditionally called 'Particle Movement'. However, whether the particle moves or not, we know that we have the same sentence with the same phrasal/'prepositional' verb since the meaning is exactly the same. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the particle counting as a PP is a phrase that comprises a head but no complement (2a). It can take a modifier (2b) plus it may take a complement (see completion in (2d)), but the main distinction between phrasal and prepositional verbs is still in effect because the 'adverbial' particle (PP) can never take the object NP as its complement to form a full PP with, whether being separated or not.

- (2e) \*Drunks would put [<sub>PP</sub>off the customers]  
 (2f) \*Drunks would put the customers [<sub>PP</sub>off the customers]

### 1.3 What category is the particle?

Let us now review the main points of two markedly different approaches to phrasal verbs. According to the traditional approach, the particle is an adverbial to the verb and it enters into a complex lexical verb (hence the name) with the verb in the D-structure (Akmajian et al 1984:200–204). In other words, the particle is between the verb and the object underlyingly. At S-structure, an optional movement to the right of the object is possible, which is called Particle Movement (Akmajian et al 1984:202). However, Particle Movement (normally an option) becomes compulsory if the object is a personal pronoun. On the other hand, it cannot apply if the object NP is very ‘long’ (phonologically ‘heavy’). It seems to follow from this that optionality is largely dependent upon the ‘size’ of the object NP (the personal pronoun normally being very ‘light’).

- (6c) You may look up [<sub>NP</sub> the word that you’ve been trying to guess.]  
 (6d) ?\*You may look [<sub>NP</sub> the word that you’ve been trying to guess]  
 up.

As we have seen before, Radford (1988:90–101) claims that a phrasal verb is separated in the D-structure and the particle is a PP in this case (see 1.3). Thus, the optional movement that takes place in this framework is the exact opposite of Particle Movement, a reason why I call it Inverse Particle Movement. Naturally, optionality changes accordingly with personal pronouns and ‘heavy’ NPs as objects since this model is to describe the same linguistic data. Otherwise, at S-structure IPM may (optionally) move the particle leftwards, between the verb and the object NP. However ‘innocent’ this movement may seem, it raises some very crucial theoretical questions about transformations since the particle, after the application of IPM, seems to be ‘only’ a P, and not a PP, as before the movement. The explanation for this is evident: when the particle is next to the verb, it cannot be pre-or postmodified so there is no reason to assume that it is a PP (unless we can come up with some sensible constraints), otherwise it must be a P (lexical category). The question is, then, the following: Do we allow movement to change

the syntactic category of the element moved? The answer to this is definitely 'no', since movement (assuming the basic principle of structure preservation??) should only move elements and not do anything else to them. Then how can we resolve this contradiction? One possibility would be to presume that we are only moving the head (P) of the PP to the verb and not the whole phrase. However, that would also present a host of other serious problems (e.g. why the specifier and the complement position of the PP cannot continue to be filled in after head-movement has taken place), so I will reject this alternative.

A possible answer is as follows: suppose that the particle *is* a PP even when it is non-separated. This is the position I am going to assume in this paper. Then the problem arises: Why cannot we have the premodifier and the complement position filled in? I can provide no satisfactory answer to it at this stage but later in this paper I will try to give a possible explanation.

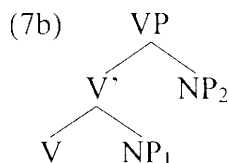
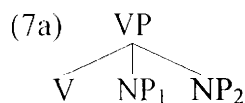
Another way around the problem would be to assume that the separated and the 'corresponding' non-separated phrasal verbs are syntactically unrelated, a position which is hard to defend, given the semantic proximity (if not identity) of the structures in question.

## 2 Larson's VP-shell hypothesis (1988)

### 2.1 Motivation: Double Object Constructions

Double object constructions include sentences involving ditransitive verbs (*give*, *send*, *show* etc.); 'heavy NP shift' transformations etc.

Among other models, the following structures were proposed to account for double object constructions (in Larson 1988:336–337):



One can easily point out the inadequacy of these models by presenting counterexamples. For instance, (7a) would suggest a completely symmetrical behaviour of the two NPs, which they do not

exhibit since commutability is not always possible. To illustrate this, we can provide the following examples (Larson 1988:337):

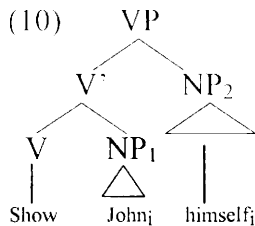
(8) The psychologist showed Mary herself.



(9) John sent Mary a letter.

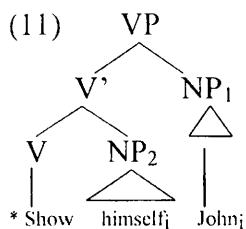


Similarly, the other model (7b), proposed by Chomsky (cited in Larson 1988:337)), fails abominably on phrases involving anaphors.



The structure presented above violates the Binding Principle on two accounts. NP<sub>1</sub> ('John') is an R-expression, which must be free everywhere, but it is bound. On the other hand, NP<sub>2</sub> ('himself') is an anaphor (reflexive pronoun), which must be bound in its governing category, but it is free.

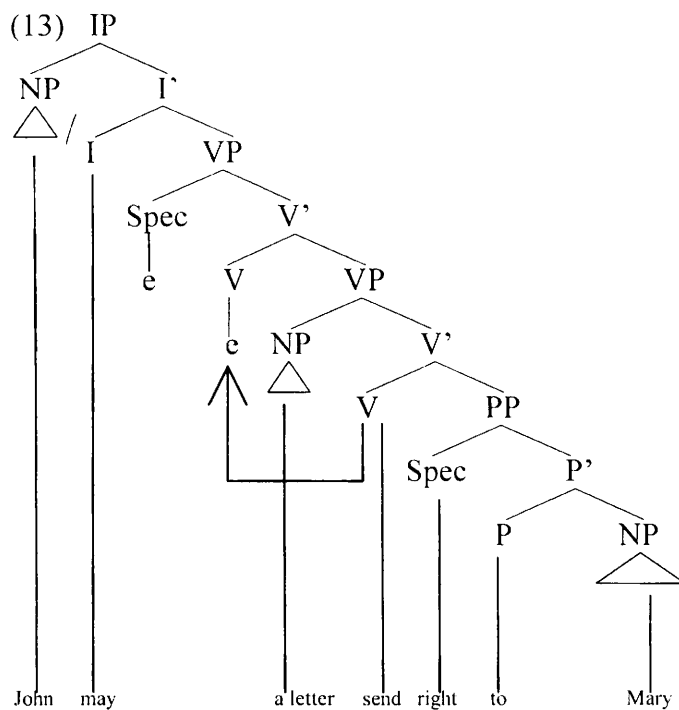
Similarly, this model may be debunked essentially along the same lines but with the argumentation going in the opposite direction. One might claim that this representation is wrong because it generates structures that should be well-formed because they comply with the Binding Principle but, in fact, they are ungrammatical.



## 2.2 V-raising and the V' reanalysis rule

Let us take a look at the following example and its tree-diagram representation as proposed by Larson (1988).

(12) John may send a letter right to Mary.



Larson adheres to binary branching, in which framework a double object construction must obviously involve two VPs, one embedded in the other (VP-shell hypothesis). However, the two VPs also imply



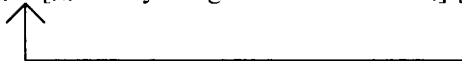
two V positions, – a problem that needs to be addressed – since we have clearly got only one verb. The two V positions would mean that one single verb would have to occupy both terminal nodes somehow. Larson solves this problem with what he calls V-raising, by which the verb moves from the lower V position (he assumes this position of the verb to be underlying) to the higher V node (he postulates this position to be empty underlyingly), leaving a trace behind. Apparently, this trace will be properly governed by the verb, in compliance with the Empty Category Principle (antecedent government). The higher V position will accommodate the verb on the surface. As a result, V-raising proposed by Larson (1988:342–343) has strong motivation indeed in that it associates the same (single) verb with both V positions.

If we now take a look at ‘heavy NP shift’ transformations we can say that there are two basic ways to account for them, based upon the fact that the positions of constituents are inherently relative with respect to movement, so the same S-structure may be the result of a different D-structure derived by a different movement (opposite direction). (14) shows the traditional approach, in which the NP moves rightwards to the end of the sentence, leaving its trace immediately after the verb. The other possible explanation (see (15)) presumes the ‘complementer movement’, that is, it views the given structure as a result of a movement that raises (leftward movement) the reanalysed V ( $V' \rightarrow V$ ) into a postulated empty V position right in front of the NP (see (17)).

(14) I gave  $t$  to Jim [<sub>NP</sub> everything that I owed him]



(15) I [<sub>VP</sub>  $e$  [<sub>NP</sub> everything that I owed him<sub>i</sub>] [<sub>V'→V</sub> gave to Jim<sub>i</sub>]]

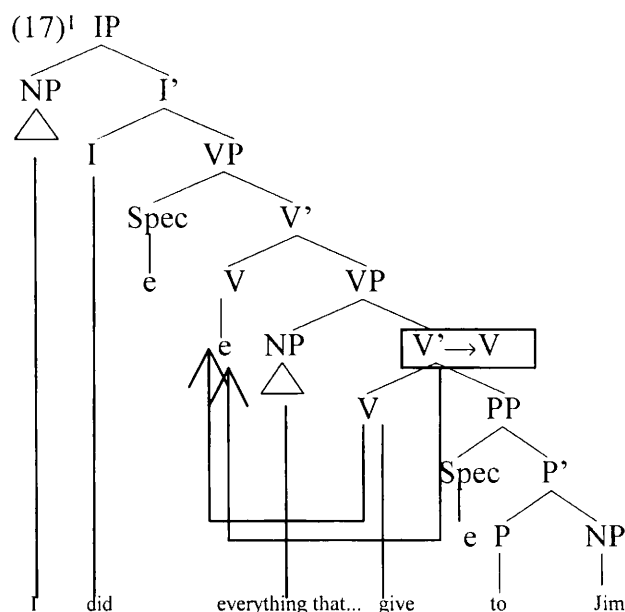


As we will see, the conditions of application of the V' reanalysis far from being unproblematic. Larson gives his V' reanalysis as an optional rule by which a V' may be reanalysed as a V, if it contains exactly one undischarged internal theta-role (Larson 1988:348–349). This thematic role (assigned to ‘Jim’, obviously) might be identified

as the ‘recipient’. Since his conditions for V’ reanalysis hold, he adopts the latter perspective on these transformations and renames ‘Heavy NP Shift’ as ‘Light (complex) Predicate Raising’ (Larson 1988:347).

Larson’s point about the optionality of V’ reanalysis can be disputed from a certain angle. Sentence (16) may be considered grammatical, but only on condition that the pronominal (‘him’) and the R-expression (‘Jim’) are NOT coreferential, otherwise we violate the relevant parts of the Binding Principle (see 2.1). This constraint, however, does not apply to (15) [on the surface it reads as (14)], that is, the NPs mentioned above may well be coreferential. It is a rather serious discrepancy that obviously weakens the validity of the optional status (vs obligatory application) of the V’ reanalysis rule with complex NPs (they are the ‘heaviest’ kind of NPs, as in the example).

(16) \*I [<sub>VP</sub> gave [<sub>NP</sub> everything that I owed him<sub>i</sub>] [<sub>V</sub> [<sub>V</sub> *t*] to Jim<sub>i</sub>]]



<sup>1</sup> The 2 arrows indicate that *either* one *or* the other movement may take place, optionally.

### 3 A VP-shell analysis of phrasal verbs

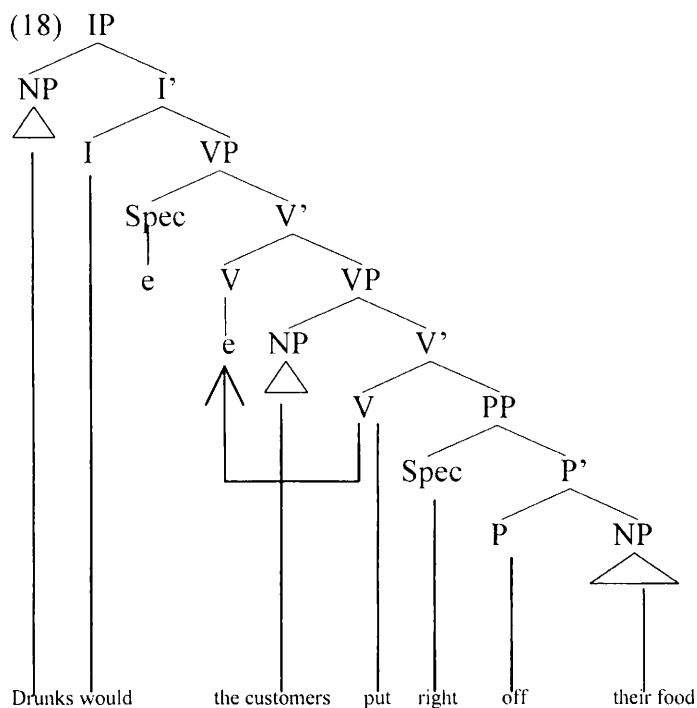
#### 3.1 Facts and problems of application

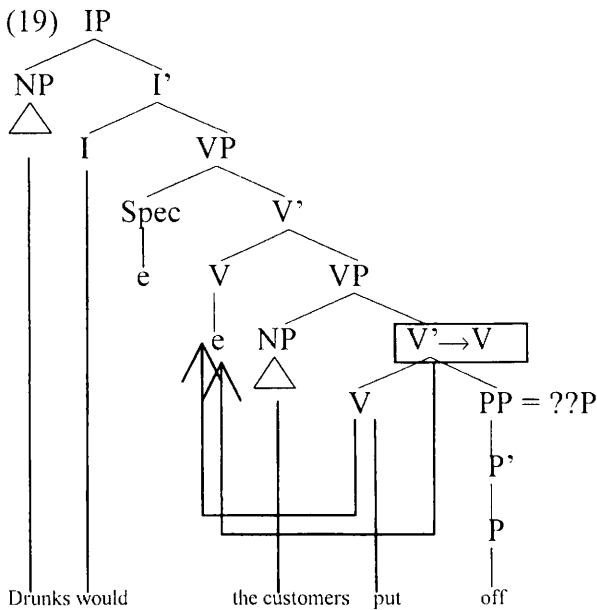
Transitive phrasal verbs can also be regarded as double object constructions. In this framework, phrasal verbs are syntactically nothing else but prepositional verbs, from which the verb is extracted by the type of V-raising put forward by Larson.

(2d) Drunks would put the customers right off their food.

(2a) Drunks would put the customers off.

(2) Drunks would put off the customers.





What supports the claim that the particle here may not be a PP but 'only' a P, if we want the V' reanalysis to work? There is some theoretical opposition to presuming that a lexical category (even if reanalysed from a V') may contain a phrase (maximal projection) as its constituent, although Larson's V' reanalysis in (9b), for instance, also results in a V that contains a phrase category (PP) (Larson 1988: 348).

The reanalysis in this case is only possible if the PP does not have a premodifier or a complement (NP), that is, if the PP consists of a P only. One could easily argue that in this case, it is just a P and not a PP, a position that has some justification (see previous paragraph) but if we accept it, we will be faced with an even more crucial theoretical problem: Why do the two sentences require a different syntactic category for the particle when the phrasal verbs in them are believed to be identical (or at least very closely related semantically)? It is for this reason that I take the position that the particle must be a PP, even when non-separated (i.e. when the V'→V reanalysis is available) and I will suggest a possible

explanation in 3.2 for why we cannot fill in any other position in the PP (i.e. other than the head) in this case.

### 3.2 Main point and conclusion

In any case, Larson's reanalysis rule can be adapted to phrasal verbs, with the important modification that the conditions of application are rather different. While Larson postulated one and only one undischarged theta-role within the V' to validate the reanalysis, here a markedly different condition seems to hold as far as theta-roles are concerned: the V' in phrasal verbs may only be reanalysed if they do not contain any theta-roles at all. The reason for this might have to do with the need to make the V' as 'light' as possible in order to facilitate the V' reanalysis with object NPs that are not so 'heavy' on absolute terms (e.g. *the customers*, which could obviously be 'heavier' if it were a complex NP), but they may count as 'heavy' relative to a very 'light' V'. Larson also talks about 'light predicate raising' when paraphrasing 'heavy NP shift', which further supports the cruciality of relative phonological 'weights' of constituents in the analysis (Larson 1988:347).

One may argue that this condition is almost the exact opposite of Larson's condition for the reanalysis so it is disputable if the two types of V' reanalysis can be identified as one and the same rule applicable on different conditions.

Another important condition of Larson's reanalysis is that the NP occupying the Spec of the VP-shell must be 'heavy' enough. This tendency remains valid for the V' reanalysis in phrasal verbs as well but on a different scale. If the NP in question is any heavier than the 'lightest' possible NP (a pronominal: just a small set of features) then the reanalysis is optional, as with Larson. For instance, if it is a full NP comprising a Determiner and a Head such as 'the customers', it is already 'heavier' than a pronominal and consequently the V' reanalysis will be an option. However, if it is a pronominal (i.e. a personal pronoun; the 'lightest' kind of NP) then the reanalysis is not applicable (only the real V is raised), which conveniently explains why we have compulsory 'separation' (see earlier terminology) when the object is a personal pronoun.

On the other hand, if the object NP is a complex one (the 'heaviest' case) the separation is quite unacceptable (see (6d) in 1.3), which means that the V' → V is obligatory, as I have indicated may

well be the case with Larson's analysis of 'heavy NP shift' transformations, too (see in 2.2).

Thus, as we have seen, by and large the same tendencies (rules?) and determining factors (conditions?) seem to be at work in both Larson's original version of the VP-shell hypothesis and my application of it to phrasal verbs. However, even in the light of Larson's hypothesis, the main distinction between (transitive) phrasal and prepositional verbs is still basically valid since the former are double object constructions, whereas the latter are not. The status of the particle in these structures is also different. As for phrasal verbs it is a PP (phrase), whereas it is a P (lexical category) in prepositional verbs (i.e. we must have an NP complement in the PP in this case) so the traditional names happen to be relevant, not only in the original sense but with reference to the category of the particle (a phrase (PP) vs a preposition (P)).

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## MEANING WITH LEXICAL REPETITION

**Abstract:** The paper examines repeated lexical items in dialogical discourse concentrating on the role of repetition in the process of text development. In terms of the relationship between lexical meaning and the context the following claims will be made:

Lexical repetition is not necessarily semantic repetition; a repeated lexical item may carry contextually new information. In discourse repeated words have an existential paradigm. Sense selection from the existential paradigm is marked prosodically, by prominence and tone.

To describe the interdependence of grammatical and lexical cohesion Hasan (1984) uses the technical term 'COHESIVE CHAIN'. In Halliday and Hasan (1985) she explains her term as follows:

"... a chain is formed by a set of items each of which is related to the others by the semantic relation of co-reference, co-classification and/or co-extension. Taking the type of relation into account, we can sub-categorise chains into two types: IDENTITY CHAINS and SIMILARITY CHAINS" (ibid.:84).

She exemplifies the two types of relationship in a text, in which *I* with *girl*, and *she* is an identity chain, whereas *went* with *walk* is a similarity chain.

This model seems to suggest that all repeated lexical items of a text are related in an identity chain. This is not necessarily true, however, especially not so in conversation. In the following extract speaker B evaluates a housewife's work repeating the noun *work* three times, and her addressee, speaker A, expresses agreement by repetition, too:

- [1]      B1:    But the the the **work** itself is is **work**.  
           A1:    Of course,  
           B2:    But not                      acknowledged                      |  
           ~A1:                         of course,                      |  
           ~B2:    as **work**, because it is not paid. It's [e]  
           ~A1:    very hard **work**.

O16A:554

If speaker B's utterance were an instance of pure lexical repetition, it would have no communicative import. But, obviously, this is not the case, as the addressee is able to interpret the statement and she gives reply to it. As a matter of fact, the utterance *But the work itself is is work* can not be regarded an example of tautology.

Levinson (1983) takes a radical pragmatic approach to the question of tautologies. Instead of interpreting sentences like '*War is war*' in terms of their logical form, he refers to Grice's conversational maxims and pragmatic inference.

Wierzbicka (1987), on the other hand, from a 'radical semantic' position argues for tautological patterns having distinct meanings. Among other things she maintains that the tautology '*A husband is a husband*' can have as many as four distinct semantic interpretations. In contrast,

Fraser (1987) argues that

"the very form of the sentence – a nominal tautology – signals that the speaker intends to convey the belief that the participants share a view towards some aspect of the objects referenced by the sentence noun phrase, and wishes to bring this belief to the hearer's awareness" (1987:218).

He also emphasizes that what this property intended by the speaker is, depends on the utterance context, and as a consequence much is left to the hearer's inference (cf. *ibid.*).

McCarthy (1987) points out that in conversation a repeated lexical item may be used by the co-conversationalist with a slight shift of meaning, i.e. the meaning of a lexical item may arise in the course of renegotiation between the participants. Renegotiation is not the only source of meaning shift; polysemy is another circumstance for the inconsistencies of meaning with repeated lexical items.

McCarthy's observation is also valid for the meanings of *work* in the above extract.



Three questions arise on closer investigation of the meaning of the initiating utterance:

1. how many interpretations of *work* are involved?
2. can the meaning of the word be specific while it is usually meant to be unspecific?
3. how are the various shifts of meaning marked prosodically?

Let us do a step-by step interpretation of the discourse.

The first noun determined by the definite article in utterance B1 has anaphoric reference, and the topic of the conversation being a housewife's job, it refers back to that. The second appearance of the same noun seems related to a more general meaning of the word: work in the broad sense, a purposeful activity which involves an effort. The 'specific' meaning is grammatically marked by the definite article, whereas the generic meaning is implied by the zero article. The zero article not only marks the generic reference of the noun, but also gives it the status of the superordinate member of a hyponymy. In this respect the repeated lexical item *work* represents the realization of a semantic change which arises in the course of the conversation. For this special relationship between the repeated lexical items I propose the term **existential hyponymy**. 'Existential' is used here after Brazil (1985), and is taken from his term **existential paradigm**, meaning the here-and-now reference at a specific time and place, a unique conversational setting and the peculiar understanding between speaker and hearer as opposed to some general, permanent feature of understanding. Existential paradigms are

"that set of possibilities that a speaker can regard as actually available in a given situation" (1985:41).

The third occurrence of the noun *work* in move ~B2 implies yet another semantic change which can be interpreted in the light of the prosodic features of the following utterance:

// because it's NOT PAID //

*Paid work* is the third member of the hyponymy. Speaker A's acknowledgement in utterance ~A1 is a mere repetition of the hypernym *work* used by speaker B in the last tone unit of utterance B1, i.e. *work* in the general meaning. This is clearly indicated by the speaker's decision to make the word non-prominent, as it usually

happens in those cases when the word is already “in the play“, i.e. when it represents a ‘given’ item (for the communicative value of prominence see Brazil, 1985).

In discourse the intended shifts of meaning, are mirrored in the prosodic features of the repeated lexical items.

Brazil (1985) emphasizes, that prominence is a feature which the speaker can change voluntarily, and that his decision is meaningful. It is this choice which carries some kind of communicative value in the discourse. Prominence choices represent the constraints which do not come from the language system as a whole, but from the interaction itself. Prominent syllables project a world of interaction as well as lexical discourse relations; they embody the speaker’s assessment of the situation in terms of ‘given’ and ‘new’ information.

Our extract shows it clearly that repeated lexical items can represent contextually new information, i.e. the speakers’ choices from the existential paradigm. These items are always prominent:

B1: // 0 BUT THE // 0 THE // p the WORK // p IT SELF // 0 IS //

// p IS WORK //

A1: // p OF COURSE //

B2: // p but NOT

| ackNOWldged //

~A1:

| // p OF COURSE //

~B2: // p as WORK // p because it’s NOT PAID // p IT’S //

~A1: // p VERY HARD work //

In extract [1a] above the word ‘work’ occurs four times, out of which three times it is prominent. This sense selection is not incidental. It projects several senses of the word (cf. **Figure 1** above, p. 109): a housewife’s work (the first occurrence in move B1), the general idea (the second occurrence in move B1) and paid work (in move ~B2). The ‘newness’ of the meaning in the latter two cases is

underlined by falling tone. The last occurrence of ‘work’ is non-selective (move ~A1), as it is the repetition of the general sense.

To summarize the taxonomy of the meanings of the noun *work* as understood in extract [1] I suggest the following distribution:

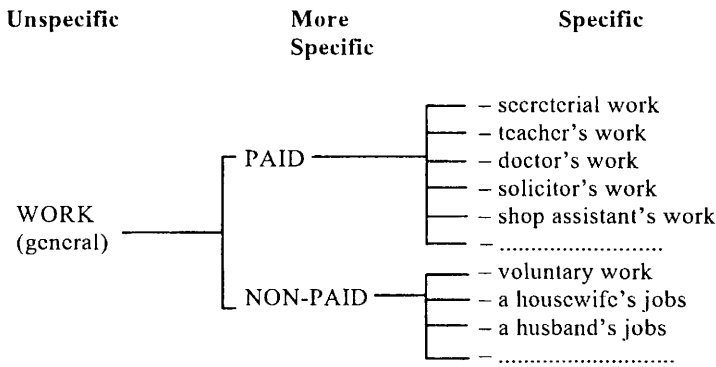


Figure 1

The diagram is not to suggest that all the possible interpretations can be listed in an inventory, as implied by Wierzbicka (1987) and (1988). The meaning of the word is context specific, new interpretations can arise in conversations, and the above diagram is meant to allow for this.

Although two maxims of Grice (1975) seem to have been violated in the discourse above, viz. the maxim of Quantity – make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange –, as well as that of Manner – avoid obscurity –, there is no misunderstanding between the two speakers. The inference on the addressee, speaker A’s part, is not a logico-semantic one: B’s message is communicated by appealing to A’s knowledge of the world which is supposed to exist as their common experience or **shared knowledge**. The response is a cue that it has been specified for the purposes of the exchange.

The context-dependency of the interpretation of a polysemic word like *work* can be described in a formula as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 X &= X1 + X2 + X3 + Xn, \text{ where} \\
 X1 &= X + C1, \quad X2 = X + C2, \quad X3 = X + C3, \quad Xn = X + Cn
 \end{aligned}$$

(Symbol X stands for lexical item, X1 – Xn represent specific interpretations, and C means the context.)

The formula is meant to also allow for the interpretation of the notion of existential hyponymy:

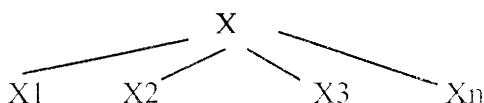


Figure 2

The following extract is an example of a proper noun entering into hyponymic relationship with itself through its repeated form.

The interpretation of the referent of the proper noun ‘Germany’ in ext.[2] below is based on the specific real-life situation, the historical circumstances of the country in the year 1989 before the reunification of West Germany and East Germany:

- [2] A: Now, you said [dfe] no country has been successfully divided for very long. Remember # Germany was, I mean unified for over a hundred years or so.  
 B: [DfedMeN] there’s there’s Germany and there’s Germany. [e] there’s a still a spiritual Germany which has which is of course [m] many [e] thousands of years old.  
 O14A:341

The context of this discourse involves not only that of the situation in which it is produced, but also a much wider context, that of the history of Germany, and the interpretation of the situation at the moment of the conversation by speaker B. He presupposes a spiritual reality besides the physical reality we live in. The sentence *There is Germany and there is Germany* is only interpretable in the light of the following.

The presence of the conjunct *and* carries interpersonal meaning; it implies the meaning of contrast by separating the two, formally identical parts of the sentence. The word for word repetition of the clause without *and* would carry a totally different meaning. A sentence like ‘*There is Germany, there is Germany*’ in discourse can have the interpersonal meaning that the speaker needs time to continue, or that he wants to keep the floor.

Bolinger (1977:7) argues for *and* having the effect of separation when e.g. used in sentences describing two separate events. Linguists who take a cognitive semantic approach to language argue that formal complexity corresponds to conceptual complexity, i.e. „More is more” (see Haiman, 1985). Proximity, or conceptual distance tends to be expressed syntactically. Adjectives like *black and white* or *good and bad*, e.g. are incompatible in meaning, there is a conceptual distance between them, which seems to be the reason why they cannot be coordinated asyndetically (cf. Haiman, *ibid.*:117).

A similar example can be taken from the area of everyday conversation. It is not uncommon that to a polar question like ‘*Would you like to come?*’ the response can be ‘*Yes and no*’. The form of the response seems a reflection of conceptual incompatibility. Due to the incompatibility the speaker is very likely to give an explanation, why he cannot give a definite answer, i.e. ‘why yes, and why no’.

In extract [2] it is also the conjunct *and* that is responsible for the meaning of contrast. In order to interpret B’s utterance the listener has to use the following conceptual system:

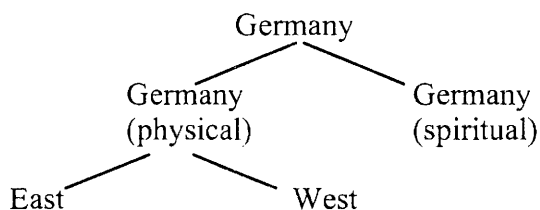


Figure 3

The General-Particular relationship behind the different interpretations of ‘Germany’ assigns the taxonomic relation of superordination to the proper noun (on taxonomic relations see Martin, 1992:294–309).

The Germany mentioned by the first speaker in move A is used as a superordinate (a hyperonym), whereas in move B the second speaker uses the co-hyponyms (the physical Germany and the spiritual Germany), which is made clear in the utterance *There is a still a spiritual Germany which has which is of course [m] many [e] thousands of years old.*

It is sense-selecting repetition in ext.[2a], too, which projects the context of interpretation for 'Germany'. The prosodic transcription is to show this sense selection:

A: // r GERmany has only been Unified // p FOR WHAT // r a HUNDred YEARS or so //

B: // 0 there's GERmany // p and there's GERmany // 0 [e] //

// p THERE IS a // r STILL a SPiritual germany // 0 WHICH HAS

// 0 WHICH IS // r OF COURSE // [m] // 0 MAny [e] // p THOUsands of years OLD //

The tone unit with the repeated occurrence of the proper noun is pronounced with falling tone, which is a mark of the shift of meaning. The falling tone implying new information adds to this implication. Semantically this word for word repetition is partial repetition.

On the basis of the two conversational extracts above the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Lexical repetition is not always complete repetition, consequently it does not always simply mean the repetition of old information as some linguistic theories might imply (see Halliday & Hasan, 1976, Winter, 1977, 1986).
2. The meaning of repeated lexical items in discourse is context-dependent, as it is emanated from the participants' shared experience of the world.
3. Prominence on the repeated word and falling tone mark entirely or partially new information.

Abbreviations and Symbols

A	speaker A's move
~A	speaker A continues his move
A1	speaker A's first move
A2	speaker A's second move
	parallel talk
ext.	extract
[1]	number of extract
[1a]	number of prosodic transcript
//p	falling tone: proclaiming
//r	fall-rise tone: referring
//0	level tone
//        //	boundaries of the tone unit

CAPITAL LETTERS in tone units signify the prominent syllables

UNDERLINED SYLLABLES IN CAPITAL carry the tone

At the end of each extract I have a **code number**. This locates the speech in the recorded data.

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## COMPLEMENTS VS. ADJUNCTS IN VALENCY GRAMMAR

**Abstract:** Valency is concerned with relationships between the verbal predicate and the other elements making up the predication, i.e. complements and adjuncts. By far the most researched question in Valency Grammar is the practical distinction of complements and adjuncts. My paper aims to review the different tests proposed by different authors to make a distinction (elimination test, the extraction method, the backformation test, substitution test and the *do so* test). Furthermore I shall present how Somers (1987) expanded the traditional distinction of complements and adjuncts into a new six-term system (integral-complements, obligatory complements, optional complements, middle, adjuncts, and extra-peripherals), which considerably strengthens the valency theory introduced by Tesniere (1959) and discussed in details by the German Grammarians.

### 1 Introduction

In General Linguistics Valency Grammar holds a rather strange position. German Valency Grammar is more or less regarded as the classical approach to linguistic description, though now there is a growing number of Valency treatments of other languages such as English, French, Latin and Japanese.

In this paper I wish to consider the linguistic theory of valency in the light of the distinction between complements and adjuncts. First I shall give a brief historical overview of the notion of Valency as regards the complement adjunct distinction. Then I shall review the different tests proposed by different authors to make a distinction. Finally I shall present how Somers (1984, 1987) expanded the

traditional binary distinction of complements and adjuncts into a new six-term system.

## 2 A historical overview of Valency Theory

Valency is concerned with relationships between the verbal predicate and the other elements making up a predication. These elements divide up into those which are closely associated with the predicate, termed “complements” and the rest, termed “adjuncts”. Complements are those elements which complete the meaning of a given verb, while adjuncts are essentially optional elements which complete the meaning of the central predication as a whole. Some complements are effectively obligatory, in that without them a sentence is ungrammatical, while others, though still closely associated with the verb, are optional in this sense.

The valency of a given verb is the number of complements it governs, and in a typical valency dictionary entry, a verb’s valency pattern is given as the enumeration of these complements with indication of their surface form (NP, subordinate clause, infinitival complement, etc.) surface functions (S, O, Prep C) and perhaps selection restrictions operating on them. Such elements are termed valency bound. The adjuncts, however, do not form any part of the valency pattern of the verb.

Tesnière (1959:102) is regarded to introduce the notion of Valency into modern linguistics. He made a distinction between “actants” and “circumstantials”, actants being elements which are central participants in the process, while circumstantials express the associated temporal, locational, etc. circumstances.

The number of actants that a verb takes is stated as the verb’s Valency. Possible verb valencies range from zero to three: aivalent verbs, like *rain* and *snow* take no actants; monovalent verbs like *fall* are traditional intransitive verbs; divalent verbs taking two actants are the traditional transitive verbs - Tesnière’s example is *hit*, trivalent verbs are exemplified by *give*.

Tesnière distinguishes types of actants, naming them prime actant, second actant and third actant. Certain syntactic and semantic functions are associated with each type. The first actant is generally the subject, the one which performs the action, the second the object,

which undergoes the action and the third the indirect object, to whose benefit the action takes place.

As regards the possible distribution of actants Tesniere is inconsistent. At one point Tesniere (1959:108) suggests that the order number of an actant can never be higher than the valency number of the verb, later he states certain valencies may remain unused or free (1959:239). Unlike actants, the number of circumstantials for any verb is indefinite. He also notes that the third actant has certain of the characteristics of a circumstantial and certain circumstantials are in some way analogous with actants.

In spite of the inconsistencies, Tesniere's work clearly laid the foundations of Valency theory.

As far as the German Grammarians are concerned, Helbig and Schenkel are regarded as central figures in the Valency theory. In their "Wörterbuch zur Valenz und Distribution deutscher Verben", which first appeared in 1968, they present their own views of the theory. The first of which is the consideration of the verb as the structural centre of the sentence. The second important issue they discuss is the distinction between complements/actants (*Ergänzung*) and adjuncts (*Freie Angabe*) and the further subdivision of complements into obligatory and optional. They give a general definition of "valency boundness" (1973:33), based on the distinction between complements/actants and adjuncts:

"Both obligatory as well as optional actants (both are necessary elements) are bound by Valency to the verb, are anchored in the syntactic frame of the verb and thus their number and type can be fixed. The adjuncts on the other hand (as unnecessary elements) are not bound to the verb, are unlimited in number and can for this reason be left out of or added to almost any sentence at will."

The theoretical section of Helbig-Schenkel's dictionary is also concerned with explaining their own formalism for the dictionary entries. Each entry consists of three levels: the first gives the numerical valence of the verb, distinguishing obligatory and optional elements. The second level gives the syntactic form of the valency-

bound elements, i.e. category (substantive, prepositional complement, embedded sentence etc.) and surface case. In the third level the restrictions – principally semantic – on each case are stated, which are expressed with familiar markers (e.g. animate, abstract, human, action, local, modal) and generally are accompanied by examples.

### 3 Complement – Adjunct Distinction Tests

By far the most researched question in Valency Grammar is the practical distinction of complements and adjuncts. Several tests have been proposed by different authors for this.

#### 3.1 Elimination Test

The “elimination test” (Eliminierungstest) is described by Helbig and Schenkel (1973:33) as follows:

“We eliminate an element from the sentence and observe whether the remaining sentence is still grammatical, then the eliminated element is not obligatory; if, however, it is ungrammatical, then the eliminated element is syntactically obligatory for the sentence to endure.”

- e.g. (1a) He put *the book under the table*.  
(1b) \*He put the book.  
(1c) \* He put under the table.

The main problem with the elimination test, as Vater (1977:25) points out is that it is only able to separate obligatory complements on the one hand from all other optional elements on the other. Therefore it cannot serve to distinguish complements from adjuncts.

#### 3.2 The Extraction Method

The extraction method (Abstrichmethode), introduced by Grebe (1966:468) looks very similar:

“We cross out from all imaginable sentences the freely added elements.”

- (2) The farmer ploughs his field in the morning.

Brinker (1972:181) distinguishes between the elimination test and the extraction test. In the former, the test is to see whether the sentence with elements removed from it remains grammatical, and thus whether the element in question is obligatory or optional. In the latter, however, the aim is to distinguish which elements are closely associated with the verb, that is complement vs. adjunct. The reason that we are not permitted to extract *his field* from (2) is that in doing so we would change the basic meaning of the predicate.

(3a) The farmer ploughs his field.

(3b) The farmer ploughs.

### 3.3 The Backformation Test

If we accept the elimination test as a means of distinguishing obligatory complements on the one hand from optional complements on the other, we still require some means of distinguishing among optional elements between complements and adjuncts.

The approach of Steinitz (1969:3) and of Helbig and Schenkel (1973:37) is the backformation test (Zurückführungstest). This test consists of reformulating the element in question as an embedded sentence: if this can be done without the resulting sentence being ungrammatical and without changing the basic meaning, then the element that has been back-formed can be said to be an adjunct.

Steinitz (1969:31) gives several possible backformations for *in Berlin* in (4), while Helbig and Schenkel (1973:37) give a number of examples of positive and negative applications (5–6):

(4a) He visited her *in Berlin*.

(4b) He visited her *when he was in Berlin*.

(5a) My friend lives *in Dresden*.

(5b) \*My friend lives *when he is in Dresden*.

(6a) He died *in Dresden*.

(6b) He died *when he was in Dresden*.

### 3.4 Substitution Test

One of the number of tests proposed by Brinker (1972) is the substitution test (Ersatzprobe): verbal predicates having a similar meaning might be expected to have comparable valency patterns, though the morphosyntactic realization of the various obligatory and optional complements may of course differ. If we take the sentence

(7a) and delete the element *in her* we are left with the grammatical sentence (7b)

(7a) He sees a friend in her.

(7b) He sees a friend.

Ignoring the resulting ambiguity of (7b) the test suggests that *in her* is an optional element. If we replace *see* with *consider* in (8a), we find that the corresponding element *her* is not eliminable (8b):

(8a) He considers her a friend.

(8b) \*He considers a Friend.

Another kind of substitution test is suggested by Andresen (1973:54):

“The exchange of one verb for another in the sentence has under certain circumstances consequences for the case of the “complement”; while the morphology of the “free adjuncts” is never affected.”

(9a) I have been waiting *for my friend for two hours*.

(9b) \* I have been expecting *for my friend for two hours*.

(9c) I have been expecting *my friend for two hours*.

The concept that verbs govern specific cases or prepositions is well established, but it is not very useful for distinguishing complements and adjuncts. Some verbs can have the same morphosyntactic valency patterns like *look for* and *search for*, others have multiple valency patterns exemplified by *roll* in (10)

(10a) I roll the ball.

(10b) I roll on the ball.

(10c) I roll onto the ball.

The unacceptability of some elements with a given verb may also be due to the fact that an adjunct may be semantically impossible with a given verb as in (11):

(11a) \* I met him to Manchester

(11b) I met him in Manchester.

Engel and Schumacher (1976:65) pointed out that a strongly governed preposition often cannot be replaced by an alternative near synonymous preposition, while in a prepositional adjunct it often can like in (12–13)

(12a) Inge is arguing *with* her friend.

(12b) \* Inge is arguing *in the company* of her friend.

(13a) Anne is travelling to Geneva *with* her friend.

(13b) Anne is travelling to Geneva *in the company* of her friend.

Somers (1984:514) comes to the conclusion that if a preposition cannot be exchanged with another preposition having a similar meaning, then this is a strong indication that the prepositional element is a complement of the verb. Unfortunately, a negative result of the test does not necessarily imply adjunct status which can be exemplified by verbs of motion, which have a directional locative as a complement as in (14)

(14) Jane walked *into* town/*to* the shops/*up* the hill/*across* the field.

There are also state verbs for which a positional locative is valency bound like in (15)

(15) He lives *in* Salford /*by* the sea / *near* Rod / *outside* the city limits.

### 3.5 The *do so* Test

It was Somers (1984:516) who introduced the *do so* test, which he regards as a reliable means of distinguishing complements and adjuncts.

Several authors (e.g. Quirk et al. 1972:49,582, 684–697); Palmer (1974:23–24), have noted the use of *do* as a general pro form for verbs. Lakoff and Ross (1976:105) described the use of the phrase *do so* as a proform for the verb phrase. Thus (16a) may be reduced to (16b):

(16a) Harry went to Reading and Ben went to Reading.

(16b) Harry went to Reading and Ben *did so* too.

Lakoff and Ross (1976:105) make the claim that *do so* replaces all of the constituents of the verb phrase AND ONLY THESE.

Somers (1984:516) states as follows: "While a *do so* phrase can be the proform of anything up to the entire predication (less its subject), the MINIMUM element that can be substituted is the predicate PLUS ANY COMPLEMENTS (again, other than the subject). Thus from the unacceptability of the sentences in (17) we are able to confirm the complement status for the italicized elements.

(17a) \* I live *in Manchester* and Jock does so *in Salford*.

(17b) \* Harold drives *a Volkswagen* and Rod does so *a Lancia*.

#### 4 On The Binary Nature Of Complement-Adjunct Distinction

Somers (1984:520) puts forward the view that "valency boundness is not a simple binary feature in the argument-predicate relationship, but that there are additional values for valency-boundness, in particular for arguments which are to be regarded as neither valency bound complements nor completely free adjuncts, but as lying in some intermediate area." He notes that some elements are central in the predication, and some are peripheral and these correspond to complements and adjuncts respectively. Another way of saying the same thing is that central participants (complements) pertain to the predicate itself, while peripheral participants (adjuncts) pertain to the predication as a whole.

The notion of central and peripheral participants is well established in linguistics outside the field of valency grammar: Longacre (1973:35) distinguishes "nuclear" and "peripheral" elements, while Cook (1972a), Dik (1978) and Halliday (1970) have similar concepts.

Somers (1984:25) observes that in (18) while *Steve* clearly pertains to the predicate itself, in (19a) *yesterday* equally clearly pertains to the predication as a whole, no such clear – cut distinction can be made about *with a hammer* in (19b)

(18) Debbie gave *Steve* a book.



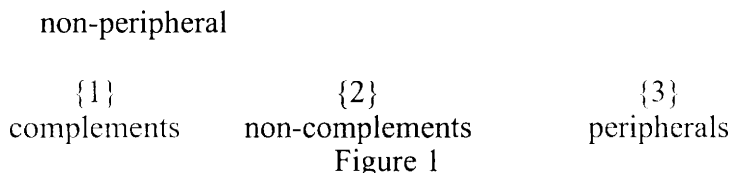
(19a) Nick smashed the vase *yesterday*.

(19b) Nick smashed the vase *with a hammer*.

While *with a hammer* in (19b) may not be a complement at all, it is somehow more central to the predicate *smash* than *yesterday*.

Matthews(1981:140) seems to have recognised the same phenomenon, as

Figure 1 shows:



Somers (1984:522) suggests that non-peripheral non-complements {2} and peripherals {3} can logically be grouped together as non-valency-bound elements, while complements {1} are valency bound.

Somers (1984:522) introduces the term “middle elements” between adjuncts and complements, which are neither complements nor adjuncts, but a bit of both.

There are two further terms Somers adds to the range of degrees of valency binding: integral complements, which are at the top of the scale, above obligatory complements and extraperipheral modifiers, which are more peripheral than the outmost elements so far suggested.

Somers notes that obligatory complements are not truly obligatory, because under certain circumstances – e.g. passives, infinitivals, nominalizations – they can be omitted. There are, however, some complements that are resistant to these omission possibilities because they are integral parts of the predicate. Examples of this are nominals *pave the way*, *keep pace*, *have a chance*, *put at risk* etc.

The extraperipherals are elements which modify an entire proposition, adjuncts included, and are typically logical or discursive modifiers like *personally*, *as you know*, *indeed*, *in fact*, *as seen above*, which are often separated from the surrounding text by conventional means ( punctuation in writing, pauses and intonation in speech).

Figure 2 represents the whole range from those elements most closely bound to the verb at the top to those most distant at the bottom. This is how Somers (1987:27) expanded the traditional two-value scale to six distinct degrees of valency binding:

intergral-complements  
“obligatory” complements  
optional complements  
middle  
adjuncts  
extra-peripherals

Figure2: Range of valency bindings

## 5 Conclusions

Somers (1984, 1987) has made an important contribution to valency theory. The traditional binary distinction between complements and adjuncts and the tests proposed by different authors proved to be unsatisfactory. Somers’ new six-term system narrows down considerably the cases where the boundaries are fuzzy though according to Somers (1984:528) there may be cases where the criteria are unclear or in conflict.

The innovations such as the *do so* test and the expansion of the range of valency binding enrich rather than invalidate existing work in valency and can expand the valency patterns of valency dictionaries. We can say that this new approach considerably strengthens the theory and perhaps will speed up the acceptance of valency as a valuable approach to the lexis-based description of syntax.

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**HOW TO EVALUATE TRANSLATIONS?  
(CLOSING IN ON PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATION  
CRITICISM)**

**Abstract:** The author of the article argues that there is a possibility to objectify translation quality assessment (performed so far intuitively and subjectively) on grounds of the equivalence concepts elaborated by different translation scholars. By this the point of departure can be the basic idea that translation equivalence is far from being a universally uniform notion in the theory of translation.

1.0. In order to give a general picture of the state of the art in the field of translation criticism in Hungary, it is the best to start by asking the question: 'does it exist at all in this country?' István Géher, for instance, in one of his essays describes the situation in the following way: "Our translators of fiction, as men of literature and public educators, would doubtless be extremely pleased to have allies – objective critics of their activity – in their noble mission aimed at forming literary taste. Unfortunately they are looking for them (these critics) in vain... What translators know for sure about their work from experience is that they are working really hard; but there is no way to find an answer to the question 'how?', 'what is the quality of this work?'" (Géher, 1981:72). And to quote just another author, we could perhaps claim that "if there is anything in this country that actually does not exist at all, then it is a systematic translation criticism" (Lontay, 1975: 915).

In general, we have to agree with this opinion. Because if reviewers of translated works mention the name of the translator at all in printed articles, they do it in clichés or commonplaces only, either patting him/her on the shoulder or trying to prove that the translation they speak about is full of mistakes and gross

misinterpretations. It is needless to quote examples: the Hungarian history of translation abounds in them.

1.1. At the same time, if we say that there is no, or at least hardly any professionally objective translation criticism, then it will not be very difficult to understand the reasons for it either. After all, it is possible to give an objective evaluation of something only in cases when there are scientifically elaborated sound criteria at our disposal, a kind of gauge if you please, which, however, are missing even now, in an era of conspicuous achievements in the field of linguistics and translation studies. And instead of trying to elaborate the above mentioned objective criteria for assessing the quality of translations, there are still always hot – and absolutely useless – debates both in Hungary and abroad about whether it is possible to translate in general and at all, and then whether it is possible to evaluate objectively a given translation or not. Let me quote some typical points of view.

In the opinion of certain authors "professional translation is an art; and it is more than harmful illusion to demand or to try to give an objectively accepted clue, pattern or key. It is impossible to evaluate any translation objectively either in principle or in practice" (András, 1988:137). Another author, however, is of the opposite opinion, and it is stressed in the title of her article already: "If the exercise is translation, then we must have a key" (Előd, 1988:187). According to others, too, "it would be most expedient to have standards for assessing translations" (Fehér, 1988:199).

Earlier István Bart had already elaborated a definition to explain the essence of these 'standards' or – as Bart puts it – 'gauge' (mérce): "Translators of fiction have only one choice and alternative, have only one possibility and no other. It is to recompose the *hic et nunc* valid message of the original into a new work of fiction. That is the only requirement or gauge" (Bart, 1981:269).

Had the problem been as simple as Bart thinks it to be, further investigations and research would be quite useless. But the problem is that in case of literary works the notion 'valid message' is a rather broad and evasive category. First of all, "a work of literature is always open, and the bigger is the degree of this openness, the better it is for that work itself" (Eco, 1975:12).

Consequently, "the essence, the message of a given literary work is not a series of items which can be enumerated, moreover it is not just a leading thought, a moral lesson that can be hung on the wall, but something much more sophisticated and mysterious than that, so it must be handled with the utmost care" (Hankiss, 1985:157). Secondly, from the point of view of translation it is by no means the same what the form of a given message is. It is obvious that a poem, a verse must by no means be translated into prose, and vice versa, and so on and so forth (for a more detailed analysis see for example Ortutay, 1991: 289–295). And is it just István Bart who would not know it!

1.2. What is the situation, however, in the field of an objective translation criticism in countries other than Hungary? The truth is that the overall picture is hardly different at all, although serious efforts have been made to discover, first of all the 'laws' of translation, and then, on the basis of this the criteria defining objectivity in assessment (see, for example Reiss, 1971; House, 1976; Toury, 1993).

Most of the scholars investigating the problems of a more objective translation criticism are of the opinion that in case of evaluating the merits and pointing out the flaws of certain translations individual predisposition and a series of groundless impressions are much more relevant and typical than objectively measurable scientific approach. Therefore on the basis of a concerned analysis of the source language text (SLT) and investigating the available translational solutions they recommend a set of criteria which can be applied methodically and systematically. At the same time, however, they also sincerely admit that subjectivity cannot be completely excluded even if all the criteria they have recommended are rigorously taken into consideration, because different readers (translators) will interpret a given text always differently, moreover the reaction of different recipients will also be quite different. After all, says Katharine Reiss, "... any analysis, however concerned it may be to achieve total objectivity, ultimately amounts to interpretation" (1971:107). Consequently "it seems to be unlikely that translation quality assessment can ever be completely objectified in the manner of results of natural science subjects" (House, 1976:64). It is most interesting how Gideon Toury, perhaps

the most outstanding figure of modern translation theory, approaches this problem:"... it goes without saying that **the mere enumeration of all that is possible** in acts (or texts) which are presented and/or regarded as translational would yield no satisfactory laws. While no doubt theoretical in nature, these lists would simply have flattened out and neutralized all the factors which affect decision-making in real-life situations; from the languages involved in the act and their genetic and/or historical relations, through the texts in which the problem-items are, and will be embedded, respectively, the models underlying those texts and the tradition to which each model (and text) pertains, through whatever is inherent to the 'bilingual brain' and/or acts of linguistic mediation, to the general concept of translation underlying the act, which is always norm-governed, and hence culture-specific. Lists of this kind are thus equipped to deal with *options* rather than actual *choices* and *decisions*, which, in terms of a translation theory, makes them very elementary indeed: **nothing to object to, but far from sufficient**" (Toury,1993:21–22; the emphasis is mine – P.O.).

1.3. Does it mean then that translation quality assessment should always remain as it is without any hope of ever becoming objectified?

My opinion is that it is far from being so, and on the basis of the latest linguistic findings it is perhaps quite possible to elaborate the rudiments of a much more objective translation criticism. As a point of departure we can accept the supposition that when comparing the original with the translation, or rather when trying to establish the (new) text of translation, that is to re-encode the original information, **every translator has, on the basis of certain professional intuitions, concrete ideas about the degree of the greatest possible and the smallest necessary similarity between the two texts**. By describing the different types of this similarity, which, as a rule, is termed **equivalence** in books on translation, we can make an attempt to model this intuition, and by doing so scientifically grounded points of view can be offered for critics of translations, who have been performing their task so far in the hope that their intuition and literary taste will serve as a more or less reliable compass in pointing out the merits and the drawbacks of the translation under review.



2.0. Equivalence is considered to be one of the crucial (if not the most important) questions in translation theory. The problem is, however, that most of the scholars are looking at it as a notion which is natural and self evident, and consequently they try to prescribe (and not to describe) it as an obligatory category, which must always be present in any translation. For instance: " The original text (SLT) and its message has a certain core which **must** be embedded unchanged into the translation (TLT)" (Dániel, 1983:13; the emphasis is mine – P.O.). Even professor Roger T. Bell is unable to avoid the traps of prescriptivism in his endeavour to define equivalence: "In essence ... the problem (of achieving equivalence in translation – P.O.) is to relate (a) sociological variables ... with (b) linguistic features which combine to create text which is realized in and as interaction" (Bell, 1991:9).

I am not going to encumber the attention of the reader with further definitions because they could be quoted almost endlessly, and still we would not get any closer to the solution of the problem. Instead I will make an attempt to demonstrate with an analysis that, even if the factors making up equivalence are extremely versatile, the sherey linguistic phenomena which determine the semantic possibilities and limits of utterances in different languages can easily be observed and described. At the same time I should like to emphasize that below I will always be trying to abstain from making judgements about the appropriateness of the given translation; no attempt will be made to assess its quality either. The analysis is going to be purely of a descriptive character and is aimed at examining and understanding **the degrees of the greatest possible and the smallest necessary similarity, viz. equivalence.**

2.1. First let us take an example in which contextual similarity between the original and the translation is the smallest in terms of the results of a comparison of any other translation with its original, which results reveal a greater closeness (between the two texts) than that we are having in the following examples (the quoted texts are all taken from the following two editions respectively: J. D. Salinger: *The Catcher in the Rye*, Penguin Books,1985; J. D. Salinger: *Zabhegyező*. Fordította Gyepes Judit. Árkadia, Budapest,1983. The figures after the quotations indicate the page number where the given quotation can be found).

1. But it was just that we were too much on the opposite side of the pole (19).

Csakhogy más nyelven beszélünk (21).

The relation between the original and this type of translation is characterized by:

- a) a complete deviation of the vocabulary and grammatical structures used by the translator from those that we have in the SLT;
- b) the fact that on the basis of the vocabulary and grammatical structures of the two texts no explanation can be given to the semantic and syntactic transformations used by the translator to achieve equivalence;
- c) the impossibility of discovering real or direct logical bonds between the original and translation on the basis of which one would be able to claim that "we are speaking of the same thing";
- d) the smallest contextual similarity between SLT and TLT.

Seemingly in case of this type of equivalence the TLT speaks about something else; it is not the same that we have in the original SLT.

Basically the above mentioned features illustrate the contextual relations of this first equivalence type 'negatively': it is very easy to see that the linguistic units which make the original mean what it means are not present in the translation. At the same time it is obvious that there must be a certain contextual similarity between the original and its translation because if there was none, we would have to make the claim that this translation is not equivalent to the original, consequently the translation is not a translation, and as such it cannot be the subject of translation studies. Moreover, the common features in the content of the two different texts must be, for some reasons, more important than any other factor because their preservation alone can provide translation equivalence.

If these types of translation are compared with the original, then it can perhaps justly be said that they convey not the 'direct' content of the lexical and grammatical units of the original text, but the content which can be 'generated' from them and which is present implicitly, and can be derived from the whole utterance only, which is treated by the translator as a meaningful whole and one unit. Linguistic units

participate in the creation of such a content not through their direct meaning, but indirectly only, and together with other units they will establish a kind of meaning which may serve as a point of departure or basis for creating a meaning (interpretation) of another type. The 'direct' content, as it were, is pushed to the background. The part of the content which must be preserved in types of translation examined here is termed 'the aim of communication' by the Russian translation scholar Kommissarov (1986:196).

What we mean by the notion 'aim of communication' can be explained in what follows. In (1), as can easily be noticed, the text, by means of a figurative idiomatic expression conveys the idea of 'the impossibility of understanding one another': two people standing far away from each other (on the opposite side of the pole) will, firstly, look at things differently, then, secondly, will hardly be concerned with the problems of the other. The translator, however, is not willing to accept this figurative description of the information (it is not "Hungarian" after all), and uses another idiomatic expression, which is perhaps less iconic, but it also provides the necessary effect.

Since in translations like this the contextual similarity between the two texts, the SLT and the TLT, is the smallest, this should be regarded as a minimum condition in providing translation equivalence. Of course, this statement is by no means equivalent with the claim that translation equivalence is in conveying the aim of communication only. Minimum condition does not equal the maximum one. Equivalence, as we shall presently see, can of course be based on a greater similarity or closeness between the original and translated texts.

2.2. The second type of equivalence is represented by translations in which the contextual similarity with the original is not based on the similarity of the linguistic devices either:

2) I made it very snappy on the phone (181).

Nagyon röviden telefonáltam (153).

3) Quite a few guys came from these very wealthy families... (8)

Bőven volt itt jómódú fiú is (9).

In these examples the rendering of the majority of the lexical items and syntactic structures into the other language, the TL, is not possible directly (one to one), because direct, or word to word

translation would heavily infringe the norms (the rules) of the TL. But at the same time the content of the original and the translation is much closer than in the case of type one equivalence above.

The relationship between this translation types and the original is characterized by the following factors:

- a) there is no direct correspondence between the vocabulary and grammatical structures of the original and the translations;
- b) there are no semantic or syntactic transformations by means of which the lexical units and grammatical structures of the two texts could be said to be bound together;
- c) the original 'aim of communication' remained unchanged, which means that the situation is the same in both texts, although they are described by means of different lexical and grammatical devices;
- d) both texts refer to the same facts of real-life, which is proved by the fact that there is a direct, real or logical connection between the English and Hungarian utterances, and it allows us to claim that in the examples above the two texts "say different things about the same thing."

Consequently, type two equivalence differs from type one in that these translations preserve even that additional part of the original content which tells us what the original utterance is actually about. This additional part of the content can be labelled as 'description of the situation' to use Kommissarov's terminology again (1986:193).

2.3. The third equivalence type could be illustrated by the following examples:

- 4) Grand. There's a word I really hate. It's phoney. I could puke every time I hear it (14).  
Pompásak! Nem bírom ezt a szót, gennyes. Felfordul a gyomrom, ha hallom (12).
- 5) ... you'll probably want to know ... how my parents were occupied, and all (5).  
... Biztos azt szeretné tudni ... , hogy mik voltak a szüleim , meg minden (5).
- 6) They give guys the axe quite frequently at Pencey (8).  
Penceyben gyakran nyírnak ki embereket (9).

Comparing the original with these types of translation the following peculiarities can be discovered:

- a) there is by far no one to one correspondence between all the lexical items (or expressions) and the syntactic structures;
- b) it cannot be claimed that the linguistic structures of the translations are derived by means of certain syntactic (or any other) transformations from the structures of the SLT;
- c) the aim of the communication and the situation are the same in the original and also in the translated texts;
- d) all those general notions and ideas by means of which the situation is described in the original, viz. part of the original text mentioned sooner as 'description of the situation', can be easily discovered in the translation as well. This can be proved by the fact that the original piece of text can easily be altered semantically into a translated piece of text in which the same relationship between the basic lexical items will be retained. Thus, for instance, in (4) – both in the original and the translation – the basic relationship in the situation is causal. In the original we have: 'I could puke every time I hear it', if I = A; could puke = B; every time = C; I hear it = D; then because of D, A is always forced to perform B. And in the translation: 'Felfordul a gyomrom, ha hallom', if 'Ha hallom' = D; 'felfordul' = F; 'a gyomrom' = E. F is always forced to perform E because of D. The notion of cause (D) is the same in both cases, although its characteristic features are different. A graphic representation will yield the following formula:

(1) D A (C) B

(2) D F (C) E

The same way (method) to describe a situation presupposes one situation (not two different ones), and the identification of the situation which is to be described in its turn will demand the same aim of communication. In other words, if in the first two equivalence types the translator preserved part of the content which tells us "what the reasons were for giving the original piece of information", or rather "what the essential information is in it", then in the third type "the original form of the information", i.e. "the object of the communication in the situation" has also been preserved.

Naturally within the framework of the same way to describe the situation there is a wide range of possibilities for the semantic representation of a given proposition which MAY (and by different translators actually will) be realized by synonymous structures. They may be termed as synonymous because of the closeness of meaning of the lexical items selected for this purpose (Cf. to puke – to vomit – to toss one's cookies etc. or: hányni – okádni – felfordul a gyomra – rókát fogni stb. in the TL). This circumstance is an explanation for why the TL information is so similar structurally to the original one, and why it is possible to claim that the translation is a synonymous structure of the original.

2.4. The following examples will represent another type of equivalence, which are significantly different from the ones mentioned so far:

7) She didn't give you a lot of horse manure about what a great guy his father was (7).

Nem tömött azzal a maszlaggal, hogy milyen nagy fiú az apja (6).

8) There isn't any night club in the world you can sit in for a long time unless you can at least buy some liquor and get drunk (80).

Nincs a világon olyan bár, ahol sokáig bír az ember ücsörögni, ha nem ihat valami komolyat, hogy berúgjon (70).

9) Anyway, that's what I decided I'd do (58).

Szóval úgy határoztam, hogy azt teszem (48).

In this group of translations it can easily be noticed that besides the similarity of the lexical items carrying the original information (or rendering the original content) the syntactic structures also show a great deal of similarity although, because of language-specific reasons, they may be transformed to a certain extent, but by no means beyond recognition (seemingly having no correspondence at all, as it was in the examples (2) – (6), and especially in (1).

Thus the relationship between the original and translations representing the fourth type of equivalence may be described as follows:

a) a significant, but not complete similarity of the lexical levels; the lexical items (their so called dictionary equivalents) of the original texts can also be found in the translations even if to a certain degree they may have slightly different connotations;

b) the syntactic structures in the translations are the transformed varieties of the original structures (synonymous structures);

c) this translation type retains the most characteristic features of the previous three equivalent types.

2.5. Finally we can mention the group of translations in which the established closeness of meaning between texts written in different languages is the greatest possible (maximum). This type may be represented by the following examples:

10) You should've seen the steaks (39).

Látnod kellett volna azt a sült húst (36).

11) He didn't say a word about Jane (44).

Egy szót se szólt Jane-ről (38).

12) I had a feeling old Ackley'd probably heard all the racket (49).

Az volt az érzésem, a jó öreg Ackley nyilván hallotta az egész ricsajt (43).

The relationship between this type of translation and the original is characterized by the following essential features:

a) there is a great deal of parallelism in the structural framework of the two texts;

b) almost a word to word correspondence between the lexical items; one can easily show in the translation which word stands for a given word in the original;

c) the translation retains all the contextual details of the original (in other words, all the peculiarities of the former four equivalence types have been preserved).

2.6. Thus a contrastive examination of the SLT-s and the TLT-s shows that there are at least five different types of linguistic equivalence in translation. The peculiarity of each separate type lies in containing the information which is present in the previous ones, and also in preserving part of the original meaning or content which is lost in the previous types. (Whether this lost information is compensated or not in the translation, is another problematic issue in translation theory which is not going to be discussed here). And if there are sufficient linguistic data at our disposal to analyze and compare, it will by no means be an exaggeration to conclude that these five types (or systems) of information, the preservation of which is crucial in any interlingual communication (called translation), can easily be discovered in **any discourse**. These systems will, as a rule, create those essential features of the content through which any information can be delivered to the recipient.

3.0. Now, from the point of view of translation practice and theory what is the use of knowing that we have at least these five types of equivalence to deal with? In other words, what is the difference between this equivalence concept and all those we have had so far (formal and dynamic, precise and free, etc., the essence of which is not my task to investigate here)? First of all, one is expected to note that this idea about translation equivalence is totally devoid of normativity (prescriptivity), and is characterized by a sheer descriptive approach. Secondly, it gives a much more detailed picture of equivalence than the ideas trying to define it through invariance in meaning or content. On the other hand, on the basis of what was said above the question arises: if there is a possibility to create different types of equivalence, then which is the one the translator is expected to choose?

3.1. To answer this question means to give a clue, the required criteria or 'gauge' if you please, for a more objective translation quality assessment.

Every professional translator and/or interpreter knows it very well from experience that from a linguistic point of view it is always the easiest to start creating equivalence on the last, the fifth level of the description suggested above. Of course linguistic peculiarities, the lack of isomorphism between languages, the notion of linguistic



distribution will, as a rule, **almost never** (which is not the same as never) permit translators to do so. If it is so, they can make a try to create equivalence on the next level, which is the fourth. If for different reasons (linguistic or any other), it is not possible either, then they may try level number three, and so on and so forth till equivalence is achieved. Now, by testing translations, which involves a meticulous comparison of the translated texts with the SLT-s, it is easy to tell whether the translator chose the appropriate level, or because out of certain considerations, or just for the sake of accepting the first easiest solution, he made a decision, or even a series of decisions which can be hardly justified (see such an analysis in Ortutay, 1993:111–118). In other words, evaluators, as a rule, may – and actually should – always take into consideration the above described system of equivalence types as a guideline. Of course, it must not be forgotten that translation has a lot of other aspects as well, sociolinguistic ones for instance, which must by no means be overlooked or neglected either in making judgements about translations. Still, it seems to be quite obvious that from a linguistic point of view (when it is only lexis, grammar and syntax which are taken into consideration), the five equivalence types described here may prove to be a very good basis or point of departure for quality assessment of translations.

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## ASPECTS OF LITURGICAL LANGUAGES IN EUROPE

**Abstract:** The three main religions in Europe the Jewish, the Muslim and the Christian have different relationship to the language of their sacred books and liturgies.

The Jewish and Muslim tradition at this time does not differ very much, as, in the course of time, they both came to the conviction that only the original texts could be really relied on. The Christian "language-policy", however, created a situation which led to contradictions between the principles of theology and the practice of language-use.

Catholics, Protestants and the Orthodox believers have even now no common liturgical language and a really ecumenical, inter-confessional edition of the Bible. In spite of the suggestions of the United Bible Society or the Vatican Council II. the language in service books is still not homogenous.

The study of liturgical languages has always been an interdisciplinary subject of investigation involving scientists of numerous, widely-varied academic fields (theology, philosophy, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, folklore, etc.).

In spite of the great deal of work done by scientists in the last few decades to answer the questions of liturgical language-use, some aspects of it still have not been paid appropriate attention. One of these is the relationship of the three main religions – the Jewish, the Muslim and the Christian – to the language of their sacred books and liturgies.

The differences were already present in the historical past. According to the ancient records the Jews must have lost their native

tongue during the Babylonian captivity and then accepted the Chaldeic (Aramaic = Syriaic) on which a small portion of the Old Testament is written (Böhm, 1897:7). In order to understand the language of the Bible they had to study it in the same way as the Christians and Muslims had to centuries later.

Although at the beginning the conditions and the criteria of the languages used in the liturgical books were the same in all the three religions – they were written in the everyday speech of the common people – later, due to different dogmas and traditions, the situation changed.

In the first centuries AD the Christians held to the principles of Paul expressed in his letter 2 to the Corinthians 3:6, according to which not the written law is important but its spirit. The same thought is made even more explicit in his letter 1 to the Corinthians 14:11:

“But if I do not know the language being spoken, the person who uses it will be a foreigner to me and I will be a foreigner to him.” (Good News Bible, Today’s English Version, The Bible Societies, Collins Fontana, 1977)

Some verses later, he once again underlines the importance of native language-use in church service:

“But in church worship I would rather speak five words that could be understood, in order to teach others, than speak thousand of words in strange tongues.” (14:19), (Good News Bible, 1977)

The Jewish tradition at this time did not differ very much from the Christian one because both of them used the Greek Septuaginta (a very literal translation of the Old Testament, see – Barr, 1975:325). However, in the course of time the authority of this version began to be questioned by the Jews. They gradually came to the conviction that only the Hebrew text could be really relied on.

We have to admit that in medieval Hebrew theology there existed tendencies emphasizing the importance of peculiar language forms in the Writings; nevertheless, we cannot speak about a strict sticking to the letters of the Tora (and not to the sense) in the Jewish religion. The basis for the different attitudes to the form of the sacred text can be found in the various interpretations of the divine revelation. Although it was generally accepted that the Bible, God’s word, was

revealed by God to man, some Jewish theologians, however, interpreted God's words only theologically (as a sense), while for others the revelation was a linguistical notion as well implying the sacredness of the form of the text, too(see: Seckler, 1981:89–90).

A more radical opposition of the two conceptions is only the product of later times, when the followers of the Reformed Judaism declared that the biblical books were written (only) with divine inspiration and in this sense the linguistic approach has lost its importance. The progress of this conception went parallel with the general ideas of reform in 19th century Europe. As a result, after a series of smaller translations the whole Old Testament was published in Budapest in 1907. It should be noted, however, that the primary purpose of this translation was to provide a better understanding of the Bible and it was not meant for liturgical use (Bottyán, 1982:102–105).

For the Christians the Latin Vulgata (406 AD) with its “*sensus de sensu*” philosophy of translation served as a reliable source for almost a thousand year even after the collapse of the Roman Empire. St. Jerome’s work, in spite of its high philological quality, anticipated the problems of translating sacred books.

The Bible and the liturgy from the point of pragmatics are complicated acts of communication where God’s word is communicated in human speech and is interpreted by the people. All the symbols, gestures and speech are means of this communication which also express man’s acceptance of the divine revelation. Communion, songs, worship, thanksgiving and the characteristic features of the language used in the liturgy (at least according to the opinion of some theologians and linguists) make up a symbolic system. Changing one part of the system can upset or distort the whole meaning – the human acceptance of the divine revelation (Thurneysen, 1964: 192–206). But here arises another question: can human language be an adequate means in this communicative act, when, on the one side we have God, described by the Bible as a state of peace, repose and absolute eternity, and man on the other side with his limited, always changing language? Has man the right to force his own language on God?

According to Muslim theologians there cannot be any right for man before Allah. Man should renounce all his personal freedom and obey the Almighty (Thivollier, 1963:31). The language of the Koran, therefore, has been preserved in its original form.

Christian liturgies – at least in the early times – did not restrict the use of vernaculars; therefore, in the early centuries we have Greek, Latin, Armenian, Syriac, Coptic, Gothic and later Slavic in liturgical use (Csanádi, 1992:70). In the following centuries, however, this tendency changed, Catholic church-authorities got more cautious, afraid of the heresies and distortions of the dogma. The use of vernaculars was restricted to the explanation of the tenets and to religious teaching. The existence of a large number of biblical quotations in medieval chronicles all over Europe testify to the fact that if not the whole Bible, at least its most important parts were translated into local languages well before the Reformation (Nemeskürty, 1990:16). It was a common tradition – and it is even now a missionaric practice – to read out passages from the Bible before sermons in the language of the believers.

It should be pointed out that behind the linguistic conservatism of the Latin and Greek Churches lay theological considerations as well, and not simply concern about the inadequacy of local languages to express the sacred thoughts of the canonical works.

The differences concerning liturgical languages between the Latin and Greek Churches came to be felt more distinctly only at the time of Reformation. Luther's Bible-translation and his introducing vernacular into the church service called forth such a prompt reaction from the Catholic Church that in a short time there appeared as many Catholic translations as there were Protestant. Bible-translations published decades earlier than Luther's (in Italy, France, Bohemia, see: Vogel, 1962) also show that the need for understanding the Bible was a common European cultural demand. The Trient-Council (1542), however, did not change the Catholic Church's position to the liturgical language.

The Orthodox Church both in Greece and Russia was to a certain degree – at least geographically – protected from the innovations of Reformation. In Byzantium the struggle for the purity of the liturgical (and literary) language can be connected with the influence

of Hesychasm. The “Atticizing” tendency aimed at a purified literary language has been trying to revive the standards of Attic Greek since the first century A.D. This archaizing style was only intensified by the Hesychastic attitude to language according to which a word itself was the essence of the phenomenon. It was not an abstraction which could be substituted by any synonym. The consequence of this theory has been seen for centuries in Orthodox territories. The Slavonic and Greek languages were not far removed in structure and lexis from the liturgical languages, and when copying the manuscripts local elements could get into the text. After centuries these seemingly small changes amounted to considerable alteration. Hesychasm and the “Atticizing-movement” created a kind of natural strain slowing down the changes.

These Greek developments had a strong impact on Church-Slavic in Bulgaria and Russia (Second South Slavic Influence). Grammarians and Church-leaders tried to create a uniform Church Slavic following the Cyrillo-Methodian models and in this way purify it from Bulgarian, Serbian and Russian elements (see: Talev, 1973.) Members of one generation did not feel the influence of the local language in the texts and might have thought the alterations brought into the canonical Church-Slavic by Church authorities in the 17th century to be heretical. This reform and misunderstanding of the reform caused a serious crisis in Russia, splitting up the Orthodox Church and depriving one part of the population from essential human rights (Old believers).

Both opposing parties thought that by changing the sacred text they changed the meaning of the whole, only their perspectives were different: the Old believers – from the perspective of the present, the reformers (Nikonians) from the perspective of past.

In effect, Hesychasm theory has similar views with modern conceptions about poetical language but, at the same time, some of its ideas can be traced back to Panini. They have in common the concept that not only the elements but their structure and hierarchy jointly make up the “work” – literary or mystical. A component of a structure can be songs (sounds), words (graphic signs, sentences and other visual or aural signs. (LaBauve), 1992:240–246). The hypersemantyc meaning postulated by modern linguists for poetic

language resembles the role of liturgical language in Hesychastic interpretation. (see in detail: Weinreich, 1963. 150–171). Strangely enough, Panini's efforts made some thousand years ago to describe Sanskrit aimed at something similar. He was anxious to revive not only the graphic form of a Sanskrit word but its sounding as well (hence his detailed phonetic descriptions). He assumed that in liturgical use both originally written and pronounced words had identical value (M. Fehér, 1993–94, 606–625).

Catholic and Protestant Bible-translations of the Reformation period had a strong influence on the literary languages in Europe (the *Károli* and *Káldy* in Hungary, the *King James* version in England and *Luther's* in Germany). The authority of these first translations, however, proved to be so great that the correctors of later centuries dared to make only minor modifications in the language. Even 19-th century revisions did nothing more than correct the obsolete words and christological errors, thus preserving the archaic language. This method created a strange situation for the Protestant liturgical language. It was on the way to becoming like the Church Slavic in "Slavia Orthodoxa", although it had nothing to do with Hesychasm. This unwillingly created situation led to a thorny contradiction between the principles of theology and the practice of language-use. As Protestant theoreticians claimed to revive the early Christian liturgies, this artificially supported archaic language stood in contrast with the principles (see: Bittinger, 1966).

A real change in "language-policy" was instituted by the Catholic and the Protestants only in the 20th century. This slow development was marked by transitional solutions which can be best demonstrated if we compare two missales (Catholic).

Magyar–latin misszálé (Budapest, 1944:438)

„*És elindulván, szokása szerint az Olajfák hegyére méne: követék pedig őt a tanítványok is.*” Lukács, 22:39

In this short passage there are three archaic forms: *méne*, *követék* – verb, past tense, *elindulván* – verbal adverb, past tens. Passages without biblical quotations do not have archaic forms.

Magyar misekönyv, (Budapest, 1967:400)

„*Az utolsó vacsora után Jézus elindult és szokása szerint kiment az Olajfák hegyére. Követték őt a tanítványok is.*” Lukács, 22:39



This quotation is literary Hungarian, without any archaisms.

English Bibles in the 20th century tried to preserve something of the “Bible-English”, especially those based on the King James version:

“But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayst thou the Son of man with a kiss?” Luke.22:48 (King James Version, Nashville, Tennessee, 1970)

In some versions the archaic personal pronouns: *thou, thee, thy, thine* and *ye* are preserved in sentences where God is addressed in direct speech:

“Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup of Me: yet not My will, But Thine be done.” Luke. 22:42 (New American Standard Bible, La Habra, 1977).

Without any archaism is published the Good News Bible (1966), in up-to-date language, “...in common English – that is the idiom which is used in common by all strata of English-speaking society as a means of communication, a spoken idiom rather than a literary one.” (Bruce, 1979:260)

The Protestants in Europe followed the suggestions of the United Bible Society and similar editions appeared in most countries (see the opinion of the Hungarian language lector, Lőrinczy, 1978). The language in service-books, however, is still not homogenous.

The Catholic versions after the Vatican Council II (1963–65), in the sense of the “*aggiornamento*” (Latin: *accomodatio*) accepted the modern literary languages for Bible-translations and liturgical use (but did not suggest the spoken idiom preferred by the United Bible Society – see the opinion of the Hungarian language lector: Ruzsicky, 1966.) The English – American Catholic editions generally follow the competent standards of the International Committee on English in Liturgy. For biblical quotation they rely on the New American Bible (1970).

According to the intentions of the Vatican Council II, Catholic liturgies are held in modern literary languages or in Latin (rarely).

Present situation:

All the more interesting is the situation in our day when scientific study of the Bible (historical, hermeneutical, linguistic etc.) transcends the barriers set by different confessions. Christians, Jews

and scholars of other denominations freely make use of each other's work. The technique of Bible-translations came to be determined by the international rules of linguistics and history, and now there cannot be any accusation against Catholics using the Vulgata as their source. But an agreement on the exact wording of the Bible is still ahead and the ecumenical, interconfessional editions claiming it in their titles (e.g. *La Bible Oecumenique*, 1969, Catholic, New International Version, 1963, Protestant) are in reality only the start of the process to "truly ecumenical" editions (Bruce, 1979:216).

In addition to the doctrinal divergencies, modern Bible-translations differ in language style, too, preferring either literary, dignified and archaic, or common style. Liturgical languages also reflect this diversity in style.

Although Catholic and Protestant liturgical language-use, in general, is based on similar principles influenced by modern theories in "translatorica" (i.e. translation should convey the same meaning for the reader as the original did for its contemporary readers), in practice there are still differences.

One of the reasons for this can be the fact that the Protestants did not jettison phrases, words and grammatical structures established by liturgical or literary tradition (see: Lőrinczy, 1978:390). It is common knowledge that the native language was strongly influenced by the Protestant biblical language in Protestant areas. The modern Hungarian Protestant translation changed the most frequent archaic verb forms and perfective verbal adverbs, but some stylistically archaic passive forms and lexical units still remained:

Károli Version, Revised, 1927. Matthew, 28:19

„Elmenvén ezért, tegyetek tanítványokká minden népeket, megkeresztelvén őket...”

New Version, 1975, (Protestant)

„Menjetek el tehát, tegyetek tanítvánnyá minden népet, megkeresztelve őket ...”

The archaic perfective verbal adverbs – *elmenvén, megkeresztelvén* – were changed to *–menjetek el* –(imperative) and *– megkeresztelve* – (verbal adverb).

The Hungarian Protestants defended the use of the passive voice (rarely used in Hungarian) maintaining that if we avoid using it, the

subjects of the sentences are left indefinite and in this way it is not known who acted (felvétetik – Luke 17:35).

Protestant Slovak Bible-editions mark the archaic features with other linguistic means:

- a. with the vocative forms of proper nouns (Luke 22:48)
- b. with frequent use of verbal adverbs (Luke 22:39, 22:44, Praha, 1969).

In the Russian Protestant Bible this marker is the great number of perfective adverbs (Luke 22:39, 22:40, Moscow, 1968).

The editions of the United Bible Society (Good News, Die Gute Nachricht) with their everyday, spoken language represent excellent, easily readable translations but none the less they run into difficulties when councils (British, American, or German) decide about the linguistic standard of liturgical languages.

The Orthodox Slavs' liturgical language is the product of continuous modifications of Old Church Slavonic in the 18th century. As a more radical reform could have repeated the situation brought about in the 17th century, these modifications did not move the language really closer to the modern idiom. The Old Believers, dissatisfied with any official change at all, use the 16th-century variant of the Old Church-Slavic. In any case, the members of the Russian Orthodox Church are dependent on modern translations (available only since the end of the 19th century) if they want to understand the Bible or the liturgy.

## **Conclusion**

At present major liturgical languages in Europe can be divided into three groups:

### **I. Ancient languages:**

- a. Hebrew – used by Jews
- b. Greek – used by Greeks and Greek Catholics (on occasion)
- c. Latin – used by Roman Catholics (on occasion)
- d. Arabic – used by Muslims

### **II. Modified ancient languages:**

- a. Old Church-Slavic (16th-century standard) – used by Russian Orthodox Old Believers
- b. Old Church-Slavic (18th-century standard) – used by the Orthodox and Greek Catholics in „Slavia – Orthodoxa”

### III. Native languages:

- a. slightly archaic variants – used by Protestants
- b. literary variants – used by Roman Catholics and in non-Slavic countries by Greek Catholics

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CONRAD'S 'SECRET GARDEN'

What we call the beginning is often the end  
And to make an end is to make a beginning.  
The end is where we start from.  
(T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*)

**Abstract:** The corpus serving for this essay on Conrad's place among the most important British writers of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century is *Heart of Darkness*.

Joseph Conrad's major themes and artistic qualities are approached from two convergent perspectives generated by discourse and authority respectively. The major aim of the essay is to offer a late twentieth century perspective of Conrad's search for truth about myth and faith, the possibility or impossibility of the artistic representation of reality. It was the intention of the author to convince his readers that tradition and modernism, or rather post-modernism and post-colonialism seem to be the key-words when reassessing Conrad's oeuvre.

Conrad's interpretation of contrast between light and darkness in *Heart of Darkness* sums up and revises many of the questions formulated in different ways by the writers and philosophers belonging to the Victorian and modern period. The pattern of perpetual progression – and regression – shaping determines a dual discourse that is reminiscent of that employed by the agnostics. Yet *Heart of Darkness* famously attempts to interpret the ills of the so-called civilised world through powerful criticism of imperialism, denouncing it as propagator of darkness under the mask of the emissary of light and progress.

The central themes underlying the novella are then centered around imminent destruction and its official version as development, and through the fictionally supported strategy of 'intellectual coma,' attempt to revive the myths acknowledging with certainty the existence of God, without ignoring the fear regarding the collapse of this myth. Myth and reality journey together to the heart of the universe to be reconciled or destroyed, because in Conrad's perception the annihilation of God's authority over the universe is not the source of its liberation, but an enormous loss. Man is not endowed with the moral strength to master the responsibility that fell back onto him in a world characterised by the disappearance of the Almighty Father. This universe, Conrad tells us, is indifferent and amoral as man has lost his privileged position in the biblical and the natural scheme and progress contradicts all its promises. There are novels in which Conrad suggests that one can, even if only for a moment, reinstate the transcendental authority of the moral order, but in most of his novels, novellas and short stories he seems to suggest that the secularisation of Western culture makes man's attempt to interpret the world around him impossible. Still, Conrad insists on the impossibility of discarding the traditional interpretation and explores man's various attempts at recreating the power of myth in a universe he feels is morally incoherent. Nowhere in Conrad's works is this duality, the compulsory presence of socio-historical reality and the character's insistence on the necessity of altering it, so clearly envisaged as in *Heart of Darkness*. Marlow refuses the idealisation of the appointed task at the very beginning of the story when he tells his aunt that his role is not that of an emissary of light, a lower sort of apostle. Although he reminds her that the company is run for profit, his narration is characterised by strong Biblical overtones. His urge to explore the heart of darkness seems as inexplicable as his refusal to give up the duality of his discourse when sharing his experience of the journey with us. The paradox is generated by Conrad's insistence on the idea that myth can be reinstated, even if only for a moment. Marlow is not going to experience the proximity of God in his attempt to interpret the prehistoric world he visits, and the Biblical terms obsessing him will always be strongly contrasted by a reality he cannot transcend either. He denies authority over that world on as



many occasions as the possibility arises, but the attempt itself is sufficient to trap him. He falls victim to a modernist axiom: the modern man is the victim of a universe violated in the name of social and moral advancement. The impossibility of mastering the modern world and returning to an initial state of innocence is again – as on so many occasions – expressive of Conrad's temperamental scepticism. Similar relevance is conferred in the book to the 'homesickness' and the failures of the victim of the consciousness of Imperialist Britain.

Conrad is aware of the necessity of what Northrop Frye calls the mythological universe<sup>1</sup> in his attempt to support the narrative survey of the socio-historical dilemmas formulated in his novels and short stories. His novels are not restricted to his own personal, or his narrator's encounters with the, for him, paradoxical value-judgements and truth value of the early twentieth century. Conrad insists on the presence of the mythological universe in a world that is deconstructing its own mythological status. The Thames is an interminable waterway linking the dark-aired city with the sea "holding our hearts together through long periods of separation,"<sup>2</sup> and it informs us of the possibility of transcending time, space and divine meanings. The Congo is the medium for a heroic attempt to reinterpret the meanings of this mythical universe by imposing the old metaphor on its misinterpretations. "The tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth"<sup>3</sup> under the overcast sky reveals the impossibility of interpretation in the mythological universe established by the narrative. Christian mythology seems to fail at this point. The attempt to bring back the harmony based on its teachings and wisdom lead us even deeper into the "heart of an immense darkness."<sup>4</sup> These three stations are telling of a conceptual unity supporting the imaginative unity of the Conradian text. Marlow, meditating on the legitimacy or illegitimacy of his lie, of any benevolent lie, does not kneel down in front of an altar, but sits apart "in the pose of a meditating Buddha,"<sup>5</sup> suggesting that if Christian mythology is not enough, other mythological expeditions are possible and desirable. Conrad's treatment of the Christian myth,

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<sup>1</sup> Frye, Northrop: *The Great Code*, Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982

<sup>2</sup> Conrad, Joseph: *Heart of Darkness*, London: Bantam Books, 1989, 3-4

<sup>3</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 132

<sup>4</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 132

<sup>5</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 132

however, is given a different interpretation through the centrality of his insistence on the attempt to re-establish, even if only for a moment, the harmony of man and God. The Conradian insistence on being suspended in this Biblical idyllic status in *Lord Jim* took Jim East. The similarities and differences between the trials of the two books can easily be established and might prove quite relevant.

The myth of innocence recreated by Jim is interpreted mainly by Jim, who maintains his status as the son of the British Empire. Kurtz identifies with the position of a pagan god of his own creation and thus the idyllic environment ceases to be idyllic and refuses to provide him with the awareness of the myth that he is trying to recreate. It is Marlow who attempts to impose Christian value judgements on the world dominated by Kurtz, but the Christian myth is incompatible with the pagan legend, although the central metaphor of that idolatry comes to dominate the twentieth century man, the unquestionable protagonist of the novella. Ivory generates power and mystifies its quality as dead matter. The myth of the Congo assumes the quality of a structure within a structure: it has, just like the book taken as a whole, a total structure in that it starts and ends as a meditation on myth and power, enclosing the demonstration of how imperialism turns against itself and its idols. The truth about the creation of Kurtz's world is revealed, as is the Apocalypse of that world, and this inquiry never ceases to be suspended between the two meditations set in the civilised world as they serve as its beginning and end. Through analogy, transfer of symbols and metaphors the two worlds and their respective mythologies overlap, creating new meanings to both levels. The Biblical environment cannot be equated with the possibility of a new act of creation and as a consequence the hope of the alienated twentieth century man to reinforce his faith in a universe governed by Christian myth and get reconciled with his own status in this century is undermined. The world envisaged by the book does not succumb to its interpretation of itself as a living hell because it comes to be dominated by the coherence of its socio-historical and mythical dimensions, further perfected by the dissonant quality of its use of mythological and linguistic metaphors.

As we have already mentioned, in reference to his mission in the service of the company Marlow, dismisses the idea of his being a lower kind of apostle, but paradoxically he adopts all through his journey a Biblical discourse.

His mythical discourse becomes clearly the expression of progression and regression, of the erotic and the thanatic quality. Progression is used here to express the hero's attempt to interpret the 'civilising mission' of the company using constructive religious discourse: "pilgrims", "apostles". This discourse in itself comes to be employed within a thanatic context, meaning the death of that discourse: the concrete noun objects are defined through portentous and vague qualifications: the pilgrims are faithless, the apostles are false, and we become participants in a "weary pilgrimage amongst hints for nightmares."<sup>6</sup> Progression is not the expression of the erotic, but of thanatos, the desire to die, to be swallowed up by the uncertainty defining the expedition as the rival discourse deconstructs the initial meaning of progression, the process intended to clarify meanings having mythical dimensions. Regression into the 'primitive' world is, on the other hand, simultaneously governed by Eros, the desire to chart the mythical parallels that might create order in and love of what is assessed by virtue of prejudice as 'prehistoric', that is, pre-Christian, chaos. Marlow is dominated by the desire to experience this chaos. The fact that he does not idealise his appointed task contrasts his insistence on his status of the person chosen for this mission. Marlow repeatedly states that he is not one of them, that is he is isolated among those people and he has no point of contact with them.<sup>7</sup> The Europeans he so insistently separates himself from become the agents of the decaying West, and Marlow alone is granted the right to set out in search of God. Considering his standing, his search can be defined as an attempt to reintegrate the modern man into a state he seems to have lost forever. His pilgrimage in spite of its objective, physical progression remains essentially static, because its real destination is, and remains, a spiritual one. The snake that charmed him,<sup>8</sup> becomes a recurring motif and even the river Congo comes to be perceived as "an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea ...."<sup>9</sup> The religious terminology and the biblical allusion to the snake, together with the loss of the "blank space of delightful mystery – a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. ... [which] had become a place of

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<sup>6</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 63

<sup>7</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 61

<sup>8</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 53

<sup>9</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 52

darkness”<sup>10</sup> seem to disclose the heart of the matter. The heart of light, the Garden of Eden becomes the heart of darkness that is hell. No wonder Marlow remarks “I felt as though, instead of going to the centre of the continent, I were about to set off for the centre of the earth.”<sup>11</sup> In spite of this comprehensive picture, Marlow insists on revisiting the Garden of Eden, which he only dreamt of in his childhood. The whispers he can hear from the secret garden tempt him to open the gate, and, as if in a spiritual coma, he can hear those voices although the garden is filled with the breath of death and it offers a sublime view of misery and greed. The meaning of the words dies, and the religious overtones are persistently subverted by the rival discourse already noted: the ‘merry dance of death and trade’<sup>12</sup> becomes the spiritual destination formulated by this discourse. Adjectives gain more power, conferring a mystical quality to concrete imagery unfolding through the journey and practically blocking interpretation as the “implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention.”<sup>13</sup> F. R. Leavis is mistaken when he writes that Conrad tries :

to impose on his readers and on himself ... a “significance” that is merely an emotional insistence on the presence of what he can’t produce. ... [an] insistence [that] betrays the absence, the willed “intensity,” the nullity. He is intent on making a *virtue out of not knowing what he means*.<sup>14</sup>

Conrad is actually making a virtue of showing that no meaning can be attached to a world suspended between belief and disbelief. Through the two clearly distinguishable discourses Conrad shows the impossibility of the modern man’s dream to reinstate the Biblical world parallel to his insistence on the attempt to return to that primary state of wholeness. The search for the moral meanings, and truth of human existence through progression and regression, through the thanatic and the erotic desire are revealed as non-definable. The metaphysical paradox is complemented by the physical paradox and

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<sup>10</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 52

<sup>11</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 60

<sup>12</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 62

<sup>13</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 92-93

<sup>14</sup> Leavis, F. R. : *The Great Tradition*, London: Chato & Windus, 1979, 180

the infinite negativity is further generated by the positivity of the repeatedly formulated presence of the Christian myth. At the textual level the adjectival epithets kill the instant meaning of the concrete nouns, but at the same time contribute to the extension of the overall mystical quality of the search for truth, throwing it into the obscure world of the past. As we have already stated, the destination of the pilgrimage itself is suspended between the two kinds of discourse. The deconstructive discourse undermines the initial metaphysical terms Marlow uses. The impossibility to apply metaphysical discourse to a quest that is declaredly of religious quality in the context of the *Heart of Darkness* is in itself purveyor of the meaning of the book convincingly formulated by the title of the novella: the meaning searched for has dissolved in the heart of darkness. Marlow himself is misled by the false deity reigning over the world, although that world is partly of his own creation. He discovers that Kurtz is rather a Cain than the Adam he had hoped to find. The man in the Garden of Eden is not Adam, but a shaman idol characterised by the infinite negativity already mentioned. This also means that the Garden created by God to host Adam and Eve is the realm of "many powers of darkness."<sup>15</sup> Karl Miller's interpretation of Kurtz as Marlow's 'secret sharer' and 'adversary self' seems to stand the test of the text, but he attaches too far-reaching meanings to Marlow's lie to Kurtz's intended.<sup>16</sup> Kurtz, the double, becomes the projection of the loss of the noble ideals searched for in that particular geographical and atemporal context. Identification with his 'social' double dictates Marlow the terms of nightmare. Once civilisation comes to be identified with savagery through the parallel identification of Marlow with Kurtz, the negation of the negation seems to be the only solution out of the motionless nightmare dominating that world. The horror faced by Kurtz is Marlow's victory over his dark double, the act being identical to the resurrected painting's horrified cry of joy seeing dead Dorian Gray's nightmarish body. No wonder Marlow does not give up his attempt to transcend reality and reach its metaphysical meanings. It is only that he does not adopt the posture of a Christ figure and his position is reminiscent of a meditating Buddha.

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<sup>15</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 116

<sup>16</sup> Miller, Karl: *Doubles: Studies in Literary History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985

## II

Britain's status as the greatest imperial power of the world brought enormous benefits to the mother country, but it also created a set of disturbing dilemmas. The colonies, those remote countries, following certain anthropological expertise, came to be declared the cradle of human civilisation. Any journey to Africa could then be interpreted as a journey back into the past. There was also the idea of the white man's 'superiority' over the tribes of Africa. The idea that as a result of development the present should be superior to the past is not paradoxical in itself. However, Conrad seems to suggest at the beginning of the story that if one travels from this amoral present into the past there are at least three possibilities the traveller into the past can choose from: it can offer him a glimpse into the source of that amoral status by contrasting it to the moral one; the traveller can choose to abandon the amoral world and live in the moral one; or he can return to the amoral world with the ambition to save the world he started from.

All three alternatives fail, because the 'civilised' man is faced with an altered version of his past.

Marlow, the son of the good old continent wants to undertake an enterprise which is even more difficult, if not impossible. Henry James's Americans were at a loss when they had to amend the system of values dictated by their home environment in an equally 'civilised' world. Conrad's European cannot cope with the system of values – be they moral, ethical, social or ideological – even in his own country. But the endeavour is the projection of a historical fact, it is part of the problems inclusive of Europe's, and implicitly, Britain's colonial expansion, generating an overwhelming anxiety for the late Victorian mind. Conrad insists on the mythical implications of the 'civilised' man's journey to the 'primitive' world and he fully explores the dangers awaiting his characters. In *Heart of Darkness*, the 'prehistoric' world becomes an expression of a double sense of dislocation in the Congo. Kurtz is the white man who 'went native', but he cannot resist the 'idol' of the white man which is ivory and all it stands for. The basic theme underlying the novella might gain new dimensions, but it remains essentially the same: the collapse of the myths which had postulated the existence of God, the transcendental authority of the moral order, and the privileged position of man

within the natural and social scheme which has turned him into victim of his own desires and consciousness.

Conrad's image of Africa is determined by Western imagination in *Heart of Darkness*. This allows for its interpretation as a voyage into the unknown, incomprehensible depths of the human self, the already mentioned Biblical dimensions implied. As Goonetilleke puts it, Marlow's sensation that instead of reaching the centre of the African continent, they were approaching the centre of the earth marks, a fantastic intuition on Conrad's part in the light of the current Noah's Arc theory stating that:

Humans evolved recently, probably less than 200,000 years ago, in sub-Saharan Africa and then migrated 100,000 years later to take over the world [...] Humanity's ancestral home was Africa – for gene analysis shows African people have a longer evolutionary history than other races and are probably the fountainhead of mankind.<sup>17</sup>

As we have already mentioned in Conrad's time, the 'primitive' occupied an ambiguous place as both the domain of contemporary 'savages' as well as a reminder of the past of Europe itself. Thus the Conradian hero is searching back into the remote past for an image of himself and the Victorian society he comes from. This is why Marlow, the participant omniscient narrator of *Heart of Darkness*, has to face the clashing of past and present, individual and society, the 'civilised' world and the 'primitive' world. But the 'prehistoric' world Marlow faces is unintelligible for him.

Kurtz, the character purporter of symbolic meanings of the 'civilised' man, has to perish because he is not able to maintain his cultural identity when trying to subdue the mystery of the 'prehistoric' world. The cross-cultural contacts prove dangerous to both the 'civilised' and the 'primitive'. The already mentioned false confidence of the Victorian era, namely that the British were at the top of the world because they were the most enlightened, progressive, civilised race in history, is also challenged by Conrad in the *Heart of Darkness*, although the colony visited is the Belgian Congo.

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<sup>17</sup> Robin McKie, 63

Through Marlow, Conrad adopts a central observer, a first person narrator in the Jamesian mode. The perspective is intended to support the British, and the universal implications of imperialism and its dehumanising effects on the representatives of both the 'civilised' and the 'primitive' world. If on one level *Heart of Darkness* is a serious commentary on imperialism, on another level it is an exciting story providing a comprehensive, believable, yet unsettled exploration of the human soul.

Marlow's tone sounds honest, because he quite often reminds us of his limits in understanding and interpreting the world he set to explore. He lies though in the course of the novel (when he intimidates the brickmaker, to Kurtz, to the Russian, and to Kurtz's fiancée), but he is trying to be as honest as possible when relating the story of the white man in dark Africa. It also should be noted that Marlow is an Englishman who finds a job with a Belgian imperial company in Africa providing the contemplation of the problems of racism, colonialism and nation extended to international, universal dimensions. The Thames becomes the symbol of this universal quality having strong British implications when at the opening of the novella, Marlow, the omniscient participant narrator, refers to the river crossing London by saying that:

The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of the day, after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth.<sup>18</sup>

The tranquil dignity at the decline of the day could easily be associated with the state of the British Empire as interpreted by many of the Victorians. The spatial extension suggested by the above lines is joined by an extension in time from present to past, as if anticipating the meanings of the story that follows. Marlow puts the imperialism of the British in line with that of the Romans, and he formulates quite a serious criticism of Roman colonialism and colonialism in general:

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<sup>18</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 8



They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind – it is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. The conquest of the earth, which mostly means that taking away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much.<sup>19</sup>

Still he finds justification for British imperialism in its efficiency and its idea, certainly exposing awareness of the unconscious hypocrisy he betrayed in *Lord Jim*. When Marlow says that it is good to see the vast amount of red on the map (red stands for the British colonies), there is a touch of nationalism in his statement. But his loyalty to the British Empire has also elements of a kind of positive discrimination based on historical facts, namely that British Imperialism had become so experienced that it was able to rectify at least some of the worst features of its previous stages ill-famed for some of its practices like slave-trade. Marlow is sent to the Belgian Congo, the population of which dropped drastically during the European rule. The Belgians, the French, the Portuguese and the Spanish were extremely aggressive towards the native populations in their colonies. Clearly, Marlow's national blindness is part of Conrad's themes in his fiction.

Conrad's presentation of the imperial theme begins in London and is continued in Brussels, culminating finally in the Congo. Marlow speaks of London as a place that has been one of the dark places of the world, but the imperial theme is projected against a European context (even Kurtz is of mixed parentage), since he intends to ask the question whether the white man is man enough to stand the tests the Romans had to stand. The answer will never be formulated because the novella remains open-ended. Marlow's experience of Africa interpreted at this level is inconclusive.

In Brussels, the headquarters of the Belgian Empire, Marlow is still confident:

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<sup>19</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 9

It appeared, however, I was also one of the Workers, with a capital -you know. Something like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle.<sup>20</sup>

But clearly, a lower sort of apostle hasn't got the power to bring light into the darkness of the Congo, and this revelation makes him feel in a very short time a kind of imposter. When Marlow leaves Brussels for the Congo, he is witness to the real face of imperialism:

Once, I remember, we came upon a man-of-war anchored off the coast. there wasn't even a shed there, and she was shelling the bush. It appears the French had one of their wars going on thereabouts [...] We gave her letters (I heard the men in that lonely ship were dying of fever at the rate of three a-day) and went on. We called at some more places with farcical names, where the merry dance of death and trade goes on in a still and earthy atmosphere as of an overrated catacomb<sup>21</sup>  
...

There is an air of alienation and frightening absurdity surrounding the man-of-war and the colonies. In *Heart of Darkness*, realities outside Marlow are more important than his own reactions since he proves a deficient 'narrative filter'. Marlow, the governing narrative force, is hesitant because he is not sure that he can impart his impressions; what's more there are frequent instances when he doubts the validity of his own understanding. He is characterised by a kind of compulsive detachment, the role of which is to protect him against falling victim to the world he is trying to interpret. The distance is that between 'civilisation' and the 'primitive' world, and Marlow's is also the detachment of the present when investigating its own past. The different perspectives are used by Conrad to illustrate the complexity of the matter. Thus the realities outside Marlow become more important, and in some sense refuse the authority of the narrator over their existence (At times Marlow is refused the capacity of shaping the plot of the novella.). This explains why Marlow quite often finds it very difficult to translate what he sees. His detachment determined some critics to label the book as racist

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<sup>20</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 21

<sup>21</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 21

and culturally imperialist, but *Heart of Darkness* suggests more of a sense of psychological discontinuity generated by the above mentioned hardships of the 'civilised' man when trying to understand the 'prehistoric' man, than racial prejudice. These problems are openly stated by Marlow in the book. He renegotiates these difficulties with his listeners within the text, just as Conrad attempts to translate an altered version of his experiences in Africa for his audience through the novella. Marlow tells his listeners that he wants to tell them what he saw. The sights which Marlow perceives are not easily imparted; thus, the language in which experiences are related is notoriously inexact. Nevertheless, the sense of sight, of clarity of vision, is an important if compromised value of the novella and it clearly negates the idea of the superiority of the 'civilised' world over the 'primitive' world. Marlow is after all the 'agent' of civilisation unable to comprehensively interpret the world he visits. Sight, the ability to see things, is obsessively repeated in the novella. The Harlequin's highest praise for Kurtz is, after all, that "he made me see things – things."<sup>22</sup> At the beginning of the second part of the novella, Marlow says: "As for me, I seemed to see Kurtz for the first time."<sup>23</sup>

As we have already stated, Marlow is aware of the tremendous difficulties of relating the visual truth to its deeper meanings and to his listeners and he cries out in frustration: "Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything?"<sup>24</sup> Marlow's exasperation is expressive of a palpable sense of dislocation on his side in the Congo. The reader who expects the mistiness to clear as Marlow progresses towards the heart of darkness and towards the revelation promised at the beginning of the journey is faced with a thickening fog in which meaning seems to be swallowed. As he looks out from the steamboat, shrouded in mist, he clearly formulates this dislocation:

She (the steamer) had been on the point of dissolving, and a misty strip of water, perhaps two feet broad, around her. The rest of the world was nowhere, as far as our eyes and ears were concerned. Just

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<sup>22</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 55

<sup>23</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 34

<sup>24</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 30

nowhere. Gone, disappeared; swept off without leaving a whisper or a shadow behind.<sup>25</sup>

The failure of even the empirical perception of the dark, alien and unknown continent is clearly stated by these lines. Marlow in consequence does not comment on the outer realities but his description rises to a dramatic tone. Avoiding the interference of his inner state, he controls his compassion so that there is no trace of sentimentality, although the plight of the black labourers is clearly formulated:

Near the same tree two more bundles of acute angles sat with their legs drawn up. One, with his chin propped on his knees, stared at nothing, in an intolerable and appalling manner: his brother phantom rested its forehead, as if overcome with a great weariness; and all about others were scattered in every pose of controlled collapse, as in some picture of a massacre or pestilence ...<sup>26</sup>

The narrative restraint intensifies the horror of the scene where people are dying slowly, the cause being the pernicious effect of the 'civilising' process. Marlow's language is symptomatic of his predicament: his adjectives are not meant to define, his noun-objects are mainly abstract. His destination comes to be dissolved into the heart of darkness as his journey becomes a spiritual attempt, rather than an objective search for the station where Kurtz is dying. The discourse seems to submerge the initial terms of Marlow's quest and becomes expression of an anti-message. The difference between moral fictional attempt (Marlow's attempt to discover the truth about Kurtz) and amoral reality contribute to the central theme of the story.

The structure of *Heart of Darkness* is provided by Marlow's journey to and from the heart of Africa. Since the unifying centre of this linear structure is Marlow, his related experience seems to be of utmost relevance when trying to comprehend the truth about imperialism.

Marlow describes the Eldorado Exploring Expedition indignantly, and he is also critical of the key imperial agencies, the public

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<sup>25</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 41

<sup>26</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 27

companies and the local authorities. The central station is a nest of 'pilgrims' who are only interested in one idol and that is ivory:

There was an air of plotting about that station, but nothing came of it of course. It was unreal as everything else – as the philanthropic pretence of the whole concern, as their talk, as their government, as their show of work. The only real feeling was a desire to get appointed to a trading-post where ivory was to be had, so that they could earn percentages. They intrigued and slandered and hated each other only on that account – but as to effectually lifting a little finger – oh, no."<sup>27</sup>

Ivory becomes a leitmotif; it is to the Congo what silver is to Costaguana in *Nostramo*. It is the actual raw wealth, but it also has a symbolic application. Ivory is dead matter which is still shiny, expressing the paradox of Western civilisation in that it is certainly more often worshipped and it affects the situation in the Congo more than the 'civilised' man's by now lost faith in the Almighty. The object of Marlow's 'pilgrimage' is Kurtz, who is put on a kind of pedestal by those referring to him, and during the three-month stay at the Central Station Marlow becomes a kind of disciple to a deity of his own making. Kurtz becomes the anticipation of spiritual comfort, but Marlow realises that the Adam he had hoped to find is, in fact, a Cain.<sup>28</sup>

Kurtz abandons his faith and 'civilisation' although his greed for power and material wealth stems from recent developments of that world's distorted sense of what is right and what is wrong. He may have been successful in the ivory trade, but he becomes a captive of the Congo. He is the victim of the psychological and cultural anxieties caused by his attempt to cross the shadow-line into a more 'primitive' culture. Marlow's admission that he had been robbed of belief is also a verdict on the civilisation of which Kurtz has been representative. It is a situation symptomatic of Conrad, since as we have already mentioned, Conrad remained aware all his life of the plight of the perpetual border-dweller, and he classified himself as 'homo duplex'. The psychological implications allow for the

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<sup>27</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 39

<sup>28</sup> Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, 100

interpretation of Marlow's search for Kurtz as creating a kind of double of his own self, whereas Kurtz becomes a kind of double of Marlow. The frequent ambiguity of the personal pronouns when used in reference to himself and Kurtz is probably not accidental. Kurtz is trying to identify with the 'primitive' world. He is a border-dweller, a kind of madman whose madness is the result of mismanaged assimilation resulting in awkward cultural displacement. He gives up his identity trying to adopt a new one, but his sense of the acquired identity is the result of the reactions he managed to produce in the 'savages' whom he grows to threaten and rule. But these reactions are misleading and certainly fully contribute to the sense of displacement and disorientation in the case of Kurtz. Conrad in many instances depicts this alienation that leads to dislocation, as when Marlow states that:

There was nothing either above or below him – and I knew it. He had kicked himself loose of the Earth.<sup>29</sup>

It is clear that the reference does not concern the land of the Congo only. This image formulates the culmination of fears that displacement could lead to the loss of the self. Because Africa in *Heart of Darkness* is not simply a continent the map of which was geographically discovered, but, as Marlow often admits, it is the mysterious land where the lack of knowledge and genuine interest of the 'civilised pilgrims' proved insufficient for their survival. At the beginning of the novella Marlow sets out on a journey in search of the lost vitality of the West, the essential wholeness man has lost in the course of its material progress, the distinctly human godlike stature the late Victorians were not certain about anymore. His attempt is then the attempt to reintegrate the 'symbolic' and the 'real,' the 'sacred' and the 'profane.' Marlow himself is not fully aware of his motives determining his journey, but in his account we always feel an intense anticipation of Biblical significances: "I [...] could not shake off the idea [...] The snake had charmed me [...] I felt somehow I must get there..."<sup>30</sup> The limits of understanding Africa

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<sup>29</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 65

<sup>30</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 53

and the people populating it seem to persist. Marlow feels the impossibility of appropriating Africa to his Victorian perceptions:

We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness [...] We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet [...] The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us, who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled.<sup>31</sup>

Marlow admires the 'prehistoric' man:

They had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there.<sup>32</sup>

And Marlow's mission in this 'prehistoric' land is to find Kurtz and bring him back from the heart of darkness. Marlow admires Kurtz as well, in agreement with nearly all the characters, who present him as a great man.

The presentation of Kurtz occupies a few pages and he speaks very little, but he is discussed before and afterwards. Kurtz came to the Congo equipped with moral ideas and this places him in the eyes of Marlow above the other Europeans whose only purpose is:

To tear treasure out of the bowels of the land [...] with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe.<sup>33</sup>

Kurtz's report to the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs is sincere, but it is empty rhetoric, and in the postscript he suggests that all the 'brutes' should be exterminated. His humanitarian ideals when confronted with the heart of darkness prove futile and degenerate. Marlow's expectations prove to be false: all that remains of the Eden of his childhood is the serpent, immense and with his head in the sea. Marlow is given the awareness of the

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<sup>31</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 37

<sup>32</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 17

<sup>33</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 50

cruel farce which is the reality of the journey, the 'merry dance of death and trade' in which he takes part. Conrad seems to suggest that this is the only thing that can happen to the humanitarian pretences of imperialism. Marlow observes that Kurtz lost his authority over his own self and became a captive of the Congo. Kurtz is unable to resist the lure of the alien; life in the wilderness makes him physically ill twice and finally both his intellectual and physical integrity is undermined. He gives up his European identity and becomes a captive of his disturbed imagination in the dark continent. Kurtz shows no trace of the lofty ideals he declared when arriving to his post. Having shed all his formerly declared high ideals Kurtz betrays, exploits and terrorises the natives. He even corrupts them by employing African villagers to fight their fellow men exclusively for his benefit. The 'civilised' savage proves to be worse than the plain 'barbarian' he set to 'civilise.' In spite of his extremely short active presence, the character of Kurtz has preoccupied many of the readers of the novella. Critics have been trying to state the source of Kurtz's character and they identified it as being derived from Marlow's *Doctor Faustus*, the sixth book of the *Aeneid* (Hades), Dante's *Inferno* and the legend of Lucifer respectively. Kurtz's personality and fate most certainly stand for the ills of imperialism, but in the context of the other negative characters representative of colonialism, racism and malevolent greed he surely gains a new dimension. The Manager plots against Kurtz, but he is very cautious and even his evil is negative, weak and mean. The brickmaker is a spy, whom Marlow considers a 'papiermache' through whom one could poke one's finger without finding anything else but a 'little loose dirt'. These people cannot attain the stature of man while Kurtz is in possession of ideals and, in spite of his madness, he is man enough to face the darkness generated by imperialism when he revisits prehistoric places and times, he is man enough to be damned. His final cry: "The horror! The horror!" is interpreted by Marlow as a moral victory and a rejection of 'going native'; nevertheless, 'civilisation' is shown as suffering an overwhelming moral defeat. Marlow is trying to avoid being affected by his experience in Africa and maintains his honesty and humanity. Detached as he is, his mind still needs soothing after the nightmare he entered and finally managed to escape. After the



Congo journey he remarks: "It was not my strength that wanted nursing, it was my imagination that wanted soothing."<sup>34</sup> Against this socio-historical background, Kurtz's story is a journey into the depths of man's unconscious, revealed against the darkness generated by colonialism. The public theme and the personal theme are linked, and it is the public theme that brings out the personal theme and leads to its development. Just as in *Lord Jim*, the public theme is that of imperialism, and the personal theme is that of man confronted with the realities of this world and his own self.

Commonwealth literary criticism often accuses Conrad of racism, asserting that *Heart of Darkness* distorts truth and cultural reality about Africa. Chinua Achebe launches a serious attack against Conrad when he writes:

Conrad was a bloody racist [...] And the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanisation, which depersonalises a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. My answer is: No it cannot.<sup>35</sup>

Felix Mnthali argues much in the same way:

Conrad attacks Europe's scramble for Africa [...] This attack is all the same neutralised by Conrad's acceptance of on of the cornerstones of modern imperialism, namely, racism.<sup>36</sup>

Conrad himself admitted that he had no sufficient knowledge of Africa, and to avoid 'responsibility' for not portraying the natives of the continent and their traditions with the exactness of an anthropologist he uses Marlow in the novel as a mask for his limited knowledge and insight. Marlow's African journey begins and ends in Europe, and the final image of Brussels is pitched at a lower key than those of Africa. Marlow's reactions to the civilised world are similar to those of Swift's Gulliver returning to England:

I found myself back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome

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<sup>34</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 121

<sup>35</sup> Chinua Achebe, 788

<sup>36</sup> Felix Mnthali, 93

beer, to dream their insignificant silly little dreams. They trespassed upon my thoughts. They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretence, because I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew.<sup>37</sup>

Conrad states the necessity of “solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts”<sup>38</sup> as essential for an artist, and in the introduction to *Almayer's Folly* he refutes the criticism he has received for writing on ‘decivilised’ people:

And there is a bond between us and that humanity so far away [...] I am content to sympathise with common mortals, no matter where they live; in houses or in tents, in the streets under a fog, or in the forests behind the dark line of dismal mangroves that fringe the vast solitude of the sea. For their land – like ours – lies under the inscrutable eyes of the Most High.<sup>39</sup>

Sincere, straightforward and convincing. There are other examples to support the idea that racism is far from Conrad's intentions. In *A Personal Record*, for example, he writes:

An impartial view of humanity in all its degrees of splendour and misery together with a special regard for the rights of the unprivileged of this earth, not on any mystic ground but on the ground of simple fellowship and honourable reciprocity of services, was the dominant characteristic of the mental and moral atmosphere of the houses which sheltered my hazardous childhood – a matter of calm and deep conviction both lasting and consistent.<sup>40</sup>

The sense of mystery in *Heart of Darkness* certainly cannot be equated with covert racism, since the mystery is the shadow of the prehistoric times Europeans like Kurtz and Marlow are willing to face in Africa. Kurtz tries to surrender for the sake of understanding both past and present, but he becomes the victim of such a daring attempt. Marlow formulates this idea explicitly:

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<sup>37</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 120–1

<sup>38</sup> *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, xii

<sup>39</sup> *Almayer's Folly*, viii

<sup>40</sup> *A Personal Record*, vii

Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge?<sup>41</sup>

Marlow cannot find the answer to this dilemma, but experiences the temptation of such a perspective: Kurtz had stepped over the edge “while I [Marlow] had been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot.”<sup>42</sup> The Harlequin expresses awareness of a similar attraction to identify with this destructive mystery, when he states:

I went a little farther, ... then still a little farther – till I had gone so far I don’t know how I’ll ever get back.<sup>43</sup>

The Russian is a pastiche, he doesn’t have the power to totally immerse himself into the myth of Africa. But many of Conrad’s characters jump into the unknown. Remember Marlow’s words referring to Jim’s jumps. His first jump was the result of a similar attraction to the forces of evil in ‘civilisation’, his second jump conferred onto him the white man’s burden, but his inability to immerse himself definitely into the adoptive culture caused his ultimate failure. Kurtz ‘goes native’ and surrenders to the world he finds in the Congo and it is this that brings about his destruction. He is led by a definite feeling of superiority and pretends to act under the ‘white man’s burden’. The Congo is a mysterious land and has a destructive magic for the ‘civilised’ man, so Marlow cannot fulfil his task and bring Kurtz to Europe. After meeting the European woman who worshipped Kurtz, Marlow ends his story in the pose of a meditating Buddha, as if suggesting further meditation on the topic to the reader and the Thames is seen by him as leading to the heart of darkness generated by Western imperialism, the death of which is foreshadowed by Kurtz’s self-destructive attitude in the Congo. Marlow himself recovers to finish his self-appointed task ‘to dream the nightmare out to the end.’

The imperialist discourse in itself proved a failure. As we have already noted, the misreadings stemming from the assumption that

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<sup>41</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 68

<sup>42</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 69

<sup>43</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 54

the metaphysical aspects and their meanings can be ignored created the premises of Conrad's being called a racist.

It is true that one has the sensation that the two sections of this paper were speaking about two definitely different stories. Both analyses are possible but in themselves tend to ignore the truth about the book, and certainly cannot formulate the complex thematic implications of the novella. Therefore the third section of this paper will follow Conrad's implied stage directions. When Marlow adopts the posture of a Buddha he suggests further meditation on all the issues problematized in the reverse mode, an interpretation where reality cannot be separated, but should be interpreted in their interrelations. Since perception and clarity and mystery are approached through two visibly governing discourses alternatively assuming progressive and regressive qualities, identifying the third discourse container of the two governing ones seems to offer a most comprehensive perspective.

### III

The end of the novella clearly shows that we have read a work of self-reflexive introspection referring back to Marlow's insistence on the idea that he wants his listeners to see. The attempt is reminiscent of Kant's theory asserting that the outside world can only be understood if filtered through the interpretation of the individual's introspection. Marlow's uncertainty suggests the difficulties he faces when trying to define his own concept of self in relation to the world around him. To gain the dimensions of the representative 'particular' he has to extend the meanings of the immediate world around him to the dimensions of the universal. Objective reality cannot be changed. This means that the two lies we have mentioned are the openly formulated echoes of a deeper, more severe, hidden lie. The agent purporter of these lies as already noted belongs to the realm of discourse. The rhetoric of imperialism has already been shown in its rival relation to the rhetoric of metaphysics, but if we are right in sensing the imminent will to lie, there must be a third discourse realised through a virtually invisible rhetoric. We could define this discourse as pseudo-mythical realism. The function of this discourse is to chart the mental landscape of the protagonist suspended between the mythical and realistic discourses without obeying to any

of them and yet not dominating them. The strategy in itself is an enormous lie, since the protagonist's meditation persists from the opening lines to the last line, because the central theme is not altered, it remains intact. The function of this relatively sophisticated network of discourses is to maintain the hero's right to interpret the end of the search for self as a beginning for an identical search. The terminology used here does not belong to Conrad's time, since it is extensively based on modernist and postmodernist views. Marlow's interpretation of the Company and Kurtz reminds us of what the narrator of the *Nigger of the Narcissus* suggested: to be conscious is to be over-civilised, to dominate through lie.

This is why his critique is conducted in the very terms of what it sets out to condemn. He ends, therefore, by participating in the violence of its conceptual imposition.<sup>44</sup>

The horror generated by this lie becomes visible for Marlow only when mirrored by Kurtz's despair. The two discourses have already created two different, but overlapping narratives characterised in turns by realism and mythology. The attempt to support the realistic discourse with the mythological one ended in corruption of both discourses, decomposing interpretation and even perception. To dominate the chaos resulting from this strategy, Conrad shifts from ethics to aesthetics, a shift which passes unnoticed at the level of the two parallel narratives, but imposes itself as the only governing principle through the reformulated consistency in the relationship of the protagonist and the material he is *re-telling* us. Marlow becomes conscious of his privileged position as the narrator retrospectively telling a story. Marlow's aesthetic consciousness has the power to redeem only if he negates that the dark power he tried to dominate through his perverse insistence on its mythological interpretation fell back on him. This explains the presence of the third discourse, which can only be interpreted when reversing the logic of the two already identified ones. Deconstruction of the two grand narratives does not come as a surprise to us since, as we have already noticed, both the mythological and the realistic discourses contained the antagonistic

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<sup>44</sup> Waugh, Patricia: *Practising Postmodernism Reading Modernism*, London: Edward Arnold, 1992, 90

quality generated by the progressive and regressive elements also identified as the erotic and the thanatic wish propelling the narrative. Most of the symbolic material through the novella remains Marlow's exclusive dominion. He is not willing to share it with anybody else. The existence of this third discourse can be supported through Conrad's perception of the role of the artist. Marlow wants to be a mythical hero who creates his world to the power of his word, but he is reduced to the status of the teller of the story. The idea of the protagonist becoming a discourse is repeatedly expressed in the novella. Marlow interprets Kurtz as discourse<sup>45</sup>, and is himself seen as a discourse by the frame narrator.<sup>46</sup> Daphna Erdinast Vulcan's explanation reaches a similar conclusion, when she writes:

He subverts the illusion of authority which is associated with the teller's voice, and pre-empts the notion of 'a clue' which the frame narrator anticipates of him, just as he had anticipated the darkness to be illuminated by Kurt's voice. The metaphysical vacuum, the denial of transcendental authority or 'voice', sets the scene for a modified view of the artist: no longer a mythical being, an omnipotent creator of the world, he is now seen in the Orphic role, as a hero who descends into hell, armed with a voice to enchant the furies for a while, and returns empty-handed to tell his tale.<sup>47</sup>

But the two explicit discourses governing *Heart of Darkness* cannot create the meaning of the novella by themselves. Their very logic also seems to suggest the existence and even the importance of the third discourse. As light and darkness generate contrast, so do the two discourses create the third one. The third discourse looks back on 'hell' and 'heaven,' considering neither of them able to dominate the other. It is true that the heart of light is as intangible and threatening through its absence as is the heart of darkness, but the novella as a totality renews the validity they lose if interpreted separately. After all, we are face to face with an early fictional formula for a paradox convincingly interpreted by both the ancient and the modern mind.

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<sup>45</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 113, 115

<sup>46</sup> *Heart of Darkness*, 83

<sup>47</sup> Erdinast-Vulcan, Daphna: *Joseph Conrad and the Modern Temper*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991, 108

T. S. Eliot's "Four Quartets" convincingly reinstate the love of God as the very meaning of life and to support his search for divine love, Eliot insists on a similar interpretation of time, space and morality, emphasising the validity of the Heraclitean 'river of stream' and continuous flux.

Or say that the end precedes the beginning,  
And the end and the beginning were always there  
Before the beginning and after the end.  
And all is always now.

( T. S. Eliot: East Coker)

The meaning of the two discourses can be only interpreted through their retroactive assessment, and in this reassessment we have to accept Marlow's help. There are 'mouse-traps,' that is, moments which dramatise the required strategy of interpretation in the novella itself. For example when Marlow realises that the man he thought to be divine is a monster, he has to search back and reinterpret both discourses. When he realises that the idol he has created has the power to deconstruct him, Marlow disclaims authority over him, but later he revises his attitude both intellectually and practically. The third discourse offers a vision of past in present with the definite ambition to contain future. It is essentially modernist in that it discloses the knowledge that we cannot know the truth about heaven and hell or ourselves, and warns us about the dangers of ignoring our limitations. However, the progressive and regressive quality it assumes tells us that we still need to believe that we can know.

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## ON THE TRANSLATION OF PROPER NAMES

**Abstract:** The translation of proper names has often been considered a simple automatic process of transference from one language into another, due to the view that proper names are nothing but mere labels used to identify a person or a thing. It has been shown, however, by authors like *Searle* or *Strawson* that this view is faulty: proper names, beyond their identifying function, may carry 'senses'. This will entail, then, that the translation of proper names may be a rather delicate decision-making process, requiring on the part of the translator a careful consideration of the functions the proper name fulfils (is to fulfil) in the context of the source (target) language text and culture. It is suggested that in translating a proper name the translator has three major strategies at his disposal: *transference*, *translation* proper and *modification*.

### 1 Introduction

In this paper we are going to look at some problems that the translator is likely to face when encountering proper names in the text he is to translate. At first glance it may seem that nothing is easier than finding a satisfactory solution to these problems; or that, in fact, there is no real problem here to resolve at all. This is exactly what *Zeno Vendler* purports when he writes that "proper names have no meaning (in the sense of 'sense' and not of 'reference'), which is borne out by the fact that they do not require translation into another language" (Vendler: 117). To reinforce this statement he argues that

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my gratitude to dr. Péter Pelyvás of Kossuth University, Debrecen for his helpful remarks and suggestions. I am also grateful to Beth Wangen for reading the manuscript and correcting my blunders of grammar and style. The responsibility, however, for everything contained in this paper is solely mine.

we do not find proper names listed in dictionaries, which also shows that they are not part of our knowledge of the language. In his view, then, proper names are to be treated as labels, which are attached to persons or objects and the only task of the translator is to carry them over, or *transfer* (we will return to this concept later in Section 4) them, from the *source language* (SL) text to the *target language* (TL) text.

In Section 2 we will show that this view is based on faulty assumptions, as will become clear from contrasting *Vendler's* observations with those of *Strawson* and *Searle*. We shall see that proper names are not mere labels but may also have some sort of 'meaning' of their own, which will, of course, have consequences in the process of translation.

These consequences will be dealt with in Section 3. Examples from the different classes of proper name will be drawn to demonstrate what kinds of problems the translator is likely to meet in connection with proper names in a TL text.

Section 4 will give a brief summary of possible solutions to the various problems, and in the final section we shall conclude that the translation of proper names is not at all a matter of course, but that it is a subtle decision-making process involving a number of factors ranging from the SL culture and language to the TL culture and language and requires careful consideration of these factors on the part of the translator.

## 2 Do proper names have senses?

When we hear the word 'flower', it immediately conjures up in our minds certain sensual images: we think of an attractive, fresh, colourful, and nice-smelling thing. When, on the other hand, we hear a proper name like 'Stewart', very probably no such sensual images are awakened – we merely think of some person we know whose name is Stewart (if there is anybody at all whom we know by this name). Thus it would seem that, as *Vendler* put it, proper names lack 'meaning'; that is, they do not have connotations, in contrast with common names, for example, which do.

What happens, however, if you happen to hear about some person whose name is Flower? In this case, you will perhaps think, even

though you may not know that person, that such a nice name must belong to a nice woman too. (Or, as was pointed out to me, that her parents must have belonged to the flower-power generation of the 60's.) In this example, then, the mentioning of the name has invited some expectation on your part as to the personality of the bearer of that name (or to the personality of her parents, for that matter). In other words, it has evoked certain connotations. You might argue that the proper name 'Flower' coincides in form with the common name 'flower' and it is only by virtue of this coincidence that the proper name has a 'meaning'. Let us not go further with the example now; we will return to it later in Section 3.

Nevertheless, the example shows that the question posed as the heading for this section may not be as simple as it first seemed. It may not be enough to say that proper names simply denote a person or an object, or that they refer to, or identify, that person or object without having anything else to do with it. In order to be able to answer this question we must first have a look at the other types of referring expressions that are used to identify objects in the world around us.

As we read in *Strawson*,

The language contains expressions of several celebrated kinds which are peculiarly well adapted, in different ways, for use with this [identifying] purpose. These include proper names, definite and possessive and demonstrative descriptions, demonstrative and personal pronouns (Strawson: 88).

We can thus distinguish three classes of such expressions: *proper names*, *identifying descriptions*, and *pronouns*. As to this latter class, it contains grammatical words, which are clearly only tools for referring and thus bear no relevance to the problem. But what can be said about identifying descriptions and proper names? To be more precise, what is the relationship of these two classes of expressions? If we can establish that proper names are in some way similar to identifying descriptions, this will prove that they do not merely refer to, but also provide some sort of description about the referent, which

amounts to saying that they do have 'senses'<sup>2</sup>. *Searle* puts the problem the following way:

'Do proper names have senses?' What this question asks, as a start, is what, if any, similarity is there between the way a definite description picks out its referent and the way a proper name picks out its referent. Is a proper name really a shorthand description (Searle: 134)?

As a first step to answer this question we must introduce the *principle of identification*, which may be formulated as follows:

A necessary condition for the successful performance of a definite reference in the utterance of a description is that the description must be an identifying description or the speaker must be able to produce an identifying description on demand (Searle: 134).

In accordance with this principle, *Searle* argues, when somebody uses a proper name, he must be able to substitute an identifying description of the referent of the proper name, otherwise he would violate the principle of identification and, consequently, would fail to perform a definite reference. These considerations lead *Searle* to say that "a proper name must have a sense, and that the identifying description constitutes that sense" (Searle: 138).

His conclusion, then, is that although proper names are not descriptions themselves, they are in a "loose sort of way" connected with the characteristics of the referent (Searle: 139). Thus a proper name can be said to have a sense, but this sense is radically different to that of definite descriptions insofar as in the latter case the sense is definite and precise, whereas in the case of proper names it is imprecise. Moreover, this imprecision of sense is a necessary

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<sup>2</sup> It has been pointed out to me that the difference between the denotation and the connotation of a proper name may be treated, perhaps in a more elucidating way for the purposes of translation, as a difference between the referential and attributive *uses* of that name, as demonstrated by Donellan (1975). This takes us from the (loosely understood) *semantics* of proper names to the *pragmatics* of proper names, the consequences of which move may well be worth another paper.

criterion for proper names, otherwise they would be nothing more than shorthand descriptions and would consequently lose their pragmatic convenience in enabling us to avoid having to provide a precise description of the characteristics of the object we are referring to when we do not want to. He finishes:

They function not as descriptions, but as *pegs* on which to hang descriptions. The looseness of the criteria of proper names is a necessary condition for isolating the referring function from the describing function of language (Searle: 140).

Thus we are now able to say that proper names are not empty marks for reference, they do not have only denotation, they may also have connotations and that these connotations are necessarily imprecise but nonetheless an important and inalienable part of the meaning of the proper name. To quote *Searle* again, the "utterance of the name communicates a proposition to the hearer" (Searle: 140). This has to be kept in mind when translating, because this will have certain consequences with regard to the decisions concerning the translation of proper names. These consequences will be examined in the next section.

### 3 Problems in translating proper names

In this section we shall see that the fact that proper names may occasionally have connotations will pose a number of interesting and non-trivial problems to the translator, and that these problems require a lot of attention and consideration from him in order to be able to find a good solution. We shall select some typical examples from three different classes of proper names without claiming that the list is in any way complete.

Let us begin with the names of persons. Four cases stand out here: 1. names of famous historical figures; 2. markers concerning the gender of the person; 3. markers of family relations; and 4. names in imaginative literature.

Some famous historical personages have a constant epithet attached to their names, e.g. *Richard the Lionheart*, or *James the Lackland*. Here the epithet is clearly a description of some characteristic of the person and is to be treated as such: it needs to be

translated into the TL. Accordingly, in Hungarian we talk about Oroszlánszívű Richárd and Földnélküli János. Another case is when a historical figure is so well-known in the TL culture that his name has become 'naturalized': *Martin Luther* must be translated into Hungarian as *Luther Márton*, because this variant has established itself as the standard form; but *Martin Luther King* is never referred to in Hungarian as *Király Luther Márton*.

In certain languages the gender of the person is represented in the name by a particle. For example, in Vietnamese *Nguyen-van-An* is the name of a man, whereas *Nguyen-thi-Tuet* is the name of a woman. The infixes *-van-* and *-thi-* are markers for the male and female sexes, respectively (examples taken from Elman: 27). Thus, in a way, they are similar to the personal pronouns of languages like English, where these are marked for gender. When these pronouns are rendered into a language like Hungarian, which lacks gender distinction in the pronoun system, we usually do not bother to preserve the reference to gender, unless it is made necessary by the context. Similarly, the most reasonable solution in the case of such names would be to leave them as they are, since the context will probably provide clues as to whether the person in question is male or female. Or, alternatively, the translator may remark in a footnote on the structure of names in Vietnamese if he feels that an explanation is in order.

An endless number of examples could be drawn of markers of family relationships in the different languages. Here, however, we will be satisfied with two of them.

In the Icelandic language, *Olaf Hilmarson* is the name of Olaf, who is the son of Hilmar. His father, Hilmar, is the son of Vigus, so his name is *Hilmar Vigusson* (examples from Elman: 27). The consequences of this case are very much like those of the above mentioned Vietnamese example. Here, too, it is up to the translator to choose from among the possible solutions.

It is a well-known fact that in most (if not all) Indo-European languages the given name comes before the family name. In some other languages, however, this order is reversed, as in Hungarian, or Japanese. The translator has to be aware of this in order to avoid misinterpretation of some situation.

It could be noted that most of the examples mentioned above have more to do with denotation than with connotation. I would argue,

however, that knowing the gender of the person, or knowing what sort of relationship that person has with others is more than just knowing that he or she is the referent of a certain name. In fact, it is stating something or 'communicating' something about that person: it is giving a description of some characteristic of that person. We are certainly not suggesting that this sort of information about a person is relevant in all contexts; there may, however, be cases when disregarding such information would lead to losses in the TL text.

And we have not yet touched the field of imaginative literature. This is an area where the translator can really exhibit his creative abilities. The so-called telling names offer themselves as the most obvious example. Now we can return to the example given in Section 2. If somebody in a work of art has the name Flower, it well may be that it is not by pure chance, but that the author had intentionally chosen this name for that figure, because he wanted to communicate something about that character, and the translator has to consider this possibility.

A very good example of this is found in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The craftsmen's names in this play all make reference to the person's profession or to his personal characteristics, or to both at the same time (Nádasdy: 38). Here the translator had to face a rather difficult problem: in some cases he had to make a choice as to which segment of the connotations in the name he should preserve. The name of *Bottom*, the weaver, for instance, is a double-bottomed reference to a part of the loom and to a part of the human body (with obvious connotations). In this case Nádasdy translated the name as *Tompor*, which makes reference to the aforementioned body part but not to the tool of the trade. The tinsmith's name, *Snout*, is again a simultaneous allusion to the spout of a can and to the size of the character's nose. Here the name is rendered as *Lavór*, which simply means washbasin.

In this play, then, names are not mere tools of reference (in the technical sense of the term), they also convey information about the referents' characteristic features. In a non-imaginative text, of course, the chances for this state of affairs would obviously be far less. All this goes to show, then, that the type of text is also an important factor in making decisions about the rendering of proper names into the TL.

Another example, which is probably the most famous in the Hungarian literary tradition is the name of the teddy bear protagonist in Milne's classic children's book, *Winnie-the-Pooh*, which was translated by Frigyes Karinthy as *Micimackó*. In the technical sense of the word, it is not a translation of the original at all. What the translator did here was change the original SL name to a TL name which is not a literal equivalent of the SL item, but evokes the image of a funny and lovable teddy bear just as the SL name does in the SL text. Furthermore, the translation also preserves the contradiction which arises from the fact that although Pooh is a male teddy (or, at least, considered as such by Christopher Robin), the names he bears (*Winnie* and *Mici*) are girls' names in both languages.

We shall now move on to consider a few problems in connection with geographical names. One is that they are subject to alterations due to the ever-changing political and social situations, and therefore the translator has to be extremely careful in selecting the appropriate TL item. It is very much a matter of taking a political stand, for instance, whether a translator chooses to render the Slovak name *Kosice* into Hungarian as *Kassa* or decides to leave it in its original SL form. Or, to take another infamous example, it is not the same if we write *Auschwitz* or *Oswiecim* (example taken from Newmark: 216), though both refer to the same location in Poland, since the two words have very different connotations. Then there are also geographical names which have become 'naturalized' in the TL, like *Bécs*, the Hungarian equivalent of the German name *Wien*. Here the translator has usually no choice, unless for some very good reason concerning the cultural halo of the word, but to use the form that is conventional in the TL.

Finally, let us consider the names of objects. These include names of institutions, periodicals, proprietaries, etc. These are generally left in their original SL forms. Occasional exceptions can be justified on the ground of the connotations a particular SL word may evoke in the TL culture if left unchanged. Newmark mentions the interesting case of 'Mist' hairspray (Newmark: 215), the name of which translates into German as 'filth'. Not a really lucky name for a hairspray, one would think. In this case, therefore, it would seem desirable to change the name when introducing the product in Germany. The irony of the example is that in actual fact the hairspray was introduced in Germany with the original name 'Mist' and still it is



alleged to have been a success. In another case<sup>3</sup>, however, failure to realize the unfavourable connotations of the original name in the TL culture did lead to financial loss. In the 70's, Chevrolet Nova was a successful car in the United States. It came as a surprise, therefore, that it did not sell nearly as well when it was introduced into the Mexican market. The reason was simple: 'va' is a form of the Spanish equivalent of the English word 'go', and thus 'no-va' would suggest that something does not go, which is not what is expected of a car.

Another interesting situation is when a brandname is turned into a common name by means of a metonymic process, or when this same name further comes to be used as a verb by the process of conversion. This is the case in English with names like *Hoover*, *Xerox* or *Kleenex*. The problem is that in the TL, for reasons of cultural differences, the same process(es) may not have taken place. So, for instance, whereas it is possible to *hoover the carpet* in English, it is impossible to *kihúverozni a szőnyeget* in Hungarian.

Many more examples could be listed, of course, but the few mentioned here will suffice to illustrate the vast range of potential problems with regard to the rendering of proper names into another language. The next section will give a short account of the strategies that the translator can employ in dealing with these problems.

#### 4 Strategies for the translator

In the footsteps of *Elman*, we will distinguish three different strategies for the rendering of proper names (although using a different terminology): the translator can choose to *transfer*, *translate* or *modify* an SL name when rendering it into the TL. We have seen examples of all three, so let us just briefly summarize here what we mean by these terms.

*Transference*, as *Newmark* puts it, is "the process of transferring a SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure" (*Newmark*: 81). This is essentially the same as *Catford's* definition (see *Catford*: 43). This is the case when we decide to leave the SL proper name unchanged in the TL text.

By *translation* we mean the "rendering (of) the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text"

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<sup>3</sup> For this example I am indebted to Don Mulder.

(Newmark: 5). This was the case, for example, with the epithets attached to the names of historical personages.

And finally, *modification*, or *total transformation* (Klaudy: 141), we understand as the process of choosing a linguistically unrelated substitute for the SL word in the TL, which, evokes a similar reaction in the reader of the TL text to that evoked by the original in the reader of the SL text. The example for this was the case of *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *Micimackó*. Another case is when a low-prestige Christian name in the SL is not rendered by its immediate TL equivalent but by another name which has similarly low social prestige in the TL. For example, the diminutive form *Maris* in Hungarian is commonly associated with maids. In the English translation of a short story by *Géza Csáth* this name is rendered as *Rosie*, which is not the closest equivalent, but probably gives rise to similar associations in the reader of the TL text (Klaudy: 144).

## 5 Conclusions

In the light of all that has been demonstrated in this paper, we can now conclude that the translation of proper names cannot be regarded as a simple automatic process of transference, as was suggested by *Vendler*. On the contrary, it is a subtle decision making process, which is influenced by a complex array of factors. The first of these to take into consideration is, of course, the role (the 'meaning') of the proper name in the SL culture, and in the SL text. The translator has to examine whether the proper name has connotations relevant in the context of the SL culture and the SL text which have to be preserved in the context of the TL culture and the TL text. If it does, then again the translator has to make a decision as to which of the possible devices at his disposal will be the most suitable for his purposes; in other words, he has to decide whether he wants to keep the name in its original form (*transfer*), to substitute an equivalent TL form (*translate*), or to *modify* the original SL form in order to ensure that it will function in the TL text in the same way as it does in the TL text.

In this process there are no automatic solutions. The decisions made are the result of a careful weighing of the arguments of the three individuals cooperating inside the translator's mind: the author

of the SL text, the reader of the TL text, and the mediator between them, the translator himself.

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