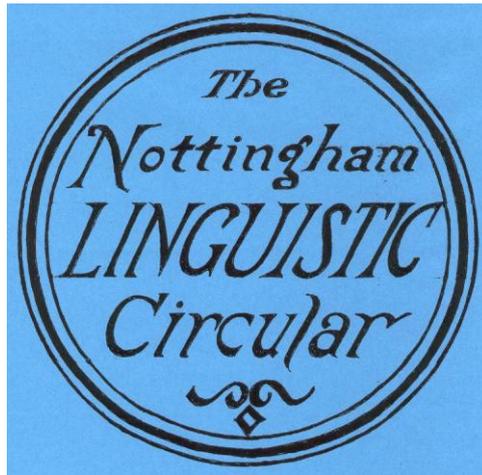


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Developing Sociocultural Competence in the ESL Classroom

Mike Handford

1.1 The importance of developing sociocultural competence

If we were to meet an adult native speaker who had grown up in a place where there were no other people, but sufficient language input, through, for example, tapes, for that person to be in linguistic terms a fluent speaker, then it seems reasonable to say that this person would in all likelihood be regarded as socially dysfunctional. Our unfortunate would not know how to deal with the most simple situations, and unless he or she were protected and educated, a sorry end may well be just around the corner.

While such a case is fantastical, the non-native speaker (NNS) who arrives in an alien culture which is markedly different from their own and who lacks sociocultural knowledge is in a position with certain parallels to that of a socially inadequate individual (Furnham 1993). While knowledge could be transferred from the native culture, there is no way of guessing correctly what the possible cultural differences or similarities are. Native speakers (NSs) would be unaware of the visitor's lack of sociocultural knowledge (Blum-Kulka 1997), and both NNSs and NSs may even be unaware that cultures can vary as much as they do (Hinkel 2001). NSs are also likely to be find behaviour that runs counter to their society's beliefs or norms unacceptable, and to react accordingly. After perusing Celce-Murcia et al's (1995) list of sociocultural factors (see appendix 1), it is not difficult to see how inappropriacy in any of the listed areas could lead to problems. The acceptable length of a silence varies across cultures, and one possible reason for some students' perceived reticence in ESL contexts could be caused by the fact that in certain cultures, people are comfortable with longer response times than is the case in English. Gestures vary across cultures, and are used to express abstract ideas (McCafferty and Ahmed 2000); potential for confusion is therefore plentiful and plain. In a liberal Western country such as England, men coming from a more patriarchal society could easily find themselves being rebuked or criticised, and might feel at a loss as to why. When and to whom the words 'Thank you' are required to be said in England is a notoriously confusing area, and a source of much resentment among the inhabitants of towns where there is a constant influx of language learners.

While the above examples show the significance of sociocultural factors in communication, the key question is how this knowledge relates to and is formulated in language, and in particular a second language. Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) argue that traditional models of second language acquisition account for the way we acquire lexical, phonological and grammatical units of knowledge, but that in order to understand language use in context, and therefore the pervasiveness of culture in communication, a model which accounts for learning as participation is necessary. In this model, the learner develops skills which enable him or her to engage with contextual and cultural factors of communication. Although the two models are not mutually exclusive but in fact complementary, the latter is far more appropriate for understanding language as socialisation, as an ongoing process of engagement

(Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000: 156). Carter and McCarthy's (1994: 150) Discourse Analysis viewpoint is compatible with that of Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000: 156), who argue that the adoption of a 'cultural view of language is to explore the ways in which forms of language, from individual words to complete discourse structures, encode something of the beliefs and values held by the language user'.

The necessity of clarifying the context in order to ascertain implied or intended meaning is also highlighted by Widdowson (1990: 102):

Understanding what people mean by what they say is not the same as understanding the linguistic expressions they use in saying it...Every linguistic expression contains the potential for a multiplicity of meanings and which one is realised on a particular occasion is determined by non-linguistic factors of context.

If the language learner can become sensitive to the opaque yet ubiquitous influences of culture and context, then it seems probable that his stay abroad will, according to Furnham (1993), be more enjoyable and less stressful. He will have more chance of being able to make informed decisions, and will therefore become more empowered. He will not unwittingly offend members of his host culture, and could thereby gain deeper access into that very culture, if so desired, and find the experience of living abroad more enriching and fulfilling. If we agree with Halliday (1985: 46) that 'much of the work of learning a foreign language consists in learning to make the right predictions', then developing sociocultural knowledge will aid the learner to be able to make predictions and navigate sensitively through the murky waters of another culture.

The purpose of this paper is to propose an approach for enabling students to effectively navigate through culturally-embedded situations in which they may find themselves in England, for example giving and receiving gifts, or asking permission to bring a friend to a party. The approach is not intended to be a language teaching panacea: the primary aim is the development of sociocultural awareness through the study of pragmatically-laden texts. Improvements in such areas as vocabulary, spelling, fluency and listening are probable, yet unintentional, outcomes of this approach. Representational texts (see below) have been chosen because they are ideal for developing the empathy that is a prerequisite for cross-cultural understanding (Seelye 1993), and also because they *by definition* challenge the schemata (Cook 1994) that dictate how we will act in and react to a given situation (Widdowson 1990). Textbooks typically are devoid of culturally-based communication (Cook 1998), or represent such communication unrealistically (Bardovi-Harlig 2001), and thus fail to activate the schema or provide the appropriate input from which the learner can interpret and infer from a communicative act. Indeed, it could be argued that by offering such culturally-disinfected exchanges as models for students to follow, publishers are deceiving students and are at least partly responsible for breakdowns in communication. Hinkel (2001) has gone so far as to argue that textbooks are incapable of adequately accounting for sociocultural variables. If language is truly a social semiotic (Halliday 1985), if meaningful communication does in fact require culture (Roberts 1998), and if potentially breakable sociocultural norms

do exist (Hinkel 2001), then it is imperative that speakers of a language realise how culture can and does affect meaning. As native speakers of English, at least in Britain, receive through the popular media prejudice-reinforcing input (Fowler 1991), the language learner and his or her teacher should develop the skills necessary for ensuring the desired outcome of an intention. The importance of this is highlighted by Blum-Kulka (1997: 57): 'Pragmatic failure...carries the risk of being attributed to flaws of personality or ethnocultural origins and may carry grave social implications.' This paper will attempt to look at ways of effectively reducing the likelihood of such failure.

1.2 The case for classroom instruction

Were adult language learners able to transfer their universal pragmatic knowledge, and to develop a working understanding of L2 speech acts compatible with that of native speakers purely from naturalistic settings, then classroom instruction would perhaps be unnecessary. According to empirical studies, however, this is not the case (Kasper and Rose 2001; Bardovi-Harlig 2001). Findings in educational psychology indicate that the transfer of appropriate knowledge and skills does not consistently occur, and this is also true of universal pragmatic knowledge. Learners tend not to use contextual information effectively, and to miss figurative or inferred meaning completely.

Not only do NNSs differ from NSs in terms of the comprehension of the intent of speech acts, but also in the performance of speech acts, even to the extent of performing no speech act at all (Bardovi-Harlig 2001). In observations of advising sessions, NNSs were found to produce more rejections and less suggestions than NSs. Bardovi-Harlig (2001: 29) states:

The empirical evidence shows that learners who have received no specific instruction in L2 pragmatics have noticeably different L2 pragmatic systems than native speakers of the L2. This is true for both production and comprehension.

She then goes on to recommend providing learners with appropriate input so that such differences can be noticed. Kasper and Rose (2001: 7) argue that it is not always necessary to teach students new information, as making them aware of and encouraging them to use their L1 pragmatic knowledge will also be of great benefit.

The language learner who consciously chooses to apply a divergent pragmatic system is, of course, perfectly entitled to do so. But in order to make that decision an informed one, learning about the culture and the way it is expressed through and reflected in language is prerequisite. As Bardovi-Harlig (2001: 32) concludes: 'Adopting the sociocultural rules as one's own in an L2 may have to be an individual decision. Providing the information so that a learner can make that choice is a pedagogical decision.' The role of the teacher is to provide this information in the most accessible and meaningful way possible. The controllable environment of the classroom is ideally

suited for this purpose (Widdowson 1990). As encounters between NNSs and NSs can actually be potentially damaging to intercultural communication because, rather than being stereotype-challenging, such exchanges can be stereotype-reinforcing and lead to imagined and real instances of discrimination, time spent reflecting on and analysing language and its cultural context is essential (Roberts 1998).

1.3 The challenges and limits of sociocultural instruction

If we consider the above five areas that comprise Celce-Murcia et al's (1995) model of communicative competence, it is plain that the one area that has received the least systematic pedagogical attention is sociocultural competence. While the aim of this paper is to modestly redress the balance, the reasons for this absence of guidelines are worth some attention.

One obvious reason for this lack of attention is that it can be a very uncomfortable area to teach. The importance of developing sociocultural awareness is now hopefully evident, and yet if we consider Kramsch's (1993: 6) paradox of education:

Teachers have to impart a body of knowledge, but learners have to discover that knowledge for themselves in order to internalise it - how can teachers at the same time give it to them and make them discover it on their own? This question is the fundamental paradox of education.

then developing awareness of something this intangible entails an acceptance that we may never be certain of our pedagogical efficacy. Whereas, for example, with vocabulary or prescriptive grammar, we can easily check whether the input has been effective, with sociocultural competence, we are primarily encouraging skills, and sensitivity to context, that are not open to a comparative type of assessment (Hudson 2001). Teachers who, quite rationally, like to test and score their students' progress in the classroom are therefore unlikely to enjoy leaping into the abyss of awareness raising.

Another possible dilemma for the teacher is to decide whose sociocultural norms should be taught, and how to analyse them systematically in the first place (see Wolfson 1989). Such a question is not as apposite to the debate, however, as it may at first appear: the teacher is not asking the students to adopt another identity, which, as Byram (1994) notes, might entail a rejection of one's own. Instead, the teacher is offering information on some of the underlying factors that can affect discourse, and some possible consequences of flouting the actualisation of such factors in specific sociocultural situations. Most of the ESL students subsequent input will come from their immediate environment, but they can equally spend time reflecting on their own native culture. The thorny issue of cultural imperialism and EFL (see Pennycook 1994) is thus sidestepped: there is no overt or implied prescription. What the student decides to do with this information is not under the teacher's control, but the student should be encouraged to develop an outlook which is informed and attentive.

1.4 The potential problems of using textbooks

A common feature of textbooks is that they offer a model of language which students can internalise, and then produce. This is true for both the micro and macro levels of language: useful vocabulary or exercises for developing pronunciation are provided, as are whole conversations which can serve as an example of learnable, and therefore retrievable and reusable, discourse. Such an approach to learning is predicated on two simple assumptions: language can be absorbed and then produced in an unreflective, un-self-conscious way (see Carter and McCarthy 1994), and the model offered to students is a valid one. When discussing raising language awareness, and sociocultural awareness in particular, these two assumptions seem somewhat specious.

‘The general use of speech is to transfer our mental discourse into verbal...the train of our thoughts into a train of words.’ Since Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* called upon the ancient Greek notion of ‘logos’, the relationship between speech and reason has been widely accepted in Western academic discourse. Apart from the errant blip that was the behaviourist account of language acquisition, consciousness is assumed to be real, and reflection is an integral aspect of our consciousness. Textbooks and the methodologies used in language teaching, however, often appear to be designed in denial of, or with scant regard for, the relationship between language and thought (Byram et al 1994), with few exercises aimed at developing interpretive, inferential or reflective skills (Carter and McCarthy 1994: 160). While certain features of language may successfully be acquired through repetition and memorisation, for example pronunciation and perhaps collocations, this approach does not suit other, for example sociocultural, aspects of language (Hinkel 2001). Even if it were the case that a reproducible model for each individual context existed, for the language learner to be able to develop sociocultural knowledge using such a system, the model of each particular context would have to be learned. As each context is unique, the comprehensive textbook based on this disregard of consciousness would be a tome of considerable, and ever-expanding, length! As we have minds, it seems wise to use them.

If we ignore the argument that using typical textbook-type material to develop awareness is *a priori* mistaken, and study the empirical evidence from textbooks, the case against using such material becomes much stronger. Textbook-based instruction, according to Bardovi-Harlig (2001: 26), ‘may play a role in perpetuating some of the nontarget-like realisation of speech acts.’ This is because the actual models that are offered as examples are untypical, or inappropriate for the context. By using such material the teacher is not merely deceiving the students by giving inappropriate input, but is committing the cardinal sin of teaching: he or she is giving them input which will hinder their opportunities for successful communication, and may well lead to their attempts at interaction with native speakers being met with coldness or even aggression. This may seem exaggerated, but consider the following dialogue:

A) (*Walks up to B in the street*) What time is it?

- B) It's just gone six.
(A: *Silence; walks away*).

Such a response from A could be considered odd, or even rude, and yet this kind of two-part exchange is to be found in textbooks (Carter 1998). In naturally occurring conversations, three part exchanges are far more common than two-part (Carter 1998). Learners who reproduce these erroneous models could, therefore, unwittingly provoke a negative and undesired response from their NS interlocutor. Misleading input like this can be found not only at the discourse level, but also at the sentence grammar and single utterance level (see McCarthy and Carter 1995, for a discussion on spoken grammar and written models). Rather than encouraging students to learn solely from such material, the circumspect instructor will either supplement it or find a more appropriate alternative. As Bardovi-Harlig straightforwardly states, 'it is important to recognise that, in general, textbooks cannot be counted on as a reliable source of pragmatic input for classroom language learners' (2001: 25). If this position is accepted, then an alternative source of input is needed. The next section will argue why representational materials can be such an appropriate source.

2 Why representational texts are suitable for developing sociocultural competence

Cook (1994: 10) argues that in order to participate successfully in a new culture it is necessary to adapt our existing background knowledge. Communicating in the new culture is not sufficient for bringing about this adaptation (Roberts 1998; Kasper 1997), and classroom instruction has been shown to facilitate pragmatic development (Kasper and Rose 2001). This section will argue that representational material is, by definition, schema-challenging, and that well-chosen representational material is ideally suited for the task of developing sociocultural schematic knowledge.

2.1 Representational material and schema theory

Literary or representational texts require, by definition, more thoughtful processing than referential texts (McRae 1991). A basic computer, for example, could read a referential text and process the information that is involved e.g. the correct time to catch the bus to get to work on time, or the rules for playing chess. At present, computers are incapable of processing or producing inferred or metaphorical meaning, and the recent interest in schema theory is in part down to the belief that the reason for this lack of ability is caused by computers' lack of schematic knowledge. Research into Artificial Intelligence has therefore been focusing on how meaning is created in text and how schematic knowledge is involved in interpreting text (Cook 1994). Language learners, too, have problems understanding inferred meaning or interpreting background information, because they either lack the relevant schematic knowledge in the L2, or such knowledge that exists is underdeveloped (see Widdowson 1990). Texts that are cognitively challenging and interesting do, however, tend to be motivating (Dornyei and Cziser 1998).

The key question is, then, *can representational texts help develop schematic knowledge?* According to Cook (1994: 10), the answer is yes:

literary texts are... representative of a type of text which may perform the important function of breaking down existing schemata, reorganising them, and building new ones...Schemata play a well-documented role in processing text, but certain texts may also play a role in building and adjusting schemata.

While discourse can reinforce, preserve, or refresh existing schema (Cook 1994), it is the latter type that is of interest here. Schema-refreshing types of text deviate from expectations inherent in one's existing schema, and Cook argues that literary texts are prized for their ability to refresh or challenge our background knowledge and assumptions. The stereotypes we hold are questioned, and this leads to either new schema being formed, or those that remain being altered to incorporate the new information. How this relates to sociocultural knowledge in particular will be discussed in the next section.

2.1 Representational material and sociocultural schemata

Celce-Murcia et al (1995: 24), in analysing their components of sociocultural knowledge (see appendix 1) concur with Widdowson (1990), in that it is the 'Cultural Factors' of their model which are compatible with schematic knowledge. While background knowledge of the target community, awareness of dialect differences and cross-cultural awareness (which could itself be seen as sociocultural competence in action) most certainly form part of a successful or ideal language learner's makeup, it is arguably a little cautious to stop there. It could equally be reasoned that the remaining sociocultural components are also embedded, or lacking, in our learners' schematic knowledge: how touching can convey messages, or how age can affect communication, are examples.

If we accept that all these factors are, or should be, part of a language learners schematic knowledge, and that textbooks typically are inappropriate for delivering the necessary input, then an alternative form of material is needed. Whatever material is used, the primary goal is that learners can at least notice how these factors can exist across cultures and countries (Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei 1998), and how these factors may affect communication. The aims of such a pedagogical approach will be described below. The central claim of this paper is that representational texts are suited to developing this knowledge for two reasons: representational texts encode sociocultural forms, and the mental processes and cognitive ability necessary for understanding and responding to such texts are the same as those that are required for noticing and consciously applying sociocultural forms. Indeed, it could even be argued that the first reason, to some extent at least, causes the second.

The latter reason can involve the following skills or processes: observing, interpreting, analysing, inferencing and reacting. Widdowson (1983: 34) asserts that it is through the process of communicating that we infer meaning, and literature can help students how to learn and use language because ‘in drama and in normal conversation the meaning is created by the interaction. It’s not there in the language’. Studying literature can thus enable learners to become better communicators by encouraging them to interpret meaning (ibid). When reading a representational text the aim is for students to create meaning through the process of ‘integrating one’s own needs, understanding and expectations with a written text’ (Brumfit 1985: 119). McCarthy (1996) argues for a similar process, deconstruction, whereby the learner first experiences, then analyses and understands a text. It is through experiencing the pragmatic mechanisms in a text that students can understand such notions as tension, conflict and irony.

The former reason can be elucidated by pondering W.H. Auden’s definition of a good poet: ‘like a valley cheese: local, but prized elsewhere.’ Unlike textbook material which is often lacking in any kind of cultural or controversial colour and is invented (Cook, 1998), representational texts are examples of attested language, and attested language ‘is a site in which beliefs, values and points of view are produced, encoded and contested’ (Carter and McCarthy 1994: 155). This holds true for both literature and spontaneous speech. And studying selected examples of the former can lead to a fuller understanding of and more adept participation with the latter (Tomlinson 1994; Cook 1998). It should be noted, however, that not all representational texts are equally rich or accessible in pedagogical terms: the *Wife of Bath* is arguably of less immediate and obvious value to the language learner than, say, *Shirley Valentine*.

3 The teaching approach

3.1 Types of activity

According to Kasper (1997), there are two types of activity that are useful for developing pragmatic awareness:

- a) awareness raising activities
- b) opportunities for communicative practice.

The lessons outlined below involves both types, although there should be no expectation that b) must immediately follow a): time for reflection and observation outside the classroom would undoubtedly benefit the student. In considering a), there is consensus that *noticing* is a requisite and fundamental step (Kasper 1997; Tomlinson 1994; Carter and McCarthy 1994; Hinkel 2001; Kramersch 1993; Schmidt 1993). Each prereading activity is designed to activate or instil the seeds of the prerequisite schematic knowledge which will in turn enable the student to notice the salient points of the text and/or performance.

Tomlinson (1994), proposes the following as objectives of a pragmatic awareness approach:

- To help learners to notice the way that proficient users of the L2 typically use pragmatic strategies
- To help learners to achieve deep, learner-driven analyses of language in use which can help them to note the gaps and to achieve learning readiness
- To help learners to develop cognitive skills
- To help learners to become independent.

These goals elucidate what can be developed through awareness raising. For opportunities for communicative practice, activities such as role plays, drama or pair work seem ideal as they allow for students to experiment and receive feedback in a controllable environment. Cook (1998) posits the use of plays or parts of plays, and argues (196) that through the type of post-reading activities proposed below in lesson four, which could equally be performed with the other lessons, the following are learnable:

- Rote learning and repetition of a model
- Attention to exact wording
- Practice in all four skills
- Motivating and authentic language and activity
- Instances of culturally and contextually appropriate pragmatic use
- Integration of linguistic with paralinguistic use.

3.2 Types of texts

The lessons in this paper involve using parts of a film (i.e. spoken scripts). As has been discussed above, textbook dialogues do not tend to be a good source of pragmatic input, but representational texts can be. Film scripts, like plays, are designed as spoken texts, and therefore have the added advantage of, if not providing a model, then providing a text which can be engaged with 'as a text of speech' (McCarthy 1996: 90). For students it often is the realm of spoken interaction that proves the most perplexing and fleeting.

3.3 Justification of this approach

The question of why such an approach is necessary is an important one, and it is answered by Kramsch (1993: 49):

Teaching how to shape contexts of interaction cannot be done directly by a well-dosed administration of facts... Pragmatic knowledge... can only be acquired through observation and analysis and a feel for the whole social

context. It is not an ‘if - then’ affair. It requires, therefore, a totally different pedagogical approach.

There is, though, a danger here, and it is that in developing what Tomlinson (1994: 122) describes as facilitating self-discovery, we as teachers actually neglect to teach very much. Students need and have a right to feel they have learned something tangible from every lesson, and in dealing with a subject as abstract as sociocultural competence, there is the possibility for this desire to be unfulfilled. Hence in the lessons proposed here the consequences of flouting and following norms are made explicit, in order that the class can glean something tangible. (This could alternatively be done at the beginning of the lesson through anecdotes, videoclips, or a quick role-play with the teacher ‘demonstrating’ on a student.) It is hoped that students will also learn more than just the possible consequences, namely how to make sense of their worlds, and how to more deeply understand the role that language can play in these worlds. Once they have begun to do this, they should start to realise that they can be active players in their world, even if that world is one that uses another language.

4 Lesson outlines

Lesson Outline 1

***Purpose:** To raise awareness of Social Contextual factors in communication, and to discuss how language can change according to differences in these variables. In particular the lesson is concerned with participants and the communicative situation, and how these factors affect the way people talk and are spoken to.*

***Text:** Dialogue from the Mike Leigh film ‘Secrets and Lies’, involving a telephone conversation between two of the main characters, Cynthia and her brother Morris (see appendix 2).*

Pre reading

***Activity purpose:** Develop students’ schematic knowledge of participant and situational variables (see appendix 1).*

***Activity:** Write the above variables (gender, time etc.) on the board, tell the class that they are going to read and then watch a telephone conversation, and that they should ask you questions before they read the text about the participants and the situation e.g. ‘what sex are the characters?’ Alternatively, a more advanced group could be encouraged to first come up with the variables themselves.*

***Activity purpose:** Activate students’ schematic knowledge of how social distance and the social situation may affect communication.*

Activity: In small groups, predict how the participants' social distance (in this case very little, especially as perceived by Cynthia) and the social situation affect the communication. Encourage students to come up with specific examples. It may be helpful for students to compare this type of dialogue to, say, an imagined conversation between Morris and a client arranging an appointment.

While reading

Activity purpose: Highlight relevant points in the text, and keep the reading focused on the lesson purpose.

Activity: Read through and find evidence of

1. the closeness of their relationship
2. Morris not wanting to say no to his sister
3. a problem between Morris' wife Monica and Cynthia
4. the unimportance of Morris' status (a successful self-employed businessman) here
5. Cynthia's neurotic disposition

Post reading

Activity purpose: show that the way we communicate affects how we appear to others.

Activity: write a description of the two characters, including a description of their personalities and how you imagine them to look. Then watch the film clip. Discuss whether or not the descriptions should be changed, and why.

Activity purpose: Highlight how stylistic appropriateness is dependent on the social context (amongst other things).

Activity: Underline all the informal language in the text. Imagine that an acquaintance of Morris is asking to bring a friend to the barbecue; change the dialogue accordingly. Then role-play this situation in pairs. Then role-play another situation, for example one more similar to the original. Discuss how the language changes according to the context. Discuss the possible effects of using inappropriate language in these two contexts.

Sum up by asking students what they have learned in this lesson, and what they can take away from this (hopefully the original lesson purpose).

Lesson Outline 2

Purpose: To raise awareness of politeness and politeness conventions in English, and the potential consequences of flouting these conventions.

Text: A short conversation from 'Secrets and Lies' between Monica, Morris' s wife, and Cynthia. Cynthia has just arrived at their house for the barbecue and has given Monica a bunch of tulips as a present. The conversation takes place in the dining room, with Morris standing in the doorway looking in on the conversation (see appendix 3).

Pre reading

Activity purpose: Activate students' schematic awareness of politeness.

Activity: Students write down one thing that is considered rude in their culture (e.g. in Thailand, pointing your feet at somebody). Without telling the others explicitly, each student has to demonstrate or enact the impolite factor. The others then try to guess.

Activity purpose: Prepare students for considering politeness in England.

Activity: Discuss as a group what is considered impolite in England, and what is considered polite. Discuss some possible reasons as to why people are at times impolite, both intentionally and unintentionally.

While reading

Activity purpose: Highlight relevant points in the text, and keep the reading focused on the lesson purpose.

Activity: Go through text and look for examples of impoliteness. Then watch the clip.
 – There are arguably five or six: Cynthia assuming she can smoke in their house and directly asking for an ashtray, Monica not finding the ashtray for her guest but merely telling her where it is, Monica commenting on Cynthia's inability to give up (hinting that she lacks the necessary self-discipline), Cynthia's way of looking at the flowers and her comment about their brightness ('prettiness' would be more usual), and Monica's ignoral of Cynthia's question. Monica in particular is seen to be deliberately flaunting the convention of commenting positively on a gift to the giver i.e. thanking her.

Post reading

Activity purpose: Raise awareness of the politeness convention of receiving a gift in England, and reinforce the idea that flouting politeness conventions may cause offence.

Activity: Brief discussion of why Monica is impolite to Cynthia. Discussion of the above instances in terms of what would be more polite, and why people in a different context may wish to be polite. Students, in small groups, then rewrite the dialogue so

that it follows the usual convention of thanking. Students then act these out in front of the class, and the teacher and class give feedback. It is essential that students are made as aware as possible of the consequences of not following such conventions.

Activity purpose: Raise cross-cultural awareness of this convention.

Activity: Discuss how this and other conventions differ across cultures. This would be a good opportunity for students to ask the teacher *why* certain conventions exist in the way that they do i.e. what are the underlying reasons for such modes of communicative behaviour.

Sum up by again stating the value placed in societies of following such conventions, and the potential reactions to ignoring or rejecting them. The teacher should be careful to not give the impression that he/she is prescribing behaviour, but is merely developing the students' knowledge so that they can make more informed choices.

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Appendix 1

Suggested components of sociocultural competence

(Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell 1995: 24)

SOCIAL CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

- Participant variables
 - age, gender, office and status, social distance, relations (power and affective)
- Situational variables
- time, place, social situation

STYLISTIC APPROPRIATENESS FACTORS

- Politeness conventions and strategies
- Stylistic variation
 - degrees of formality
 - field-specific registers

CULTURAL FACTORS

- Sociocultural background knowledge of the target language community
- living conditions (way of living, living standards); social and institutional structure; social conventions and rituals; major values, beliefs, and norms; taboo topics; historical background; cultural aspects including literature and arts
- Awareness of major dialect or regional differences
- Cross-cultural awareness
 - differences; similarities; strategies for cross-cultural communication

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATIVE FACTORS

- Kinesic factors (body language)
 - discourse controlling behaviours (non-verbal turn-taking signals)
 - backchannel behaviours
 - affective markers (facial expressions), gestures, eye contact
- Proxemic factors (use of space)
- Haptic factors (touching)
- Paralinguistic factors
 - acoustal sounds, nonvocal noises
- Silence

Appendix 2

SECRETS AND LIES

On the phone, Cynthia at home, standing up in the hallway. Morris in his office with his secretary, Jane, listening and eating a bag of crisps.

C: Listen, Morris, Sweetheart. I wanted to ask you a favour.

- M: Oh yeah. What's that then?
 C: You know the party Sunday...
 M: The BBQ, yeah
 C: Yeah. Can I bring a mate, Sweetheart?
Silence.
 C: Hello?
 M: Is it a bloke?
 C: Course it aint a bloke, silly bugger. Chance'd be a fine thing!
Both laugh.
 M: Who is it then?
 C: Oh just somebody at work. We've been out a couple of times and I was meant to have seen her Sunday only I forgot. That alright then?
 M: I suppose so.
 C: What do you mean 'you suppose so'?'
 M: No, it'll be fine.
 C: Smashing.
 M: Have to check it out though.
 C: Check it out? Who with?
Short silence.
 M: Listen, Erm, if I don't ring you back then bring her. Right?
 C: I don't want to upset nobody.
 M: Don't worry.
 C: Are you sure then?
 M: Yeah, yeah. No problem. Yeah.
 C: O.K. then sweetheart. Looking forward to it.
 M: Alright, well, say hello to Roxanne for me.
 C: Ta ra then.
 M: Alright ta ra sis.

Appendix 3

SECRETS AND LIES, written by Mike Leigh

Cynthia and Monica (holding a bunch of flowers) standing at the dining table with Morris standing in the kitchen doorway looking in on the conversation.

- Cynthia: Have you got an ashtray, Monica?
 Monica: There's one on the coffee table, Cynthia. I didn't think you would've given up.
 Cynthia: One of the few pleasures in life, Monica.
Monica looks disdainfully at the flowers given to her by Cynthia.
 Monica: These are very bright.
 Cynthia: Oh? Don't you like them?
 Monica: I'll put them in a vase.

Requesting strategies in English and Greek: Observations from an Airline's Call Centre

Maria Economidou-Kogetsidis

1 Introduction

A number of studies have demonstrated that there can be important cross-cultural differences in the speech-act performance between two different speech communities, especially in relation to the level of directness of their request realisation (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984, Matsumoto 1988, Blum-Kulka and House 1989, Wierzbicka 1989, Wierzbicka 1991). Such distinct cross-cultural differences have been found to exist between the Greek and the English interactional styles (Sifianou 1992) as well as between the Greek and the English verbal telephone behaviour (Sifianou 1989 and 2001)

While requests in English are expressed more elaborately and indirectly, with imperative constructions normally seen as inappropriate, bald-on record, direct request constructions in Modern Greek are so acceptable and widely used, both among members of the in-group as well in business encounters, that a foreign observer may be taken aback by the Greeks' 'authoritarianism'.

This article examines whether there are marked cross-cultural differences in the degree of requestive directness between the Greek native speakers (henceforth GNSs) and the British English native speakers (henceforth ENSs) in telephone business encounters. The present empirical study found significant differences in the degree of requestive directness employed by GNSs and ENSs when ringing an airline's call centre. The GNSs were found to employ a higher degree of directness as far as their opening telephone requests were concerned and this finding can be seen as being consistent with the ethos of directness, spontaneity and positive politeness orientation found to characterise the Greek language and culture.

Despite a growing criticism and controversy regarding Brown and Levinson's theory (1978 and 1987) as an account of universals of politeness, the theory's broad distinction between positive politeness and negative politeness cultures, seems to adequately explain the differences in the Greek and English verbal behaviour. While the English have been found to place a higher value on privacy and individuality, thus favouring the negative aspect of face, the Greeks can be seen as emphasising involvement, in-group relations, spontaneity and informality, thus favouring the positive aspect of face (Sifianou 1992).

2 The face-saving view of politeness

The face-saving view, proposed in Brown and Levinson's theory (1978 and 1987), provides the theoretical framework that this paper is based on. It is considered to be the most influential and best known of the recent approaches to an account of politeness,

despite the fact that it has attracted a number of justified criticisms (Matsumoto 1989, Ide 1989, Holtgraves 1992, Janney and Arndt 1993, Sifianou 1993, Spencer-Oatey 2000), which are beyond the scope of this paper.

The face saving view of politeness places politeness within a framework in which the rational Model person has *face*. The concept of *face* is a central one to the theory and was adapted from Goffman (1967), who defined *face* as ‘the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself’ (Goffman 1967: 66). This image can be maintained, enhanced, threatened or damaged through interaction with others, thus it is assumed that it is in everyone's interest to work to maintain each other's face. This motivation to preserve everyone's face is very strong and ultimately constitutes the basis of smooth communication.

Face has two aspects, which are equally central to Brown and Levinson's theory (1978 and 1987): positive face and negative face. *Positive face* is defined as every person's want to have his/her public self-image appreciated, understood, liked, approved of and ratified by others. *Negative face*, on the other hand, is seen as every person's want to be free from imposition and distraction, to have his/her territory respected and his/her freedom of action unimpeded by others. While positive and negative face wants exist in every individual and are present in most societies, different cultures tend to place different emphasis on one of the two aspects of face.

Brown and Levinson (1978 and 1987) also introduce the concept of *face-threatening acts* which are strategies that can damage or threaten another person's positive or negative face. The principal empirical claim of the theory is that these strategies are ordered against a scale of lesser to greater estimated risk of face. According to the authors, the first decision to be made is whether to perform the face-threatening act or not. If the speaker decides that the degree of face threat is too great, he/she may decide to avoid the face-threatening act altogether (in other words, to say nothing). If the speaker does decide to perform the face-threatening act, then there are four possibilities. These are briefly presented as follows:

- To perform the face-threatening act *on record* without any redress: the speaker expresses his/her utterance baldly, with little or no concern for face.
- To perform the face-threatening act using *positive politeness* strategies: with redress directed to the addressee's positive face, which appeals to the hearer's desire to be liked and be approved of.
- To perform the face-threatening act using *negative politeness* strategies: with redress towards the hearer's negative face which appeals to the hearer's desire not to be impeded or to be left free to act as he/she chooses.
- To perform the face-threatening act using *off record* strategies: the speaker expresses his/her utterance ambiguously (formulated as a hint, for instance), and its interpretation is left to the addressee. Such strategy is used when the risk of loss of face is great but not too great as absolutely to prohibit the face-threatening act.

The theory accounts for a broad distinction between positive politeness and negative politeness cultures, despite a growing criticism and controversy regarding the theory as an account of universals of politeness. Although this is not to imply that societies as a whole restrict themselves exclusively to positive or negative politeness, current cross-cultural literature has found certain societies to favour the positive aspect of politeness while others emphasise the negative aspect of politeness (Garcia 1989, Rhodes 1989, Kitao 1990, Sifianou 1992). Comparing the English to the Greek culture, the English have been found to place a higher value on privacy and individuality (i.e. the negative aspect of face), while the Greeks have been found to emphasise involvement and in-group relations (i.e. the positive aspect of face) (Sifianou 1992: 41). Similarly, Garcia (1989) comparing the Americans to the Venezuelans showed that the analysis of their conversations indicates that the Americans opt for negative politeness strategies, whereas the Venezuelans, in line with their sociocultural rules of language use, opt for positive politeness strategies. Additionally, Rhodes (1989) presented data illustrating politeness usage in Ojibwa, an American Indian language of an egalitarian society, where polite requests are expressed directly, based 'on the presumption of co-operation (positive politeness) rather than avoiding or redressing threats to face (negative politeness)' (1989:249).

3 The study

This study aimed to examine whether there are cross-cultural differences in the degree of requestive directness employed between the GNSs and the ENSs within the framework of business encounters, and most specifically within the framework of telephone business requests. As the requests elicited from this data are context-specific (elicited exclusively from the call centre of an airline company), it is not appropriate to make general claims regarding the speech act of requesting in different contexts.

3.1 Telephone observation data

The method of data gathering followed the collection and comparison of telephone *opening requests* produced by callers at the call centre of a UK airline based in the South of England. The company's call centre was primarily a flight reservation centre and the nature of the calls concerned both requests for flight reservations and requests for various flight information (i.e. requests for flight availability, prices, times, destinations etc.). This data collection method gathered both requests for action and requests for information.

A total of 200 opening requests were randomly collected: 100 opening requests produced in Greek by GNSs and 100 opening requests produced in English by ENSs. The data were collected within a period of 5 months, and were recorded in the form of field notes.

Pauses and laughter were noted but no effort was made to record overlaps and interruptions or to time pauses or other temporal factors, as this was beyond the scope of the study.

Semi-structured interviews were also carried out in relation to the telephone operators who received the calls. These interviews were conducted in order to gain some qualitative insights into how the callers' requests and telephone behaviour were perceived by the hearers (operators).

The operators who agreed to participate in the study were made aware that they were not the focus of the present study and that the study concerned the *callers'* conversational style instead. This made them feel more comfortable and at ease during the monitoring procedures. No information was given about the exact nature of the study as it was felt that this might have affected their performance and conversational style.

3.2 Subjects

Two hundred random callers were used as subjects. One hundred Greek callers (46 female, 54 male), and one hundred English callers (54 female, 46 male). Due to the nature of telephone data, no homogeneity in the callers used could be ensured (i.e. their age, educational background, social background, cultural background etc.). For this reason, only their gender was recorded.

As the airline employed both native and non-native speakers to work as operators taking calls in one or more languages (i.e., English, Greek, French, Spanish, Dutch, German), only operators who were (a) British English native speakers, and (b) Greek native speakers, were monitored. With the help of a caller display function the calls which were recorded were: (a) telephone calls made by ENSs answered by British English operators (conversation carried out in English), and (b) telephone calls made by GNSs answered by Greek native operators (conversation carried out in Greek).

4 Data coding and analysis

The requesting strategies yielded by the telephone monitoring procedures were analysed within a shared analytical framework. The analysis was based on an independent evaluation of each request *head act* according to its degree of *directness*, where *directness* was taken to mean 'the length of inferential processes needed for identifying the utterance as a request' (Blum-Kulka et al 1989: 18) and 'the degree to which the speaker's illocutionary intent is apparent from the locution' (ibid. 278). *Head act* was defined and used as 'the minimal unit which can realise a request' (i.e., the core of the request sequence) (Blum-Kulka et al 1989: 275).

Based on the dimension of directness/indirectness, a coding scheme (taxonomy) was developed for the cross-linguistic analysis of both English and Greek requesting strategies. The taxonomy was primarily based on the coding scheme used in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (see Blum Kulka *et al* 1989), although a number of request substrategies were modified or re-designed. In addition, *requests for action* (i.e. for some goods or a service) and *requests for information* were analysed on a separate scale of directness.¹

4.1 Directness/Indirectness model for cross-linguistic analysis of requesting strategies

Three major levels of directness were incorporated in the model. These three levels of directness had previously been empirically tested and successfully used by a number of researchers (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1986, Blum-Kulka *et al* 1989, Van Mulken 1996, Hassall 1999, Fukushima 2000, Billmyer and Varghese 2000). These are as follows:

1. *The Most Direct strategies (Bald-on-record strategies):*²

This most direct level was realised by requests syntactically marked as such (e.g., imperatives) or by other verbal means that name the act as a request (e.g., ‘Tell me, do you fly to Newcastle?’).

2. *Conventionally Indirect strategies:*³

This conventionally indirect level covers ‘strategies that realize the act by reference to contextual preconditions necessary for its performance, as conventionalised in a given language’ (Blum-Kulka 1989: 47) (e.g., ‘Could you tell me whether you fly to Nice?’).

3. *Non-conventionally indirect strategies (Hints):*⁴

This category includes strategies which are not conventionalised in the language and hence require more inferencing activity for the hearer to derive the speaker’s requestive intent (e.g., ‘I’m trying to find out about refunds for delayed flights...?’) (i.e., as a request for a refund).

These requesting strategies are placed on a direct-indirect scale, with strategy 1 being the most direct and strategy 3 the least direct. As one moves up this scale, the length of the inferential process needed for identifying the utterance as a request becomes longer. It must, at this point, be emphasised that this scale refers to a scale of directness and *does not* necessarily account for politeness.

5 Results

Using the analytical framework described above, each of the opening requests of the telephone observation data was coded and classified. The data was firstly analysed on the basis of the main three levels of directness and was then separately analysed on the basis of the substrategies employed. The results were statistically tested in order to establish whether the differences found were statically significant.

The results in relation to this telephone observation data revealed that there were significant differences⁵ in the degree of requestive directness and strategy selection employed by GNSs and ENSs in the specific situation examined. More specifically and as can be seen in figure 1 below, the results indicate that the GNSs employed *more direct* requesting strategies than the ENSs as far as their main strategies are concerned.

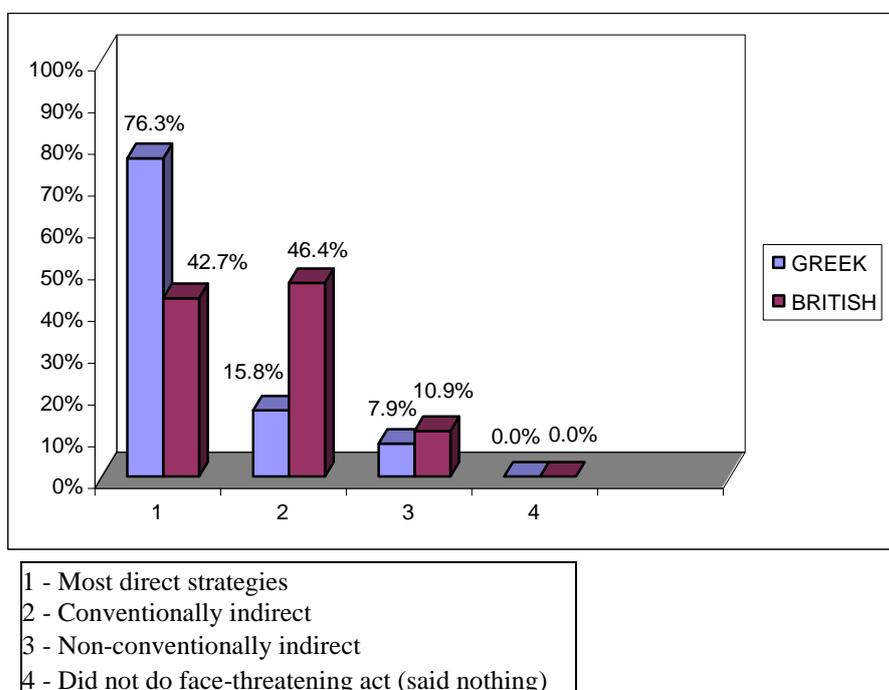


Figure 1. Main requesting strategies employed by ENSs and GNSs.

The results in relation to the *substrategies* employed (see figure 2) revealed that the GNSs primarily opted for mood derivable requests (i.e., example 1), direct questions (i.e., example 2), hedged performatives (i.e., example 3) and want statements (i.e., example 4) which all belong to the most direct strategy level:

e.g., 1

‘Παρακαλώ πεστε μου, τι ώρα φθάνει η μεσημεριανή πτήση από Αθήνα’

(Please tell (plur.), me what time is the midday flight from Athens arriving?) (transl.)

e.g., 2

‘Καλημέρα... Τιμή εισιτηρίου για Αθήνα.’

(Good morning... Ticket price for Athens?) (transl.)

e.g., 3

‘Ναι, καλημέρα... Ηθελά να ρωτήσω για τιμή εισιτηρίου για 10 Δεκεμβρίου...’(Yes good morning... I wanted to ask about flight prices for 10th December) (transl.)

e.g., 4

‘Καλημέρα... Θέλω 2 εισιτήρια για Λονδίνο στις 2 Ιανουαρίου’

(Good morning... I want 2 tickets for London on the 2nd of January) (transl.)

STRATEGIES	GREEK	ENGLISH
Mood Derivable/Direct Questions	19	18
Explicit Performatives	0	2
Hedged Performatives	27	4
Obligation Statements	0	0
Want Statements	31	21
Need Statements	0	2
Pre-Decided Statements	0	0
Reminder Requests	0	0

Figure 2: Frequencies of most direct requesting strategies for ENSs and GNSs
(n Greek =77) (n English = 47)

The ENSs, on the other hand, opted largely for query preparatory substrategies (see figure 3), and more specifically for ‘ability’ strategies (i.e., examples 5 and 6), which belong to the conventionally indirect strategy level:

e.g., 5

‘Can you tell me about flights from Luton to Barcelona?’

e.g., 6

‘Yes. Could you quote me a price please?’

STRATEGIES	GREEK	ENGLISH
Suggestory Formulae	2	0
Query Preparatory Ability/knowledge	14	50
Query Preparatory Willingness	0	0
Query Preparatory Possibility	0	1

Figure 3: Frequencies of conventionally indirect requesting strategies for ENSs and GNSs (n Greek = 16, n English = 51)

6 Discussion

As seen above, the analysis of the telephone observation data revealed some significant differences between the GNSs and the ENSs' requestive production. The GNSs were found to employ a higher degree of directness as far as their opening telephone requests were concerned. Even though this finding concerns results from a context-specific situation and no general claims can be made, it still offers evidence that there are marked and distinct cross-cultural differences between the Greek and the English interactional styles (Vassiliou *et al* 1972, Triandis and Vassiliou 1972, Tannen 1981, 1983 and 1984, Pavlidou 1991 and 1994, Sifianou 1992, 1992*b* and 1993). This result also agrees with Sifianou (1989 and 2001) and Pavlidou's (1994) finding that there is an observed difference in telephone conversational styles between the Greeks and the English, while at the same time supporting the argument that, on the verbal level, requests in Modern Greek are expressed structurally more directly than in English (Sifianou 1992).

It could be argued that the tendency for higher directness on the part of the GNSs is consistent with the ethos of directness and positive politeness orientation found to characterise Greek society. Brown and Levinson's politeness model (1978 and 1987), which distinguishes between positive and negative politeness societies, seems to adequately explain the GNSs and ENSs' different requestive choices. The view that the Greek culture qualifies as a positive politeness, solidarity-oriented society, has been supported by a number of scholars (Wierzbicka 1991, Sifianou 1992, 1992*b* and 1993, Pavlidou 1994) and agrees with Blum-Kulka's (1985: 134) finding that solidarity politeness encompasses directness in request strategies. Greek requests are very often expressed directly, based on the presumption of co-operation and intimacy (positive politeness) as opposed to British English requests which emphasise tact and avoiding or redressing threats to face (negative politeness).

In line with their positive politeness orientation, the direct strategies employed by GNSs in the present study served to emphasise intimacy, informality, closeness, solidarity and in-group relations (Triandis and Vassiliou 1972). This is in contrast with the negative politeness orientation of the ENSs whose requests served to emphasise individuality, tact and personal autonomy. The results confirmed that English, as compared to Modern

Greek, places more restrictions on the use of bald-on-record request strategies and showed how important it is in the English language to acknowledge the addressee's autonomy by inviting them to comply with the request, mostly through the use of conventional indirect requests and normally using an interrogative form (e.g., 'Could I confirm that you fly to Brussels?', 'Would it be possible to book a return flight?'). Direct/ bald-on-record strategies, on the other hand, were not only extensively employed by Greek callers, but also perceived as socially acceptable by the Greek operators who were interviewed on the issue. One of the Greek interviewees characteristically notes:

...the Greeks start the question directly "How much does it cost to go...". So, this is a more direct approach but I don't see this as being rude...perhaps because I'm Greek myself so I understand how things work. I know that these people ring up to get some information. End of story. I don't get offended by such directness. I only get offended if I realise that they genuinely show no respect...

[translated from Greek]

From a morphological and semantic point of view and with specific reference to the imperative, it can be explained that what makes the Greek imperative requests so widespread, frequent and acceptable is the fact that 'the Greek morphological system for marking the imperative is more elaborate than the English' (Sifianou 1992:126). While English imperatives are more often used to express commands, instructions or offers and are more common and appropriate in cases of greater urgency or desperation or in actions directly referring to the hearer's interest (i.e. Enjoy yourself, Watch out!) (Brown and Levinson: 1987), the imperative in Modern Greek language, can denote both command as well as *desire* and *wish* (Triandafillides 2000). The English imperative is an uninflected form which is not marked for aspect or number. In Greek, however, 'there is a distinct morphological system for marking imperatives for singular, plural, active and passive voice as well as for the present, past, and occasionally the present perfect tenses' (Sifianou 1992: 126). The use of the second person plural (V-form) in example 1 for instance, achieves to soften the imperative request and make it more polite and acceptable.

Moving away from a morphological and semantic point of view, Sifianou offers a social account for the widespread and acceptable use of the imperatives in Modern Greek which can also serve to explain the widespread use of imperative requests in the telephone encounter studied at present. The author explains that such imperatives are widely used to also express role-dependent duties (Sifianou 1992: 134) and are used like *reminders of a duty* rather than like power-based imperatives. Such reminders of a duty can be particularly common in *standard situations* (House 1989), which are characterised by high obligation to comply, low degree of difficulty in performing it, and a strong right on the part of the speaker to pose the request. Such telephone business exchanges can be regarded as standard situations where callers have a low difficulty and

a strong right to pose the request and operators have a high obligation and a role-dependent duty to attend to what is requested.

The results additionally indicate an observed difference in telephone conversational styles between the Greeks and the English (Sifianou 1989 and 2001, Pavlidou 1994). The social motivation for the Greeks' directness in this situation seems to be found in the different attitudes towards telephone usage for business affairs in the two cultures. Whereas the telephone is widely used for business affairs in Britain, by contrast in Greece, due to the existing bureaucracy, business dealings need to be carried out in person. Call centres are not yet a widespread phenomenon in Greece and there is often the common misconception that the employee deals with the call and the customers (who have come in person) at the same time. Such business telephone calls in Greece are therefore often very short and brief, not because they do not constitute an imposition, but on the contrary because they are an imposition that has to be kept as short as possible, and thus anything irrelevant to the purpose of the call has to be excluded. It is therefore possible that for the Greek callers this is a case where quick compliance is essential for goal achievement. Following this, it could be argued that there is a need for the Greek callers to formulate their requests in the most explicit and shortest way possible and that directness is primarily motivated not only by *spontaneity* but also by the need for *efficiency*, *urgency* and *pragmatic clarity*, necessary in this situation. This urgency is particularly exemplified in examples 1, 2 and 4 above.

Considering finally the relationship between directness/indirectness and politeness, it is evident from the above that politeness is *not* determined by indirectness. This is against Brown and Levinson's hierarchy which assumes that the more indirect an utterance, the more polite it becomes (Brown and Levinson 1987: 17-21). It is also against Searle's argument (1975: 64) that 'requirements for politeness normally make it awkward to issue flat imperative statements (e.g., 'Leave the room')'. It is, however, in line with Blum-Kulka's challenging finding (1987) that the notions of directness and politeness do not represent parallel dimensions. A number of scholars outlined how direct requests are much more widespread and acceptable in a number of Eastern European and non Western languages such as in Polish (Wierzbicka 1985, 1991), Russian (Thomas 1983) Greek (Sifianou 1992, 1992b), Persian (Eslamirasekh 1993), Hebrew (Blum-Kulka 1982 and 1985), Chinese (Lee-Wong 1994) and Japanese (Fukushima 2000). The finding of the present study shows how the most direct/bald-on-record requests are the most favoured request strategies for the GNSs and that a direct question is the dominant and therefore most acceptable means of asking for information in the situation examined.

7 Conclusion

The results derived from this study support the argument that there are marked cross-cultural differences in the strategy selection and degree of directness employed between the GNSs and the ENSs as far as their requesting strategies are concerned, and reveal the tendency on the part of the GNSs to employ greater directness in their requestive

production. This finding is consistent with the ethos of directness, spontaneity and positive politeness orientation found to characterise the Greek language and culture. It additionally suggests that there is a need for the Greek callers to formulate their requests in the most explicit and shortest way possible in the business context examined particularly because directness seems to be motivated not only by *spontaneity* but also by their need for *efficiency*, *urgency* and *pragmatic clarity*.

As the requests elicited from this data were exclusively elicited from an airline's call centre, they are context-specific. Further research is therefore needed in order to establish whether such significant differences are present in socially different contexts as well as in different role relationships.

Notes

1. Requests for action and requests for information ('Asks')(Hassall 1999) were classified on a separate scale of directness. This is because of problems presented by one strategy for asking for information, the 'direct question'. A 'direct question' (i.e., 'Where is Vicarage Street?') is the most direct way of all to ask for information, but as a means of asking anything other than information (e.g., for some goods or a service) (i.e., 'Where's your jacket', from a mother to a child on the way out), is *not* direct.

2. There are eight substrategies in this strategy level. These are as follows:

a1. Mood Derivable / Imperative (Requests for Action)

'Utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force' (Blum-Kulka et al 1989: 18). The prototypical form is the imperative. Functional equivalents such as elliptical sentence structures and infinite forms also belong to this category (e.g., 'Please look after the kids for a few hours').

a2. Direct Questions (Requests for Information)

'A query-locution used to perform a request for information with a minimum of indirectness' (Hassall 1999: 595) (e.g., 'Where's the Post Office?').

b. Explicit Performative (Requests for Action/ Requests for Information)

'Utterances in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named' (Blum-Kulka et al 1989: 18) (e.g., 'I'm enquiring on the availability of a return flight to Geneva').

c. Hedged Performative (Requests for Action/ Requests for Information)

'Utterances in which the naming of the illocutionary force is modified' (Blum-Kulka et al 1989: 18) e.g. by modal verbs or verbs expressing intention (e.g., 'I would like to ask whether you know how to get to the Town Hall please').

d. Obligation Statement (Requests for Action/ Requests for Information)

‘Utterances which state the obligation of the Hearer to carry out the act’ (Blum-Kulka et al 1989: 18) (e.g., ‘You will have to tell me how much it is’).

e. Want Statements (Requests for Action/ Requests for Information)

‘Utterances which state the Speaker’s desire that the Hearer carries out the act’ (Blum-Kulka et al 1989: 18). Utterances, which state the S’s desire that the act is done, also fall into this category (e.g., ‘I’d like you to tell me whether you fly to Nice’).

f. Need Statements (Requests for Action/ Requests for Information)

Utterances which state the Speaker’s need that the Hearer carries out the act. Utterances which state the S’s need about something also fall into this category (e.g., ‘I need to find out whether you fly to Greece’).

g. Pre-Decided Statements (Requests for Action)

Utterances according to which the Speaker chooses to skip the requesting utterance altogether and state his/her decision about the course of action he/she will take. Normally employed in situations where the speaker feels it would be more appropriate to help himself/herself rather than employ any kind of requesting construction (i.e., for free goods) (e.g., ‘I’m helping myself to your cigarettes, OK?’)

h. Expectation Statement/Question (Requests for Information)

Utterances which express the Speaker’s expectation that the Hearer gives him/her the desired information (e.g., ‘Are you/aren’t you going to tell me what happened between you and Peter?’)

i. Reminder Requests (Requests for Action)

Utterances which serve to remind the Hearer about an expected or a prohibited action.

Expectation Requests (e.g., ‘Mike, you haven’t paid me today’).

Prohibited Action Requests (e.g., ‘You’re not allowed to park here’).

3. The substrategies of this level are as follows:

a. Suggestory Formulae (Requests for Action / Requests for Information)

‘Utterances which contain a suggestion to do X’ (Blum-Kulka et al 1989: 18) (e.g., ‘How about looking after the kids tonight?’).

b. Query Preparatory (Requests for Action / Requests for Information)

Utterances which contain reference to preparatory conditions as conventionalised in any specific language. They contain reference to ‘ability’ (e.g., ‘Can/could we arrange my payment for the lesson please?’) ‘possibility’ (e.g., ‘Would it be possible to have an extension for this assignment?’), ‘willingness’ (e.g., ‘Would you mind if I had a week off?’) and ‘knowledge’ (e.g., ‘Do you know where Pizza Hut is?’) .

4. The substrategies of this level are as follows:

a. Non-Explicit Question Directives (Ervin-Trip, 1976) (Requests for Action)

Utterances which do not specify the desired act but treat the question directive as if it were an information question - thus giving the Hearer an escape route (e.g., 'Where is your jacket?') (mother to child).

b. Strong Hints (Requests for Action / Requests for Information)

Utterances containing partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act. Hints are not conventionalised and thus require more inferencing activity on the part of the Hearer. The Hearer is given an escape route to ignore the requestive force behind the utterance. Hints are by nature inherently opaque (e.g., 'Help, I need a baby-sitter!').

c. Mild Hints (Requests for Action / Requests for Information)

Utterances that make no reference to the request proper but can be seen as requests by context. They secure a higher degree of potential deniability and they are by nature more opaque (e.g., 'I need to go to the cash point because I'm broke!') (request for lesson payment)

5. Chi-square tests were performed in order to establish whether the differences in the strategies used were statistically significant. The Chi-square analysis revealed that the differences between the GNSs and the ENSs' selection of main strategies were *significant* ($p=0.000$ $p<0.01$).

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Fixed Expressions in EFL: The Case for Prepositional Clusters

Melinda Tan

Introduction

Prepositional clusters have long been absent in EFL/ESL coursebooks. This could be due to the fact that prepositions are notoriously difficult to teach due to their ambiguous nature of being both a lexical and grammatical item. Furthermore, the predominance of prepositional clusters in language (written and spoken) used metaphorically and how EFL/ESL language learners have struggled to make sense of their meanings as a result of this absence could be an additional reason case for arguing the inclusion of prepositional clusters in EFL/ESL coursebooks. The common use of prepositional clusters is obvious in the frequency with which they occur. Some spoken and written examples of these clusters are given below; they were taken from the television and local newspapers in the space of one week.

- ‘Although links between on and off screen violence have yet to be proven, we cannot deny that watching too much fictional brutality can desensitise the viewer to any real-life horrors...’ – (Dr Marian Watts, child psychologist, in an interview with Channel 4 News, about the effects of the increase in television violence on children, 16th August 1999)
- ‘Nottingham’s down and outs were having a cuppa with Housing Minister Hilary Armstrong last week...’ – (*Nottingham and Long Eaton Topper*, local newspaper, 18th August 1999)
- ‘The doctors are not only working in the hospitals but are also out and about the disaster area, treating victims...’ – (Julian Tapper, reporter for BBC World News, in an interview about the earthquake situation in Istanbul, 19th August 1999)
- ‘I’ve got a new cell-mate... He’s okay I guess... been in and out of jail a few times...but he’s alright...’ – (The TV character ‘Matt’ from *EastEnders*, BBC 1, 23rd August 1999).

Besides their pervasive use in daily life prepositional clusters are also used very frequently on the Internet in various types of written texts – electronic mailing lists, on-line advertisements, social messages, etc. With the Internet becoming so much a part of the information age and English being by far the most widely used language on the Internet, users of the Internet have to employ English to communicate with one another. This has resulted in the language of the Internet tending towards the informal where the use of idiomatic English is prevalent. One implication of this is that the use of prepositional clusters in everyday language interactions will not be an idiomatic aspect confined only to native English environments as other English language users of the Internet virtual community (native and non-native speakers of English) will soon acquaint themselves with their use.

The Conceptual Relationship in a Prepositional Cluster

A conceptual relationship refers to a relationship between constituent elements that show opposing, or reinforcing metaphorical concepts. In a prepositional cluster, the relationship between prepositional constituents will focus on the prototype meaning that prepositions like ‘up’, ‘down’, ‘over’ are assumed to possess. The application of prototype meaning here is based on the studies of single prepositions conducted by Brugman (1981, 1988), Rice (1992), Boers (1996), Boers and Demecheleer (1998) and Lindstromberg (1996, 1998). The advantage of applying the notion of prototype meaning is that the overall meaning interpretation of prepositional clusters becomes simpler if one relies on comprehension of basic prototypical concepts related to the up-down, front-back, in-out, far-near and left-right dimensions. Thus, the combination of deictic meaning interpretation and knowledge of common metaphorical concepts associated with a particular preposition aid the meaning interpretation of a prepositional cluster. Put simply, meaning interpretation is thus the result of the *extension* of the prototypical spatial and temporal conceptual meaning of the prepositional constituents into other mental conceptual domains such as state (e.g. happiness, sadness), area (e.g. huge, tiny), period (e.g. quickly, slowly), manner (e.g. rude, polite), etc. This claim can be illustrated in the analysis of two kinds of prepositional cluster. These clusters each comprise two prepositional constituents and follow the word patterns:
a) Prep + and + Prep, b) Prep + Prep respectively.

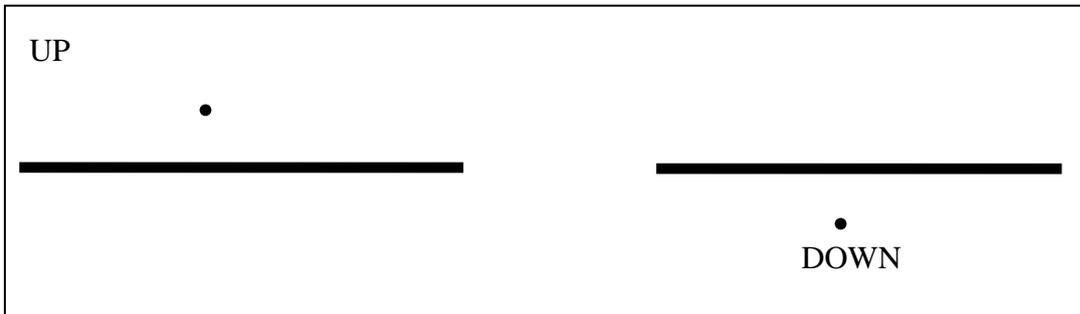
Opposing conceptual relationship in Prep₁ + and + Prep₂, Prep₁ + Prep₂

The notion of an opposing conceptual relationship will be demonstrated by the examples *up and down* and *inside out* which reflect the pattern Prep₁ + and + Prep₂ and Prep₁ + Prep₂ respectively. Some of the common metaphorical concepts attached to each preposition will be illustrated as well as how these metaphorical concepts oppose one another, thus creating this opposing semantic relationship between the prepositional constituents Prep₁ and Prep₂. Langacker’s (1993) schema-prototype-extension theory will be used to demonstrate this opposing semantic relationship on various examples found below. All data for this chapter have been taken from the BNC, COBUILD and CANCODE corpora.

A) Example 1: *up and down*:

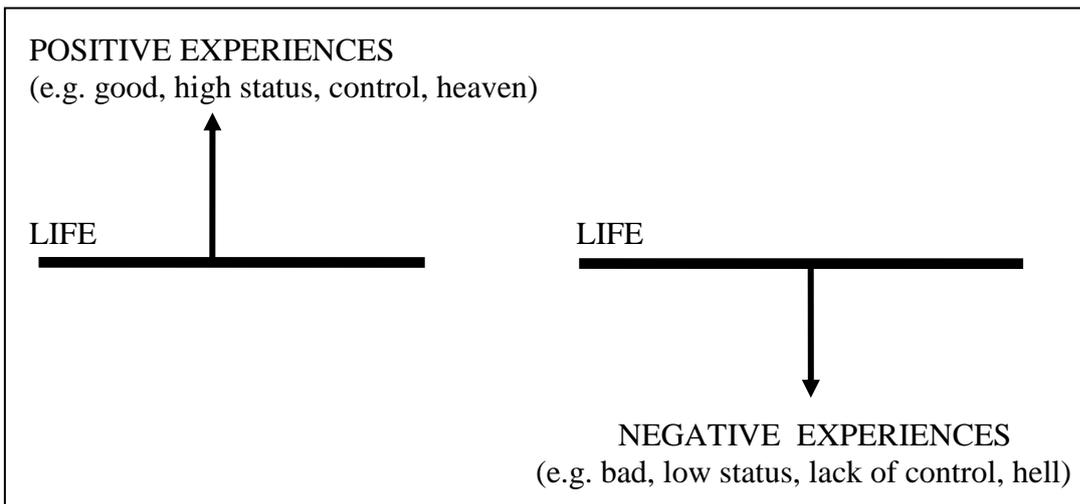
Prototype meanings (Spatial) for *up, down*:

Figure 1



Common metaphorical concepts for up, down:

Figure 2



Prototype Meaning of constituents + Metaphorical Concepts of constituents = Meaning of up and down:

Meaning 1: repeated physical movement in a defined space

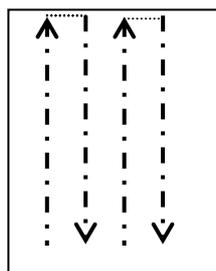
e.g.

His fingers were still around Tug's wrists as he looked the woman *up and down*...

Cologne was sprayed about and lipsticks swished *up and down*...

The trains, running *up and down* from London to Stanmore and back...

Figure 3



Meaning 2: positive and negative human experiences*e.g.:*our marriage has its *ups and downs*, but it is mainly on the up and up...has not been tied to the everyday *ups and downs* in the hurly-burly of school life...As a pressman, I've had my *ups and downs* with Tommy...

Figure 4

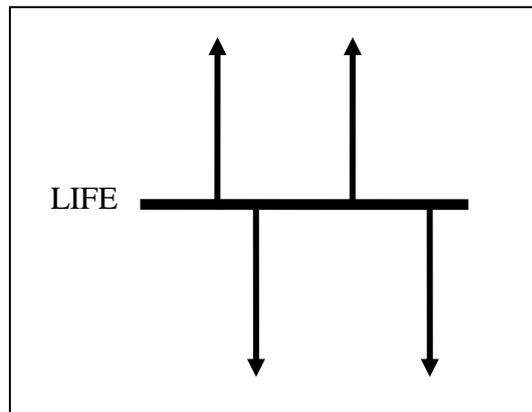
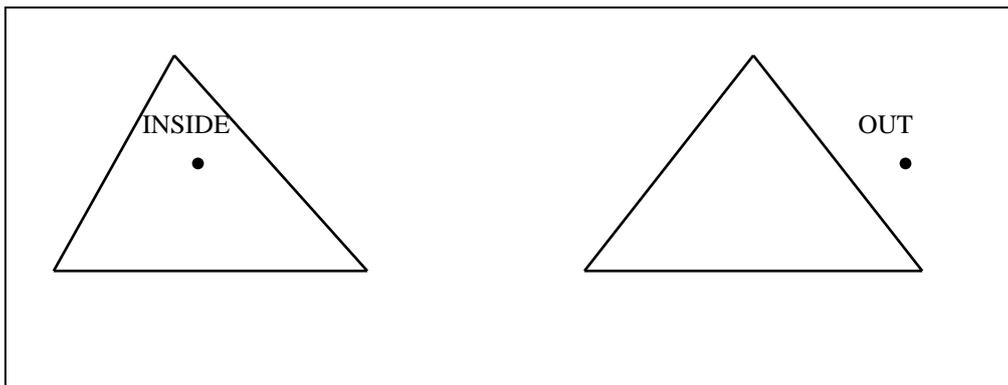
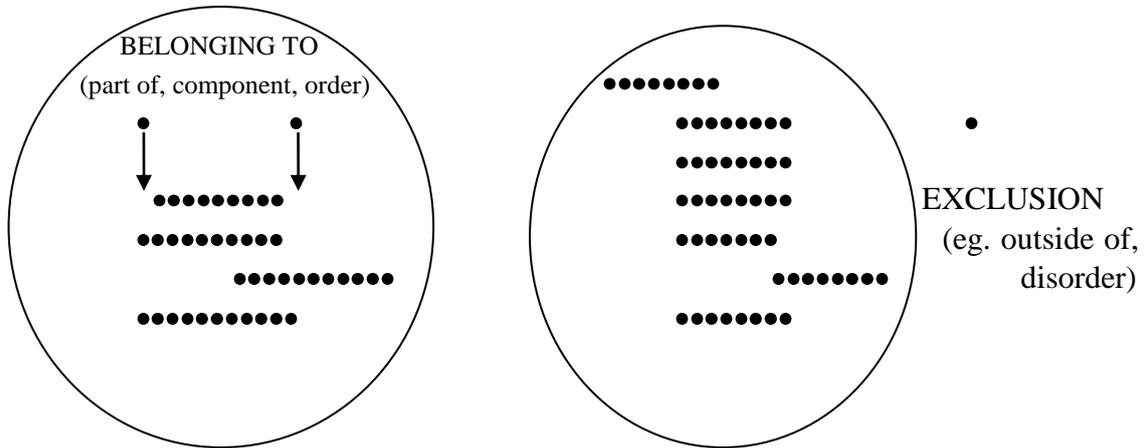
**B) Example 2: inside out**Prototype meanings (spatial) for inside, out

Figure 5



Common metaphorical meanings for inside, out:

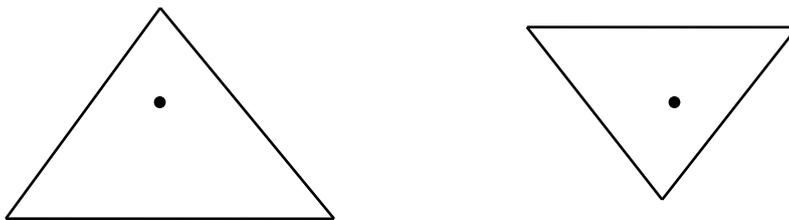
Figure 6



Prototype meanings of constituents + Metaphorical concepts of constituents = Meaning of inside out

Meaning 1: inversion

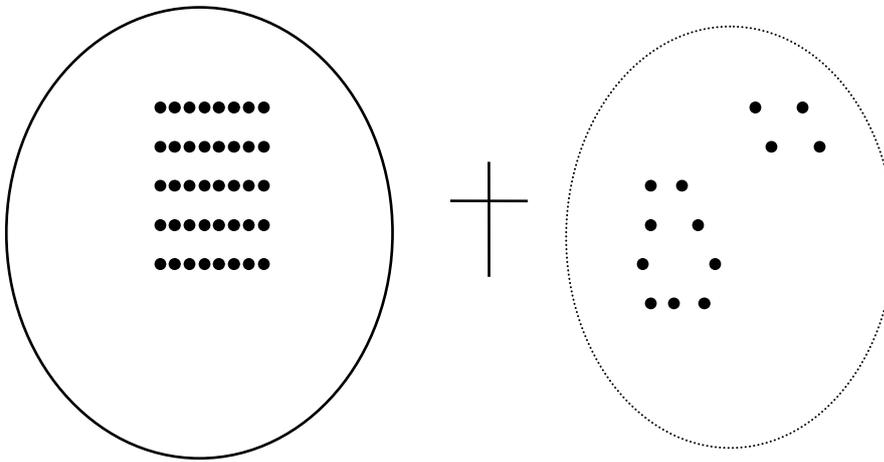
Figure 7



- e.g.
 the players turn their shirts *inside out*...
 the child's socks were dirty so she had turned a pair *inside out*...
 the ugly girl turned her lips *inside out*...
 the lovedoll was turned almost *inside out*...

Meaning 2: detailed knowledge of

Figure 8



e.g.

He knows his subject absolutely *inside out*...

He knew the division *inside out*...

I know this one *inside out*...

as he was a ...professional journalist, he already knew the media *inside out*...

Meaning 3: chaos

Figure 9



e.g.

they had turned his flat *inside out*...

had once turned the Iris society *inside out*...

it gave her the feeling of being turned *inside out* for better examination...

More examples of an opposing conceptual relationship

Here are further examples demonstrating an opposing semantic relationship between Prep₁ and Prep₂. However, the list here is not meant to be exhaustive.

a) Prep₁ + Prep₂

his smile almost turns his face *inside out* with smugness
 they had turned his flat *inside out* and questioned him
 had once turned the Iris Society *inside out* with excitement
 he knows his subject *inside out*
 He knew the division *inside out*
 They know them *inside out*
 Sometimes he could be observed wearing some garments *inside out*
 Inversion is thus a kind of 'turning *inside out*' effect
 he pulled off his jacket in a hurry and left one sleeve turned *inside out*
 (Data taken from COBUILD, CANCODE and BNC)

b) Prep₁ + and + Prep₂

and we went *up and down* as if we were on springs
 panting as he scrambled *up and down* the ladder
 his emotional *ups and downs* are part of a manic depressive syndrome
 Life is full of *ups and downs* and I know that there are going to be bad times
 a self-destructive actress who drifted *in and out* of the story
 patterns of adult members being *in and out* of sync with one another
 we knew the *ins and outs* of the situation at hand
 Bill was aware of the *ins and outs* of the problem
 I've read a lot of arguments *to and fro*
 the old motorbike carried him *to and fro*

A point to add is that analysis of data also revealed that adverbs could also form clusters of the type which showed an opposing metaphorical relationship between the constituents. However, these adverbial clusters have to be of the syntactic pattern: Adv₁ + to + Adv₂ which has a parallel structure to Prep₁ + to + Prep₂ where the two adverbial constituents (Adv₁ and Adv₂) also demonstrate an opposing relationship. Another adverbial cluster which demonstrates this opposing relationship is Adv₁ + and + Adv₂. Some examples of adverbial clusters which show an opposing relationship are given below:

baseball hats worn *back to front*
 Vicky began writing *back to front* and upside down a year ago
 I think it's all er *back to front* er the way the government is
 born, after her mother's protracted...labour with her right foot twisted *back to front*
 we must have driven several thousand miles *back and forth* between Al
 Hauser paced slowly *back and forth* at the far end
Back and forth their bodies went, like a pair of dancers

He wrenched the knife *back and forth* to free it from the planking
 the stone-work mellows, and *here and there* vineyards appear
 delicate bamboo-screens placed *here and there*
 pulling at a weed *here and there* and swishing away flies
 (Data taken from COBUILD, CANCODE and BNC)

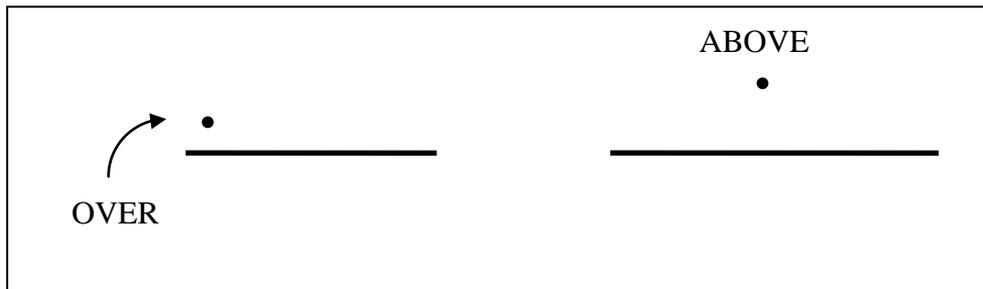
Reinforcing the conceptual relationship in Prep₁ + and + Prep₂, Prep₁ + Prep₂

The prepositional clusters *over and above* and *round about* which are examples of the syntactic patterns Prep₁ + and + Prep₂, Prep₁ + Prep₂ respectively, will be used to demonstrate a reinforcing semantic relationship. The diagrammatic representations below indicate that the metaphorical concepts and prototype meanings of the prepositional constituents Prep₁ and Prep₂ are almost similar and actually *intensify* and *strengthen* one another and thus, the overall meaning of the expressions.

a) Prep + and + Prep: over and above:

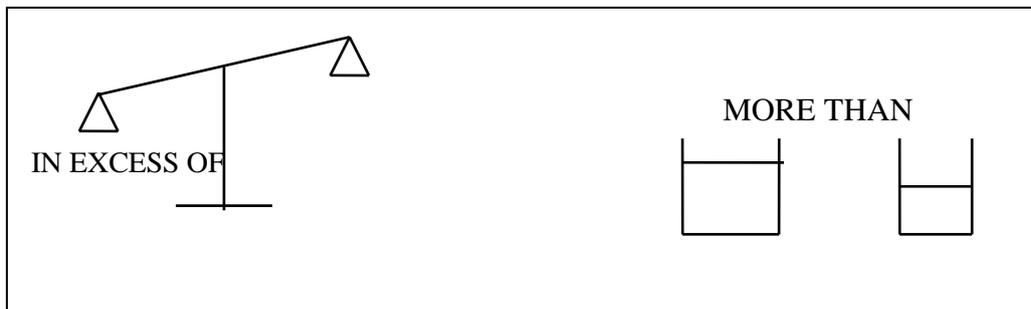
Prototype meanings of over, above:

Figure 10



Common metaphorical concepts for over, above:

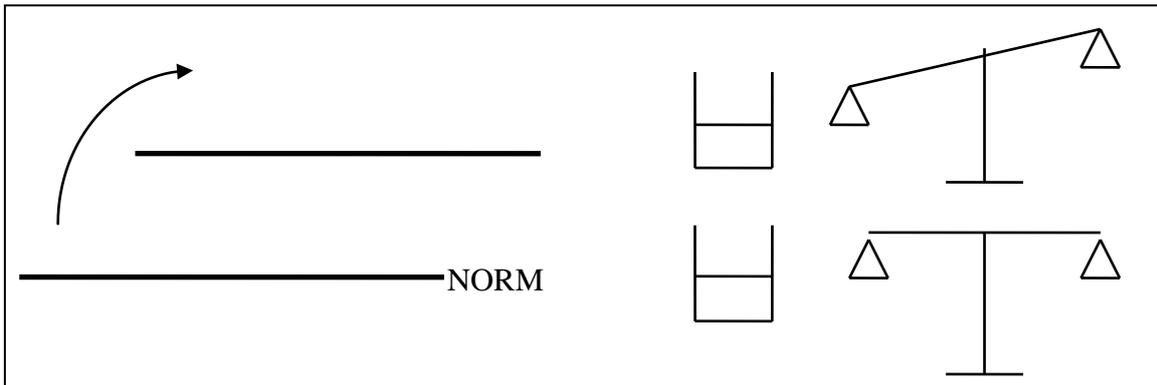
Figure 11



Prototype meanings of constituents + Metaphorical meanings of constituents = Meaning of *over and above*

Meaning 1: surpassing, exceeding the norm

Figure 12

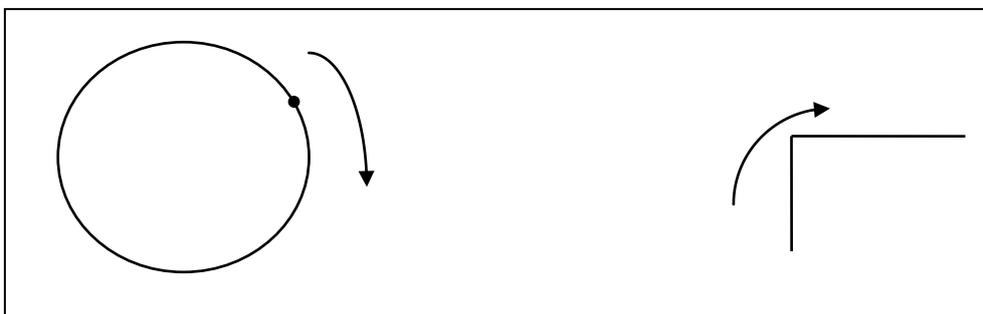


e.g
 increase average prices by 5% *over and above* inflation
 special reasons why this should be the case, *over and above* those that have been applied

b) Prep + Prep: round about

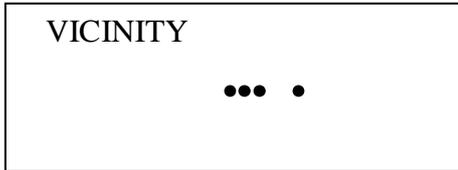
Prototype meanings of *round, about*:

Figure 13



Common Metaphorical concepts of *round, about*:

Figure 14

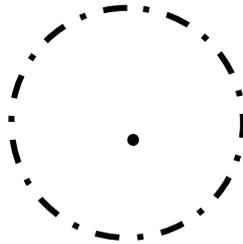


e.g.
 so she's been *round about* the South of England
 ordered his tents to be pitched *round about* Valencia
 and the people *round about* would tug at her and shout

Prototype meanings of constituents + Metaphorical concepts = Meaning of *round about*

Meaning 1: Surround

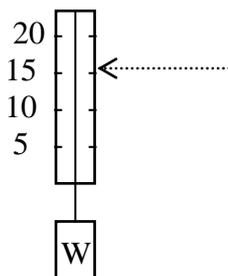
Figure 15



e.g.
 I'll put a girdle *round about* the earth
 and fortified *round about* with sharp trees
 you elements that clip us *round about*

Meaning 2: Approximation

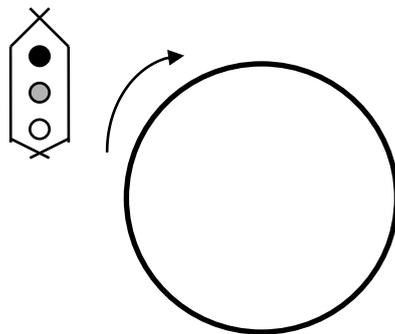
Figure 16



e.g.
 settled into what looked like immobility *round about* 1950
 between the two stations *round about* 500 times a second
 I think you're looking *round about* twenty years

Meaning 3: traffic-junction

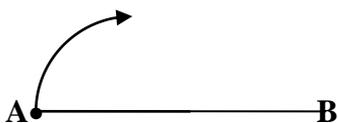
Figure 17



e.g.
 just after the *round about* intersection with the B3274

Meaning 4: circuitous

Figure 18



e.g.
 Sorry to bring you on this *round about* route
 She let Gwer up by a *round about* way
 could have spoken in a *round about* manner

Other examples showing a reinforcing conceptual relationship:

A) Prep₁ + and + Prep₂

Gail, 39, is *up and about* early to travel
 The elephant should be *up and about* in ten minutes
 lots of friends who like to get *out and about*

it's nice just being *out and about*
 they are currently *out and about* on their first major tour
 and Sporting looked *down and out* when irrepressible Gavin Peacock struck twice
 It's the worse you can imagine, *down and out* in Wigan
 they had in different measures contributed to society *over and beyond* their work
 many books are desirable possessions *over and beyond* the value of information
 it rolled *over and over* several times, preening its paws
Over and over again, the hands danced through the same short sequence of signs
 (Data taken from COBUILD, CANCODE and BNC)

It is interesting to note that adverbials can also show form clusters of the sort Adv + Adv which show a reinforcing metaphorical relationship between the adverbial constituents Adv and Adv. Some examples of this are shown below:

B) Prep + Prep

I lost interest *round about* a week when I was with them
 he does very well. And *round about* him, his band of assorted
 located on the right, just after the *round-about* intersection with the B3274
 I should have known what I was *in for*. She was silent for a moment
 If they try they're *in for* a nasty surprise
 the Gulf crisis may mean he's *in for* an easier ride
 the Prince of Wales's trip *Down Under*
 Koresh's current destination *down under*
 is tearing rugby league apart *Down Under*
 And I know exactly what I am *up against*. There are plenty of quick wingers
 for her steward Antonio comes *up against* a sense of power, hers over him
 Police are often *up against* a wall in trying to get evidence
 But this time he will be *up against* the Banana team
 Come on, come on, the game's *about to* start
 the pain you are undergoing or are *about to* is extreme
 Her time at 12.5 miles was *about to* go up on the result board
 (Data taken from BNC, COBUILD and CANCODE)

Adverbial clusters of the sort Adv + Adv which are parallel in syntactic patterning to Prep + Prep also show this reinforcing metaphorical relationship between the constituents. The examples below show this:

you can never go so *far out* that you can't get back
 rafts with beautiful wing-like sails - *far out* onto the open sea
 from the record labels, you won't stray *far out* of the west
 But if your old polling station is too *far away*
 are a bunch of enthusiasts, from as *far away* as Holland
 Follow a story deep-rooted in *far-away* lands, with colours of sand
 (Data taken from BNC, COBUILD and CANCODE)

Pedagogical Implications

The teaching of prepositional clusters could help learners develop an awareness of authentic language usage patterns in English. It thus remains the task of language teachers to empower language learners with appropriate skills which enable them to analyse for themselves how such patterns are used. Here is a sample lesson of how students could make develop their analytical skills and at the same time become aware of how prepositional clusters are used in everyday communication.

Sample lesson

The following examples demonstrate a particular metaphorical concept:

CONSCIOUSNESS IS MOVEMENT

e.g. I was *up and about* again within a week
 he'll be *up and about* in no time, I can assure you
 I work odd hours which means I'm *up and about* at funny times of the day
 I don't see why he should lie in bed all day when I'm *up and about*.
 When you come next week, I'll be *up and about*, as good as ever.
 How good to see you *up and about* again.

(Data taken from BNC and COBUILD)

Question:

From the examples above, find some other expressions you know, that convey the same metaphorical concept.

Comment:

This task is suitable for all levels of learners in the sense that the teacher can grade and sequence the task depending on the ability of the learners. The task requires two stages of mental processing:

- a) Stage 1: Hypothesising or interpreting the meaning of the expression *up and about* from observations of lexical choices in the given examples about the concept of 'being conscious', based on their own cultural knowledge, world knowledge and experiences.
- b) Stage 2: Experimenting with their observations and hypotheses about expressions depicting similar concepts, by suggesting other expressions they might be familiar with. Beginner to intermediate learners can stop at Stage 1. However, more advanced learners can progress to Stage 2, where they meet the challenge of experimentation. In this stage, they are encouraged to extend their skills of observation and hypothesis by exploring and analysing other alternative expressions that convey the same concept.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to describe the semantic relationship between prepositional constituents in a cluster by applying prototype theory and conceptual categorisations of the world according to human experience. Whilst selection and analysis of the prepositional clusters in this article have been based on conventional cultural concepts experienced by native speakers of English, comparative studies in language learning and culture could be made to extend this work further. They could seek to establish if speakers from different cultures use similar or different kinds of prepositional clusters as those found in English to express the same kind of human experience. In fact, this aim could even be pursued in the language classroom, to extend language awareness in students through consciousness-raising exercises.

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Genre and Spoken Discourse: Probabilities and Predictions

Svenja Adolphs

Introduction

The relationship between language and context is a rich field of study (Halliday 1973,1978, Thibault and van Leeuwen 1996). Hasan (1999), for example, argues ‘that to describe the nature of human language we need to place it in its social environment; that this environment – call it context – must be taken as an integral part of linguistic theory [...]’ (1999:224).

There seem to be two distinctly different views on how to approach the analysis of texts in relation to context. One starts with an examination of context, folk-terminology for genres, perceived distance between the speakers and social factors of the participants. Goffman (1964: 133) for example lists ‘age, sex, class, caste, country of origin, generation, schooling [...]’ as social variables which determine linguistic variation. The other view is more text-based, and as Sinclair (1992) states, ‘is to expect the text to supply everything necessary for its own interpretation; what we need is not an external knowledge base but a better understanding of text structure. If we do not rely on the text itself to indicate its own interpretation, then we invoke mysterious processes for which it is difficult to find evidence’ (1992: 82).

The first view is based not only on the distinction between text internal and text external criteria but also the traditional division between syntax, semantics and pragmatics, whereby speech acts ‘belong in a separate ‘pragmatics’ of utterances in their contexts-of-use’ (Thibault and Van Leeuwen 1996). The meaning of a speech act is here inferred by reference to context, rather than implicated in the text. The view taken in this paper, sees the meaning of speech acts as an integral part of grammar and text.

Text and context

Approaches to the analysis and description of contextual categories vary enormously in current research on texts in context. The term ‘genre’ has emerged over the past 20 years as a powerful tool in language description as well as in areas of applied linguistics, such as the language pedagogy (see Hammond and Derewianka 2001). The power of the concept of ‘genre’ lies in ‘the attractiveness of its potential to formalise generic aspects of the structure of texts [...]’ (Knapp 1997:113). Genre theory, then, is based on the ‘view that texts can be classifiable and have understandable and predictable forms, structures and purposes’ (Knapp 1997: 113).

The description of ‘a genre’ is not straightforward and various approaches have been suggested with regard to possible categories of definition. Hasan (1985), for example, sees genre in relation to semantic choices in texts. She argues that ‘the statement of genre specific language is best given in terms of the semantic categories, rather than the lexico-grammatical ones, since (1) the range of meanings have variant realisation; and (2) the more delicate choices within the general area are not a matter of generic

ambience' (1985:113). Others differentiate between 'genres' and 'text-types' (Biber and Finegan 1986). The former is characterised on the basis of text external criteria, i.e. recognisable discourse genres, such as 'adventure fiction' or 'press reviews', while the latter is a statistically derived notion, based on lexico-grammatical features. This type of approach, it could be argued, is too crude and too reliant on a manner of classifying texts which disregards their structures and goal-types.

McCarthy (1998) is able to capture part of this aspect of discourse structure by checking texts for 'goal-types'. Goal-types are related to the activity that the speakers are engaged in and are often manifested in the structure of texts, in that a goal-type such as 'providing information' will be reflected at a discourse level as unidirectional. McCarthy analyses a number of linguistic concepts, such as deixis and formulations, in a set of CANCODE¹ texts, and finds that 'extracts controlled for variables such as goal type and context-type can be seen to display similarities at the lexico-grammatical level which fit in the higher-order features of generically oriented activity.' (1998:46). Bhatia (1993) proposes a similar approach to the analysis of texts which takes into account lexico-grammatical features, text-patterning and an interpretation of text structure.

The brief overview above shows that there are different ways of approaching the relationship between text and context, some involving the analysis of lexico-grammar, and others relying on goal-types as clues to generic activity. The approach taken in this study combines these two methodologies in an analysis of indirect speech act formulae in discourse.

Lexico-grammar, speech acts and context

Aijmer (1996: 26) argues that 'all routines are to some extent constrained by the situation. They can be restricted with regard to the antecedent event, the setting, the participants in the conversation, etc.'. Levinson (1983), in a discussion of speech acts in context, mentions the term 'frame' as a possible analytical notion to capture the intricate relationship between individual speech acts and the environment in which they occur. A frame, he points out,

is a body of knowledge that is evoked in order to provide an inferential base for the understanding of an utterance [...] and we may suggest that in the attribution of force or function [...] reference is made, as relevant, to the frames for teaching, shopping, participating in committee meetings, lecturing and other speech events (see e.g. Gumperz 1977).

(Levinson 1983: 281).

The phenomenon described by Levinson above has received a lot of attention. Discussions of 'frames' (Aijmer 1996), 'speech events' (Hymes 1986), 'activity types' (Levinson 1992), 'speech activity' (Gumperz 1982) and 'schemata' (Cook 1994) all highlight the way speakers orient themselves to a 'higher-order framework' (McCarthy 1998). This includes knowledge about certain contexts and the restrictions and

constraints that such contexts pose on possible contributions, as well as the structural progression of discourse.²

In an attempt to relate surface structure to context, a number of functionally motivated linguistic features have been isolated in the past. Gumperz (1982: 131) refers to these as ‘contextualisation cues’, a concept that describes surface features that signal ‘contextual presuppositions’. Contextualisation cues can be lexical, linguistic, paralinguistic or prosodic, and operate on different discourse levels. As such, these cues are related to the notion of ‘frame’ used by Aijmer (1996). Tannen (1993) also discusses linguistic features which can be seen as a realisation of the participants orientation to a particular type of discourse. She mentions, among other features, ‘negative statements’, ‘modals’ and ‘false starts’. These features all encode the speaker’s expectations about the upcoming discourse. McCarthy (1998: 32-8) discusses ‘expectations’, ‘recollections’, ‘instantiations’ and ‘formulations’, and some of their linguistic realisations, as evidence of speaker goals. Formulations are explained as ‘paraphrases of previous talk or summaries of positions reached in the ongoing talk’ (McCarthy 1998: 32). Formulations that refer to subsequent talk, on the other hand, have been described as pre-sequences (Levinson 1983) and metastatements. The following extract illustrates the speaker’s use of a metastatement:

<S1> Because **what I was going to suggest was that erm you went along to the class.**
If if he lets you go.

Here speaker 1 introduces his/her speech act by naming it. McCarthy argues that ‘suggestions by individuals are an important part of the goal-orientation and are realised both in formulaic and more indirect ways’ (1998: 43). Gumperz (1992) also finds that formulaic expressions at the beginning of a sequence trigger inferential processes which link the discourse to the context.

While the importance of metastatements has been widely accepted (Schegloff and Sacks 1973), it will be demonstrated below that the use of speech act prefabs similarly relates to the participants’ interpretations of discourse, as well as their expectations regarding the goal-type and text-type. They are not related to context in the routinised way suggested by Halliday, such as phrases like ‘once upon a time’ (1985: 37) which indicate that the speaker is about to relate a fairy-tale, but they nevertheless carry generic information. Another difference between speech act prefabs and metastatements is that the latter is associated mainly with sequence initial position. While it is not always easy to determine the notion of ‘sequence’, it is clear that speech act prefabs can occur at any place in an ongoing discourse, occupying ‘initiation’ as well as ‘response’ slots in the overall discourse model.

The review above yields the following question which Hasan puts as follows: ‘can definite statements be made about the linguistic selections in a text-type that are genre motivated, so that every text belonging to a genre would display those linguistic properties?’ (1985: 108). To answer this question Hasan discusses three texts which are

structurally similar but are verbally different. She comes to the conclusion that ‘it is not possible to claim that [...] if two texts are structurally identical, then they must be verbally identical (...)’ (1985: 112). By building this important claim into her theory, Hasan is able to maintain that ‘only certain aspects of texts are sensitive to context’, which means that she ‘has rejected the crude determinism whereby each text and its context are utterly predictive of each other’ (Hasan 1985: 112).

Hasan examines this claim by looking at individual speech acts and finds that a demand, for example, can have varying lexical realisations, probably related to the relationship between the speakers. In a given genre, such as a ‘service encounter’, the differences in lexical form that the speech act takes does not influence or change the genre as such. However, wording must effect genre at some level as otherwise there would be no relation between the two. Hasan therefore suggests that genres are realised through meanings, or processes, which are realised through a specific class of verbs.

It is curious that Hasan’s rejection of a determinant relationship between verbal identity of a text and genre is based on a discussion of three short texts only. This makes it difficult to ascertain whether there are any lexico-grammatical patterns which emerge from a relationship to a certain genre. The conclusion that may be drawn from Hasan’s discussion is thus not so much that lexico-grammar is not directly related to genre, but rather that more corpus data and analysis is needed to determine the type of relationship that might exist between the two. It is also noteworthy that Hasan starts her analysis with lexico-grammatical different entities in a supposedly similar context. An analysis that keeps both the linguistic and the contextual unit constant is better equipped to draw conclusions about the relationship between language and context.

Genre and text-type

The two notions that have been used to describe the difference between text-based and context-based descriptions of recurring situations are ‘text-type’ and ‘genre’.

In the following section the notion of text-type and its role in the framework of context will be explored. The emphasis, however, is not on determining various genres or text-types as such, but rather on the relationship between social processes, such as ‘explaining’, ‘arguing’ and ‘narrating’³, their relation to goal-categories, such as ‘decision-making’, and the relationship between social processes and context. Social processes, in the framework proposed here, are identical to text-types, yet the levels of description are different. While ‘social processes’ are a general descriptive category, recognisable by members of a culture, the term ‘text-type’ is used to account for the structure of social processes. Similarly, goal-types, such as ‘problem-solving’, can be explained from the perspective of social processes, as well as from the perspective of text-type. To see ‘problem-solving’ as a social process would invoke a folk understanding of the process involved, such as presenting a problem, attending to a problem, finding possible solutions, discussing such solutions, etc. From a text-type point of view, on the other hand, the ‘problem-solving goal type’ is seen in terms of

textual structures and turn options. The three perspectives, goal-sub-type, text-type and social process, represent distinct points of departure in the model.

Askehave and Swales (2001) distinguish between a text-driven and context-driven definition of genre which are associated with two different layers of analysis. Where genres are generally determined on the basis of external criteria (Biber 1988) and identified by their function and communicative purpose (Swales 1990), text-types are similar in linguistic form to each other and identified by text internal criteria (Biber 1988). Genres are therefore linked more readily to culturally recognisable categories such as 'the research article' (Swales 1990), or 'fiction'. Text-types on the other hand are more of an analyst's category (Köster 2001) and can be described in terms of the processes they fulfill, such as arguing, discussing, etc. Genres tend to be closely related to the discourse community in which they occur (Swales 1990). Hence, certain genres, such as 'service encounters', will be defined differently by people living in different countries in which the procedures and constraints of such encounters differ. The relationship between genres and text-types is maybe closest when the interaction is highly structured, such as in a 'court-hearing'. Here, the textual structures are more easily described as the genre constraints are at a maximum. The same applies for written genres, such as recipes.

However, considering the conversations in the CANCODE corpus, the relationship between genre and text-type is not as clear-cut. The relationship between genre and text-type ranges from very fixed to negotiable. It is because of this 'negotiable' character of most conversation, that the units of description need to be much smaller than the whole text.

The difference between genre and text-type is thus therefore twofold. Firstly, text-types are based on linguistic description, while genres are often based on folk-categories. Secondly, text-types are associated with social processes while genres are associated with products. However, Harrison (2001) argues that recurrence of a particular text-type in a genre defines this genre: 'If narrative is probabilistically of high frequency in conversational argumentation, then its level of probability becomes part of the definition of the genre itself'.

Speech acts and genre

Speech acts have always played an important part in categorising genre as well as text-types (Longacre 1983, Hasan 1978, Dudley-Evans 1994). Thus, the stages of a certain genre, for example a 'service encounter', are realised by certain obligatory and optional elements (Hasan 1985). These are, in turn, describable in terms of speech acts. The first stage of a service encounter, could be described as 'Salutation' (Mitchell 1957), realised at a speech act level as 'greeting'. Harrison (2001), in an analysis of the text-type 'discussion', argues that if specific kinds of speech acts are recurring they are defining for this text-type. Hoey (1983), in a discussion of decision-making discourse identifies a

number of lexical signals for the various stages in this type of discourse. Hence the word 'problem' often occurs in the beginning of a decision-making process. While Hoey relates the use of the word 'problem' to a particular stage within a specific (problem-solution) textual pattern, Gumperz (1982) argues that there are lexical formulations in discourses which reveal speaker goals (see also Craig 1990). This means that certain speech acts reveal the discourse goals of the speakers. A pre-sequence such as 'I want to make a suggestion' signals the speaker's desire for his or her utterance to be understood as such. Again, no exhaustive list of lexico-grammatical features exist that is related to particular goals.

CANCODE, goals and discourse

I have already mentioned some possible goals in the previous section. A discourse goal is identified here in terms of discourse structures and alludes to the way participants in a conversation negotiate turns to achieve an outcome. Since conversation is inherently dynamic, such goals are transient which means that the unit of analysis needs to be suitably restricted in length. A bottom-up approach is thus advocated which starts at the level of speech act and includes an analysis of the surrounding turns. The reason why 'top-down' approaches are mostly unsuccessful lies in the often too rigorous formalisation of higher-order stages of genres, which are then expected to exhibit a lower-order reflection in terms of particular textual structures or lexico-grammatical choices. At the same time, the fluidity of speaker goals brings with it changes at both structural level and lexico-grammatical levels.

Köster (2001) finds, for example, that suggestions in 'decision-making' discourse can be made by all participants while suggestions in 'advice-giving' discourse can only be made by the advice giver. While the goal of the former is to make a joint decision, the goal of the latter, according to Köster, is 'to get the addressee to carry out some action' (2001:75). Similarly, Hudson (1990) in an analysis of a gardening radio phone-in programme differentiates between 'diagnosis texts' in which the caller is provided with a diagnosis on a previously described problem with his or her plants, and 'how to texts' in which the caller receives advice on the process of caring for a plant. Hudson finds linguistic and structural differences within the two 'text-types' which respectively follow different goals. In the same vein, Eggins and Slade (1997: 235) argue that 'texts of different genres reveal different lexico-grammatical choices.'

Goal-types resemble text-types to a certain extent. Thus, the goal 'reach agreement on an issue', can be realised by the text-type 'observation-comment' (Martin and Rothery 1986). The generic activity, then, emerges from the texts themselves in the patterns that become obvious in texts of the same context-type or goal-type. No comprehensive taxonomy of goal types exists although textual structures have repeatedly been linked to goal-directed behaviour (see for example McCarthy 1998 on decision making).

The current analysis starts with the speech act *prefab*⁴ and then builds a unit of analysis around that. To illustrate this approach the speech act ‘suggestion’ has been chosen along with two *prefabs* that are traditionally associated with this speech act.

Suggestion episodes will have as their main property the goal of ‘changing a state of affairs’. Since the act of a suggesting is ‘to put forward a line of action or idea for consideration’, the problem-solving element must be seen as part of this type of episode. The proposal of a line of action assumes that the current state of affairs would benefit from a change. The problematisation of the existing situation may be more or less explicit. However, this does not mean that searching for solutions of problems is the main goal of the ‘suggestion episode’. There are a number of reasons why people would make a suggestion. As DeCapua and Huber argue, ‘advice serves to establish or maintain rapport, to flatter, to help, to reprimand, distance and dominate. (1995: 128). Those are the speaker goals which will in turn be part of the suggestion episode. The main goal of ‘problem-solving’ or ‘problem-orientation’, however, remains stable across these more individualistic goals.

The pilot study below will investigate the extent to which different lexico-grammatical realisations of a speech act express different goal-types. Since goal-types mirror generic activity, a probabilistic relationship between lexico-grammar and goal-types would be indicative of a link between the verbal identity of a text and genre.

Pilot study

The following pilot study compares the discourse sequences which surround the suggestion *prefabs* ‘why not + V’ and ‘how about + V’. The relationship between the speakers in the chosen extracts is relatively constant. Any distinguishing textual patterns are therefore unlikely to be related to differences in power distribution between the speakers.

The two *prefabs* ‘why not’ and ‘how about’ have both traditionally been described as suggestion markers (Leech and Svartvik 1994). In order to control the variable ‘speaker relationship’, only instances which are used in casual conversations between close friends have been considered. In the corpus data, the main functional uses of both *prefabs* is that of a question which is different to the function investigated here. However, there are four instances in each category which followed the structure ‘*Prefab* + V + proposition’ and introduced a suggestion. These instances are listed in the concordance output below.

```
1   it </$=> you know why not sort of make it a bit m
2   ey want to do a job why not do it through the night
3   people living there why not build on the lot anyway
4   the police is well why not put some sort of type o
```

- 1 **How about** you know looking at t
 2 **How about** we look at a situatio
 3 <\$2> **How about** finding out?
 4 <\$?> **How about** sampling a bottle of

Despite the limited set of examples, it is quite clear that these prefabs are not functional synonyms. There are immediate differences that can be seen from the concordance output. While the ‘how about’ examples are utterance initial, the ‘why not’ examples occur in mid-utterance. As such we find that in three of the ‘why not’ examples, the speaker has stated the reason for the suggestion him or herself within the sentence. The speaker states a current situation and introduces an improvement as in the following extract:

- <S02> They’ll give you twenty four hours’ notice.
 <S01> Right.
 <S02> Erm we get a card saying that we’re going off such and such a time twelve o’clock at night and coming back on at+
 <S01> Mm.
 <S02> +six o’clock the next evening+
 <S01> Yeah.
 <S02> +you know. Erm and like my husband say he’s been out and comes back at one two o’clock in the morning well there’s nobody up there working.
 <S01> Mm.
 <S02> Erm if they want to do a job **why not do it through the night.**
 <S01> Mm.
 <S02> They’ve got the lights to do it.
 <S01> Mm.

Here speaker 2 is relating a current situation regarding working regulations at an electricity supplier. The goal-type here is complaining or lamenting which is a considerably frequent text-types in casual conversation. Speaker 1 is merely making back-channeling noises. Interestingly, this suggestion is embedded in a conditional structure. Hudson argues that ‘In directives, the conditional clause sets up some situation in which agency coding is an issue’ (1990:294). Agency here is encompassed by people other than the speaker or the hearer. Again this is characteristic for the use of ‘why not’ as the following extract shows:

- <S01> Right. Right. Don’t you think people might go there if they were like you know cheaper the prices were a bit lower or something like that.
 <S03> No. Why should they. You you don’t want to put your life in your own hands if you don’t know what the hell’s going on do you.
 <S01> There’s a lot of
 <S02> You’re lot you’re not gonna find You’re not gonna pay say seventy thousand pound there when you can get one f= further away for the same price.
 <S01> Right. Well just another thought. I mean And given that this is built up already I mean the area’s like a lot of people living there **why not build on the lot**

- anyway if you already got people in the area? I mean**
- <S03> You can do. You you Obviously you can do. Or you can go You can go either way.
- <S01> Right.

Again, the participants are discussing an issue that calls for action on the part of people other than themselves, this time related to safety issues for housing near a plant. The text-type is different, in that it has changed from recounting to discussing, which is reflected in the turn-taking structure. The turns are more evenly distributed than in the previous extract. Again the suggestion is part of a conditional structure and part of a unique genre. While the discussive element was mainly taken forward by one speaker in the previous extract, it is jointly achieved in this one. That does not change the goal-type, however, which is to reach agreement on an issue by pointing out faults with other people or systems. The same pattern can be found in the remaining two examples of ‘why not’ suggestions.

If we turn to the instances of ‘how about’, a distinctly different pattern emerges at the discourse level. The use of ‘how about’ in the chosen examples seems to be restricted to discussions about personal ‘problems’. This means that they introduce a suggestion that is aimed at improving the situation of one of the speakers. The suggestion emerges through a joint discussion or by one speaker expressing a need for improvement of a situation. The following extract illustrates this point:

- <S03> I couldn’t go and be a university lecturer.
- <S02> That is the one job prospect of doing a P H D. Are there any others?
- <S03> I can’t think of any. Can you?
- <S02> Do you wanna really wanna be a university lecturer?
- <S03> Yeah.
- <S02> You do.
- <S03> Yeah. Be a laugh. [laughs]
- <S02> Er no. Do you?
- <S03> Yeah.
- <S02> More than any other job?
- <S03> Mm. No. Maybe. I want to What I really want to do is go and work for academic publishing.
- <S02> Oh.
- <S03> That’s what I really want to do.
- <S02> But do you need a P H D to do that?
- <S03> I’m not sure.
- <S02> **How about finding out?**
- <S03> Mm.

The two speakers in this extract are discussing the job prospects of speaker 3 who is considering doing a PhD. The suggestion ‘How about finding out’ is related directly to a

problem introduced by speaker 2. As such, agency is foregrounded, as one of the speakers is directly involved. The text-type has shifted from discussion to advice giving, which is realised in a problem-solution sequence. The main goal is that of ‘problem-solving’ in this particular episode.

The following extract with ‘how about’ as a speech act prefab occurs in a reported sequence but nevertheless shares some of the features of the previous extract:

- <S01> Well she she’d she’d given it up. Erm+
 <S02> Mm.
 <S01> +erm+
 <S02> She was working out her notice.
 <S01> two months ago.
 <S03> And not having grief from her boss.
 <S02> Mm.
 <S03> But erm+
 <S01> But she’s I mean+
 <S03> +the erm+
 <S01> +the fact that this consultancy came up
 <S03> +Irish cousin’s taking care of
 <S02> Oh so she’s got some work. She’s got more work.
 <S01> Yeah.
 <S02> Oh great.
 <S01> Cos the day after she she works with various suppliers and suppliers the day after this driver went and said Look. **How about you know looking at the market and developing newer new products.**
 <S02> Right.
 <S01> I think she felt that she wasn’t being very creative because+
 <S02> Right.
 <S01> +er
 <S02> She was just doing a day-to-day type

This extract differs from the previous extract containing ‘how about’. However, there are similarities within the story that is being told, in that the reported suggestion is a response to a personal ‘problem’ rather than a public one. And since the language in narratives is partly based on the knowledge of such situations there may be at least an indirect relationship between the direct use of the prefab ‘how about’ and the recounted situation. The third example of ‘how about’ is again different to the previous ones.

- <S01> It’s just a good thing for getting out stains
 <S02> Yeah. [laughter]
 <S01> White velour [laughter]
 <S02> And then you put salt on to get the wine out.
 <S01> That’s right yeah.
 <S02> **How about sampling a bottle of white.** [laughs]
 <S01> Oh. that food

<S02> Yes. I think it's a good idea.

This extract is task-oriented in that it refers to an immediate material context. The group is having a meal and one of the speakers has spilled some red wine. The process of stain removal is accompanied by comments from various speakers related to the task at hand. Towards the end, one of the speakers makes the suggestion, 'How about sampling a bottle of white', which is followed by laughter. While, the goal-type and goal-sub-type are somewhat different from those in the other 'how about' episodes, this instance still refers to a personal problem rather than a public one.

This last extract is taken from the same conversation as the 'why not' example above in which the speakers discuss possible solutions for building houses close to an industrial plant. It is in this conversation that the notions of genre embedding, text-type, goal orientation and lexico-grammar are most apparent.

<S01> Well tell you what. Let's look at that situation then. Cos that's. Erm I mean we've talked about an existing plant there right and about+

<S02> Yeah.

<S01> +putting new houses round it. **So how about the other way round. How about we look at a situation where we're we're talking about maybe putting a new plant into an area right.** Let's say here that we've got these two sites site A and site B right which are both industrial sites.

<S02> Mm.

<S01> But neither of them have anything going on there at the moment+

<S02> Mm.

<S01> +that represents any kind of risk to the people living nearby right.

<S02> Mm.

The text-type here is still one of 'discussing', although speaker 1 is holding the floor in this episode. The main goal type remains 'collaborative idea' but the sub-goal type has changed from the 'why not' episode in the same conversation from reaching agreement by 'relating faults' to 'organising the discourse'. The suggestion introduced with 'how about' refers to the way the participants 'should' organise their discussion in order to reach agreement. Again, the commitment is on the part of the participants, not on an external agent. As such it is geared towards the notion of 'success', rather than to 'understanding', as was the case in the 'why not' episode taken from the same conversation.

It seems then that there are clear differences between the two speech act prefabs and their relation to genre. These come out most prominently in the type of problem that is being addressed, which again is related to the goal-type and to the text-type. We find, for example, that 'why not' is mostly used to address some wider issue in the context of a discussion, with the aim of complaining or lamenting. 'How about', on the other hand, is used in suggestions directed towards an identified problem related to other

participants in the conversation. The problem itself has either arisen through the situation or through a comment by one of the speakers.

Conclusion

Returning to Hasan's (1985:114) claim that verbal identity and generic identity of a text are not probabilistically related, it seems that this is only true when we see generic identity at a level which excludes goal-types. On the other hand, if we take the structure of speech act episodes as an analytical category, certain patterns between lexicogrammar, discourse, and genre orientation become apparent. The nature of agency in such episodes is an important indicator for generic activity and is easily overlooked in the wider schema of the generic structure of texts. However, the pilot study above is based on a relatively small set of data and not too much should be claimed for it until further research has confirmed the results.

Notes

1. CANCODE stands for Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English, a 5 million word corpus of naturally occurring conversation. The project was sponsored by Cambridge University Press with whom sole copyright resides.
2. See Brown and Yule (1983) for a discussion.
3. It is important to note that text-type and genre are often used synonymously and that what is referred to here as social process has elsewhere been described in terms of genre (see Longacre (1976) on narrative, procedural, expository and hortatory discourse). However, while the term 'genre' has traditionally been associated predominantly with literary conventions, the notion of 'text-type' has been used in relation to textlinguistic models (see Esser 1993 for a discussion).
4. Research into the nature of formulaic sequences is on-going and the concept of a 'speech act prefab' is problematic in more than one way. However, the discussion of prefabricated language is beyond the scope of this article.

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‘Behaving Badly’: A Cognitive Stylistics of the Criminal Mind

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1 Introduction

This paper is part of a study that aims to explore the stylistic nature of those extracts of contemporary American Crime Fiction that allow access to the criminal’s consciousness. It therefore aims to contribute to both the discipline of literary criticism and that of cognitive stylistics. The paper primarily focuses on Gary Soneji, a serial killer who features in two contemporary novels by James Patterson, namely *Along Came a Spider* (1993) and *Cat and Mouse* (1997). Both of these are part of the author’s series featuring detective/psychologist Alex Cross in addition to sharing the same villain – Soneji – a psychopathic madman who engages in criminal actions that range from kidnapping to murder. *Cat and Mouse* (1997) also features Mr Smith, an equally dangerous madman terrorizing Europe, and his criminal mind will also be analysed.

In this paper, I investigate the nature of the figurative language employed in those extracts portraying the criminal consciousness, and argue that both criminals’ figurative conceptualisations of experience appear to be motivated by underlying metaphorical schemes of thought that constrain, even define, the way they think, reason, argue, and carry out their criminal actions. In other words, I base my analysis on the argument that figurative aspects portraying the criminal consciousness reveal the poetic structure of the criminal mind. I claim that since the constraints of how we speak and write are not imposed by the limits of language but by the ways we actually think of our everyday experiences (Gibbs 1994: 8), it follows that the way that the criminal mind is linguistically portrayed is closely tied to the way the criminals are believed to conceptualise their lives and actions.

More specifically, I consider some of the ‘*sustained metaphors*’ (see Werth 1999) employed in these extracts, meaning those that provide a sustained frame of reference, as well as a means of thematic coherence. I analyse the way the criminals manipulate *idiomatic expressions*, linguistic *connotations* and *conventional metaphors* to bring out cruel, inhuman and violent undertones, as well as how *irony*, *colloquialism* and *metonymies* convey their vicious intentions. I also consider the various *literalised metaphors* adopted, the types of *personification* used, and instances where abstract concepts are treated as if these are concrete ones. Finally, I consider the use made of *creative metaphors* in the extracts.

2 Contextualising the criminally focalised extracts

James Patterson is one of the top-selling novelists in the world. *Along Came A Spider* (1993) is his first of five books in the series featuring detective / psychologist Alex Cross, and is followed by *Kiss the Girls* (1995), *Jack and Jill* (1996), *Cat and Mouse* (1997) and *Pop Goes the Weasel* (1999). In the first explosive thriller, the Washington

D.C detective/psychologist must track down a daring serial killer who has kidnapped the daughter of a famous Hollywood actress and the young son of the secretary of the treasury. That killer is Gary Soneji, a mild-mannered mathematics teacher at a Washington private school for the children of the political and social elite. When one of the children is found dead in a river, badly beaten, all hope is lost for the other child. A ransom is demanded and paid in full but the money disappears and is never found.

The murderer/kidnapper is eventually found and arrested but in addition to there being no sign of the money, the kidnapper claims to have no recollection of asking for the money. He appears to have a split personality. Alex Cross faces the ultimate test as a psychologist: how do you outmanoeuvre a brilliant psychopath? Especially one who appears to have a split personality – one who won't let the other half remember his horrific acts?

Soneji escapes police custody only to return in the fourth novel in the series, *Cat and Mouse* (1997). He goes on a murder spree at train stations in Washington and New York, but his ultimate goal is killing Alex Cross and his family: two young children, Jannie and Damon, and his grandmother (referred to as Nana) who has raised him from a child. Meanwhile, FBI agent and profiler Thomas Pierce is tracking Mr. Smith, a brutal serial killer, across Europe. Thomas, referred to by the FBI and Interpol as 'St Augustine' for his uncanny ability to catch killers, has been chasing his demon, Mr Smith, since his fiancée was brutally murdered, her heart cut out.

When the Soneji case takes a baffling new twist, Pierce must put the Mr Smith case on hold to assist in a special investigation. That is, when tragedy strikes Alex, Pierce is called in to aid the investigation. As the body count rises, Alex and Pierce must continue their pursuits, and as their cases become intertwined, the question becomes 'who is chasing whom'.

Both novels have all the elements readers have become accustomed to in an Alex Cross thriller – mystery, action, suspense, references to current pop culture, and *alternating points of view*, mainly those of Cross and the criminal under pursuit. Patterson's trademark of 2-3 page-chapters is also retained. Gary Soneji's mind is as twisted as ever, but Mr Smith's may even be more warped, as he performs autopsies on living victims. Patterson builds up the psychological thriller as he puts us in the killers' minds and into Alex's head as he tries to understand and predict their next move.

3 The poetics of the criminal mind

As Gibbs (1994: 5) argues, recent advances in cognitive linguistics, philosophy, anthropology and psychology show that not only is much of our language metaphorically structured but so is much of our cognition.

People conceptualise their experiences in figurative terms via metaphor, metonymy, irony, oxymoron and so on, and these principles underlie the way we think, reason, and imagine.

Gibbs (1994: 5)

There is, he argues, considerable evidence for the inextricable link between the figurative nature of everyday thought and the ordinary use of language. There is now much research (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Turner and Fauconnier 1995) showing that our linguistic system, even that responsible for what we often conceive of as literal language, is inextricably related to the rest of our physical and cognitive system (Gibbs 1994: 5).

Since language is not independent of the mind but reflects our perceptual and conceptual understanding of experience, then it may be argued that when novelists employ *deviant* linguistic structures to portray the criminal mind, they are in fact allowing readers access to the criminal's conceptualisation of reality. And one may even argue that there lies the key to demystifying criminal behaviour. Criminality, here seen as a tendency that certain people are prone to, is often mystified; it is thought of as unconventional, antisocial, unusual, unexpected and unpredictable. One could argue that crime writers attempt to demystify it; by offering us the poetics of the criminal mind, we are allowed access to the criminal's world or reality, where their crimes are justified and accounted for. Hence, we are, to a certain extent, being put in a position where we understand the criminals, share their conceptual viewpoint and are even forced to sympathise with their behaviour and course of actions.

Since criminal behaviour is itself unusual and unconventional, it can be argued to be somewhat demystified via *linguistic deviation*, a term most commonly used to refer to divergence from the norms of everyday language. Leaving aside for the moment the problem of determining the norm, Short and Leech (1981: 48) define *deviance* as a purely statistical notion – as the difference between the normal frequency of a feature, and its frequency in the text or corpus. Prominence is the related psychological notion, whereby some linguistic features stand out in some way through the effect of foregrounding.

The term *figurative language* is here used to refer to that language which is not to be taken literally. Though the term is frequently used to simply mean *metaphorical language*, here *metaphor* is seen as a very important or basic aspect of figurative language. Leech (1969) considers *metaphor*, and also *synecdoche* and *metonymy* under this heading. Cognitive linguists, such as Gibbs (1994), also regard *slang metaphors*, *hyperbole* or *exaggeration*, *simile*, *idioms*, *proverbs*, and *irony* as figurative language. In this paper, I take up Gibbs's definition, and will hence consider most of these features in connection to the portrayal of the criminal mind.

3.1 Extended metaphorical mappings

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), in metaphor, there are two conceptual domains, and one is understood in terms of the other (e.g. LOVE is understood as a kind of nutrient in 'I'm drunk with love', 'He's sustained by love', 'I'm starved for your affection' and so on). Creative individuals will often provide unique artistic instantiations of conceptual metaphors that partially structure our experiences. In the Patterson novels, there seem to be a number of such metaphors, which are 'sustained' (see Werth 1999) or 'extended' (see Nowotny 1962), that is, work on even more extended ways across the whole of both novels and give rise to related metaphors, as well. Werth (1999: 323) refers to such sustained metaphorical undercurrents as *megametaphors*.

The first noticeable metaphor in the two novels of the Patterson series is the KILLERS ARE SPIDERS metaphor. Sentences such as 'He had spun his web perfectly' (1997: 5), 'Mr Smith had to bend low to talk into Derek Cabott's ear, to be more intimate with his prey' (1997: 7), 'He had been *Mr Soneji – the Spider Man*' (1997: 26), and 'Then Sojeni was lost in his thoughts. His memories were his cocoon' (1997: 30) are used to mark out the killer as an individual who is so disturbed that he even sees himself as a spider looking out for victims to catch in his web. Even though this metaphor is rather conventional, it is used to such a great extent (note especially the title of the first novel in the series) that it may be said to be a 'sustained metaphor'. The main KILLERS ARE SPIDERS metaphor is elaborated across the novels; the criminal's planning of the crimes is thought of as the web, victims are viewed as prey, and the criminal's thoughts and memories are his cocoon, the protective silky thread to be found around insects.

The metaphor is very closely connected to the larger KILLERS ARE ANIMALS / INSECTS TO BE FED metaphor, which further underlies the two novels under analysis. Examples from the first novel in the series include '[H]e moved closer and closer to his first moment of real glory, his first kill' (1993: 3), 'Here comes Mr Fox.' (1993: 5)', 'He watched the blubbery blob the way a lizard watches an insect – just before mealtime' (1993: 100), 'As he walked outside to the car, he felt like an animal, suddenly on the loose' (1993:157), all of which present the criminal as an animal or insect out for search of food. The combination of similes and metaphors somewhat justify the killings as necessities: the killer is presented to kill out of need for survival, just like an animal or insect kills to feed. Note especially the title of the second novel under analysis, *Cat and Mouse* (1997) which, as mentioned, raises the question of 'who is chasing whom': though it is Cross who is once again in pursuit of Soneji, Soneji's attempts at killing Cross offer the impression that it is Soneji who is metaphorically conceived of as the hunter (cat), and Cross the hunted (mouse). Similar occurrences of the same metaphorical mapping are further evident in this novel, as well, e.g. 'The Cross house was twenty paces away and the proximity and sight of it made Gary Soneji's skin prickle' (1997: 3), and 'Cats were such little ghouls. Cats were like him' (1997: 49). According to this mapping, the killer is conceived of as the hunter on the loose, the (potential) victim as the hunted - the (potential) kill under observation, the killing as the

feeding, and the anticipation of the crime as the physical reaction the animals get to the killing.

Another *megametaphor* that is evident in both novels in the series is that of CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR IS PLAY-ACTING or CRIMINALS ARE ACTORS. There are many good examples of the use of this metaphor in the first novel in the series: 'He thought of his nickname at the school. Mr Smith! What a lovely, lovely bit of play-acting he'd done. Real Academy Award stuff.' (1993: 49), 'And that performance was a classic. De Niro himself had to be a psychopath in real life.' (1993: 49), 'This was his movie' (1993: 52), 'He still had work to do tonight. Masterpiece Theatre continued' (1993: 54), 'Gary lied, and he knew it was a pretty good one. Extremely well told, well acted.' (1993: 145), 'He was another De Niro – no doubt about that – only he was an even better actor' (1993: 183), 'A special performance for all the kiddies and mommies' (1993: 183), 'He had another big part to act out' (1993: 370), and so on.

Similarly, such metaphors are evident throughout *Cat and Mouse*: 'What a handsome couple they made, and what a tragedy this was going to be, what a damn shame' (1997: 19), 'he knew every single move from this point until the end' (1997: 19), 'The scene of the crime-to-be, the scene of the masterpiece theatre' (1997: 20), 'they would be safely on board on their little commuter trains by the time the 'light and sound' show began in just a few minutes' (1997: 27) and so on. As can be seen from these examples, the narrator appears to adopt and elaborate on the CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR IS PLAY-ACTING megametaphor. The criminals and victims are viewed as actors, the crime-scene is viewed as the stage for play acting, the crime a tragedy, and the by-passers or people who learn of and are terrified by the crimes as the audience to be amused and entertained.

Once again, this megametaphor appears to be closely connected to yet another metaphor in the series: CRIMES ARE GAMES. Examples of this metaphor evident in *Along Came A Spider* include 'Let's Play Make Believe' (1993: 1), 'It's time for more fun, more games' (1993: 171), 'This was the most daring part of the whole adventure' (1993: 180), and 'He was playing policeman and it was kind of neat' (1993: 394), and examples from *Cat and Mouse* include 'You, Derek, are a piece of the puzzle' (1997: 8), 'He had outdone the legendary Charles Whitman, and this was only the beginning' (1997: 48), '*Victory belongs to the player who makes the next-to-last mistake*' (1997: 48), '*Make no mistake about it. I will win*' (1997: 55) etc. According to this metaphorical mapping, the criminals and detectives are thought of as players, the pursuit of the criminal as an adventure/game, the criminal who gets away with it a winner, the completion of a crime a victory, and the criminal behaviour is plain childish fun.

One final extended metaphor to be noted is CRIMINALS ARE MACHINES. Patterson elaborates on this metaphor to once again bring out inhuman undertones to the criminal course of action in the two novels. Examples from *Along Came A Spider* include 'Gary was like a programmed machine from the moment he spotted the police' (1993: 170),

‘He was completely wired’ (1993: 180), ‘real high-wire stuff’ (1993: 180), and ones from *Cat and Mouse* include ‘Just to look around, [...] to fuel his hatred, if that was possible’ (1997: 4), and ‘His murder would electrify the town’ (1997: 7). According to this metaphorical mapping, criminals are viewed as machines that carry out their vicious intentions, the criminals’ hatred is the fuel, the pre-planning of the crimes is the machine’s programming, their criminal behaviour is the electricity generated by the machine.

3.2 Metonymies

The novels also include a few instances of *metonymy*. Unlike metaphorical mappings, metonymies involve only one conceptual domain, in that the mapping or connection between elements occurs within the same domain (Gibbs 1994: 13). For instance in ‘Hollywood is putting out terrible movies’, the movie industry is referred to by the place where movies are made, which maps a salient characteristic of one domain (its location) as representing the entire location (the movie industry).

Such a metonymic mapping is found in ‘The boy ran back across the muddy fields with the precious struggling bundle in his arms and disappeared into the darkness’ (1993: 5). Here, the name of the referent, ‘the baby’ is replaced by the name of the element that contains it - ‘the bundle’, therefore bringing out the impression that the baby was as insignificant to its killer as a bundle of clothes to be carried around. Another example is that of ‘Soneji picked up a small reindeer sweater. He held it to his face and tried to smell the girl.’ (1997: 5). Even though the criminal appears to smell the sweater, in his mind, it is the girl that he smells. That is, the name of the referent ‘the sweater’ is here replaced by the name of an entity related to it, ‘the girl’, while it is worth pointing out that the original referent is phonologically as well as graphologically associated with ‘sweat’, creating the impression that the criminal attempts to smell the girl’s sweat.

3.3 Literalised metaphors and de-idiomatized idioms

The novels also contain many metaphors that are literalised such as ‘He was coming back with a vengeance that would blow everybody’s mind’ (1993: 5). Here, the third person narrator plays around with the ‘blowing someone’s mind’ metaphor that he uses as a clue, as he indeed intends to set off on a murder spree at a train station and literally blow people’s heads off. Further metaphors are literalised in *Cat and Mouse* as in, ‘This afternoon Mr Smith was operating in the wealthy, fashionable Knightsbridge district. He was there *to study the human race*’ (1997: 7). Firstly, we have the use of the verb ‘operate’ that is part of the common police register for ‘carrying out criminal actions’. What we find out later on, however, is that the criminal is indeed performing a surgical operation; he is actually carrying out an autopsy on a living victim. We therefore re-evaluate the verb ‘operate’ as literal, as opposed to figurative. Similarly, ‘study’ is also to be interpreted literally (to mean ‘visually investigate the physical nature’) rather than figuratively (to mean ‘reflect over the psychological nature’).

What the reader faces in all these examples is what Emmott (1999: 160) refers to as 'miscuing' of the signals needed in order to understand the episodic information offered. According to the same source, the reader will, later on, engage in what Emmott refers to as a *frame repair*:

Repairs become necessary when a reader becomes aware that they have misread the text either through lack of attention or because the text itself is potentially ambiguous.

Emmott (1999: 225)

As Emmott suggests, such repairs force readers not only to replace the 'erroneous' frame when they discover the problem, but also to reread or reinterpret the text with the 'correct' frame from the point at which the switch should have taken place. This process has also been referred to as *schema refreshing* (see Semino 1997).

According to Gibbs (1994: 91), *idioms* have traditionally been defined as expressions whose meanings are noncompositional or not functions of the meanings of their individual parts. That is, people automatically comprehend the figurative meanings of idioms and therefore do not necessarily process their literal interpretations. For instance, the figurative interpretation of *kick the bucket* ('to die') cannot be determined through an analysis of the idiom's literal meaning. According to the same source, some scholars propose that idioms are dead metaphors, expressions that have lost their essential metaphoricity over time and now exist as frozen semantic units, perhaps in a special phrasal lexicon.

In crime fiction, *idiomatic* expressions are often manipulated so as to bring out cruel, inhuman and violent undertones. It is in fact often the case that the apparent idioms' meanings are indeed to be determined through an analysis of the individual meanings of the words they consist of. In a way, the idioms are literalised, or de-idiomatized. For instance, in the first novel in the series, we are told that 'Less than two miles from the farmhouse, he [Soneji] buried the spoiled-rotten Lindbergh baby – *buried him alive*' (1993: 5). Even though Soneji is engaged in fantasies at this point in the novel, his choice of idiomatically describing the baby as 'spoilt-rotten' brings out vicious connotations; the baby is in fact soon expected to be literally and physically spoilt rotten. Similarly, 'Michel Goldberg weighed next to nothing in his hands, which was exactly what he felt about him. Nothing' (1993: 50) is equally disturbing; the little boy weighed 'next to nothing', which matched the kidnapper's feelings about him.

Other examples include 'Is that a mindblower or what?' (1993: 184), uttered when Soneji shoots a man in his forehead. A final interesting example from the first novel occurs when Soneji is speaking to a former agent while simultaneously cutting his arm with a knife: 'Cut to the chase, hmmm.' (1993: 393). Once again, an apparently innocent idiomatic expression takes on a vicious twist and is interpreted on a different, or rather, literal and cruel plane.

The same manipulation of idiomatic expressions is also evident in *Cat and Mouse*. In the first chapter of the novel, Soneji is outside the Cross household and thinks to himself; ‘*Enjoy every moment – stop and smell the roses. Soneji reminded himself. Taste the roses, eat Alex Cross’s roses – flowers, stems, and thorns.*’ (1997: 4). Here, the again apparently innocent idiomatic expression ‘stop and smell the roses’ (commonly used to mean ‘enjoy yourself and relax’) takes on a rather different meaning. ‘Smell’ is replaced by ‘taste’ and we are thus given the impression that ‘roses’ may be meant to be interpreted metaphorically, as the source domain for the things that Cross loves and cares for. Once the ‘roses’ are elaborated as ‘*flowers, stems, and thorns*’, we view the three elements offered as three aspects of Cross’s life that are to be exploited so as to cause Cross pain, probably his Nana and two children.

Another good example of such an idiomatic manipulation is that found in: ‘Whatever happened was meant to, and besides, he definitely wanted to go out with a bang, not a cowardly whimper’ (1997: 26). Here, readers are once again forced to interpret the idiom ‘to go out with a bang’ (to mean ‘to die impressively’) on a literal level: Soneji indeed hopes to be able to die in the sound of a gunshot. The idiom is again de-idiomatized; the readers decompose and analyse the meanings of the individual words of the idiom in order to arrive at the criminal’s literal intended meaning.

3.4 Linguistic connotations altered

An extension of these patterns occurs when words *acquire connotations* other than the ones that are ordinarily attached to them. According to Wales (1990: 78), in both Semantics and Literary Criticism, *connotation* and *connotative meaning* are commonly used to refer to all kinds of associations words may evoke: emotional, situational, etc, particularly in certain contexts, over and above the basic *denotational* or *conceptual meaning*. For instance, ‘home’, defined as ‘dwelling-place’, has to many people connotations also of ‘domesticity’ and ‘warmth’. Across the two novels of the series, such connotations are manipulated and most significantly altered, especially in the context of the ‘criminally-minded’ extracts; we are often invited to attach negative additional meanings to words that we commonly view positively.

In the first novel, we are given noun phrases such as ‘the brilliantly conceived and executed crime’ (1993: 52), ‘the century’s most elegant crime’ (1993: 52), and ‘the sensational, unsolved kidnapping’ (1993: 130). The adjectives ‘brilliant’, ‘elegant’ and ‘sensational’ usually carry positive connotations for the nouns they are attached to as those of ‘brightness’, ‘stylishness’, and ‘beauty’. Hence, they seem rather out-of-place when attached to the nouns ‘crime’ and ‘kidnapping’, and invite rather negative connotations, even ferocious and sadistic undertones. Similarly, the sentences ‘One body at a time, he hauled the children into the barn.’ (1993: 49) and ‘He [the victim] was propped up in the bathtub, with cold water halfway to the rim’ (1993: 392) seem awkwardly structured. The verbs ‘haul’ and ‘prop’ are most often used in reference to inanimate, lifeless objects and hence their usage in these contexts seems

unconventional. Even though the victims share little physical power due to the drugs the perpetrator inserted into their bodies, it seems that the verbs' connotation of 'lifelessness' need nevertheless be adjusted to that of 'lack of emotion toward them' on behalf of the criminal. The perpetrator appears to be treating his victims heartlessly and unfeelingly, as if they are lifeless objects to be handled, manipulated.

In the second novel, Mr Smith comments 'Your life will end. May I be the first to congratulate you' (1997: 9). The contextual connotations of 'success', 'achievement' and 'praise', usually evoked by the verb 'to congratulate', are again altered. Here, 'congratulate' is used in an address to the inspector who is dying, and therefore the conventional connotations attached to the word seem out of place; death is not normally considered an achievement, and people on the verge of death are not usually to be praised. This usage instead brings out the impression that Mr Smith regards dying as 'the reaching of one's goals', 'the achievement of success', and might even regard himself as Godly since he is the one that can allocate people such a special gift. 'Congratulate' acquires vicious connotations, carries sadistic suggestions and, one can argue, ironic undertones.

3.5 Personification and the treating of abstract concepts as concrete

In the course of the two novels, there are various instances of *personification*, again especially within the context of the 'criminally-minded' extracts. One good example from *Along Came A Spider* (1993) is that found in: 'He was fascinated by this condition known as *fame*. He thought a lot about it. Almost all the time. What was *fame* really like? How did it smell? How did it taste? What did *fame* look like close up?' (1993: 4). Here, Sojeni *animates*, *personifies*, or rather *concretises* the condition of fame, which is, in common usage, an abstract concept. By conceptualising this abstract concept in physical terms, Soneji's fascination and obsession with the condition takes on enormous dimensions: the criminal not only craves/wants to be famous, but is fixated by the psychological feeling of devouring that it would evoke.

Further examples from the same novel, if rather more conventional, include: 'His pulse was racing' (1993: 4), 'Gary was letting his mind wander now, letting his mind fly' (1993: 129), 'So many thoughts and perceptions were crashing on him, deflecting off his brain' (1993: 183), and 'His eyes roamed from window to window' (1993: 411). In these examples, the criminal's pulse, mind, thoughts, perceptions and eyes are all personified, animated, taking on a life of their own. Such personifying metaphors are often used to project a world-view that attributes a potentially threatening animacy to nature (Semino and Swindlehurst 1996: 148). When discussing a similar occurrence in the mind style of Lambert Strether in *The Ambassadors*, Fowler argues:

It is as if his feelings are disconnected from his own psyche; as if his perceptions assail him from the outside, beyond his control; as if he relates

to others and himself only through intermediaries; and it seems that he pictures others as suffering the same divided self.

Fowler (1977: 112)

A similar effect seems to be achieved in the conceptualisation of Soneji's world-view. Even though it is not inanimate objects but the pulse, mind, thoughts and eyes of the criminal that come to be animated here, the effect achieved is still just as strong. The man who experiences the physical and emotional states becomes merely a potential onlooker of the states themselves that are animated by movement, motive and awareness. The feelings are the ones that overtake Soneji, acting on his behalf, and taking responsibility of the criminal actions away from that who carries them out.

A good example of *personification* from *Cat and Mouse* (1997) is that found in: 'He let the aiming post of the rifle sight gently come to rest on Christine's Johnson's forehead' (1997: 19). Here, the aiming post of the rifle sight again takes on a life of its own; it is 'allowed' to 'come to rest' on a potential victim's forehead. It is presented as an animate entity, taking responsibility of the crime away from Soneji. Such instances of *personification* are also evident in: 'The outrageous, sensational event had galvanized him back then' (1997: 30), 'A cold, hard shiver ran through his body. It was delicious, tantalising' (1997: 31), and 'The head flew apart before his eyes' (1997: 34). In the case of the first two examples, cruel, abstract criminal events of murder appear to take on the concrete form of nutrients, and are thus experienced on a physical level: the criminal 'tastes' the events, and is nourished by them. In the case of the last example, the head Soneji blows off is personified, animated, presented as a 'bird', therefore giving the impression that the event of shooting the teenager's head off was involuntary, automatic, a reflex and not the responsibility of the person who pulled the trigger.

3.6 Childishness and colloquialism evoking irony

In the extracts, register choice portrays Soneji's viewpoint as a persona that is intelligent and careful, in that he has pre-meditated and pre-planned the whole course of his criminal behaviour, takes precautions in carrying out his actions, has contingencies for every situation that may occur, etc. Despite this fact, the narration is diffused with elements that portray a rather child-like viewpoint. The anticipation and excitement marking out every single one of Soneji's actions seem more appropriate for a child than a serial killer: 'Cool Beans, he thought.' (1993: 4), 'A stained Georgetown ballcap was hung on a hook. Soneji put it in his head. He couldn't resist' (1997: 4). In addition, the structure of all these passages is simple, and suffused with co-ordinated clauses, while structures such as 'Once upon a time, he had been a famous kidnapper and murderer' (1997: 5), are there to mark out the fact that though a criminal, his viewpoint often blends with that of a child at play.

However, this informal, childish register is often additionally reinforced by casual conversational jargon such as 'Agent Graham obviously thought he was hot shit' (1993: 51), 'Marty's piece [of pie] was bigger than all the others. He was The Man, right?'

(1993: 142), 'He thought he had a treat for everyone now' (1993: 157), 'Volpi took out his walkie-talkie' (1993: 371) etc., all of which add a strong sense of irony to the claims made. The colloquialism employed seems somewhat unnatural in the context of a serial killer carrying out his criminal behaviour, and it is this duality of the narrator's voice that makes the extracts appear to be so ironic. Examples from *Cat And Mouse* include 'No more chitchat from Derek' (1997: 8), 'The Big Bang in miniature, no?' (1997: 34), 'He had just tripped the light fantastic, hadn't he?' (1997: 48) and 'Big unexpected surprise. Mindscrewer for the ages surprise' (1997: 54) etc.

According to Gibbs (1994: 97), *slang* expressions are often associated with idiomatic phrases, although slang is usually seen as having a shorter life span within a language than idioms have, and is used only by certain groups of individuals or specific communities. Such slang metaphors, Gibbs adds, also often convey certain attitudes or feelings of the speaker's that idiomatic expressions do not. For instance, the expression *He's on a trip* (meaning 'He's taking drugs') can suggest that the speaker is aware of certain social norms and attitudes about drugs and the drug culture. Nevertheless, *slang* is characteristically associated with very informal registers, and speech predominantly, and it presents an alternative lexis, of an extremely colloquial, non-standard kind, sometimes co-occurring with swearing (Wales 1990: 361). Though many of the slang expressions noted (i.e. 'hot shit' 'trip the light fantastic', 'mindscrewer' etc) are commonly thought of as humorous, such humour being exploited in a kind of *euphemism* which softens *taboo* subjects, in this context they invite a strong sense of *irony*. Even though the prime motivation for such usage is obviously a desire for novelty of expression, such expressive creativity seems unfit for the context of serial killing. Irony is generated, therefore, since the words actually used appear to contradict the sense usually required in the context.

3.7 Creative metaphors

In addition to the various conventional, extended and idiomatic metaphorical mappings previously discussed, the criminally-minded excerpts contain a number of *creative metaphors*, otherwise known as *literary* ones (see Gibbs 1994: 260), whereby the metaphors have a predominantly expressive or evocative function. Recent studies suggest that readers find such literary metaphors to be more original, less clear, and less communicatively conventional; to have a higher value; and to be less committed to moral positions than metaphors from non-literary sources (Steen 1994).

Examples of such metaphors from *Along Came A Spider* include 'He felt the different textures of darkness as they blanketed the farm' (1993: 51), 'Gary just couldn't get serious about the paper blizzard of bills and invoices littering his desk' (1993: 165), and 'the FBI goons were watching the building as if it might sprout wings and fly away' (1993: 391), whereas examples from *Cat And Mouse* include: 'For a while he'd been the dark star of television and newspapers all over the country' (1997: 18), 'The marble floors continued to shake as his beloved trains entered and departed the station, huge

mythical beasts that came here to feed and rest' (1997: 28), and, 'He watched a montage of shapes and motions and colors swim in and out of death's way' (1997: 33).

Creative metaphors of this nature, some of which also involve *personification*, create a different perspective on reality than most metaphors used in science and in mundane speech (i.e. *conventional* metaphors). Making sense of such creative, literary metaphors requires that readers go beyond the isolated metaphor to envision better how metaphors are recognised as intentionally created by authors to make new the world we live in (Gibbs 1994: 261). In other words, people tend immediately to seek authorial intention when reading such novel metaphorical expressions. In the case of my criminally-minded excerpts, the creative metaphors help re-conceptualise the criminals' experience of events, create new insights into their world-view, and help reconstruct their frame of mind.

My analysis is based on the argument that language is not independent of the mind but reflects our perceptual and conceptual understanding of experience. It follows that when crime writers employ *deviant* linguistic structures to portray the criminal mind, they are in fact de-mystifying their criminal behaviour; they are justifying it, or putting readers in the position of sympathising with the criminal. By allowing readers access to the criminal's conceptualisation of reality, readers can deconstruct the criminal frame of mind, access their reasoning, even understand, if not accept, their actions.

In Patterson's *Along Came a Spider* (1993) and *Cat and Mouse* (1997), I found that both criminals' figurative conceptualisations of experience appear to be motivated by underlying metaphorical schemes of thought that constrain, even define, the way they think, reason, argue, and carry out their criminal actions. In other words, the figurative aspects of the language of extracts portraying the criminal consciousness can reveal the poetic structure of the criminal mind.

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A Case Study of Metaphor in Literary Readings

Zonglin Chang

1 Introduction

This study focuses mainly on data collected from interviews of two subjects, whose transcripts are discussed in relation to the questionnaire for the interviews. The research is based on the following hypotheses:

(1) There are differences and similarities in the way in which such core metaphors as LIFE IS A JOURNEY are processed in cultural contexts of English and Chinese. A basic difference with Chinese is a greater degree of fixity in schematic assumption and metaphor interpretation, especially in relation to literary texts.

(2) The extent of metaphoric understanding varies in relation to cross-cultural figurative understanding in general. When confronted by novel metaphoric analogies some Chinese learners of English are constrained by schematic stereotypes.

(3) Metaphor awareness can be a key methodological platform for the integrated teaching of language and literature to Chinese Higher Education students of English. And enhanced metaphor awareness is one of the key components in both fuller cross-cultural reading and interpretation on the part of Chinese and British Higher Education students of English.

A qualitative study of the case and the development of data analysis regarding metaphor processing in different cultures are the main concern of this research.

2 Method

Subjects: Two English teachers from one of the key universities in China were interviewed. They had just started MA courses at the University of Nottingham. One (Subject C) majors in English Language Teaching. Another (Subject D) majors in Modern English Language in Literary Studies. They had both taught English for more than four years before they came to study in Nottingham. They knew nothing about the purpose of the interviews.

Materials: One Chinese poem and one English poem were chosen.

1. 'Leaving the White Emperor Town for Jiangling', a Chinese poem by Li Bai.
2. 'Metaphors', an American poem by Sylvia Plath.

Both poems deal with the theme of a 'journey'. While the texts are lexically within the reading competence of the subjects, both poems contain metaphorical connections at the

discoursal levels. The poem by Plath contains metaphors at lexical and sentential levels as well.

Procedure: The subjects were interviewed separately. Each interview lasted for forty minutes, and was divided into two equal sections. The first twenty minutes were assigned to each subject for reading the poems. This provided them with enough time to scrutinize the whole poem. An instruction sheet with pre-reading questions was presented to each subject, emphasizing that the subjects should read the texts, detect their features and look for metaphors. The second twenty-minute section was initialized with some warm-up questions and was mainly used for:

- Questions for the subjects about their immediate impressions about the poem and how they understand the poems.
- Discussions about metaphors (with a main focus on the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor) and their conceptual meanings and questions about metaphors in the poems.
- A mini experiment which explores the leap from referential language to representational meanings and for the effective activation of the subjects' schemata for interpretation.

The questions for the subjects were issued principally for the purpose of activation of the subjects' comments and thoughts about the poems and to make sure that they did not deviate far from the research topics under investigation. The whole poems were presented to the subjects and a twenty-minute reading time was given, which guaranteed their familiarisation with the texts as a whole. The names of the poets were deliberately removed from the texts and were disclosed to the interviewees at an appropriate later time as clues for their schema activation. The interviews were conducted in either English or Chinese at subjects' choice to ensure that they could express themselves well and were not inhibited by an 'interview format'. Before the interview ended, they were asked if these poems could be used as a text for teaching in China. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

3 Results and discussion

This is a qualitative study, so examples will be discussed for analysis below.

3.1 Vehicle / topic identification and metaphor construction

As Cameron (1999) points out, metaphor processing is undertaken by means of analogical reasoning with transference of relations from Vehicle to Topic, which is the basic mental process for identifying metaphors.

The data of the interviews show that both subjects have difficulties in identifying and constructing metaphors. They both found few metaphors in the poem by Li Bai. They

both experienced difficulties in identifying topics for the vehicles in the poem by Plath, though they could identify a few vehicles.

The transcript of interview with Subject C shows that she identified the following vehicles in the poem by Li Bai in the following way, as she said, ‘because of the mention of “emperor”, that is why they can use “crowned with clouds”.’

Vehicle	Topic	Ground
Crowned with clouds	Town	Emperor

Similarly Subject D identified the same kind of vehicles in the poem by providing similar cultural reasoning. She said, “‘crowned with clouds’ is definitely a metaphor. That means the city is crowned with clouds like a **king** or an **emperor**.’

Vehicle	Topic	Ground
Crowned with clouds	City	King or Emperor

Both subjects thought this was the only metaphor in this poem. They used a stereotyped cultural reasoning for their vehicle and topic identification, and did not mention the nature of personification of the metaphor. They related the analogical feature of being ‘covered’ with being ‘crowned’ in association with the *king* or *emperor*. However their stereotyped schematisations indicate some cultural overlapping, in which both *king* and *emperor* take the same prototypical position in their schemata. They are interchangeable in their prototypes. A review of both Chinese and western cultures indicates that a *king* wears a crown, but an *emperor* does not. He wears an imperial robe. That is why in an English metonymic expression, ‘crown’ can be used to stand for monarch. But for a Chinese metonymy, ‘an imperial robe’ should be used instead.

The subjects’ metaphor identification processes for the poem by Plath underwent two stages: the first stage consisted of their twenty minutes reading periods and the periods of time before they were given the hints for their schema activation. The second stage started when they were offered some clues for their vehicle and topic identification and metaphor construction and for their leap from referential meanings to representational meanings.

During the first stage, Subject C found the following vehicles in the poem:

an elephant a ponderous house a means a stage a cow in calf.

But she could only figure out the referential features of the *elephant* and *ponderous house* as being ‘huge and heavy’. With the help of a dictionary she worked out the meaning of *a cow in calf* as ‘being pregnant’. She could not identify any topics to match

the vehicles she had identified. The meaning she tried to map from these source domains onto the unknown target domains is ‘inflation of something’ or ‘something becomes gradually bigger’.

During the second stage, the interviewer deliberately cued her to develop her schematic understanding.

Table 1

Interviewer	Subject C
It's an American poem written by Sylvia Plath, an American woman poet.	I really don't know what this poem is trying to express.
In the poem, you have noticed the 'elephant', 'a ponderous house'. You talked about its hugeness.	Yes. It is big.
Big. Any other things related with 'big'?	I noticed 'this loaf's big with its yeasty rising'.
What do you think of 'I'm a riddle in nine syllable'? What does 'nine' indicate?	'Nine' is the biggest (number) in our Chinese culture.
What do you think of it, if it is related with 'a cow in calf'?	Yes. I see the cow is pregnant.
What about 'nine syllables'?	'Nine syllables'?
The time.	Oh. I have never thought of that. It is pregnancy. Are they used for the childbirth? And then ten month.
'I' is a married woman.	A married woman? Oh, here means... Yes. The woman is pregnant. Ha....

With the clues provided by the interviewer, the subject succeeded in identifying 'I', one of the topics for the vehicles, and mapped the meaning of pregnancy on to it. Subsequently she noticed two more related vehicles: *yeasty rising* and *fat purse*.

There are two salient phenomena in this process. One is that the subject stuck to the referential meanings of the words rather than their representational meanings (Carter 1998, McRae 2000). Another is that the subject tended to decode culture-connoted words with her native cultural schemata. This phenomenon can be illustrated by the bold parts in Table 1. In Chinese culture, 'nine' is connoted with the meaning of being 'the biggest number', the 'supremacy'. That is why in some royal palaces such as the Forbidden City and the North Sea Park in Beijing, nine dragons are carved on the walls and nine pillars are used to support imperial buildings. This cultural feature of the figure is more remarkable than the idiomatic saying in Chinese, 'Nine months for pregnancy; tenth month for childbirth.' When the interviewer indicated that 'nine' referred to the time, which cancelled the possibility of the previous cultural schematic application, the subject was immediately reminded of the latter saying and came to her interpretation in co-relation with other cues. As she said, 'You (referring to the interviewer) say that "I" means a married woman and say "nine" is related with "a cow in calf". I see now the woman is pregnant. Yeah, if in that way, I think I can understand "an elephant", "a ponderous house"'. As a result, she also worked out that 'O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers' means a baby.

Subject D had difficulties in topic identification. She could not figure out whether there should be one topic 'I' or many topics 'I', or whether there should be some other topics, though she guessed that most of the expressions were metaphorical. She could not find any grounds for the metaphor constructions. She formed isolated images in terms of their referential meanings rather than their representational meanings. She could not find any clues that could link all these images together for the activation of her proper schemata, saying, 'There is no such image which can be linked to all these images.' Because of her indecisiveness, she underwent a round-about way in her proper image mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Table 2

Interviewer	Subject D
The second poem is an English poem by an American poet. Her name is Sylvia Plath.	Her? I thought it was 'he'.
What do you think of the poem now?	Oh! Is it a poem by a lady?
Yeah, it was written by a lady.	Is it Emily?
No. it is Sylvia Plath, an American poet. And it is about a woman's experience.	Women's experience?
Yes. What do you think of the poem now? It was written by a woman writer. And it is about women's experience.	Maybe it is about her tedious life.
Tedious life?	Yes. Maybe. Because she boarded a train that is no getting off. Maybe the marriage. But 'ponderous house'. 'I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf'. Maybe she is trying to say that is the value of being a wife.
What is the value of being a wife?	Only 'a means', a stage'.
You are on a train. You can't get off.	Yes.
Being a wife, a cow and a calf, can you see...?	Yeah, why she said 'a cow in calf', because calf is young, right?
Yeah. What might she be saying? What experience might she be having?	She is trying to say there is still some hope to escape.
What do you think of the words 'elephant'? What's its common feature? 'A ponderous house', did you look it up in your dictionary? What is its common feature?	Yes. 'A ponderous house' maybe means 'tedious'.
'Tedious'?	I forgot. I looked it up in the dictionary, but I forgot.
What are features of an elephant?	Huge. Long nose. And very hard working.
'Ponderous' also means 'slow, clumsy, cumbersome, that sort of movement rather like an elephant's movement.	So there is some similarities between the two things.
Yeah. What is 'a cow in calf'? Have you ever looked it up in the dictionary?	No. Is it a phrase?
Yes.	I don't know.
What is a calf? Do you know what a calf is?	A young cow?
Yeah.	So I said OK it is a young calf.
You know this 'I' in the poem is a married woman.	Yeah. My guess is right.

Yeah. Your guess is right. But what is it talking about? You know the 'Metaphors'. It is about a woman's special period of time.	A special period? What kind of special period?
You know 'a riddle in nine syllables'. The time 'nine' is related with a married woman. And also the huge shape of the elephant, a ponderous house...	Ah! Pregnant. No?
Go on.	With a baby? Maybe.
You are not quite sure about this, why?	I cannot be sure.
Why?	Because nothing here tells you whether it is really about this.

Subject D had been hesitant about her interpretation until she was reassured by the interviewer. The reason for her initial failure to have a proper image mapping lay in the fact that she could not select the relevant features of the images and she was too confined by different aspects of their referential meanings rather than the 'plurality of meanings potential' (McRae 2000: 138). As she said, 'There are so many different things. And even nothing mentioned about a woman. At first, actually I assumed it was he. And yeah. I said OK, only a man can write such stuff. So messy; such nonsense.' 'When I first read these, I only found that it was so messy that I just didn't know what it was about, the first few times. Actually I didn't have any thought. I tried to work out the relationship between them, because I think if they are used to describe one thing or object or something, there should be some similarities between them. But I didn't find any.' When she realized that 'I' was a woman, she still could not think of her pregnancy, because the first clue she found was 'boarded on a train there is no getting off', which reminded her of 'a tedious life'. With this meandering clue, she traced her whole way throughout the poem, trying to extract such meanings from the rest of the source domains for her mapping process. She was so fixed in this stereotype that she could not release herself from this mental restriction until the prototypical concept of a nine-month pregnancy helped her.

3.2 Metaphor understanding

In talking about vehicles, Goatly (1997) points out that they range from single words and phrases to clauses or sentences or even whole discourses and texts. That means metaphor can be formed on the lexical, sentential and discursal basis.

Metaphors formed on all these levels can be found in Plath's poem. For instance,

an elephant (single word)

a melon strolling on two tendrils (noun with a present participle phrase)

a cow in calf (noun with a prepositional phrase)

I've eaten a bag of green apples, boarded a train there's no getting off (sentence)

'*Metaphors*' – 'a journey of a pregnant woman and a journey of a child-to-be' (the whole discourse)

Even though there are some metaphors on the lexical or phrasal levels in the poem by Li Bai, its main metaphorical feature is that its whole discourse serves as a vehicle to indicate its metaphorical concept – LIFE IS A JOURNEY.

The data from the interviews show that neither of the subjects recognized that this poem was a metaphor on its discursive level. As a matter of fact, they did not recognize metaphors either on the discursive or on the sentential level. To them, metaphors are formed on the basis of words or phrases. In defining metaphor, Subject C explicated it as: ‘you try to explain something, that is to say, not explicitly, with implied meaning.’ Subject D stated: ‘metaphor for me is to try to tell the other persons something which shows the image of another image, or object or something like that.’

Their search for metaphors in their reading processes focused on an individual word or phrase ignoring the whole sentence or whole text. Similar cases can be found in many of the Chinese books on metaphors (Wang 1995), in which metaphors are only considered as trope, a figure of speech formed on the basis of a word or an expression. Their concepts about metaphor are not as broad as those of the western theories (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1987, Lakoff and Turner 1989, Gibbs 1994, Steen, 1994). Therefore it was difficult for the subjects to look at metaphor from perspectives outside the cultural circle in which they had been confined. But whether or not most of the Chinese readers focus their attention on metaphor on a lexical basis rather than on a sentential or discursive basis needs to be further investigated and researched.

3.3 LIFE IS A JOURNEY – Subjects’ understanding of the core metaphor

Many people express their understanding of life as a journey. A factory worker in a midwestern town describes his view of life as a journey that travels in a straight line. A Catholic priest depicts his life as a continuous journey in which he walks with God through life (Norton 1989: 35-36, 106). In one of her poems, Christina Rossetti compares a day’s journey with a person’s life: the uphill road represents the course travelled in life and the wayfarer’s inn the resting place after death (Gibbs 1994: 208-9). Robert Frost’s poem, ‘The Road Not Taken’, ‘shows how every choice excludes every other choice and how every life is full of roads not taken that continue to haunt us with a sense of missed opportunities’ (Gibbs 1994: 190). Li Bai’s poem is a metaphor comparing his journey to his unusual life experience. In this poem there is a sense in which one passes through different stages of trial and is then relieved from persecution; and then there is the journey home with the feeling that one has gone through an unusual experience. Plath’s poem implies the pregnant woman’s journey as well as the journey for the baby.

All these examples show that life has been conceptualized as a journey via metaphor. Within the basic framework of the metaphorical concept, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, there is a journey as a worker, a journey as a priest, a journey as an official, a journey as a child, a

journey as an adult and a journey from life to death. They all originate from the universal prototype that ‘a journey is a movement from here to there, from Point A to Point B.’ ‘As a metaphor for life the two points are obviously life and death. Metaphorical journeys have the day’s journey at their core, the amount of space we can cover under the cycle of the sun. By a very easy extension, we get the day’s journey as a further metaphor for the whole of life in regard to the cyclical process of birth, death, and renewed life’ (Gibbs 1994: 188-9) These sorts of things are common to all cultures. Metaphors which descended from such a framework are universal. They provide the possibility of text interpretation in different cultural contexts.

In their responses to the metaphorical concept, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, Subject C claimed that it depended on what kind of journey was undertaken and if it was a smooth journey or a journey full of difficulties. She realized that Plath’s poem depicted a journey for a pregnant woman who had a long way to go before the childbirth. She did not think Li Bai’s poem was metaphorically related with JOURNEY, because, she said, the words were plain. She thought the poem was about a journey, but it had nothing to do with life *metaphorically*. The review of the earlier section of the interview reveals that her words are paradoxical. Enlightened by the background information from the interviewer about the poet, she made the following comments in her dialogue with the interviewer in the previous section.

Table 3

Interviewer	Subject C
	I feel there is a kind of relief, which is expressed here in the poem. At first he was exiled. Now he has been pardoned by the emperor. So there is expression of relief, a kind of feeling. It seemed as if he were far away from the madding crowd, in which people intrigue against each other.
You think there are some implied meanings in it, don’t you?	Yeah.
Do you think it is just a description of the natural scenery?	No. I don’t think so. It is not just a description of the natural scenery. Of course when I read it just now, before we talked about this, I was only thinking of the description of the natural scenery. After I knew the background, I feel that it is expression of a kind of relief, from the complicated interrelationship in court, the well-known kind of personal relationships, in which all people feel over stretched and burdened. He has now got away from all this, far away from the turmoil of the world. So he ‘has left ten thousand mountains far away’.

Her seemingly paradoxical statements do not indicate a change of mind. They may imply that her categorization of metaphors only stays at a lexical or phrasal level. She did not expect that a whole text could be a metaphor even though she admitted that it had many implied meanings in it. Subject D thought Li Bai's poem only described part of his journey. So long as LIFE was considered as JOURNEY, she thought that it described a happy part of his life after he got relief from his suffering. She did not think the poem was a metaphor either. She thought the poem by Plath indicated a long journey for a pregnant woman.

Though it is clear that LIFE IS A JOURNEY is a common conceptual metaphor, it is illuminating to explore the individual metaphors that are used to modify the journey, such as *green apples* and *ivory* etc., which are very specific to the context of the poetry. Within the broad conceptual framework, individual metaphors relate to specific cultures or life experiences.

3.4 Reference, presentation and metaphor awareness

The subjects showed that they looked for referential meanings of the word they met rather than its representational meanings for their interpretation (see Tables 1 and 2). There are not many difficulties for them to understand in Li Bai's poem, because they are familiar with its Chinese version and its Chinese cultural background. They confront many difficulties in understanding Plath's poem, even though they admit that there are only few new words in it. With help from a dictionary, they still feel it a great challenge. Only with the interviewer's cues were their relevant schemata activated for their identification of the representational meanings of the words.

Their way of education in China has formed their ways of reading, their reading schemata. Students cannot jump out of the circle to look for representational meanings in the poem and understand them from other perspectives. What they are supposed to do is to wait for their teacher's explanations. This phenomenon can be exemplified by the discussion on the teaching of Plath's poem between the interviewer and Subject C who taught university English in China for many years.

Table 4

Interviewer	Subject C
By the way, do you think 'Metaphors' can be used as a proper text for teaching in China in consideration to everything, its theme, its topic and its content etc.?	If there are two poems like these, I prefer to choose the second one. Because most of the students will not understand it. So it is very challenging. We'll teach them. Maybe

	they'll be very interested in this poem, because we have a lot to say.
You don't need to understand every word or every image in order to appreciate the poem. ... When you teach a poem to students of English, they don't need to understand every word in order to read it to get something out of it.	But you know for Chinese students, they really want to understand every word of a poem. That is what we do. If there is a sentence which they cannot understand, the students will be puzzled. They will ask their teachers to explain that.
Are they puzzled by individual words or are they challenged by each individual word or are they challenged by trying to work out meanings?	I think in China, most students read every word, or word by word. They just want to understand the exact meanings of that word, of that phrase. What we have to do as a teacher of English, we should let students get the understanding of the main ideas. That's all.
If you are teaching, for example, the word, 'melon', then you come across the word 'melon' in a poem, OK. The students understand it, look it up in a dictionary, translate it into Chinese, understand the meanings of the word 'melon', but miss the fact that or the possibility that the 'melon' is a shape of a wife's stomach when she is pregnant.	That is what the teacher has to teach.
Can the students do that? Can they make that leap from melon as a word as a reference to melon as an image of	It is up to the teacher's explanation or give some hints to the students. I think they can.

representation?	
Without teachers' explanation, can they do that? Can they associate them together?	I mean if you just want the students to read it, maybe they have to get a dictionary and look up every new word they don't understand in a dictionary. But I mean when the teacher teaches students, maybe the teacher can give students some hints and they will use their imagination and that will be OK.

The whole process of the poem-teaching recommended by Subject C is mainly teacher-oriented. Salient evidence can be found in the words in bold type in Table 4. In reading poems, Chinese students tend to put more emphasis on the literal meanings of individual words in a dictionary. They focus their attention more on referential language, 'which means exactly what it says, where one word has one meaning, and where grammar and syntax follow the accepted rules' (McRae 2000: 138). When words appear in poetry, they do not have just referential meanings but often representational meanings as well. Since representational language 'is open to interpretation, contains plurality of meaning potential rather than one single denotational meaning, and requires negotiation and judgement by its receiver in order to be fully understood (McRae 2000: 138), it demands students' acquisition of competent schemata for them to make a big leap from a word as reference to an image of representation. This schematic leap can only be acquired from the process-based approach, rather than a product-based approach in which language in use is prescriptive and definitive (McRae 2000).

The best way to 're-educate' the students who have been trained by a product-based approach is the incorporation of the skill of processing and thinking (McRae 2000). And the best medium for this skill training is metaphorical discourses, in which the words have to be thought, processed and decoded for their implications. The skill of thinking will enable the students to be well schematized to make the leap from referential language learning to an awareness of representationality. The deliberate mini experiments made in the interviews reveal some of their effective results as displayed in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5 (Subject C)

Vehicles	Before understanding	After understanding
A riddle in nine syllables	A riddle in nine syllables	The journey of a childbirth
An elephant	An elephant	A pregnant woman
A ponderous house	A ponderous house	A pregnant woman who walks slowly and awkwardly
A melon	A melon	An image of a pregnant woman

Tendrils	Don't know	Don't know
Red fruit	Red fruit	Baby
Ivory	Ivory	Baby
Fine timbers	Don't know	Don't know
Loaf	Bread	The belly of a pregnant woman
Money	Money	Don't know
Fat purse	Fat purse	The belly of a pregnant woman
Means	Means	Don't know
A stage	A stage	Don't know
A cow in calf	A pregnant cow	A woman in condition
Green apples	Green apples	Don't know
A train ...	A train ...	Journey of life
Writer's comments	Mostly referential	Mostly representational

Table 6 (Subject D)

Vehicles	Before understanding	After understanding
A riddle in nine syllables	The riddle has nine syllables	Can't work it out
An elephant	The animal which is huge	A pregnant woman looking clumsy
A ponderous house	Tedious life in a house	The woman's body
A melon	A fruit	Maybe her legs
Tendrils	Part of the plant	Don't know
Red fruit	Maybe red apple	Colour of her skin
Ivory	Don't know	Don't know
Fine timbers	Texture of the fruit	Don't know
Loaf	Bread	Her body
Money	Money	Baby
Fat purse	Fat purse	Her fat body
Means	Method	A person who is pregnant
A stage	A period	A period
A cow in calf	A young cow	A pregnant woman
Green apples	Apple	Baby
A train ...	Life	Period of life
Writer's comments	Mostly referential	Mostly representational

Tables 5 and 6 display the subjects' responses to the words in the poem before and after the 'application' of the skill of thinking. Before they were encouraged to think, most of the words they read carried their referential meanings. When they were given some cues

for the representational meanings of the words, they began to interpret the poem further. They activated and co-related their relevant schemata for this process.

The result of these mini experiments does not mean that the acquisition of the skill of thinking can be easily accomplished in one move, because it needs systematic training and it 'involves a refining of three levels of awareness in cognitive terms: language awareness; text awareness and cultural awareness' (McRae 2000: 140-1). How to 're-educate' the students with a process-based approach, who have been trained without the skill of thinking, is another research topic to be further investigated.

The experiment results however illustrate on one hand the fact that the application of the skill is the best way to help students to see the representational meanings and to enable them to be better readers of poetry. On the other hand, they reveal the fact that sticking to their referential meanings and being confined by their cultural and educational stereotypes are the main causes that lead to a greater degree of fixity in Chinese students' schematic assumption and metaphor interpretation in relation to poetry.

4 Conclusion

We can say that the Chinese subjects are constrained by schematic stereotypes in their processes of metaphor interpretation especially when they confront metaphors which do not carry universal connotations and which contain novel analogies specific to individual poetic contexts and cultures. The causes of these constraints lie in their sticking to the referential meanings of the words and a lack of competent schemata for activation of thinking for representational meanings.

In terms of literary texts such as poems, the Chinese subjects' reading processes are more concerned with word-for-word interpretation without much consideration for context and cultural background. They have more difficulties in vehicle / topic identification and metaphor constructions especially when they read literary texts in a foreign cultural background. Their identification and categorization of metaphors only stay at lexical and phrasal levels rather than at sentential and discoursal levels. There is no obvious dispute about the interpretations of the core JOURNEY metaphor in general. But there are different interpretations about different aspects within the framework of the JOURNEY metaphor due to different cultures and individual experiences. Metaphoric understanding is undoubtedly related to cross-cultural figurative understanding.

As the responses of these subjects suggest, to help Chinese students develop from referential language learning to an awareness of representationality, metaphor awareness incorporated with the skill of thinking is one of the key methodological platforms for the integrated teaching of language and literature to Chinese students. But how to insert the skill into the re-education of the students who have been schematised by the product-based approach will be an issue to be further researched.

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Abstracts

Developing Sociocultural Competence in the ESL Classroom

Mike Handford (University of Nottingham)

The purpose of this paper is to propose an approach for enabling students to effectively navigate through culturally-embedded situations in which they may find themselves in England, for example giving and receiving gifts, or asking permission to bring a friend to a party. The importance of developing this kind of knowledge and the relevant skills, the potential and the potential difficulties of the classroom, and the inadequacy of textbooks are discussed. The case for using schema-challenging representational texts is then argued, which is followed by a description of a pragmatic teaching approach along with two example lessons. The approach is not intended to be a language teaching panacea: the primary aims are the development of sociocultural awareness through the study of pragmatically-laden texts, and the opportunity to practice and discuss appropriate skills for dealing with given situations. Prescribing behaviour is not advocated as a pedagogical option, but raising awareness of the impact of pragmatic failure is.

Keywords: *Representational texts, sociocultural competence, pragmatics, schema*

Requesting strategies in English and Greek: Observations from an Airline's Call Centre

Maria Economidou-Kogetsidis (Intercollege (University College), Cyprus)

This article examines whether there are marked cross-cultural differences in the degree of requestive directness between Greek native speakers and British English native speakers in telephone business encounters. This empirical study found significant differences between the Greek and the English native speakers in the degree of requestive directness employed when ringing an airline's call centre. More specifically, the Greek native speakers were found to employ significantly more direct requesting strategies than the English native speakers. It can be argued that the Greek speakers' requesting strategies were consistent with the ethos of directness, spontaneity and positive politeness orientation found to characterise the Greek society and language.

Keywords: *Greek, requesting strategies, cross-cultural communication, directness, politeness*

Fixed Expressions in EFL: The Case for Prepositional Clusters

Melinda Tan (Assumption University, Bangkok)

Prepositions are notoriously difficult to teach due to their ambiguous status of belonging to the lexical and grammatical domain. They have traditionally been taught as single words and not as multi-word items, except for the case of phrasal verbs. This article will put forward the case for the inclusion of a common kind of fixed expression called a prepositional cluster in the teaching of EFL. It will illustrate that the formation of a prepositional cluster is simply based on the conceptual relationship that exists between the constituents of the cluster. Thus, a prepositional cluster can be defined as a fixed expression which includes all binomials (e.g. ups and downs, ins and outs, etc) and compound constructions (upside down, inside out, etc) that comprise prepositional constituents. The article will conclude with a sample activity of how prepositional clusters could be taught in the EFL classroom.

Keywords: *prepositions, EFL, semantic field, image schema*

Genre and Spoken Discourse: Probabilities and Predictions

Svenja Adolphs (University of Nottingham)

This paper explores the relationship between routinized speech acts and genre. Indirect speech act prefabs, such as 'why don't you X' or 'can you X' have traditionally been associated with a particular function in spoken discourse. However, the relationship between particular pre-formulated sequences and their recurrence in specific discourse situations, is an area of research that has not yet been explored in detail. This is not surprising since until recently there has been a lack of spoken corpora large enough to approach this kind of research. Based on a 5 million word corpus of spoken interaction, this paper explores the question of whether there could be a probabilistic relationship between the choice of individual speech act prefabs, the discourse sequence in which it occurs and the wider context of the conversation.

Keywords: *discourse analysis, pre-formulated sequences, prefabs, corpus*

'Behaving Badly': A Cognitive Stylistics of the Criminal Mind

Christiana Gregoriou (University of Nottingham)

Much has been written about crime fiction, and treatments of the subject vary greatly. Critics have described both the history of the genre and changing attitudes to it, while less evaluative approaches have tried to establish why crime fiction is so compelling. Psychoanalysts found the basis of the form's patterns in the psychic anxieties of writers and readers, while another type of analysis has seen the social attitudes and pressures of modern environment as the basic drive in crime fiction. Overall, though the

development of the genre has been traced by literary critics, psychoanalysts and sociologists, little linguistic work has been undertaken in the area. This paper is part of a study to explore the stylistics of contemporary American crime fiction. In the paper, I conduct an investigation into the criminal mind, as portrayed in two contemporary works by James Patterson, *Along Came a Spider* (1993) and *Cat and Mouse* (1997), both of which are part of the author's celebrated series featuring detective/psychologist Alex Cross. The criminal under analysis is Gary Soneji, a psychopathic serial killer who figures in both novels. The extracts portraying the criminal's viewpoint will be linguistically analysed, in an attempt to establish the way in which his actions are morally, socially and stylistically situated.

Keywords: *cognitive stylistics, deviance, crime fiction, James Patterson, metaphor*

A Case Study of Metaphor in Literary Readings

Zonglin Chang (Ocean University of Qingdao, China)

Targeting Chinese EFL learners, a research study is undertaken to investigate how Chinese subjects respond to metaphors in literary readings in terms of their cultural and perceptual categories. With greater emphasis on metaphor interpretation, the research is carried out on a basis of a qualitative study, which is designed to reveal how metaphor reading is related to intercultural figurative understanding and how metaphors are processed in different cultural contexts.

Keywords: *metaphor, schemata, vehicle / topic identification, metaphor awareness, reference, representation*



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