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THE RHETORIC OF 'INTERNAL' BRANDING IN NIGERIA'S REBRANDING CAMPAIGN

Adeyemi Adegoju

Abstract

This paper examines the rhetorical strategies of mobilising and inspiring a domestic audience for national identity re/construction in order to reinforce the Nigerian brand. Data for the study are composed of some branding strategies packaged and broadcast mainly on radio and television by Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Information and Communications in its rebranding campaign in 2009 which was targeted at domestic citizens' value re-orientation. The study adopts Fairclough's (1992) dialectical-relational approach which centres on "dialectical reasoning" – a way of reasoning from critique of discourse to what should be done to change the existing reality, by way of explanation of relations between discourse and other components (social, cultural and political) of reality. It then applies the tenets of the theory to analyse the rhetorical strategies in the rebranding campaign, as the domestic citizens' agency is considered instrumental in bolstering the Nigerian brand. The study demonstrates that the branding strategies analysed largely invoke history, collective memory, values, traditions, and aspirations which could appeal to domestic citizens' nationalistic sensibilities and imaginaries to evolve an enduring Nigerian brand which is domestic driven.

Keywords

domestic politics, 'internal' branding, national identity, negative image, Nigeria, rebranding

1 Introduction

The question of Nigeria's negative image perception in the international community has generated interest among critical stakeholders because national image entails national identity and the politics and economics of competitiveness. Oluwafunmilayo et al. (2022) aver that a negative perception of a country's image could translate to her lacking respect, influence, and prestige in the international community. Consequently, scholars have tried to establish some possible causes of Nigeria's image crisis and appraise efforts made towards building a positive image for the country. Indicators such as absence of good governance, endemic corruption, insecurity of lives and property, poverty, infrastructural decay, gross human rights violations and extra-judicial killings have negatively impacted Nigeria's image in the international community. In addition, social vices such as cybercrime, money laundering, smuggling, and drug trafficking, which some

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Nigerians both domestically and externally perpetrate, have adversely affected the country's image. Thus, the negative perception of Nigeria's image derives from assessing the citizens' behaviour, on the one hand, and interrogating the governance style of the country's political leaders, on the other.

Given the claim that news coverage about Africa in the international media has been ostensibly biased, there is a conspiracy theory that western media negative representation of Nigeria, particularly by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Cable News Network (CNN) in their news coverage, has largely fuelled the country's image problem externally. Therefore, some of the adverse effects of Nigeria's negative image in the international community have been negative stereotyping of Nigerian nationals, visa ban, profiling and deporting Nigerian nationals, and poor ranking reports of the country, chief among which is the poor rating of the ease of doing business in Nigeria. Since development is tied to a positive image perception in the international community, Nigeria would certainly face stiff competition in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). In view of the fact that "negative external perceptions do not serve the purpose of foreign policy of any state and the national interest it seeks to pursue" (David 2021: 41), successive administrations since Nigeria's return to democratic governance in 1999 have initiated schemes to tackle Nigeria's brand eroders. Such image-building initiatives are lent further credence by Owuamanam and Agbaenyi (2021: 100), who assert that "[...] image-building must necessarily constitute a fundamental element of leadership character and a nation's foreign policy [...]".

It is instructive, therefore, that Nigeria's rebranding campaign of 2009 had as its focal point how to engender attitudinal change in citizens so that they could imbibe the core values and cherished traditions requisite to re-igniting national pride and promoting the country's positive image. At the unveiling of the logo and slogan of the rebranding programme on 17th March 2009, President Umar Musa Yar'Ardua represented by Vice-President Dr Goodluck Jonathan declared that the campaign was to enlist all Nigerians in the quest to engender social change, entrench community values, drive national re-orientation, and restore the dignity of Nigeria and Nigerians. Professor Dora Akunyili, Nigeria's Minister of Information and Communications during the rebranding programme emphasised that the exercise was rooted in inspiring the internal audience to live the Nigerian brand before Nigeria's image could be enhanced externally. Given that 'internal' branding constitutes a vital aspect of nation branding and indeed the substratum on which the success of nation branding at the international level rests, the present study attempts to explore the discursive construction of Nigeria's image in the rebranding Nigeria campaign. It rhetorically analyses the branding strategies

deployed by the Nigerian government to mobilise an internal audience to live the socio-cultural and historical values which are instrumental in successfully promoting the Nigerian brand.

2 'Internal' branding in nation branding practice

Nation branding practice is a postmodern paradigm in which nation-states deploy branding techniques to promote their uniqueness with respect to their potential in competing for trade and investment, export and tourism promotion, among other indexes. Considering that nation branding is a multi-dimensional blend of economic, political and cultural aspects of national identity construction, scholars have seen it as another strand of diplomacy and a catalyst for successful participation in the global market. The conception of publics in relation to the circulation of discourse in nation branding practice shows how practices of marketing and strategic communication now pervade public spheres. Encompassing professions such as marketing, brand management, and public relations, the term "strategic communication" refers to "intentional and concerted efforts to advance value-producing representations of some target entity (e.g. a business, a product, a place, a politician, oneself) within and across publics" (Graan 2022: 2). Commenting on the public spheres of nation branding, Viktorin et al. (2018) posit that purposeful branding enables publics internationally and domestically to view a state as legitimate and credible and, therefore, worth patronage, allegiance and support.

Varga (2013) argues that although nation branding is usually discussed as an exclusively "externally" oriented strategy that aims to communicate a competitive image to attract international attention, there is an often neglected but crucial "inner-oriented" feature. Varga (ibid.) opines that nation branding is indeed an implicit cultural policy which is basically an inner-oriented, cultural-political measure which targets the citizens of the nation-state and is characterised by conservative, transformative and transferring political agendas. Therefore, Varga (ibid.) surmises that the inner orientation is a necessary condition for success since nation branding cannot be effective without the participation of citizens who are at the same time representatives, stakeholders and customers of the brand. Still on the inner-oriented audience, Brennan and Wilson (2016) state that the goal of nation branding in particular is thus to insist on the meaningfulness of the nation for existing or prospective citizens, thereby corroborating the view of Pamment and Cassinger (2018) on the idea that nation brands can extend and empower citizen participation in the assertion of national identity.

Against this backdrop, Nimijean (2018) emphasises the connection between nation branding, the external projection of national identity, and domestic politics.

Rehman and Ali (2019) emphasise that the citizens of any nation whether based locally or internationally are its brand ambassadors consequent upon which the task of any nation branding campaign for the promotion of a positive image internationally should begin with building the confidence of the citizens. For Hoefte and Veenendaal (2019), nation branding strategies can also have domestic effects because they can be employed by governments to enhance pride in the nation and thus promote social cohesion. It is noteworthy, therefore, that Browning (2015) emphasises how branding strategies demonstrate that foreign policy is not simply about interacting with others but also about communicating values and identity narratives to citizens. Writing on how brands are targeted for internal consumption and designed to provide direction and purpose for national citizens, Browning (ibid.: 205) submits that "[...] branding processes are not neutral since in packaging the nation and seeking to engineer social consensus around certain ideological commitments they draw on particular mandated histories and symbols to the exclusion of others".

3 Overview of research interests on nation branding practice

The global practice of branding nation-states with a view to enhancing the image and competitive identity of both developing and developed countries has attracted the attention of scholars across fields of study such as marketing, international relations, public relations, and communication studies. On the desirability and viability of nation branding in international politics, Eggeling (2020) argues that nation-branding is a productive and inherently political practice that (re)produces dominant interpretations of national and state identity rather than merely describing them. Eggeling (ibid.) elucidates the workings of nation-branding by investigating the activities involved in branding the Kazakhstani and Qatari state, and the interpretations that describe them. From another perspective, Del Percio (2016) analyses the debates, tactics, positioning, and controversies surrounding the policing of the brand "Switzerland". In another study, Kaneva (2021) reviews nation branding research that relates to the countries of the former communist bloc, proposing that future research should look at nation branding both as a field of practice that merits critical examination in its own right and as a lens that can be used to investigate changes in the state of nationhood today. Furthermore, Nimijean (2018) evaluates the Trudeau government's attempt at branding Canada in "Canada's back" and "Sunny ways", interrogating the rhetoric-reality gap when actions or experiences do not live up to the brand promise, and stressing the imperative of matching values with action to achieve the goals of brand Canada.

In another light, some scholars have explored aspects of nation branding practices such as the nexus between nation branding and economic development and other forms of diplomatic relations in international relations. Bisa (2013) examines the political aspect of nation branding as a subset of international relations by analysing the case of Greece and the branding campaign pursued by its government, and assessing the degree to which branding is one function of a nation's image enhancement. Nation branding is considered by Zeineddine (2017) as a competitive factor in modern economies by comparing the brand strategies in the nation branding initiatives of United Arab Emirates and Qatar to boost their economies. Qatar's nation branding efforts and relationship with economic development draw the attention of Rehman and Ali (2019), who apply Anholt's (2002) Nation Branding Hexagon Model with a view to establishing if economic development leads to the need for nation branding or vice versa.

An aspect of nation branding – soft power – which was popularised by Nye (1990) and further elaborated in Nye (2021) has also attracted the attention of some scholars. On the theoretical relations between public diplomacy and nation branding, Tecmen (2020) stresses the importance of deploying soft power assets to create distinct and appealing identities with respect to the making of brand Turkey. In a similar vein, Matsui (2014) investigates why and how some aspects of stigmatised Japanese popular culture were appropriated within government circles to promote the "Cool Japan" popular brand. In addition, the practice of sharing a state's cultural heritage through cuisine which is called gastrodiplomacy to assess Malaysia's potential to make its own stand in the eyes of the world by its capacity of using food as a soft power tool has been the subject of a study by Solleh (2015). With respect to the branding potential of languages as an important resource for local strategies in nation branding, Brennan and Wilson (2016) investigate how in Shetland and Western Ireland, meanings associated with language are connected with how crises are framed and constructed in discourse. In a related study, Djuraeva (2022) utilises the concept of "nation branding" in two post-Soviet Union nation states – Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan – to trace the relationship between language ideologies and broader socio-political factors by examining students' ideologies of English vis-à-vis their linguistic repertoires in the context of national imaginary and globalisation. It is interesting how Lee and Kim (2021) explore South Korea's pandemic public diplomacy in the context of her national responses to COVID-19 pandemic, adopting sentiment analyses of social media and international news media which suggest that the country is perceived as a model on how to cope with the pandemic by international audiences. Finally, the role of digital diplomacy in the articulation of soft power

given the potency of digital diplomacy in conducting public diplomacy has been investigated by Gosling (2021).

In the foregoing overview of research interests in nation branding practice, negotiation of meaning in the discursive construction of national identity has not been adequately explored. There are, no doubt, existing studies such as Del Percio (2016), Graan (2016), Golinvaux and Evagelou (2017), Allagui and Al-Najjar (2018), Cheregi (2018), Panajoti (2018), Zantides (2019), Işik and Bilici (2021), and Budiwaspada and Fadilah (2021) which apply the tools of semiotics to analyse branding strategies in nation branding discourses. The lacuna in these studies, however, is that none explores the rhetorical strategies of mobilising the domestic audience by invoking elements of history, memory and culture relative to Nigeria's national identity re/construction. This research gap is what the present study intends to address by rhetorically analysing some brand strategies in Nigeria's rebranding campaign discourse.

4 The data

Data for the study are composed of some branding strategies designed by Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Information and Communications in the 2009 rebranding Nigeria campaign to re-orientate the Nigerian citizenry in a bid to redress the country's negative image. The data consists partly of the brand slogan which became popularised and was widely circulated via media outlets as soon as the scheme was launched. In addition, the data comprises two radio and television jingles designed and broadcast on federal and state media houses to mobilise and inspire Nigerians for the coveted attitudinal change and renewal of national pride. The jingles were recorded from the broadcast of some radio stations and transcribed accordingly. The text of one of the jingles originally rendered in Nigerian Pidgin was carefully translated into Standard English. But the original Nigerian Pidgin version is still retained in the data presentation for authenticity. It is instructive that the second jingle unlike the first one has no Nigerian Pidgin English version. The text is, therefore, presented for analysis in its original version in the Standard English language variety. The study adopts a qualitative analytical method, drawing upon relevant aspects of the theoretical framework.

5 Theoretical framework

Fairclough (2001) argues that Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) is the analysis of the dialectical relationships between semiosis (including language) and other elements of social practices. Hence, this study adopts Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach. Fairclough (2001: 123) notes that

the particular concern of CDA is "with the radical changes that are taking place in contemporary social life, with how semiosis figures within processes of change, and with shifts in the relationship between semiosis and other social elements within networks of practices". Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) posit that it is germane in discourse analysis to forge meaningful links between texts and societal and cultural processes and structures, thereby providing an interdisciplinary perspective where the analyst combines textual and social analysis. What is central to Fairclough's approach is that "discourse is an important form of social practice which both reproduces and changes knowledge, identities and social relations including power relations, and at the same time is also shaped by other social practices and structures" (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 65). Thus, CDA is a theory and method of discourse analysis that focuses on the study of the dialectical relations between discourse and social, cultural, and political developments in different social domains (Aydin-Düzgit 2017: 1).

Writing on the nature of CDA and dialectical relations, Fairclough (2019) explains that CDA as "dialectical reasoning" is a view of CDA which might support political action to change social life for the better. Fairclough further states that "dialectical reasoning" encompasses a way of reasoning from critique of discourse to what should be done to change the existing reality, by way of explanation of relations between discourse and other components of reality. That is why CDA is considered as a combination of critique of discourse and explanation of how discourse figures in the existing social reality as a basis for action to change reality. According to Gürsel-Bilgin (2020: 34), the general question the dialectical-relational approach seeks to address is "what is the particular significance of semiosis, and of dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements, in the social processes (issues, problems, changes, etc.) which are under investigation?" Gürsel-Bilgin (2020) concludes that Fairclough's (1992) dialectical-relational approach identifies how discourse not only functions to produce and reproduce society through its social structures, relationships, and value structures, but also has a hand in transforming society.

According to Aydin-Düzgit (2017), the dialectical-relational approach proceeds in four stages of analysis. The first stage involves the identification of a social wrong. The second step entails a focus on the mechanisms in the social order that prevent the social wrong from being addressed. The third step revolves around an evaluation of whether the identified social wrong is inherent to the social order, while the fourth and final step tries to identify possible ways of overcoming the obstacles to dealing with the social wrong under scrutiny. Against the backdrop of the first and last stages above, in the analysis we will attempt to underline the negative image of Nigeria in the international community for

which the government tried to mobilise the citizens to imbibe some core national values steeped in history, memory and culture for the re/construction of Nigeria's national identity narratives. Further, we will carefully analyse relevant brand strategies in the campaign by focusing on the relationship between discourse and elements of social practices which are geared towards transforming reality in the political context.

Generally, we will examine the discursive construction of Nigeria's national identity by exploring the dialectical relations between discourse and social, cultural, and political developments. We will analyse the data in line with Fairclough's (1992) view that in the attempt to investigate the social function of language (while doing CDA), one needs to make a description of linguistic properties so as to disclose or unravel the ideologies embedded in the discourse under study. Fairclough et al. (2011) opine that although there is a diversity of approaches to CDA research, drawing on various linguistic analytic techniques and theories, all will involve some form of close textual analysis. Elaborating this view further, Huckin et al. (2012: 118) explain that "[t]he systematicity of CDA keeps analysis close to the linguistic data under analysis, looking for patterns at the stylistic, verbal, syntactic, and figurative structure and considering the ways in which such discursive and semiotic structures circulate or articulate with ideology".

6 Data analysis

In this section of the study, we identify some discursive practices characteristic of the persuasive discourse of re-orientating Nigeria's citizens for national rebirth, paying close attention to the striking linguistic devices that give rhetorical force to the discourse. The analysis is carried out in three major sub-sections.

6.1 Deployment of sloganeering strategy in nation branding practice

The strategy of sloganeering is deployed in Nigeria's rebranding campaign to give a positive self-perception of Nigeria's national values. In this light, the slogan of the rebranding campaign "Nigeria, good people, great nation" has some significant semiotic-cum-rhetorical features with very deep ideological undercurrents that could inspire national rebirth citizens. In the discourse of constructing national identity narratives, Billig's (1995) notion of banal nationalism comes to the fore. Billig coined the term "banal nationalism" to illustrate the reproduction of nationalism in existing states and noted how national identities become "a form of life which is daily lived in a world of nation-states" (ibid.: 68). Consequently, there is a conscious attempt in nation branding discourse to counter the stories told by others about a nation by

engaging in the rhetorical practice of positive self-representation as evidenced in the slogan of the rebranding Nigeria campaign. The choice of the "augmenting adjectives" (Martinez-Mira 2014) *good* and *great* to qualify the noun heads *people* and *nation* respectively appears to instil a sense of pride in the domestic audience to believe in the country and themselves, too. To this end, the positive posturing of entities in the slogan of the rebranding Nigeria campaign typifies banal forms of nationalism which are mobilised in reproducing the discourses/practices related to national imaginaries. The rebranding slogan which reiterates the cherished ideals of citizenship and statehood appears to resonate with national identity imaginaries in line with Anderson's (2006) notion of an "an imagined community".

Wodak et al. (2009) argue that the question of how an imaginary community reaches the minds of those who are convinced of it is easy to answer: it is constructed and conveyed in discourse, predominantly in narratives of national culture. Writing on the dialectics of discourse, Fairclough (2003: 23) explains that discourses include "not only representations of how things are, they can also be representations of how things could be, or 'imaginaries'. They can represent or imagine interconnected webs of activities, instruments, objects, subjects in social relations, times and places, values, etc". Fairclough (2012: 459) explains further that "[di]scourses as imaginaries also come to be enacted in new ways of acting and interacting, and such enactments are in part 'intra-semiotic': discourses become enacted as genres". Wodak and de Cillia (2007) corroborate this view, stressing that the construction of national identities always necessarily draws on narratives which relate the past, present and future in specific ways. Therefore, while the thinking of some observers could be that Nigerians are already a good people in a great nation, a fact that need not be reiterated, or that the virtues of 'goodness' and 'greatness' were saleable only in times past, the slogan "Nigeria, good people, great nation" appears to play up inherent national values which should remain constant across phases of national history no matter the odds. In all of this epistemic construction in the positive self-representation strategy deployed in the sloganeering technique of the rebranding campaign, we could validate Jørgensen and Phillips' (2002) view that discourse contributes to the construction of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and meaning.

6.2 Invocation of national pride via the core value of hard work

In order to substantiate the alluring beliefs and values evoked in the sloganeering strategy ideologically interrogated in the previous sub-section, the rebranding campaign also engaged jingles dwelling essentially on the

fond collective memories of the people which they could tap into for renewed nationalistic spirit. Consider one of the jingles below which is first rendered in its original Nigerian Pidgin English version before the Standard English translation:

Nigerian English version
Every day for Naija as day dey break even before cockcrow
Plenty people don wake up to begin work for Nigeria
Farmers dem dey, builders dem dey
Market people nko? We dey. Teachers? we dey
Some dey work for office, others na factory
Sports people nko o dem own na for stadium
Some people own na to sing, everybody get im own
Naija people no dey lazy, dem no tire, dem no give up
Come rain, come shine
Country people na dem go make country better
Wellu wellu …
Nigeria, good people, great nation

Standard English translation
Every day in Naija [Nigeria] as day breaks even before cockcrow
A lot of people have woken up to begin work in Nigeria.
Farmers are there, builders are there.
What of market people? We are there.
Teachers? We are there.
Some work in the office, others in the factory.
What of sports people? Theirs is at the stadium.
Some people's job is to sing, everybody has their own job.
Naija [Nigerian] people are not lazy, they don't get tired out, they don't give up.
Come rain, come shine
It's our nationals that make the country better
Very, very well
Nigeria, good people, great nation

This jingle appears to be directed at domestic citizens to invoke a sense of national and cultural pride in what Nigerians do for a living, which should bring contentment to an average national instead of engaging in some untoward activities which regrettably could tarnish the nation's image. Interestingly, the ideology that citizens should take pride in their work is conveyed via some striking style markers with very compelling rhetorical effects for mass mobilisation and national re-orientation. In this regard, the appropriation of deixis for rhetorical effect is significant. According to Levinson (1995), deixis refers to the phenomenon wherein understanding the meaning of certain words

and phrases in an utterance requires contextual information. Levinson (2004: 14, as cited in Maienborn et al. 2011: 1-2) sees deictic expressions as linguistic elements with "built-in contextual parameters" that must be specified by aspects of the situational or discourse context. Of the five forms of deixis (person, spatial, temporal, discourse and social) classified by Levinson (2001), we will touch on the appropriation of only temporal, spatial and social deixis in the jingle above.

According to Dylgjeri and Kazazi (2013), in English, temporal deixis is expressed by adverbs of time and tense markers on the verb. Thus, in the jingle, the use of the temporal deictic marker *every day* is rhetorically significant. It emphasises the consistency, habitualness, unfailing assiduity, and zeal with which Nigerians supposedly go about their daily activities in the course of fending for themselves and also developing the nation. To emphasise the value of hard work and the expediency of exploiting the morning hours for efficiency, the temporal deictic marker "as day breaks even before cockcrow" is instructive. For in a traditional African society, there is a well ordered and clearly defined system of traditional ethics guiding human conduct and actions. Traditional ethics, according to Udokang (2014: 266), are "the norms, precepts, principles and moral codes, which regulate the conduct and actions of individuals in African societies". So, the breaking of the day for a traditional African man/woman is a call to duty, particularly when the traditional time indicator – the cock – crows at dawn.

The jingle also contains verbs expressing both actions and a state of being. First, the verbal group "have woken up to begin" is striking. The goal of waking up for the day is not to perpetrate cybercrime or engage in other unpatriotic activities but to be meaningfully engaged as summed up in the complement *work* of the verb *to begin*. As we shall see shortly, *work* is used as a superordinate term with subordinates or hyponyms. Second, the recurrence of the verb of state *are* in the jingle is significant, too:

> Farmers are there, builders are there.
> What of market people? We are there.
> Teachers? We are there.

The repetitive pattern of the verb of state *are* in the lines above emphasises some of the noble classes of workers and the pride they take in doing what they know best, not opting for social vices for survival. While the verb is used with a third person narrative voice referring to a class of people who specialise in certain vocations – "Farmers are there, builders are there" – in the first line, there is a shift of narrative voice in the second line to a first-person narrative voice (i.e. *we*)

where the proud nationals themselves acclaim their vocations with a sense of pride – "What of market people? We are there. / Teachers? We are there". This voice shift is rhetorically significant, as it attempts to give authenticity to the pride which the workers themselves take in doing their respective jobs.

To this end, the deployment of social deixis in the jingle is noteworthy. According to Levinson (2001), social deixis concerns encoding social identities of participants, or the social relationship between them, or between one of them and persons and entities referred to. Huang (2009) explains that the information encoded in social deixis may include social class, kin relationship, age, sex, profession and ethnic group. In this jingle, the information contained in social deictic elements centres on vocation. Recall that we mentioned *work* as a superordinate term earlier on. Now let us examine that in detail. In terms of the sense relations that hold between words in a language, Lyons (1968: 443) argues that the structural underlying principle is that "every linguistic item has its 'place' in a system and its function, or value, derives from the relations, which it contrasts with other units in the system". The term hyponymy is used by Lyons (1968) to denote the notion of "semantic inclusion", the meaning of one item is included in the meaning of another. The superordinate term is technically referred to as hyperonym while the subordinates are called hyponyms. The hyperonym in the jingle is *work*, while the hyponyms are: *farming, building, trading, teaching, administration, engineering, sport,* and *singing.*

It is noteworthy that these hyponyms touch on different aspects of vocation from artisanship (*farming, building, trading*), skilled labour (*teaching, administration* and *engineering*) to entertainment (*sporting* and *singing*). It is in line with these vocations that the jingle emphasises the social deictic elements: *farmers, builders, market people, teachers* and *sports people*. And for the vocations with no social deictic markers, spatial deictic markers are deployed. Fillmore (1982: 37, as cited in Cairns 1991: 19) describes spatial deixis as "that aspect of deixis which involves referring to the locations in space of the communication act participants […]". Hence, in the jingle, the spatial pointers "in the office", "in the factory", and "at the stadium" all emphasise noble locales where Nigerians would generally work to develop the nation as opposed to cyber cafes where some desperate youths perpetrate cybercrime. Further, the utterance "[…] everybody has their own job" becomes instructive. It typifies the representative act in Searle's (1976: 10) classification of illocutionary act which is "to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition".

The utterance "[…] everybody has their own job" appears to celebrate the diversity of vocations among Nigerians, which the next line of the jingle buttresses

by invoking the work ethics that the people are noted for: "Naija people are not lazy, they don't get tired out, they don't give up". Preference for the negative element *not* in this line is rhetorically striking. It serves as a discursive strategy of engaging rebuttals which contest possible negative stereotypes of Nigerians, as a result of which the country has an image crisis. The value of hard work is further emphasised with the invocation of the temporal marker "Come rain, come shine […]" which is used in popular discourses to emphasise people's resoluteness to reach the acme of their desires no matter the odds. Generally, the staging of cultural identity in this jingle fits in with Williams' (1984) distinction between cultural policy as "display" and cultural policy "proper". Cultural policy as display, which is favoured for our present purposes, according to Varga (2013: 826), "takes on the form of 'identity politics', which aims both to shape collective identities and to provide a range of exemplary models that are available for individuals to construct their personal identities". As a result, Varga (ibid.) conceives of nation branding as being "essentially an inner-oriented cultural-political measure that targets the citizens of the national state".

6.3 Celebrating Nigeria's global ambassadors

With the kind of values that Nigerians are portrayed to have in the jingle we analysed in the previous sub-section, it naturally follows that they should excel in their various endeavours thereby doing their nation proud. The second jingle below attempts to highlight the exploits of Nigerians in this regard.

Nigeria is undoubtedly a country with many great minds.
At home and abroad, they are helping create a better world.
Philip Emeagwali, the *Time Magazine* calls him the unsung hero of the Internet.
Wole Soyinka, literary icon and Nobel laureate, the first African to be so honoured
Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director of the World Bank
Jelani Aliu, designer of the Chevy Volt General Motors electric car
Chimamanda Adichie, winner of several literary awards including the Orange Prize for fiction
Asha, international award-winning singing sensation
These are Nigerians who have impacted the world positively.
For each of these there are millions more doing us good
That testify to the can-do spirit of the Nigerian.
At home or abroad the spirit is the same.
Our people step up to the challenge, excelling in all endeavours
Making their families, friends and Nigeria proud.
Nigeria, good people, great nation.

This jingle is aimed at bolstering Nigeria's international pride by parading global brands who should serve as models to youths in particular. The use of the quantifier *many* before the noun head "great minds" and the adverb "undoubtedly" in the first line is stylistically significant. The stylistic markers reinforce the rhetorical attempt to dispel possible doubts about the stuff Nigerian nationals are made of as global citizens. In this sense, the use of the spatial deictic element "at home or abroad" is rhetorically significant. As a thematised element in the structure of the utterance, it attempts to stress the fact that Nigerians are not "local champions", as the common phraseology goes, but global citizens whose spheres of influence and ingenuity combine effectively with the resourcefulness of other nationals across the world to drive global development in different sectors.

The superordinate-subordinates relations between "many great minds" and a catalogue of iconic Nigerian figures in different fields of endeavour is intriguing, as clear evidence is provided to support the proposition that Nigeria is blessed with great minds:

> Philip Emeagwali, the *Time Magazine* calls him the unsung hero of the Internet
> Wole Soyinka, literary icon and Nobel laureate, the first African to be so honoured
> Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director of the World Bank
> Jelani Aliu, designer of the Chevy Volt General Motors electric car
> Chimamanda Adichie, winner of several literary awards including the Orange Prize for fiction
> Asha, international award-winning singing sensation

Rhetorically, these iconic figures are paraded as models to invigorate a sense of national pride in the average Nigerian citizen who is invited to admire and celebrate the nation's ambassadors. The iconic figures are also presented probably as models for some wayward citizens to have a rethink that it pays to tread the path of honour and do one's nation proud rather than engage in improper activities that cast the nation's image in a negative light.

The rhetorical goal of selling these national icons to the target audience is enhanced by the pattern of information structure in the discourse. Halliday (1967) identifies three categories of information structure: presupposition and assertion (the structuring of propositional information into given and new); identifiability and activation (the information status of discourse referents); and topic and focus (the relative predictability of relations among propositions). According to Roberts (2012), information structure is a sentence level structure generally characterised as a variation of sentential structure along certain parameters to modulate the presentation of the information imparted by the sentence in such a way as to

relate that information to a prior context. The factors in that relationship are characterised in terms of primitive functional roles such as theme/rheme, focus/(back)ground, topic/link, old/new, etc. It is the function of the second category in Halliday's (1967) classification (identifiability and activation) which correlates with Roberts' (2012) topic/link role and Birner and Ward's (2009) entity/attribute relations that we explore in the jingle.

In the lines quoted above, all the entities (iconic figures) have an attribute attached to each of them to reinforce the claim that Nigeria can boast of innovative minds shaping world affairs. It is rhetorically significant that cogent fields such as information and communications technology (ICT), literature, banking, automobile and entertainment are identified while zeroing in on the attributes of the entities. First, reference to the evaluative judgement of the famous international *Time Magazine* (an American weekly news magazine published in New York which has the world's largest circulation for a weekly news magazine) of Philip Emeagwali "as the unsung hero of the Internet" is rhetorically striking considering the global appeal of the magazine. Also, with respect to Wole Soyinka's winning the Nobel Prize in Literature, the use of the noun in apposition "the first African to be so honoured" as part of the attribute of the entity "Wole Soyinka" is a rhetorical attempt to emphasise the pride of place Nigeria occupies in streams of contributions Africa makes to global development.

Further, attributing the feat of designing the Chevy Volt electric car (one of the most admired American cars globally for its superior technology) by General Motors to another Nigerian Jelani Aliu is rhetorically significant given the fact that America is one of the leading lights in the automobile industry globally. It is interesting too that the entities whose attributes are being emphasised in the topic/link information structure also include the womenfolk in Nigeria: Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Managing Director World Bank), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (winner of the Orange Prize for Fiction) and Asha (internal award-winning singing sensation). Hence, from banking, to literature to entertainment, Nigerian women are singled out as worthy ambassadors contrary to the possible negative picture of some Nigerian ladies as commercial sex workers in some notable cities in Europe and America.

7 Conclusion

This study has examined the rhetorical strategies used in the rebranding Nigeria campaign to communicate values and traditions, negotiate collective memory, invoke history and reinforce aspirations of a domestic audience for national image building. The rhetorical strategies explored in the study, despite the inner orientation of the rebranding Nigeria campaign, resonate with the discursive

construction of national identity narratives whereby positive self-perception is deployed by an in-group to contest purported negative perception by an out-group in a spirited effort to boost the confidence and patriotism of the domestic audience. The ideological struggle over disparate national identity narratives by patriotic internal stakeholders versus seeming external detractors as well as a disgruntled internal audience clearly demonstrates that nation branding discourse is a site of struggle over image perception. Given that discourses are never fully fixed, it is, therefore, justifiable that further research needs to explore the discursive patterns of approbation of or critical responses to the message of the rebranding campaign by the domestic audience in some counter-discourses or feedback responses via other public spheres apart from government-controlled media outlets.

The rhetorical strategies analysed in the study equally reveal the deployment of discursive practices which validate the principles of the theoretical framework adopted for the study. The study reveals that the social practice of seeking to mobilise an internal audience for a successful nation branding campaign necessitates the articulation of diverse social, cultural and historical elements which are central to the discursive construction of national identity. Such elements encompass some core national values and consciousness which are located in time and space relative to Nigeria's national identity in which some fond national memories are invoked, some subjects are celebrated as role models and some work ethics define the true Nigerian brand, among other national values. Generally, the analysis validates Fairclough's (2001: 125) definition of CDA as "a form of critical social science geared to illuminating the problems which people are confronted with by particular forms of social life, and to contributing resources which people may be able to draw upon in tackling and overcoming those problems".

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APOCALYPTIC REPRESENTATION OF COVID-19: A CORPUS-ASSISTED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S DISCOURSE PRACTICES

Sadiq Altamimi

Abstract

This study examines the interdiscursive representation of the coronavirus disease by the World Health Organization from the outbreak of the virus in January 2020 to the announcement of a successful vaccine in November 2020. The aim is to find out whether the agency has delivered apocalyptic language that increased anxiety and stress among the public leading to a weak human immune system, or contributed to creating global cooperation and placing emergency measures to fight the virus. I have adopted a discourse analysis approach, with the aid of NVivo qualitative software and corpus linguistic tools, for the analysis of a purpose-built corpus of the WHO Director-General's speeches, focusing on referential, predication, perspectivation, intensifying, mitigation and argumentation strategies. The result of the analysis revealed that the WHO discourse referred to COVID-19 as an eccentric virus, qualified and intensified by the agency as a threat to humanity. The WHO adopted a subjective point of view, showing active involvement in the discursive representation of the virus and argumentatively asking people to unite until a vaccine is invented.

Keywords

COVID-19, World Health Organization, corpus-assisted discourse analysis, discourse-historical approach, NVivo

1 Introduction

The outbreak of COrona VIrus Disease in late 2019 (COVID-19) has shifted the world into a big prison, where those outside their homes are either medical staff or patients suffering deadly symptoms in hospitals. The virus rapidly developed into a pandemic creating globalised hysteria where conspiracy theories suggest that the virus is a human-made pandemic. The virus was described as a new generation of coronavirus family that infected humans in 2003, causing severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) (https://who.int). However, the newly discovered COVID-19 caused lethal symptoms and led to more than 2.4M deaths and 109M confirmed cases, at the time of writing this research (https://covid19.who.int). For months, the causing agent of the virus stayed

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unknown, and laboratories around the world were in a race to find antiviral drugs or vaccines to stop the virus.

The COVID-19-inspired discourse by institutional and non-governmental organisations has contributed to the scientific ambiguity of the origin and impact of the virus and has left the world terrified of what could come next. The current study focuses on the discourse practices of the World Health Organization (WHO) in times of the virus, because this organization is the United Nations' specialized agency for international public health. Since the outbreak of the virus in January 2020, the agency has made recurrent speeches by its Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus who briefs the public about the virus and updates information on the laboratory findings, symptoms, prevention guidelines and vaccine production. The aim is to uncover the discourse representation of the virus by the WHO and to find out whether the agency has contributed to taking serious measures to stop the virus or has left the world baffled with fear and anxiety. To achieve this aim, I have adopted Wodak's (2001), and Reisigl and Wodak's (2017) Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), using NVivo qualitative analysis software and Corpus Linguistic (CL) tools.

As for the qualitative aspect, the analysis concerns itself with issues of language, power and ideology, whereby ideology derives from the taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups (van Dijk 2006). This part of analysis employs referential/predicational, perspectivation, intensification/mitigation, and argumentation strategies to discover aspects of coherence, authoritarian reference, group identities, proximal distance and point of view in the representation of the virus within the WHO's speeches. This includes the analysis of the cohesive lexical items within clauses and larger-scale units of paragraphs in the corpus. NVivo software is used to code the qualitative features of the data, classifying the linguistic features according to their discourse function within the corpus. For the quantitative analysis, I have used the Wordsmith CL tool (Scott 2020) to process a relatively large corpus of 241 speeches on the virus, since obtaining reliable evidence regarding the use of language requires the analysis of a large sample of data (Stubb 1991, Baker & McEnery 2015).

The Discourse Analysis (DA) theories and methods employed in this study can complement sociological studies and contribute to this area of study by providing a systematic analysis of power and ideology present in the discourse of those with power to change/impact the status quo of the society in the time of the pandemic. Also, this paper, to the knowledge of the researcher, is the first to provide a diachronic analysis of the lexical choices and lexico-grammatical structures of COVID-19 in speeches made by the Director-General of the WHO,

and to shape the specific attitudes and ideologies of the agency. Furthermore, the corpus examined is unique in its scope, covering the period of the pandemic from the outbreak in January to the announcement of a successful vaccine in November 2020. Therefore, this study contributes to filling the gap in knowledge of the representations and impact of COVID-19 within the fields of linguistics, politics and sociology.

2 COVID-19 discourse and social reality

For COVID-19 discourse and social reality, this subject has received considerable academic attention to date. Previous language analyses, especially within sociology, report that COVID-19 is a social disease and suffering requiring equity-focused treatment of a more fair and just society (Trout & Kleinman 2020). The virus was also found to teach humans how to develop a social system that works for sustainable, ethical and equitable existence (see e.g. Matthewman & Huppatz 2020, Ward 2020). While sociological studies have contributed to a better understanding of the impact of the virus on society, it is through discourse that we can understand how people feel, think and react to social issues (in this context COVID-19) they are suffering (van Dijk 2000, Harper 2003). The analysis of COVID-19 discourse as communicative units embedded in social and cultural practices helps uncover how the whole world started a struggle for survival in late 2019, when a new virus hit Wuhan city in China's Hubei province and spread very rapidly outside China to other countries. The discourse representation of COVID-19 as a social reality varies across medical institutions, media and governments. The virus has been represented, from a socio-political and medical perspective, as a monster (Davis 2020), a silent killer (Birhman et al. 2020) and a social stigma (Ramaci et al. 2020). Politicians, in particular, construe discourse to persuade the public of their politically oriented view of COVID-19, since "the aim of politicians is not only to be understood but also to make the audience accept their representation of reality" (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2012: 79). Such discursive representation contributes to uncertainty and spreads fear and anxiety across the public, which can weaken the human immune system, causing cardiovascular and gastrointestinal damage and leading to death (Iddir et al. 2020, Seiler et al. 2020). The importance of the study of the discursive representation of COVID-19 by the WHO can help measure/point out the damage, if any, such representation causes to the public and the role of the agency in (in)directly increasing stress and affecting the immune system and, then, the lives of people.

The WHO is the United Nations agency responsible for public health and whose objective is the "highest possible level of health" (World Health Organization

2020: 10). The agency has an essential role in the governance of disease because of its international function of enforcing medical standards and coordinating common goal actors (Ruger & Yach 2009). More importantly, the WHO presents evidence-based medical standards on core areas, such as COVID-19, for key institutions and governments to coordinate for a drug or vaccine. At the time of the COVID-19 outbreak, the WHO started press releases updating the public on the laboratory findings, research development, medical protocol and technical guidance to avoid the infection. The speeches delivered by the WHO's Director-General are important briefings for medical institutions and the whole world. The speeches (language) show the ways the WHO conceptualizes COVID-19 and the agency's implications and guiding protocols (see e.g. Chen et al. 2020, Adal 2022). Since the outbreak, the agency started suggesting safety guidelines, such as "protect yourself and others from COVID-19, keep yourself and others safe, don't forget the basics of good hygiene, take some simple precautions, such as physical distancing and mask wearing" (https://who.int). The agency, also, asked member states to come together to protect those who cannot afford protection, and to maintain health services. On the other hand, the agency showed how fragile many health systems are when they are unable to mitigate the deadly risk and avoid the system collapse, by taking immediate actions, such as robust planning, (non)governmental coordination, and facility management (Thomson et al. 2019). This means that the role the agency plays in saving the lives of affected people and the discourse they delivered can shape the research agenda and global response to COVID-19, which justifies the selection of WHO speeches as the data of the current study.

3 Methodology

3.1 Data

The data of the current study are 241 speeches (212K words) delivered by the WHO's Director-General from 5 January 2020 (when WHO published the first outbreak statement) to 25 November 2020 (when the leading vaccine production companies Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca/Oxford developed effective vaccines for COVID-19). Following the download of the speeches which are freely available on the agency's website (https://who.int), they were saved as txt files for CL processing. They were then cleaned from corpus noise (Gabrielatos 2007) and classified via the date of publication.

3.2 Framework and procedures

To understand the WHO's institutional and political stance and function in the representation of COVID-19, there is the need to examine the relationships between language, ideology and power – principal DA trends in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (see e.g. Fairclough & Wodak 1997). DA methodology helps uncover why certain procedures are to be followed in the discursive representation of social issues (such as COVID-19) (Wodak 1996, 2015). It also allows understanding the way discourse is constructed and delivered to the public, and the political power in framing the social reality of the virus (or what Finlayson et al. 2016 call political rhetoric). Within power theory, Fairclough (2001) recognizes two aspects of power, power in discourse and power behind discourse. Power in discourse refers to the actual use of language where power relations are enacted, such as face-to-face communication, language disorders, and cross-cultural communication. The power behind discourse, on the other hand, focuses on the order of discourse (total discursive practices of an institution) shaped by the relations of power, such as standard language (standardization). This study focuses on the two aspects of power in the analysis of WHO discourse, because the agency has the two sources of power. The methodology that works on this overlap between language, power and ideology within DA is Wodak's (2001, 2015), and Reisigl and Wodak's (2017) DHA. The DHA "integrates different approaches, and proceeds multi-methodically based on a variety of empirical data as well as background information" (Reisig & Wodak 2001: 2). It is marked by the principle of triangulation (Wodak 2001: 2015) which aids in drawing on various interdisciplinary approaches. This triangulation presupposes the possibility of combining CL and DA for the purpose of "identifying specific contents […], investigating discursive strategies […] and examining context-dependent linguistic realization" (ibid.: 44). More importantly, the DHA is marked by contextual triangulation of four contextual factors, namely co-text, intertextual relationship, extra-linguistic social variables, and sociopolitical and historical context. This potential of triangulation is methodologically applied through the analytical tools of referential/predication, perspectivation, intensifying/mitigation and argumentation strategies (Wodak 2001, Wodak 2015, Reisigl & Wodak 2017). These strategies are attributed to five questions that explain what each strategy is meant to do, and those I will answer throughout the analysis of the WHO's discourse:

- How is COVID-19 referred to and described in the WHO's corpus? (referential and predication strategies)

- From what point of view are these references expressed? (perspectivisation strategies)
- Are these references intensified or mitigated? (intensifying and mitigation strategies)
- By what means (arguments) are references justified? (argumentation strategies)

What I have found extra potential in the DHA strategies of representation is that there is a hierarchical or inclusive relationship between these strategies starting with a reference and ending with an argument. In other words, an entity (linguistic feature) within discourse is negatively/positively referred to by a noun (reference) and might be followed by a predication that negatively/positively labels the entity (predication). The entity can be described and qualified by various linguistic categories (intensification/mitigation), and may occur in a specific discoursal context (perspectivation). Finally, the whole positive/negative utterance can be justified (argumentation). The DHA, drawn upon in this study, has been applied for the analysis of socio-political issues and achieved the aims to which it was applied, such as the analysis of the collective identity of social actors and how it is formulated by discourse practices (Koller 2010), and the socio-political representation of terrorism in media and political discourses (Bhatia 2009).

For the quantitative analysis of the corpus, the Wordsmith corpus tool was used (Scott 2020). Wordsmith software shows patterns in text from different languages in different fields of knowledge, such as linguistics and politics (lexically.net). This software has built-in tools for frequency, concordance, collocation and keyword analyses. The frequency of occurrence tool was used to set a list of COVID-19 terms (search words), including coronavirus, covid*, virus* (* stands for more characters/additions), pandemic and epidemic. The concordance lines and collocates of the terms/search words were then extracted to form the WHO corpus of this study.

Each concordance line was then read by eye and coded through NVivo for referential/predication strategies. The basic function of NVivo is to code the linguistic features of the discourse into categories or nodes which can be divided into sub-nodes and a hierarchical structure of coded information (see also Mozzato et al. 2016). NVivo is qualitative and mixed-methods research software that can be used for the analysis of audio, video, and, more importantly for this study, texts. The software is produced by QSR International – the developer of software products for qualitative data analysis (QDA) based in Australia (see https://qsrinternational.com). This software enables the researcher to import large texts from web content, online surveys, social media, and others in an

intuitive interface to do an in-depth qualitative analysis. I use NVivo to code the DHA strategies in the WHO corpus, followed by a statistical analysis of these strategies. The goal is to bring together qualitative and quantitative analyses in the examination of how COVID-19 is linguistically represented to the public by the WHO. This method extends the use of an innovative synergy of qualitative data analysis software like NVivo (2018) and corpus linguistic software like Wordsmith (Scott 2020). It helped uncover topic representations via salient lexical selections which were grouped on the basses of semantic fields.

The corpus was then searched for the parts of speech (POS) collocating with the search words in Wordsmith. Lexical selections were shown in word trees marked by associations of each lexeme to others in the texts. The resulting list was then extracted and coded in NVivo for the intensification and mitigation strategies. The concordance lists of the search words and their collocates were then analysed for functional elements (subject/objects) and coded for the perspectivisation strategy in NVivo. Finally, I have used the keyword tool in Wordsmith software to compare the WHO corpus against the COVID-19 corpus (https://sketchengine.eu) to find out the lexically salient keywords/topoi in the WHO corpus (see e.g. Baker 2006). Each Keyword-concordance was read by eye for further qualitative analysis to identify the warrants-argument used to justify the representation of the virus in the corpus, which was, then, coded in NVivo under the argument strategies.

4 Corpus analysis

4.1 Statistical measures and qualitative coding

Following the clearing of the corpus noise (see Gabrielatos 2007), such as dates, applause and cheers, the corpus was uploaded to NVivo. I ran the word frequency tool and searched for the words 'covid'*, 'coronavirus'*, 'pandemic' and 'epidemic'. The frequency of occurrences was n=2,622, n=1,768, n=1,736 and n=912, respectively (see Figure 1).

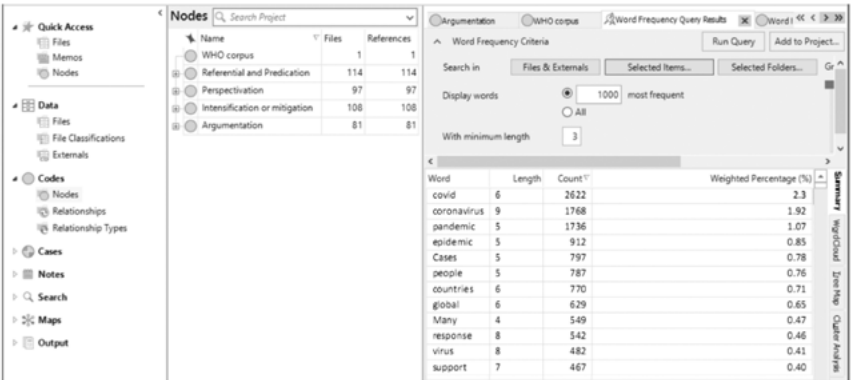

Figure 1: NVivo results for search word frequencies

The concordance lines of the search words were then read by eye and qualitatively analysed for discourse strategies. The manual reading of all the concordances allowed grouping the search words in the internal sources of NVivo into discourse strategies or nodes, with each referring to a specific strategy, namely referential and predicational, intensification or mitigation, perspectivation and argumentation. When selecting any of the nodes, NVivo showed a list of all the occurrences of the search words with a scrollable list of all examples in the corpus (see Figure 2).

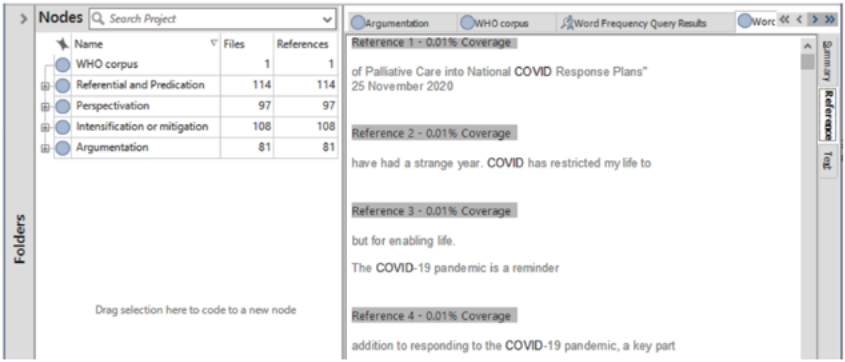

Figure 2: NVivo platform for discourse strategies

By selecting any of the nodes from the left panel in Figure 2, NVivo shows the list of all examples coded under this node (category) in the right panel of the

platform. For example, the referential and predicational node has been coded 114 times. Following this statistical measure and qualitative coding, quantitative and qualitative analyses were further employed throughout the analysis of the discourse strategies as illustrated in the analysis section below.

4.2 Discourse representation of COVID-19

4.2.1 Eccentricity discourse

The qualitative analysis of the concordance lines and paragraph views of the referential strategies showed that the WHO discourse referred to COVID-19 as an eccentric virus linguistically realised through cases of being *complex* (33), *uncontrolled* (27), *unknown* (19), *straining* (13), *varied* (8), *transferable* (8) and *winding* (6). COVID-19 was represented as an unbeatable disease toward which the WHO acted powerless. The common characteristic of the presented referential and predicational identification of the virus is that the virus is an eccentric entity that has no stable condition to be examined and assessed, for example (all examples are extracts from speeches delivered by the WHO's Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus):

(1) *The epidemic of COVID-19 is becoming increasingly complex.*

(2) *We are dealing with a global pandemic, uncontrolled outbreak.*

(3) *The COVID-19 pandemic is straining health systems in many countries.*

There was no frequent use of terms that showed control of the virus, such as *treated*, *cured*, *healing*, or *controlled* (cf. Weldon analysis of Ebola discourse 2001). Contrarily, the WHO's discourse continuously updated the rise in the number of death and the shortage of beds and medical supplies, portraying as if the world has come to an end. It added that a 25-per-cent increase had been reported in the prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide. This was evident when COVID-19 took the majority of health scientists by surprise, although they had long predicted a disease would strike and it was only a matter of time (Seiler et al. 2020). By the start of the virus, scientists insist that they are facing an invisible monster for which they have no treatment yet. Soon, according to Iddir et al. (2020), the system got overwhelmed and a medical crisis happened.

Dealing with this eccentric virus has led the WHO into revising the medical treatment protocol eight times since May 2020 (https://who.int, Centre for disease control and prevention 2020). The clinical guidelines and protocols to survive the infection with COVID-19 have been continuously modified following

shifting radiographic findings, laboratory tests and newly discovered symptoms. The WHO responded to this uncertainty over the nature of the virus by using challenging action verbs in its discourse (see Figure 3), e.g. *fight* (45), *control* (23), *suppress* (14), *beat* (12) and *conquer* (11) the virus, as illustrated in the following examples:

(4) *That makes it even more important to fight the pandemic with every tool at our disposal.*

(5) *This is how we will break chains of transmission, suppress the virus, and protect health systems*

(6) *We will continue to drive science, solutions and solidarity until we beat this virus, together.*

ɔnal unity and global solidarity to learn from each other and suppress the	virus	everywhere. </s><s> A key part of this week's landmark resolution
;sed and inspired by the commitment of so many countries to fighting the	virus	and saving lives. </s><s> I also thank the Regional Directors for the
e of public health measures is our most effective set of tools to tackle the	virus	. </s><s> That means test, track, isolate, and treat, combined with
ɔpeated in cities and countries the world over. </s><s> We must treat this	virus	with the respect and attention it deserves. </s><s> More than 4-and
'e called consistently for the two essential ingredients for conquering this	virus	: national unity and global solidarity. </s><s> We all have lessons to
:s> Researchers are working at breakneck speed both to understand the	virus	and also to develop potential vaccines, medicines and other techno
lerate science and expand access so that together we can overcome the	virus	. </s><s> Until everyone is protected, the world will remains at risk.
est, trace, isolate and care for patients, which is the best way to track the	virus	, slow the spread and take pressure off the health systems. </s><s>
good news is that there has been a great deal of success in slowing the	virus	and ultimately saving lives. </s><s> However, such strong measure
nsive package of measures is our most effective set of tools to tackle the	virus	. </s><s> In this vein, new guidance was released over the weeken
ng patients. </s><s> But ultimately, we will need a vaccine to control this	virus	. </s><s> The success in developing effective drugs and vaccines f
ı the whole of government approach will be very important to beating this	virus	. </s><s> Second, we call on countries to implement proven public
'HO remains committed to standing with all of you in solidarity to fight the	virus	and save lives. </s><s> Finally, I would like to wish you Ramadan k
es and governments to continue suppressing and controlling this deadly	virus	. </s><s> So-called lockdowns can help to take the heat out of a co
tests are important for knowing who has been infected, tests that find the	virus	are a core tool for active case finding, diagnosis, isolation and treat
:edented global health crisis. </s><s> Not only are we confronting a new	virus	, we are also confronting the first pandemic in history caused by a c

Figure 3: Screenshot of verbs used with COVID-19

This 'actionalisation' strategy of the WHO through the use of challenging verbs echoes a military ideology, where social activities explain social actors (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 52, see also Almaged 2021a). In this strategy, professionalization of the social actors determines the actions they take to face the virus. However, as revealed by the process verbs used, the WHO abstained from using somewhat medical verbs (e.g. *cure*, *treat*, and *heal*) to reflect the health profession, and employed military actions, instead.

4.2.2 Discourse of threat

The analysis of intensification and mitigation strategies revealed that the WHO qualified the condition of the virus as a threat to humanity. The illocutionary force of the representation of the virus toned and sharpened the utterances on the virus (Renkema 2009), describing it as being *dangerous* (43), *new* (29), and *deadly* (23) (see Figure 4).

><s> Humility to believe that we need one another to fight this dangerous	virus	. </s><s> And Josep, as you rightly said during the World Health Ass
><s> It is when the world comes together that it can defeat this dangerous	virus	. </s><s> I will be honest with you. </s><s> I am really, really worried
l bring the rest of the world together and to be able to fight this dangerous	virus	in unison. </s><s> Without that, the virus will get advantage and will
ities and governments to continue suppressing and controlling this deadly	virus	. </s><s> So-called lockdowns can help to take the heat out of a cou
ecedented global health crisis. </s><s> Not only are we confronting a new	virus	, we are also confronting the first pandemic in history caused by a co
safe operation of markets. </s><s> Because an estimated 70% of all new	viruses	come from animals, we also work together closely to understand and
focus for WHO. </s><s> As we have said many times before, this is a new	virus	, and the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus. </s><s> We're all l
he Turkic speaking states. </s><s> We have learned much about this new	virus	since we first encountered it at the start of the year. </s><s> While e
lease in the coming days. </s><s> We have learned much about this new	virus	since we first encountered it at the start of the year. </s><s> These h
/ID-19, health workers in DRC faced the double threat of fighting a deadly	virus	in one of the world's most dangerous and unstable regions – exposin
lsewhere. </s><s> As I said at yesterday's press conference, this is a new	virus	, and the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus – two firsts. </s><s:
gh football. </s><s> We didn't know then what we know now – that a new	virus	would emerge that would bring many parts of society to a standstill –
save lives. </s><s> And fourth, innovate and learn. </s><s> This is a new	virus	and a new situation. </s><s> We're all learning, and we must all find
save lives. </s><s> And fourth, innovate and learn. </s><s> This is a new	virus	and a new situation. </s><s> We're all learning, and we must all find
d cases. </s><s> And fourth, innovate and improve. </s><s> This is a new	virus	and a new situation. </s><s> We're all learning and we must all find
ve blended strategy for controlling their epidemics and pushing this deadly	virus	back. </s><s> Countries that continue finding and testing cases and
ve blended strategy for controlling their epidemics and pushing this deadly	virus	back. </s><s> Countries that continue finding and testing cases and

Figure 4: Screenshot of COVID-19 modifiers

This intensification of the virus as dangerous constructs the feeling of insecurity. This insecurity stance entails a shift in people's cultural and national heritage (see e.g. Dalarud 2013). Notably, the semantic nature of this representation instigates the communicative effectiveness of threat among the public and displays the functional orientation of the WHO to not only alarm, but to scare people, as illustrated below:

(7) *It is when the world comes together that it can defeat this dangerous virus.*

(8) *Not only are we confronting a new virus, we are also confronting the first pandemic in history caused by a coronavirus.*

(9) *COVID-19 continues its deadly path across the planet, as we all know.*

The intensification strategy revealed the coherent formation and the controlling theme of the discourse on COVID-19, especially in terms of macrostructure theory (van Dijk 1980), where the virus was represented in frame-like

conventional knowledge of threat. Reinforcing the virus as new, dangerous and deadly is a rhetorical strategy of stylistic gradient with the focus on "making plans and employing strategies" to accomplish the frame of a threatening entity (Caffi 2007: 16). Consequently, intensifying the threat of the virus can (and it did) increase the tension and stress to the peak. This intensification strategy is an author's viewpoint trying an effective communication, rather than the actual status of the object/event being intensified (see e.g. Dalarud 2013). This means that the WHO might not represent the actual situation of the virus at the time of representation, but the speeches it delivered were still threatening.

Another intensification strategy was the use of quantification terms that pointed out the growth and amount of the virus, e.g. *very* (56), *many* (34), and *wide* (18):

(10) *COVID-19 spreads very efficiently among clusters of people.*

(11) *Everyone is fighting hard against the virus but so many lives have been lost.*

(12) *Countries are in the dark as to how far and wide the virus has spread – and who has coronavirus or another disease with similar symptoms.*

The intensification and quantification of the virus as being 'unbounded' foreshadows the social reality that the virus cannot be brought down, which again brings fear and imposes threat among people.

4.2.3 Hegemony discourse

While the WHO represented COVID-19 as eccentric (see 4.2.1) and intensified it as threatening (see 4.2.2), the agency adopted a subjective point of view in this discursive representation of the virus. The WHO showed active involvement in the discourse on the virus, seen evident in the frequent use of proximal first-person pronouns *we* (n=511) and *I* (n=172), as in Examples 13 and 14, in comparison with objective representation through distal pronouns, such as *you* (n=123) and *they* (n=73), as in Examples 15, 16:

(13) *We also established the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool, a voluntary mechanism through which we are inviting companies or governments to develop an effective vaccine.*

(14) *I said that the global COVID-19 outbreak can now be described as a pandemic.*

(15) *This will not only help you in the long term, it will also help you fight COVID-19 if you get it.*

(16) *Some countries have had large outbreaks but were able to bring them under control and they continue to suppress the virus*

The perspective of using first-person pronouns in the representation of COVID-19 reveals the ideology of WHO being actively included in the representation of the virus, rather than using bird-eye narration. The use of first-person pronouns, however, marks an element of subjectivity and constructs the speaker's active consciousness in the discourse, which, in fact, provides additional power to the WHO's commitment to what it proposes and communicates to the public (see e.g. Langacker 1991, Marín-Arrese 2007, Almaged 2021b). First-person pronouns, also, foreground the authority of the WHO, as they do in academic writings when authors act as 'architect' of the theses (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2013: 21). Nuyts (2001), for instance, goes further and states that the speakers' subjective references imply their responsibility for the subject matter under consideration, which puts the WHO under serious responsibility in dealing with the virus.

This subjective involvement is referred to by Simpson (1993) as internal points of view or homodiegetic narrations, where speakers can be either negatively or positively committed to taking action. Notably, most of the internal narrations in which the WHO used first-person pronouns were negative, using epistemic and perception modality markers in which the WHO was not obliged to the achievement of actions it proposes to deal with COVID-19. Consider Example 17:

(17) *We will break chains of transmission, suppress the virus, and protect health systems.*

Epistemic '*will*' in Example 17 does not oblige the WHO (*we*) to *break*, *suppress* and *protect* the health systems, because the future commitment might (not) occur. This modality use is intuitively negative, highlighting uncertainty over actions (see Jeffries 2014). In a few cases, the WHO employed a neutral point of view, marked by a 'complete absence of narratorial modality' (Simpson 1993: 55), presenting the fact that the WHO is learning lessons from the pandemic, as illustrated in Example 18:

(18) *From Berlin to Bogota, Minneapolis to Mumbai, Seoul to St Petersburg, we are facing the same threat, confronting the same difficult new reality.*

In Example 18, the use of the verb *to be* (*are*) shows that WHO adopts a categorical assertion point of view (Jeffries 2014) which is a straightforward

description of what the world is facing – a threat. This point of view, unlike the negative epistemic *will*, portrays actions from the WHO's spatial location, rather than its bird-eye position.

4.2.4 Discourse of distress

The analysis of argumentation strategies employed in the representation of COVID-19 as eccentric and threatening, and the agency's discourse as hegemonic showed that the WHO implied public antagonism and asked people to unite until a vaccine is invented. This was evident in the identification of the recurrent keywords/topos manifested in the data. The keywords provide a set of main topics in a corpus (Scott 2020) and constitute an essential feature of corpus-based methodologies because it is inherently comparative (Partington 2009). They are "content-related warrants or 'conclusion rules' which connect the argument" (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 69-80). This was necessary for the analysis of the WHO's discourse in that keywords are indicators of the aboutness of the discourse and a reflector of the societal and cultural views of actors (WHO) (see e.g. Baker 2006). To analyse keywords, the CL software Wordsmith was used to compare the WHO corpus with the Covid-19 Open Research Dataset (CORD-19). CORD-19 is a 224M-word corpus released by Allen Institute for AI including 280K scientific articles about coronavirus. As illustrated in Table 1, the keyword analysis showed that the frequent keywords were 'unity', 'solidarity', 'supply', 'vaccine', 'honour', 'cooperation', 'treatment' and 'lifesaving'.

Item	Score	Freq
unity	1,134.39	276
solidarity	580	313
supply	472.13	161
vaccine	318.66	76
honour	255.66	74
cooperation	100.21	45
treatment	54.82	31
lifesaving	51.97	23

Table 1: Keywords of WHO against COVID-19 Corpus

The keywords in Table 1 underlay manipulative arguments in representing the virus. They can be classified into two groups, namely 'unity' warrant and 'vaccine' argument. In 'unity' warrant, the topos of *unity*, *solidarity*, *honour* and *cooperation* were the main assumptions and justification to support the WHO's

'vaccine' argument that the virus can be defeated when *supply*, *vaccine*, *treatment* and *lifesaving* are offered:

(19) *I have said many times, the keys to defeating this pandemic are unity and solidarity.*

(20) *We have called consistently for the two essential ingredients for conquering this virus: national unity and global solidarity.*

Following the increase in virus fatalities and shortage in medical supplies, such as masks and ventilators, many countries were in a race to buy them overseas. The US, for example, was accused of piracy when it confiscated 200K Germany-bounded masks for its own in April 2020. Italy, on the other hand, was crying for help to suppress the virus when the death tolls 1K a day, with the European Union acting helpless. This has driven the WHO to condemn this antagonistic behaviour and to call for unity to defeat the virus (see also Schemm & Taylor 2020).

5 Discussion

Referring to the virus as an eccentric entity being *complex* and *uncontrolled* reflects the inability of the WHO and member states to control the pandemic. The WHO's discourse has worsened the situation and led to a global economic crisis since the 1930s when poverty and social exclusion grew rapidly (Lorenzo-Dus & Almaged 2020). This was evident in the discourse analysis limited to the WHO Director-General's speeches from January to November 2020. Eccentric discourse could contribute to placing burden on people and increasing their anxiety and stress, hence affecting their immune system functionality. This representation of the virus has also been reported by Scott (2016) in his analysis of WHO's health security reforms. He states that the agency has urged the affected countries to ask for help, rather than offering them aid and service, which has led to a baffled, then broken global health system. The WHO used eccentric discourse between January and April 2020, which might worsen the economic and medical situation in the developed countries and drive some developing governments to suffer health collapse. Italy, for instance, suffered more than 1K reported deaths in a single day in March 2020 (https://who.int).

Death toll shortly declined in May 2020, and Pfizer and AstraZeneca companies started the development and trials of vaccines for the virus. However, with another phase of the outbreak in September 2020, death tolls rose to 6K a day and the eccentricity discourse came to the surface again when the WHO frequently described the virus as *uncontrolled*. While deaths steadily declined in November and successful trials of the vaccines were announced, the number

of fatalities across the globe tolled 62.3M confirmed cases and 1.45M deaths (worldometers.info). This human catastrophe drove the WHO to call for emergency response and to employ warlike metaphors and military terms, e.g. *fight*, *defeat* and *conquer* the virus. The personification of the virus as an enemy motivates and encourages medical staff to endure long hours of work and, at the same time, invokes the call for renewed medical research to win over the enemy/virus. Similar findings have been reported in the analysis of the Ebola virus, such as Larson et al.'s (2005) analysis of infectious diseases and Weldon's (2001) analysis of Ebola discourse, where the virus was personified as an enemy and the tilt to political replaced medical representation.

Following the November 2020 death toll, the WHO delivered threatening discourse by intensifying the virus as being *deadly* and *dangerous*, in addition to qualifying the growth/amount of the virus as *wide*. This was a typical discourse practice of media representation of COVID-19 (see e.g. Parvin et al. 2020, Chen et al. 2020), fuelling apocalyptic representation of the pandemic. It was also the discourse of doctors, healthcare workers and medical staff (briefings) (see e.g. NHS.uk, healthaffairs.org). In one of the interviews, Bill Gates, Windows software developer and prominent vaccine funder, has also invoked an apocalyptic representation of the virus, predicting more outbreaks and wider infections "We're not ready for the next pandemic. And, sadly, not that much was done, it got more into do vaccines work at all?" (Didion 2020). This apocalyptic discourse echoes the destructive instability of the virus with the ideology that every human being today should be afraid of economic crisis and death. What has worsened the situation is the denial from what is now called anti-lockdown and anti-vaccine protesters who believe in the conspiracy theory that COVID-19 is a man-made virus. Conspiracy theorists aim to direct blame at the Trade competitors, mainly the US and China, and motivate disbelief and distrust in governments (Sardarizadeh & Robinson 2020). Ironically, conspiracy theorists might help people cope with a virus they do not believe existed, such as when urging people not to have masks or follow social distancing procedures (ibid.). This, on the other hand, has slowed virus containment and medical response, leading to the raise in the number of confirmed cases and hospital overstaffing.

The reference to COVID-19 as eccentric and the intensification of the virus as threatening was formulated by an internal perspective/point of view. The agency showed active involvement in the representation of COVID-19 through the use of proximal first-person pronouns (*we* and *I*) in the corpus. This conscious and/or physical involvement, together with the use of challenging actions, implies the WHO's appeal to hegemony. Similar findings have been reported in the analysis of the discourse practice of political elites, where hegemony and authoritarian

references are typical examples (cf. van Dijk 2006, Lacerda 2015). The viewpoint the WHO withholds in the representation of COVID-19 is a discursive tactic to persuade the public of the agency's stance, because the discourse communicating a point of view subjectively is by nature persuasive (see e.g. Verstraete 2001, Rett 2010). However, the agency has not made an active involvement in funding the vaccine production, nor managed the cooperation among vaccine production companies, namely Pfizer, Oxford-AstraZeneca and Moderna. Furthermore, the agency has not taken obligatory measures to ensure that rich countries help those suffering from the pandemic.

The keyword analysis between the WHO corpus and COVID-19 corpus showed that the agency implied a ground argument of antagonistic behaviour among the public. This argument was justified by resorting to topics of unity and vaccine invention to overcome public discord. While such justifications highlight the responsibility of every organization and individual, the focus on the production of a vaccine (via topos of *supply*, *vaccine*, *treatment*, and *lifesaving*) revealed the inability of the WHO to take emergency actions. The agency, instead, resorted to wishes of creating a vaccine, which is seen evident in the frequent use of topos of *unity*, *solidarity*, *honour* and *cooperation* in the corpus. This might contribute to spreading distress among the public and fuel antagonism among the member states to invent/book vaccine shots first. Meanwhile, member states were in an unfair race to reserve medical supplies, such as the US piracy of masks shipment imported for the German police (*The Guardian* 2020). Also, the US terminated more than 100M$ of the WHO's funds, about 15 per cent of the total WHO budget in May 2020, arguing that the 'WHO had not made reforms' (https://who.int). This move has alarmed medical institutions of WHO's potential to cooperate with member states to fight the virus and has undermined the effort to produce vaccines.

While the WHO Director-General's speeches are representative of the agency's functional procedures in medical and health issues, they might not be fully reflective of the agency's political stance and military intervention toward other issues. The findings of the analysis validate the agency's inadvertent behaviour/procedure toward health issues, and are limited to a particular period between January-November 2020 when the WHO General Director delivered his speeches. Researching the Director-General's speeches on different occasions/timespan, for future research, may render different findings, i.e. different WHO's socio-political stance and measures.

6 Conclusion

The study aimed at uncovering the interdiscursive representation of COVID-19 by the WHO between January 2020 and November 2020, and the extent to which the agency was contributive to the world health systems. The analysis of the speeches delivered by the WHO's Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus revealed that the agency is apocalyptic in the representation of the virus, while strengthening its hegemony. The systematic application of the DHA's strategies of referential/predication, intensification/mitigation, perspectivation and argumentation, with the aid NVivo software and Wordsmith CL tool, has achieved its aims and assisted in finding out that the agency has manipulated four discourses in the representation of the virus, namely eccentricity, threatening, hegemony, and antagonism. Each of the discourses is rhetorically constructed through a specific DHA strategy to uncover the socio-political stance of the WHO.

COVID-19 is institutionally identified by the WHO as an eccentric entity with unbounded measures. This representation, frequently following the first rise of death tolls, in April 2020, implies global series of failure and inability of the WHO to deal with the virus, putting millions of lives at risk. In this regard, the WHO's corpus did not show the agency assigning the member states freedom in encountering the virus and cooperating to avoid the agency's and individual states' failures. This also laid with the member states not being ready to face medical challenges (Benvenisti 2020).

The virus was presented as an enemy that the WHO needs to fight, similar to the representation of terrorism in political discourse. This political waging of war against the virus has its impact on mental health, and the human immune system. Military discourse is not common in the WHO's scientific and medical support to the health system. The WHO could have better used encouraging rhetoric and promising measures to contaminate the virus. With the second outbreak of the virus in November 2020, the agency intensifies that the virus is deadly and dangerous, threatening the public and inciting a pessimistic view. This has also been evident in representing the virus as unbounded and growing in amount. Notably, the WHO shows consistent political dynamism, rather than medical support, by adopting a subjective point of view/perspective in the representation of COVID-19. This perspectivation is linked to power exposition and discourse of control, which is a rhetorical move to strengthen the political power and hegemony of the agency, rather than to strengthen ties and cooperation among working medical labs and teams. Hegemony discourse is often associated with antagonism, and this association was noticeable in setting the ground argument for

COVID-19. The antagonistic discourse by the WHO is a strategy of ideological closure adopted to constrain the interpretation of the agency's discourse by its audiences to defeat the virus.

The WHO's discourse fell short of its stated objective to keep the international health system secure, since member states showed no discursive intention to fit the WHO assignment to cooperate against the pandemic, or adopt shared sovereignty in front of the global crisis. This failure in management and administrative tasks might have motivated the economic and medical strain on developed countries and driven some developing governments to suffer health collapse. The WHO might unintentionally assist in creating a desperate social reality no one was willing to live.

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RECONTEXTUALISING "DOING A DOCTORAL DEGREE" AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE COMPLEX: EVIDENCE FROM MALAYSIA

Teun De Rycker

Abstract

The current study is part of a longitudinal research project into the relationship between students' ways of recontextualising their doctoral degree experience and eventual programme completion. Building on earlier findings reported in De Rycker (2014, 2022), the objective is to examine the hidden ontology of "doing a doctoral degree". The primary data consist in structured interviews conducted with 20 doctoral students at the Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Using Van Leeuwen's (2008) socio-semantic model for the critical study of discourse, the analysis of the interviews produced two major empirical findings. First, doctoral students' discourse is characterised by a strong sense of personal agency but also a lack of specificity and a simplification of the overall practice complex, in which doing research seems to be reduced to mere semiotic actions. Secondly, students construe "doing a doctoral degree" as a mystifying process replete with paradoxes. Further interpretative analysis suggests that semiotic action representations play a significant role as self-enhancing metonyms for "doing research", helping students to demystify the academic practice and resolve some of its inherent contradictions. Implications for supervisory practice as well as the larger research project will be discussed.

Keywords

doctoral research, social practice complex, recontextualisation, discourse, Malaysia

1 Introduction

Early last year (11 February 2022), one of my recently assigned PhD supervisees sent me an email saying, among other things, the following: (1) "Seems that I was stuck in how I want to figure out what I want to do in my research", (2) "I feel a bit depressed" and (3) "To complete this PhD programme, I also need to publish an article in a Scopus-indexed journal". These three sentences poignantly illustrate some of the main concerns that led me – around a decade ago – to examine the constructive potential of the discourse typically produced by higher-degree research students. What initially started as a form of action research to improve my own supervisory practice became – over time – a more substantial longitudinal project. Its overarching aim was – and still is – to generate empirically sound generalisations about novice researchers' own "ways of knowing some aspect of reality" (Van Leeuwen 2009: 144), i.e. their conception

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of the reality of "doing a doctoral degree", and to relate these discursive features to doctoral success. Such general insights could subsequently help to design targeted interventions and also more effective methods for guiding students.

The context within which this larger project has to be seen is not only doctoral attrition rates – usually put at around 50 per cent worldwide (e.g. Churchill et al. 2021, Cosgrove 2022) – but also PhD students' academic or professional "enculturation" (Lee 2012, Lee & Murray 2015, Wrigley et al. 2021) and their well-being and resilience (e.g. Lee 2018, Schmidt & Hansson 2018, Bekkouchei et al. 2021). The personal and contextual risk factors that contribute to attrition have long been established (e.g. Kis et al. 2022: 4-5). What is largely missing from the literature, however, is the role played by the discourse that doctoral students employ in recontextualising "doing a doctoral degree" or "doing doctoral research" as a social practice. To cite Van Leeuwen (2009: 144), when one social practice (e.g. doing a PhD) is incorporated into another (e.g. *talking about doing* a PhD), the process of recontextualisation creates new "socially constructed ways of knowing some aspect of reality". It is not inconceivable – as was argued in De Rycker et al. (2019) – that "[p]erceptions and construals motivate linguistic representations that may negatively affect performance". Put differently, regardless of the accuracy, comprehensiveness or fairness of representing the aforesaid "aspect of [academic] reality", the students' own discourse is a distinct "way of knowing" the doctoral research practice, and as such, can be conjectured to influence their sense of agency, goal-directedness and self-efficacy. These qualities, in turn, may help or hinder their progress and ultimately affect their chances of timely programme completion.

One of the main empirical findings to emerge from the project so far is that research students construe their master's or doctoral programme experience in terms of three separate but often conflated academic practices: (i) conducting the various research activities that uniquely make up their supervised research project, (ii) communicating their research findings in the form of a dissertation, research article or oral presentation and (iii) satisfying a particular academic or practical requirement of their programme (De Rycker 2014). I refer to these three components as respectively "doing research", "communicating research" and "satisfying programme requirements", using the capital letters A, B and C in curly brackets as a coding shorthand. Note that {O} is used for still other, not directly related non-academic practices (e.g. looking after the children). To illustrate, in the student email cited in the opening paragraph, Sentence (1) represents certain actions within {A}, i.e. deciding on the topic area and research design of the PhD, while Sentence (3) refers to {B} ("publish an article") as part of {C}, the publication requirement for programme completion. Sentence (2) but also

part of (1) include affective reactions to the "doing a doctoral degree" practice ("stuck" and "depressed"). Adding emotional reactions and evaluations to the recontextualised practice is not unusual. Nutov and Hazzan's (2011: 28) analysis of interviews with PhD students concludes that doing a doctoral degree is experienced as "an inspiring process" but also one that is "intensive, emotionally loaded [and] depleting".

Though their co-dependence is not absolute, the practices of {A}, {B} and {C} typically co-exist within the same time-space configuration and display a high level of integration. The three are bound tightly enough – especially for research students – to justify their categorisation as a so-called social practice complex, a term borrowed from Shove et al. (2012: 17). Social practices tend to co-exist but while some are only loosely associated as so-called "bundles", others represent "stickier and more integrated arrangements including co-dependent forms of sequence and synchronization"; it is the latter that are referred to as "complexes". Another useful distinction within praxeology is between social practices viewed as performances and social practices viewed as entities. Becoming a recognisable entity usually implies that there has emerged a relatively homogeneous or standardised way of integrating the various practice elements (ibid.: 38). It is through the actual performance, however, and the immediacy of doing that the constituent elements are recognisably and intelligibly integrated (ibid.: 7).

In respect of social practice and social practice theory, this study draws on Van Leeuwen's (2008) approach to discourse as the recontextualisation of social practice. Within the broader field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and the study of discourse more generally, his socio-cognitive framework is "a clear tool" (Van Leeuwen 2009: 277), well suited to identify, describe and interpret the socially shared cognitions that characterise PhD students' discourse. The student perspective has, of course, been examined before. Research designs include surveys (e.g. Johnston et al. 2016, Ching et al. 2021, McCray & Joseph-Richard 2021), narrative inquiry (e.g. Brazill 2021) and ethnographic accounts (e.g. Matthews 2021, Rivera 2022). However, these studies focus on major themes and recurrent concerns – such as students' "perceived lower satisfaction ratings across all doctoral education experiences" (Ching et al. 2021: 13 of 17). They do not examine the less obvious meanings encoded in the discursive transformations to be observed. Wrigley et al. (2021), for example, deploys interviews, focus groups and reflective journals but these textual sources support the discussion and are not analysed linguistically. The same holds for Baydarova et al.'s (2021) semi-structured interviews with doctoral students and supervisors. As with other strands within CDA, Van Leeuwen's discourse-analytical approach goes beyond the examination of what is said, how often and what it may mean

(e.g. the number of times that PhD students talk about data collection or which negative emotions they express such as worry or guilt). Instead, it tries to identify configurations of lexico-grammatical features in the language used and what these patterns convey about the recontextualised social practice itself.

As such, the present study breaks new ground, with little prior scholarship to relate it to (e.g. Jones 2013). It is telling, for example, that a major 2022 publication entitled *Research Anthology on Doctoral Student Professional Development* mentions "discourse" once, and then only in the context of dissertation writing (Crain-Dorough & Elder 2022). Literature search strings with "discourse", "discourse analysis", "Van Leeuwen" and/or "doctoral students" also failed to identify any directly relevant studies. The archives of the *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* – a leading platform for sharing conceptual, theoretical and empirical research since 2006 – yields only five papers between 2016 and 2022 for the search term "discourse". Moreover, these articles define the term differently, are interested in different phenomena (e.g. academic identity), study different stakeholders (e.g. universities, faculties or supervisors) or employ different theories and methodologies (e.g. multiracial feminism). At the other end of the spectrum, there are studies that adopt a social practice approach to, for example, academic identity and agency (e.g. Mathieson 2019) but narratives are taken at face value and not examined from within a discourse-analytical perspective. Recently, there have been attempts to reframe doctoral supervision research in terms of social practice theory (e.g. Trowler 2021) but without combining this with the critical analysis of discourse. Note that the lack of a consistent body of prior scholarship is in line with the more general observation that "[w]hile higher education studies typically use textual data […], textual methods have been used surprisingly sparingly" (Nokkala & Saarinen 2018: 14).

Nonetheless, the significance of the current study is not purely practical or exploratory or only of interest to discourse scholars. It also contributes to prior empirical work on the macro-environment (e.g. institutional discourses about the doctoral degree), the doctoral research process (e.g. the transitional stage that novice researchers go through) and the micro-experiences of various stakeholders (e.g. supervisors). Where relevant, these studies will be referenced when presenting, discussing and interpreting the findings in Sections 3 and 4.

2 Materials and methods

The data sources employed and the methods for collecting and analysing the discursive recontextualisations are the same as those described in De Rycker (2014, 2022). For the sake of completeness, however, a summary of materials and methods is provided here, also because the research questions guiding this

study are different and the new findings to be reported are based on a smaller subsample of the original dataset.

2.1 Research design and data collection

To collect authentic discourse about the postgraduate research experience, potential students were recruited for interview – through opportunity sampling – during a postgraduate training workshop held at the Universiti Malaya (UM), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (see also De Rycker 2014). Of the 44 workshop attendees who volunteered to complete the written "structured interview" questionnaire, 20 were doctoral students and thus qualified to participate in the present study. To cite Vogt et al.'s (2012: 149), "20 to 40 interviewees is a normal range" for obtaining in-depth information, identifying regularities and drawing generalisations. Considering the limited number of interview questions (see below), a sample size of 20 also offers an acceptable trade-off between breadth of representativeness and depth of analysis. The interviewees represent the humanities as well as various social, natural and applied sciences. They are on average six months into their PhD programmes; their age ranges from 24 to 57 years, with 35 as the average; the majority are women (16 out of 20, or 80%).

The questionnaire used in the study was developed by De Rycker (2014) to form part of a corpus of diverse semiotic sources for studying the recontextualisation of "doing research" in general. In the present context, the seven original questions are exclusively aimed, however, at capturing PhD students' recontextualisations of the "doing a doctoral degree" practice complex.

Question 1: What are you doing right now?
Question 2: And how is it going?
Question 3: What have you already done so far?
Question 4: And how satisfied are you with what you have done already?
Question 5: What are you planning to do next?
Question 6: And what are your expectations about how it will go?
Question 7: Report one problem that has hindered work on your thesis. And how did you solve it?

As the question formulations show, the focus is on describing past, present and future "doing" (Questions 1, 3, 5 and 7) and on evaluating these (Questions 2, 4 and 6). Consider the following example, an answer to Question 4:

(1) *Not very satisfied since I know that some of my friends have a very clear focus in their study. I need to summarize what my finding is and concentrate on choosing what my problem statement is and get on with my study.* [3108MPHD]

Note that to enhance readability, some answers have been minimally edited for grammar and spelling. Each interviewee has been assigned a unique eight-digit code – added in square brackets at the end of each example. The interview answers consist of 2,636 words, which amounts to an average of 377 words per question, 132 words per interviewee and 19 words per question per interviewee. It is this dataset that was subsequently subjected to a systematic discourse analysis.

2.2 Analytical framework

The 20 interviews were examined as concrete discursive events, using the same framework that underlies De Rycker (2013, 2014, 2022) and De Rycker et al. (2019), namely Van Leeuwen's (2008, 2009) socio-semantic model. Van Leeuwen (2008: 6-12) distinguishes eight structural elements in a social practice: the principal two are (i) the actions that make up the practice and (ii) the participants (or social actors) involved; without "people doing things", there would be no rationalised, proceduralised social (inter)action to begin with. For a more comprehensive account, due consideration should also be given, however, to the six other elements: (iii) times, (iv) locations, (v) resources like tools and materials, (vi) performance modes ("stage directions" as to how to carry out a particular action in the practice), (vii) presentation styles (the "dress and body grooming requirements" of participants) and (viii) eligibility conditions (what qualifies a person, an object, a place, etc. to play their role in the practice).

So, the central research question can be reformulated as follows: When doctoral students talk about their overall programme experience, which social practices show up in their recontextualisation, which elements of these practices are represented linguistically and in what way? To illustrate, consider the following partially coded answer to Question 2.

(2) *I'm so worried because I haven't started writing papers {B} to be submitted to ISI journals {C} in order to fulfil the university's requirement {C}. There is so much work {A?, B?, C?, O?} to be done!!* [2406MPHD]

In the process of recontextualising the social practice complex of "doing a doctoral degree", some constitutive practices – and elements of these or other, non-academic practices – are represented by means of substitution and rearrangement, while others may be deleted and still others (e.g. evaluations and legitimations) added. In Example (2) above, 2406MPHD represents several actions related to both "communicating research" ({B}) and "satisfying programme requirements" ({C}) but without rearranging them. Closer analysis reveals that the substitutions combine agentive and non-agentive constructions

(e.g. use of the passive voice in *to be submitted* and *to be done*) as well as both material and semiotic actions (*start*, *write*, *submit*, *fulfil*, *do*). Moreover, the practice representation also includes an addition in the form of a negative affective reaction (*worried*). It is also potentially significant that the two phrases *writing papers* and *to be submitted to ISI journals* involve collectivisation through pluralisation at the expense of individuation and informative detail. Finally, the nominalisation *writing papers* is also a form of objectivation, and thus, a construction that deactivates the activity. Note that Van Leeuwen is known for his intricate and highly ramified taxonomies for describing the transformations taking place when social practices are recontextualised. This is especially the case for social action and social actor representations – see the overview tables in Van Leeuwen (2008: 52 & 73).

In short, the present study contains two types of analysis: one macro at the level of social practice representation, the other micro at the level of representing separate practice elements within the social practices represented. Taken together, both give an idea of how the interviewees construe the practice of undertaking a doctoral programme. By aggregating the descriptive findings, it is possible to identify regularities and patterned meanings and to interpret these in a wider societal context. In Example (2) above, 2406MPHD does not explicitly refer to the core component of "doing research" ({A}), i.e. it is deleted from the recontextualisation. Because of its centrality in the practice complex, the absence is particularly noticeable. What it means in respect of students' understanding of their doctoral studies will depend on the prevalence of this type of deletion among the interviewees and other aspects of the practice complex recontextualisation (see Section 3.3).

3 Findings and discussion

3.1 Key discourse features

Based on the descriptive minutiae and analytical evidence gleaned from the interviews, the distinctive nature of the doctoral students' discourse can be characterised in terms of the following three generalisations. The discursive features have been ranked in decreasing order of salience or prominence.

3.1.1 Agentiveness

The notion of agentiveness refers to representations of social actions that are activated and agentialised. As Van Leeuwen (2008: 66) puts it, "[a]ctions and reactions can be […] represented as brought about by human agency […] or as brought about in other ways, impervious to agency". Consider the following answers, illustrating a sliding scale of human agency representation:

(3) *1. I am recruiting respondents.* [3611MPHD]
2. About 80 per cent of the respondents have been recruited by me for the first interview. [hypothetical example based on Example (3.3) below]
3. About 80 per cent of the respondents have been recruited for the first interview. [3611MPHD]
4. The next stage is doing recruitment. [hypothetical example based on Example (3.5) below]
5. The next stage is recruitment. [0702MPHD]

Grammatically, these five utterances range from active-voice and tensed verb constructions to their passive-voice equivalents to nominalisations (or so-called process nouns) involving "do" and next, to nominalisations without "do" (Van Leeuwen 2008: 63-66). All five of them refer to certain aspects of the broader academic research stage of sampling, selection and recruitment but arguably, not all of them position the doctoral student as a pro-active, agentive and self-efficacious individual. Within a typical CDA perspective, the five utterances are not regarded as interchangeable or randomly distributed but as encoding different conceptions of the practice or one of its elements. While Example (3.1), for example, is dynamic, agentive, personal and relatively specific, Example (3.5) – at the other pole – is static, non-agentive, impersonal and general. In other words, the scale moves from representing the same action as part of a practice-as-performance involving agents and patients (*recruiting*) to representing it as part of a practice-as-entity (*recruitment*), while suppressing or backgrounding the social actors involved.

Systematic analysis of agentialisation, agentive constructions and, more generally, agency shows that obtaining a research qualification is construed as an individual and active process – a solo endeavour. In respect of the doctoral students, nearly all their social action representations display agentiveness – with 190 agentive constructions versus 43 non-agentive ones – or 81.55 per cent of the total of 233. A typical case frequently attested in the interviews is "searching for (the) literature" rather than "doing a literature search" or the compound nominalisation "literature search" on its own. A strong sense of agentiveness is to be expected as a doctoral degree involves a unique research project to be conducted autonomously. Originality and independence are also emphasised in Malaysia's MQF Level 8 description: a doctoral degree or PhD "involves substantial, advanced, *independent* and *original* research and scholarship in a most advanced area of knowledge and emerging issues of a specific area of study in a discipline or multidiscipline, assessed against international standards [italics mine]" (Malaysian Qualifications Agency 2017: 26).

A second factor contributing to agentiveness is the lexico-grammatical representation of social actors. Van Leeuwen's (2008: 52) social actor network distinguishes two major categories: (i) inclusion (with more than 25 substitution options such as individualisation, nomination or functionalisation) and (ii) exclusion (i.e. suppression or backgrounding). To illustrate, consider the following answers – "self" representations only – with their broad top-level coding:

(4) *Question 1: What are you doing right now?*
1. Sample collection {A} [exclusion: nominalisation] [2707MPHD]
2. I am at the stage of collecting data and doing fieldwork at hospitals and shelters {A}. [inclusion: pronominalisation] [3611MPHD]
3. – *I am doing my literature review* {A}. [inclusion: pronominalisation]
– *Planning learning and understanding the new theories that are related to my study/research* {A} [exclusion: ellipsis] *that I've never come across before.* [inclusion: pronominalisation]
– *Planning the contents of my study/research* {A}. [exclusion: ellipsis]
– *I have to alter the previous contents* {A? B?}. [inclusion: pronominalisation]
– *Preparing my proposal defence* {C}. [exclusion: ellipsis] [2406MPHD]

Given the nature of the interview questions, it is not surprising that the interviewees themselves make up the majority of social actor representations. Taking all interviews together, there are 242 "self" representations compared to 31 for "others" (88.64% and 11.36% respectively). Note that these "others" are (i) the supervisor, the ethics committee or the university, (ii) respondents, participants [in the research] and interviewees, and to a far lesser extent, (iii) social actors in non-research-related activities such as colleagues, friends, family and the household help. Note that "friends" usually refers to other doctoral students in the programme – see Example (1). Interestingly, 65 per cent of these "self" references are left implicit through ellipsis and nominalisation (159 out of the total of 242). As they talk about their research activities and progress, it should be self-evident that it is the students themselves whose actions make up the practice-as-performance.

3.1.2 Lack of specificity

A second dominant feature of the doctoral students' "way of knowing/speaking" is a lack of specificity throughout all interview answers. Despite the dynamic representation of most actions and the emphasis placed on personal agency in performing them, a paucity of descriptive detail is provided as to the "what" and "how". Practice elements are implied or represented indirectly, and there is a marked preference for such transformations as collectivisation,

aggregation, functional categorisation and objectivation. Research activities especially are described in abstract or generic terms, with no concrete information or actionable detail about the many steps that comprise the "doing research" process. See, among many others, Examples (5.1), (6.2), (7.1) and (7.2) below.

Similarly, there is also a lack of descriptive detail regarding how these research-specific actions interrelate with social actors other than the students themselves or with the performance modes ("stage directions"), locations and resources required. Only a handful of instances could be attested for each of these three. Note that presentation styles are completely absent from the interviews. Consider the following instances, one set for each of the three additional practice elements represented (bolding mine):

(5) *1. I have to read books **from chapter to chapter** since I am not very familiar with the field of my study.* [3108MPHD]
*2. Need some improvement especially on completing a **comprehensive** literature study.* [4412MPHD]

(6) *1. I am at the stage of collecting data and doing fieldwork **at hospitals and shelters**.* [3611MPHD]
*2. The first four months of my study was hectic but with constant visits to **the library** and consulting one of my professors, I was able to overcome some aspects.* [3008MPHD]
*3. Prepared for my study attachment in **Waseda University, Japan**.* [4412MPHD]

(7) *1. Collect **articles and books** regarding the study.* [1904MPHD]
*2. **Reading all kinds of materials** which are relevant to my study.* [0802MPHD]
*3. Buy **e-kamus** [digital dictionary] to help.* [1904MPHD]

Note that performance modes can be represented either directly or indirectly. In the former case, the focus is on representing the way in which the action is performed, i.e. the dynamic process, as in reading *from chapter to chapter* in Example (5.1). In the latter case, the representational focus is on a particular outcome of one of the actions in the practice and on one of its essential qualities – see Example (5.2).

It can be concluded from the lack of representational specificity that the interviewees' "way of speaking" and their underlying "way of knowing" constitute what Van Leeuwen (2008: 35) calls "a conception of reality" and do not represent "the flux of experience". If it had been the latter, the language would have been one of nomination and unique identities – instead of, for example, functional categorisation – and would have captured the uniqueness of the practice elements for each PhD student in expressive detail. The discourse analysis of the interviews, however, shows that "doing research" is largely

represented as a social practice that assimilates, a practice that is done the way it is through aggregation and collectivisation (Van Leeuwen 2008: 37), i.e. with a focus on groups rather than isolated or individuated cases. Arguably, this is one of the primordial objectives of academic research and how research findings are communicated within the community. Yet, there is no obvious reason why a similar discursive requirement should be in evidence in the recontextualising practice under analysis.

3.1.3 Ontological reductionism

As shown by the examples given so far, the doctoral students mention a range of actions across all three constituent practices in the complex. Closer examination, however, reveals the following three major tendencies. First, the range of social action representations is relatively narrow, with most students drawing from the same limited subset. Secondly, that subset is made up of predominantly semiotic actions, especially verbal processes like reading and writing, while mental processes – except for planning – are rare. In fact, there are only two occurrences of thinking in the sense of the interactive cognitive skills employed in solving problems, acquiring expertise, creativity, making decisions and the like (e.g. Reed 2012). Thirdly, material actions occur infrequently, with only four cases attested: travelling (for data collection or study attachment purposes), buying (a translation dictionary) and downloading (research articles). On the distinction between material and semiotic actions, see Van Leeuwen (2008: 59-63).

Apparently, students' "doing a doctoral degree" discourse is permeated by a form of ontological reductionism: judging from the interviews, the practice complex is discursively reduced to a sequence of predominantly semiotic actions, especially verbal processes such as reading and writing and, to a lesser extent, the mental process of planning. Out of a total of 102 social action representations in the interviews, the top five most frequently represented actions – each with more than 10 mentions – are reading (e.g. articles), reviewing (e.g. literature, articles), collecting (e.g. data, samples, articles, books), planning (e.g. contents, workload) and reviewing (e.g. literature).

To get an idea of the sorts of actions represented, consider the answers in (8) below: summarising, reading, collecting data, writing up a chapter, meeting the supervisor, etc.; the unrelated practices include activities such as sleeping or taking care of children.

(8) *Question 5: What are you planning to do next?*
1. *I am planning to summarize* {A? B?} *all that I have read* {A}. *Then specify my problem and adjust my objective of the study* {A}. *Then after that, I will feel relieved [affective reaction] with what I am doing* {A? B? C?} *and can go further to write up my literature findings* {B} *and the introduction chapter* {B}. *And after that, I plan to continue to collect my data* {A}. [3108MPHD]
2. – *Speeding up my reading* {A} *and writing process* {B}.
   – *Less sleep* {O} *and rest* {O} *equals progress* {A? B? C?}*!*
   – *Adjust my study life* {A} – *focus more on study* {A} *and family* {O}. [2406MPHD]
3. – *After the exam* {C}*, meet my supervisor* {C}*, to determine the method and scope* {A}.
   – *Write up Chapter 1* {B}. [1904MPHD]

The detailed breakdown of all social practice recontextualisations – a total of 231 – shows that almost half of all actions that are being represented refer to "doing research" (107 out of 231, or 46.32%), followed by "others" (29.44%), and again at a great distance, "satisfying requirements" (13.42%) and "communicating research" (10.82%). Given the average time into their doctoral programme, it is perhaps to be expected that most actions not only belong to the constituent practice {A} but are also characteristic of what Vogt et al. (2012: 12) call the "expanded [research] design process", the early stages in the overall research process.

Still, a narrow focus on semiotic or rhetorical actions is remarkable in view of what doctoral research is meant to be. The description of MQF Level 8, for example, emphasises the importance of originality, innovation, expertise, critical reflection, ethical awareness and so forth; it is about generating original research ideas and turning these into research projects; it does not mention either reading or writing (Malaysian Qualifications Agency 2017: 26). Of course, reading and writing are indispensable, but it is not clear from the interviews how the students relate both to the many higher-order thinking skills associated with their research-intensive programme. The only exception to this is 3108MPHD:

(9) *Until now, I still haven't written any chapter for my thesis. I know that I have to write something even though it is not my intention now. But from the ideas that I have written down, it might be that I will get some new ideas.* [3108MPHD]

The above student hints not only at the importance of what can be referred to as "writing for thinking"– writing as an ideational technique, writing to generate "some new ideas" and thus part of {A} – but also shows awareness that this type of writing is distinct from {B} "writing to communicate" (crafting a "chapter for my thesis").

Note that these social action findings lend support to Starke-Meyerring et al.'s (2014: A24) conclusion that institutional discourse about academic practice {B} envisions the doctoral thesis as "a knowledge product", while reducing "the production of that knowledge" to "the writing of the thesis", a purely rhetorical practice "located outside the disciplinary knowledge-making practices *that shape and are shaped by research writing* [italics mine]"; it ignores "the intellectual work of actively working out findings and arguing for their interpretation *through writing* [italics mine]" (ibid.: A18). Supervisory practice often overlooks the integrated nature of both, focussing on thesis and degree completion at the expense of supervisees' academic or professional development (Bastalich 2017).

As a final point, in keeping with the practice elements discussed so far, the social action representations do not display a great deal of specificity – see also Section 3.1.2. Example (10) below illustrates how the lack of specificity (i.e. "all kinds of materials which are relevant to my study") tends to combine with the other prominent discourse feature, namely the focus on verbal actions (i.e. "reading"):

(10) *Question 1: What are you doing right now?*
Reading all kinds of materials which are relevant to my study. [0802MPHD]

This combination produces a kind of language that is vague, sketchy and – in flouting Grice's (1975) Maxim of Quantity – even uncooperative. In fact, and with reference to Lemke's (1998: 87) work on the semiotics of science, students' preoccupation with reading and writing merely offers an analytical abstraction of "doing research" as if it were a disembodied social practice instead of a concrete, material process of making meaning of the physical world. More on this in Section 3.3.

3.2 Under-representation

The conclusion seems warranted that in the interviews, "doing doctoral research" is not so much represented as "under-represented". Such under-representation, however, runs the risk of imbuing the key participants with only "a vague and woolly knowledge" of what the practice entails; leaving activities out or not disclosing certain elements in detail creates a "mystique of expertise" (Van Leeuwen 2008: 18). This mystique typically occurs when experts, i.e. elite institutional or individual actors (e.g. a corporation or a lawyer) interact with non-experts (e.g. their clients), while it is rare among experts themselves. In a community of professional practitioners, inclusion (e.g. being complete and comprehensive) and specificity (e.g. attention to detail) as well as evaluations

(e.g. quality assurance) and legitimations (e.g. argumentation) are defining properties of the elite, expert discourse.

The question then is who is doing the under-representing in the case of the interviews. De Rycker (2014) conjectured that it is not the research degree students themselves but that it is coming from the officially sanctioned university discourse, including the language typical of the written research genres to which the students are exposed. The analyses reported in the current study now seem to confirm this conjecture. The "recruitment" examples given in Section 3.1.1 show that many of the PhD interviewees' utterances sound as if taken from another source, as if coming from somewhere outside the student: Example (3.3) may have been pragmatically more appropriate in a progress report, while Example (3.5) seems to be cited verbatim from a research methodology text or doctoral programme brochure. Another example is 2607MPHD's Likert-scale-type reply to Question 4 about past performance: "On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, I rate myself as 6" or student 4312MPHD, who says "20 per cent – feeling my progress too slow" as if in both cases the participant in the practice somehow becomes the practice. Research students' near-constant exposure to institutional and research methodological discourses about what it is they are supposed to be doing could explain the high frequency of abstract, deactivated nominalisations when talking about their activities or progress in the interviews (e.g. "proposal presentation") compared to agentialisations that emphasise their ability to get things done and a more personal engagement (Van Leeuwen 2008: 73). For example, there are twice as many instances of the definite article – e.g. "doing *the* proposal presentation" or "presenting *the* proposal" (italics mine) – as first-person singular possessive pronouns – e.g. "doing *my* proposal presentation" or "presenting *my* proposal" (italics mine). It is a kind of generic, distancing language that students are likely to encounter all the time, perhaps also during supervisory consultations. Fulgence's (2019: 724) review of the literature found that knowledge and use of the "discourse conventions" in the discipline is one of the main doctoral supervision skills; however, these conventions seem to be limited to institutional "ways of speaking".

Together with the three discourse features identified in this study, under-representation thus construes the "doing a doctoral degree" practice as an entity rather than a performance. Given the highly regulated and prescribed way of "doing research" – largely owing to the primacy of the scientific method – and the other two related practices "communicating research" and "satisfying programme requirements", it is perhaps inevitable that research degree students' discourses become as homogeneous and standardised as the practice-as-entity itself, with little room for a distinct personal perspective or interpretation.

Though further research is required, the interviews suggest that a personal perspective or interpretation is only provided when a practice element requires legitimation. The following two examples may serve to clarify this conjecture.

(11) *Attrition due to maturation (my subjects are cancer patients), so I need to oversample.* [1804MPHD]

(12) *I have three kids – need to balance between my study and [incomplete sentence]. For the first three months of my study, I had to make a huge adjustment to my family life. To solve the problem, I got a maid to help me manage my housework.* [2406MPHD]

The first example is about oversampling, which in the case of 1804MPHD is a justified decision as "my subjects are cancer patients". While research participants – as social actors – are mostly represented generically, the further specification of "subjects as cancer patients" signals that something is out of the ordinary, exceptional or problematic, prompting the interviewees to add a form of justification even when they were not explicitly asked to do so. Similarly, in Example (12), 2406MPHD is the only PhD candidate to share the exact number of children in the household ("three kids") and the exact number of months that she had to adjust to the new challenges ("first three months of my study"). Having to go through a period of huge adjustment seems to be socially marked, requiring some form of legitimation. It is at junctures like these that "doing research" and "obtaining a PhD qualification" become more of a personal, individual experience – involving real people, real concerns, even real interest. When reporting problems, obstacles or setbacks, the students can no longer "hide" behind abstract construals and the fiction of an immutable "script of the ideal" (Bieber & Worley 2006) for completing their research degrees; instead, they must be their sincere selves.

3.3 The search for a voice

The findings reported and discussed so far reveal certain paradoxes between the defining features of the academic practice complex and its discursive transformations and lexico-grammatical representations. A dominant paradox is the tension between, on the one hand, *self-directed* learning, creativity, exploration, initiative and self-efficacy, and on the other, *other-directed* compliance, performance mode requirements and stepwise management. It seems that doctoral students – at least those who are relatively early into the process – are caught between the dual demands of distinctiveness ("standing out") and conformity ("fitting in"). Note that these discursive dualities come on top of other

tensions that have been documented in the literature (e.g. McCormack 2004, Ross et al. 2017, Lee 2018). Judging from their "way of speaking", many of the students also give the impression of being somewhat mystified by the academic practice of doing research, witness the under-representation and lack of specificity referred to above. When recontextualised, the "doing doctoral research" practice remains something of a mystery, "a vague and woolly knowledge", hard to articulate or explain and perhaps – though more speculatively – also hard to understand and perform. Note that these discourse-analytical findings tie in with personal narratives of new PhD students such as Rivera's (2022: 332-333). In her search for meaning amidst the "high stress and uncertainty", she encountered a "multiplicity of mixed messages" and "paradoxical statements".

From a CDA perspective, it might be concluded that as entry-level researchers, many of the doctoral students have yet to develop their own unique "way of knowing" and, related to it, their own "way of speaking" – their own "voice". As evidenced by the extracts and examples given above, the doctoral students all refer to virtually the same practice elements, using an homogeneous language; when examining the dataset question by question and answer by answer, there is very little to distinguish one interviewee from the next. The students appear not so much as "victims" within an academic context of "deception" and "disempowerment" – my original interpretation (De Rycker 2013, 2014) – but rather as research novices, as newcomers to a practice: they are "no longer students" but they are "not yet experts", not only in praxeological terms but also discursively.

Though these findings support, therefore, Tinto's (1994) much-cited three-stage model, they do not construe socialisation into the academic community as exclusively epistemic or socio-psychological but also as inherently and potently discursive, within the broader context of social practice performance. The analysis suggests that PhD candidates may *first* have to construct "doing a doctoral degree" as practice-as-entity *before* internalising it as practice-as-performance – gradually "making it their own". This process requires an idiosyncratic re-conceptualisation of the practice and the development of a personal vocabulary and phraseology, not only to make sense of the research process at a deeper level but ultimately also to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. If so, the discursive re-construal of "doing research" would also contribute to Cosgrove's (2022: 1) critical strategy of doctoral degree completion: the "identity shift from dependent student to independent scholar". Note that this conjecture about discursive re-construal is fundamentally different from prior scholarship that understands the identity shift as a form of socialisation into *existing* discourses (e.g. Anderson 2017).

The uncertainty and the search for a "voice" – and perhaps a confident academic identity – may also explain why so many interviewees refer to reading or writing: both are concrete, measurable and familiar activities that help bridge "doing a doctoral degree"-as-entity and "doing a doctoral degree"-as-performance; in other words, both may smooth the transition between "a conception of reality" and "the flux of experience". A focus on writing, chapters and words can help reduce the tensions inherent at this transitional stage; it helps overcome the initial cognitive complexity and conceptual fluidity by creating an early – if only temporary – sense of simplicity and solidity. Semiotic actions like reading and writing may also afford a relatively straightforward way to (i) make progress and achievement visible and (ii) plan out the next steps in the process, with both tactics likely to affect a doctoral student's sense of control and motivation positively. Even if it contains no actual descriptive or instructional detail, a phrase such as "write up Chapter 1" – see (8.3) above – has an immediate clarity to it and may also facilitate supervisor-supervisee communication.

Because of these benefits, it would perhaps be more accurate – and more charitable – to see reading and writing as inadequate but helpful and self-enhancing metonyms for the whole process of "doing research", a conflation of practices {A} and {B} that is further promoted by much institutional discourse – see Section 3.1.3. A preoccupation with reading and writing may even be regarded as a form of self-scaffolding aimed at simplifying the task and making progress measurable (Wood et al. 1976). It cannot be determined from the dataset, however, whether this kind of self-scaffolding – or the additional scaffolding provided by supervisors and academic language practitioners – also enables the doctoral students "to make leaps forward in their ability to think critically", as envisaged by Wilson and Devereux (2014: A91). On the other hand, it can be speculated that this focus on reading and writing may give them a greater sense of control and a more positive appreciation of their progress, a critical factor in doctoral degree completion (Devos et al. 2017), especially in view of the "projectification of research" (Grant-Smith & Winter 2022: 238).

4 Conclusions

Building on De Rycker (2014, 2022), the present study conducted a systematic analysis of doctoral students' recontextualisations of their research activities, progress and expectations half a year into their respective programmes. Its theoretical contribution lies in the deployment of "discourse as the recontextualization of social practice" (Van Leeuwen 2009) as an alternative analytical lens through which to reveal students' understanding of "doing a doctoral degree" as a complex of academic practices. The interview answers

allowed a characterisation of that understanding in terms of agentiveness, lack of specificity and ontological reductionism, within an overall context of under-representation, paradoxes and mystification. The findings also suggested an alternative way of interpreting the role of semiotic action representations as self-enhancing metonyms for "doing research".

One limitation of the study concerns the use of Van Leeuwen's (2008) *Discourse and Practice*. It is well-known that the critical study of discourse has its shortcomings (e.g. Breeze 2011), and that it has been rightfully criticised – to cite, for example, Bartesaghi and Pantelides (2018: 158) – for "its slippage into an unaccountable ontology of intentionality, hiddenness, and hegemony". In fact, though perhaps all recontextualisations come with some degree of ideological loading, this study has shown that they do not necessarily encode oppressive power structures and epistemic imbalances in society or in societal domains such as higher education; they can also be usefully related to more observable micro-level outcomes in the somewhat smaller world of an individual social actor performing a particular practice. A second limitation inherent in all discourse analysis is that the recontextualising practice itself – in this case, the interview-as-genre – may in part have influenced the discursive regularities in the recontextualisation of the practice under analysis – see, for example, Section 3.1.2.

Despite these limitations, the current study provides an original evidence-based understanding of PhD students' "way of knowing" the doctoral programme process. As such, findings can be of practical relevance to students and their supervisors, other newcomers to research, the academic language community and even the universities where this academic practice complex takes place. Assuming that a more personal "voice" affects self-efficacy positively and may even contribute to overall student well-being, further research could investigate the kinds of interventions necessary to help students develop a deeper engagement with the research process, also when recontextualising it. It is in this area that interaction with supervisees may benefit from the findings reported in this study. There is general agreement that the supervisor-student relationship is a key factor in effective supervision and doctoral success (e.g. Orellana et al. 2016, Spronken-Smith et al. 2018, Terentev et al. 2021, Cosgrove 2022). However, as noted in the introduction, the discursive aspects of this relationship have so far been largely ignored. The current findings strongly suggest that in addition to all other types of support that they provide, supervisors should also help doctoral students achieve higher levels of discursive specificity, accuracy and completeness so that feedback can be more targeted instead of the "vague advice" usually offered (Starke-Meyerring et al. 2014: A24). At the same time,

doctoral supervisors could encourage students to provide more descriptive and self-enhancing information about the under-represented elements in the practice complex with a view to improving objective reporting skills but also self-efficacy through identifying and addressing more accurately potentially inhibiting factors.

The central question would no longer be what certain recontextualisations – whether or not they are descriptively, factually or historically "accurate", "complete" and "fair" – reveal about a particular social practice and its ideological context – as is typical of CDA – but rather what their contribution is to the successful performance of that practice at the level of social action. The focus would then shift to exploring "emancipatory discourses or positive changes in social language use" as advocated by Breeze (2011: 521) and others. The assumption then is that while certain discourse features may hinder the students in their performance of the practice, others are likely to help them conduct their unique research project ({A}), communicate their work in the form of a dissertation or thesis ({B}), meet the other requirements for the doctorate ({C}) and complete the process on time. It has to be borne in mind that the practice-as-performance itself also influences its discursive representation, given that both are linked in a "causal" loop. It is to this more ambitious line of research – work in progress within the larger project – that the present study has hopefully made a valuable contribution.

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ENGAGEMENT IN INITIATION, RESPONSE AND FEEDBACK IN L2 CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS

Masoomeh Estaji and Meisam Mirzaei Shojakhanlou

Abstract

Engagement in the L2 classroom is consequential for enhancing the quality of L2 learning experiences; however, the exploration of engagement in the Initiation, Response, and Feedback (IRF) cycles has received scant attention in L2 pedagogy. This study reports on research, examining engagement in Initiation, Response, and Feedback moves in the IRF cycles. Video recordings and questionnaires were used to collect data from ten EFL classes, being directed by eight teachers, with 73 learners. Using a post-interaction questionnaire and conversation analysis of classroom interactions, the analysis of the data revealed 784 triadic cycles out of which 493 moves embodied engagement. The data showed that not only do the Response and Feedback stages afford L2 learners the opportunity to deliberate on Form-focused language-related episodes (F-LREs), Lexis-focused LREs (L-LREs), and Mechanical LREs (M-LREs), but they also promote social and affective engagement. The comments on the questionnaire also revealed a deeper understanding of the participants' affective engagement. The findings revealed that certain features of the IRF cycles and peers' contributions encourage engagement during the IRF cycles. The results also demonstrated that scaffolding, mutuality, reciprocity, back-channeling, and commenting on preceding contributions made L2 learners socially engaged. The analysis suggests that the IRF cycles can create ad-hoc chances for engagement in L2 classroom interactions.

Keywords

affective engagement, classroom interaction, cognitive engagement, IRF cycle, social engagement

1 Introduction

One of the requirements of learning is the active involvement of students, and action is the kernel feature of learner engagement (Mercer 2019). From a pedagogical perspective, engagement is defined as how intensively L2 learners are involved in completing a pedagogical task and activity (Svalberg 2009, Philp & Duchesne 2016, Hiver et al. 2021). An engaged student is characterized by their active involvement and commitment to learning, and engagement is seen as a significant factor which can drive meaningful learning (Hiver et al. 2021). In other words, engagement explains all learning (ibid.).

Over recent decades, engagement has been commonly used and investigated in mainstream education (Fredricks et al. 2005). Despite much research in this area, there is less agreement on its conceptual definition and there are unanswered

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questions regarding its role in learning (Reschly & Christenson 2012, Dincer 2019). This lack of consensus is more evident when it comes to language pedagogy and L2 classroom learning (Philp & Duchesne 2016, Montenegro 2017, Noels et al. 2019). While there are controversies in the literature, it has been evinced that engagement bolsters efficient learning (Schlenker et al. 2013, Jang et al. 2016). Student engagement as participation practices has precedence over accuracy, and it is the ultimate goal since it affords L2 learners the opportunities to take part in classroom practices and tasks (Walsh 2002). One of the pedagogical goals in L2 classroom interactions is student engagement as L2 learners' participation can augment language learning opportunities. These surfacing learning opportunities in classroom interactions can be a rich locus for investigation (Sert 2017).

One of the prevalent features that is accounted as a central structure in classroom dyadic interactions is Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF), "a teacher Initiation, a student Response, and a teacher Feedback" (Walsh 2011: 17). The way it is adopted and employed relies on the context in which it is used (Waring 2009). These three restrictive stages of IRF can be broken to permit classroom interactions to happen with higher frequency and expansion, which are highly likely to facilitate learning opportunities (Sert 2017). However, how the components of this triadic pattern are structured and organized in larger sequences is subject to flexibility (Walsh 2011). Previous studies on the functions of this triadic cycle have found varying results. On the one hand, it was found that the IRF cycle follows an uninterrupted and restrictive pattern, in which the teacher's feedback in the F stage terminates the sequence, providing little room for the pupils to engage in the classroom interactions (Hall 2010). On the other hand, it has been reported that this triadic cycle can be flexible, providing L2 learners with opportunities to be involved in collaborative knowledge construction (Nassaji & Wells 2000, Waring 2009, Li 2019).

From a methodological perspective, research on interaction in language education has given us invaluable insights into interaction and discussion of language forms, error correction, group work dynamics, and learner engagement. However, these studies have not covered other variables in relation to student engagement (Svalberg 2009, Philp & Duchesne 2016, Aubrey et al. 2020, Mercer & Dörnyei 2020). Tajeddin and Kamali (2020) reported a new perspective on IRF cycle. They argued that L2 teachers need to expand the post-F stage to see if the L2 learner has an awareness to the given feedback, is engaged and internalized the feedback in short-term memory, and uptake has pushed the learner to use the language. Their findings demonstrated that the post-f stage was not expanded to give L2 learners more chances to be engaged in the interactions. As few studies have examined engagement in L2 classroom, more studies are required

to gain an insight into the interconnections between classroom discourse and different dimensions of engagement with language (Sulis & Philp 2021). Given the present gap in the literature, this study attempted to examine the stage (in the triadic cycle of Initiation, Response, and Feedback) in which the L2 learners were engaged in L2 classroom interactions. This study employed engagement with language, a multifaceted concept as conceived by Svalberg (2009), entailing the cognitive, social and emotional aspects. In particular, the following question was posed in this research study:

At what stage of the Initiation, Response, and Feedback cycle does engagement happen to Iranian EFL learners at upper-intermediate level?

2 Literature review

Appearing straightforward, engagement has been defined in different ways over the years. Early research such as Lamborn et al. (1992: 11) viewed engagement as "active involvement, commitment, and concentrated attention, in contrast to superficial participation, apathy, or lack of interest". Recent studies focusing on L2 education see engagement as the intensity of L2 learners' involvement in task completion, and it is perceived as a multilayered construct characterizing different features like emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social (Svalberg 2009, Lambert 2017). Similarly, Philp and Duchesne (2016: 51) have considered it as "heightened attention and involvement" in a task performance.

Social engagement reflects the L2 learners' reciprocity and quality of their interaction, while cognitive engagement indicates L2 learners' mental investment and effort in task performance. Emotional engagement reflects the learners' various emotions (e.g. passion, apathy, enjoyment, and the like). The behavioral facet is related to the students' on- and/or off-task participation. Although these subcomponents are conceptualized as separate facets, they are closely interrelated (Reeve 2012, Dao 2020). The most contemporary perspective on engagement was proposed by Svalberg (2009, 2018). Her model is known as engagement with language, which represents the affective, cognitive, and social states. According to this threefold model, language is considered as a vehicle of communication and/or an object. The cognitive facet of engagement is viewed as an L2 learner's focused attention, alertness, and knowledge construction, while the affective dimension represents a student's eagerness, purposefulness, and autonomy. Social engagement is seen as how much students are interactive, supportive, and initiating.

Despite being comprehensive and pioneering, Svalberg's model has been adopted by only a limited number of studies to examine engagement with language in L2 classroom interactions. For example, Lambert et al. (2016) employed

a simplified version of Svalberg's model to examine different engagement types. They operationalized cognitive engagement as the L2 learners' attention to interaction characteristics and language used in their dyadic interactions (e.g. LREs). Affective engagement was seen as the L2 learners' eagerness to engage, while social engagement was considered in terms of reciprocity, support, and collaboration during interactions. They identified engagement with language through analyzing classroom interactions, chat logs, and questionnaires in both synchronous computer-mediated chat (SCMC) and face-to-face (FTF) interaction.

Their findings revealed that complex tasks inspired more cognitive engagement on the part of the learners. As for completing tasks in FTF classrooms, L2 learners indicated more affective engagement as they saw the tasks as intriguing, helpful, and fun. The learners also reported that performing the assigned task was contingent on their partners' contributions, for which there was greater eagerness to participate, while SCMC students showed lower affective engagement. Those L2 learners with more affective engagement also manifested greater social scaffolding that ushered in significant instances of cognitive engagement. The researchers concluded that the components of this threefold engagement are closely interconnected. That is, L2 learners' high level of affective and social engagements can promote the cognitive facet of engagement as well.

In a very recent study, Dao and Sato (2021) recruited 74 Vietnamese EFL learners to examine the dynamic nature of the affective facet of engagement and how this aspect of engagement associates with interactional behaviors in a communicative English course. They used a picture-sequencing task to have the students engaged in interactions. Their results indicated that L2 learners' emotional status is subject to change as their emotional engagement differed during the intervals. In line with previous studies (Boudreau et al. 2018), these results show that emotional engagement is prone to change even during a short communicative task.

Furthermore, being gauged in three intervals, the emotional engagement of the learners while performing a new task had a growth from interval 1 to interval 3, which suggests that L2 learners need time to reach a stabilized level of engagement. Completing a new task, the learners were more concerned about the language form but after a while, they showed a tendency to be socially and interactionally engaged. It was also found that the amount of L2 production and degree of collaboration have a positive correlation with the affective facet of L2 learners. However, emotional engagement did not promote the L2 learners' attention to linguistic aspects known as language-related episodes (LREs).

In a seminal study, Dao (2020) examined the efficiency of interaction instruction on promoting the L2 learners' engagement. The results supported the development of engagement through strategy instruction. L2 learners being under instruction treatment not only manifested more tendency to be involved in LREs productions but also have more talk in the picture-based story recount. Likewise, in terms of social and emotional engagement, while performing discussion tasks the students were more enthusiastic and had more reflection on their peers' contributions. However, individual differences such as proficiency and attitudes as well as task features were shown to have an effect on the L2 learners' strategy and engagement.

The learners' engagement through peer interaction in L2 classroom discourse was also investigated by Dao and McDonough (2018). Their findings showed that having interaction with the learners at higher proficiency levels promoted the lower proficiency learners' engagement in terms of both cognitive and social facets. The learners manifested the tendency to produce more idea units. Regarding the cognitive engagement with language, L2 learners with lower proficiency significantly engaged in LRE and self-correction as one of the indicators of cognitive engagement and LRE was obvious in dyadic-interactions between higher and lower proficiency students. In terms of social engagement, being involved in classroom dyadic interactions and being pushed by proficient partners, less proficient learners had more active roles and were accordingly more socially engaged. These results imply that L2 teachers need to consider pairing students with different language competencies when they are assigned to perform classroom interactions. Considering the significance of engagement and ubiquity of the IRF cycles in L2 classrooms, this study sought to explore the stage in which engagement occurs in this triadic cycle.

3 Method

3.1 Participants

The data for this study were collected from 73 EFL learners at upper-intermediate level through convenience sampling, the most common and largely practical strategy (Dörnyei 2007). The participants were monolingual native speakers of Farsi, except for six students who were bilingual in Farsi and Azeri. From the participants, 32 (44%) of the students were male and 41 (56%) were female, with an average age of 26. The classes were taught by eight EFL teachers, whose ages ranged from 27 to 48, teaching English in a non-state (private) English language institute in Iran. The teachers were either Teaching

English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) graduates or had taken teacher training courses in advance.

3.2 Corpus

The data for this study were taken from ten adult EFL classes. Classroom interactions were video-recorded and documented. As Nunan and Bailey (2009: 259) put it, "three basic approaches to document classroom interaction are (1) through the use of observation systems to code data (either in real-time or using the recorded data), (2) by recording and transcribing classroom interactions, and less commonly, (3) by producing ethnographic narratives". The video-recorded corpus came from 90-minute classes, corresponding to a total of about 900 minutes. To avoid missing classroom interactions, high-quality video recordings were required. To do so, the researchers singled out ten classes whose installed cameras could provide them with high-quality videos and voices.

3.3 Questionnaire

To explore the students' views, attitudes, and perceptions on the interactions emerging from the IRF cycles, how they realized the purpose of interaction, and how they took to the interaction, an open-ended questionnaire entailing eight questions was employed. The items were adapted from Baralt et al.'s (2016) and Dao's (2019) studies. The items revolved around the triadic dimensions of engagement: cognitive, affective, and social engagement. To ensure the content validity of the questionnaire, the designed items were issued to four outside researchers who are experts in the area of applied linguistics. The received comments in terms of content and linguistic features of the questionnaire were meticulously applied. After revising and finalizing the items, the questionnaire was administered. The L2 learners' written comments were garnered to figure out how they viewed the interaction based on the IRF cycles. The obtained data were used to compare the identified and actual engagement from the interactions with the comments written by the students. The items in the questionnaire were in English, and the learners were supposed to report their perceptions in English as well.

3.4 Data collection procedure

At the outset of the study, the learner participants and teachers were informed about the research purpose. In other words, before the commencement of the data collection, the whole procedure and purpose of the research was fully explained to assure the participants that their confidentiality would be maintained. They agreed to support the present study by letting the researcher video-record the

classroom interactions. The manager of the institute also showed his agreement by granting the researchers permission to use the cameras installed in the classes.

After testing all the cameras and being sure they had enough quality to capture every detail of classroom interactions, the whole classroom interactions were recorded. Subsequently, the IRF cycles were identified, and the recordings were transformed into textual forms through transcription. The obtained transcriptions were analyzed to identify the emerging engagement dimensions from the IRF cycle based on the framework proposed by Svalberg (2009, 2012). After completing the IRF cycle interactions, a perception questionnaire was employed and the participants were asked to comment on the items.

3.5 Data analysis

To analyze the obtained transcriptions, Conversation Analysis (CA), as an important ethnomethodological approach to analyzing spoken data (Markee 2000), was employed. Given that classroom interactions are complex and meanings are shaped and co-constructed by the participants, CA can be a versatile tool to unravel the micro details of talk-in-interaction (Walsh 2011). The system developed by Ten Have (2007) was used to have a line-by-line transcription and analysis of the data. The emerging engagement from the IRF cycles was coded based on a scheme devised by Baralt et al. (2016). Their scheme contained all the dimensions of engagement, including the cognitive, affective, and social facets proposed by Svalbverg (2009, 2012). Table 1 depicts the components of the scheme. The obtained transcriptions were coded for the three facets that constitute engagement with language: i.e. the cognitive, social, and affective aspects.

Criterion	Coder comments
Cognitive engagement	Noticing of language and/or interaction features?
	Attention on the language as an object or as a medium?
	Critical/analytic reflection during the task? (Reasoning induction or memory/imitation-based reflection?) Hypothesis formation?
Affective engagement	Willingness to engage? (Eagerness or withdrawal?)
	Learner's purposefulness (Focused on task or bored?)
	Autonomy: dependent or independent behavior?
Social engagement	How interactive with partner to learn?
	Socially supportive? Negotiates and scaffolds?
	Leader or follower? (Reactive or initiating types of interactions?)

Table 1: Scheme for coding the learners' engagement

The emerging cognitive engagements from the IRF stages were coded when the participants discussed language issues and reflected on language features (Svalberg 2009). For instance, an L2 learner's comment such as "What is the passive form of this structure?" was coded as a cognitive engagement, as it indicates the student's critical reflection on forms. Moreover, the obtained comments from the questionnaire were analyzed following the content analysis approach (Braun & Clarke 2006). For inter-coder reliability of the codings, 25 per cent of the data were coded by a second rater. Pearson correlation r was found to be 0.94 for cognitive engagement, 0.88 for social engagement, and 0.86 for affective engagement.

4 Results

This study examined the stage in which engagement occurred for L2 learners in the IRF cycle. Descriptive statistics of the engagement are indicated in Table 2, demonstrating that an overwhelming majority of engagements transpired in the R stage. Cognitive, social, and affective engagement constituted 50 per cent, 61 per cent, and 70 per cent of the engagements in the R stage, respectively (Figure 1). Regarding the engagements in the F stage, 40 per cent, 30 per cent, and 25 per cent of the engagements accounted for the cognitive, social, and affective engagements, respectively. However, the I stage had far less engagement.

	Initiation	Response	Feedback
Cognitive engagement	10%	50%	40%
Social engagement	9%	61%	30%
Affective engagement	5%	70%	25%

Table 2: Engagement in the IRF cycle

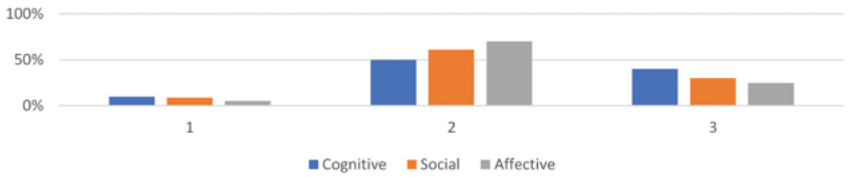

Figure 1: Engagement dimensions in the IRF cycle

The analysis of the corpus data revealed 784 triadic cycles, out of which 493 engagements happened. As Table 3 indicates, 43 per cent of the transpired engagements were social. Cognitive and affective dimensions comprised 39 per cent and 18 per cent of the engagements (Figure 2).

Cognitive engagement	Social engagement	Affective engagement
39%	43%	18%

Table 3: The use of cognitive, social, and affective engagement

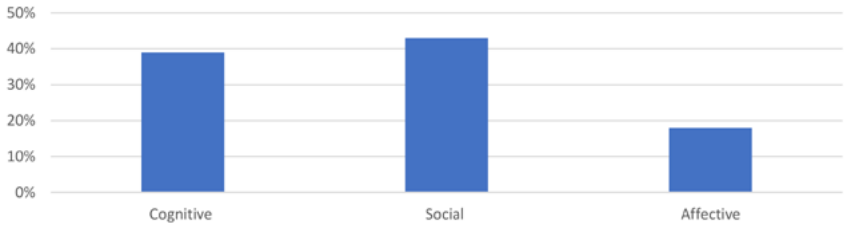

Figure 2: Cognitive, social, and affective engagement

In terms of coding the cognitive engagements, LREs were used to identify the emerging cognitive aspects (Storch 2007, Zhang 2021). LREs were any segment in which L2 learners stopped to discuss and reflect on their language use. These episodes were categorized based on that aspect of language the learners reflected on. Form-focused LREs (F-LREs) were episodes, where L2 learners discussed morphology and syntax. As Table 4 shows, there were 187 (37.9%) F-LREs in this study. Mechanical LREs (M-LREs), which were concerned with pronunciation and spelling, accounted for 12.9 per cent of the LREs. Lexis-focused LREs (L-LREs), engaging the learners in word choices and word meanings, made up 48.8 per cent of LREs.

	N	%
F-LRE	187	37.9
L-LRE	241	48.8
M-LRE	64	12.9
Total	793	100

Table 4: Summary of LREs (F-LRE, L-LRE, M-LRE)

4.1 Cognitive engagement

The primary data used to determine cognitive engagement, surfacing from the IRF stages, were the transcriptions. The secondary data for the cognitive facet of engagement was the questionnaire. The obtained data from the IRF cycles showed that cognitive engagement accounted for 39 per cent of the identified engagement facets. In 192 cases, there was noticing of language and interaction features. The students and teachers stopped to reflect on and discuss the accurate use of particular forms, including the lexical items, linking devices, grammar, and pronunciation. Out of 192 cognitive engagements, 10 per cent, 50 per cent, and 40 per cent transpired in the Initiation, Response, and Feedback stages, respectively. Reflection on the language as an object was more evident in both the Response and Feedback stages. A sample of the IRF stage in which the lexical cognitive engagement (L-LRE) occurred, accounting for 48.8 per cent of cognitive engagement, is presented below.

Excerpt 1
T: *recently we talked about learning English better*
S1: *it's important to 'explain' words*
T: *it is important to::*
S2: *ex (3) extend hum*
T: *extend?*
S3: *teache::r extend is doing for long time*
S1: *extend hamoun bishtar kardane dige [it means to increase something]*
S3: *no:: no::: extend yani tamdid kardan teacher? Yes? [extend means to make something continue for a longer time]*
T: *yea*
S3: *we expand our words*
S1: *yea yea expand hum improve yes we had it in our book*
T: *<u>expand</u> expand new words (.) very:: goo:d (4) it's useful or it's good to expand new words (.) what else?*
S2: *hum I I have bee:n reading story books*
T: *aha*

As can be seen, the teacher (T) initiated the cycle by asking the students to recall what strategies they could implement to learn English. Student 1 (S1) ventured a word and made an attempt to respond to the teacher's question, but he was not successful in using the correct lexical item. Witnessing the problem, the teacher tried to elicit the correct form which led the other students to step in. S2 made her contribution by offering "*extend*" but she was unsuccessful and the teacher again endeavored to push S2 to notice her mistake and provide the correct word which was followed by a contribution from S3 and commencing a talk segment where the students stopped and explicitly discussed the language form.

S3 corrected the wrong lexical choice and elaborated on the differences between "*extend*" and "*expand*". They collaboratively hypothesized and, after asking questions and offering different lexical items, they eventually came to a conclusion on the required lexical item. The reflection on lexical choice (lines 4-8) is an instance of a lexical LRE (language-related episode) (Storch 2008), where there was an explicit focus on the lexical item. As is evident, the LRE in the preceding excerpt is elaborate noticing where the participants deliberated on the form and took into account alternative lexical items.

In terms of grammatical engagement/form-focused engagement (F-LRE), it made up 37.9 per cent of the cognitive engagement. The following excerpt is an instance of F-LRE in the IRF cycle, which commences with a request from the teacher for sharing ideas about euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Excerpt 2

T: *ok let's share our ideas about euthanasia and assisted suicide.*
S1: *I think it does not have legal it's hum it's inlegal*
T: *yes it is illegal in Iran and other countries too*
S1: *aha in other countries illegal?*
T: *yes*
S1: *sometimes people have bad ill and hs their ((inaudible)) their life is not hum good for them and they hum prefer die and they wish they die*
T: *they have bad ill?*
S1: *yeaa=*
S3: *noun is used because ill is not hum illness*
T: *yea an adjective can't be used with have when there is not a noun after it*
S1: *yes illness (3) but I think in our culture we we:: prefer hum to save our our families hum life=*
T: *hum*
S1: *even they are very bad (.) they are had have a bad iile iile /aıl/ illness*
T: *good job*

In response to the request in the initial stage, S1 began enunciating his ideas about euthanasia. He believed that assisted suicide is illegal, but his contribution was ill-formed (line 2), which elicited an expanded recast from the teacher and after receiving the correct form, S1 corrected the earlier deviant form. The correction led to uptake on the part of the student. S1 went on by focusing on the content of the theme under discussion (Lambert et al. 2017). However, he made an ill-formed production and did not understand the correct use of "*ill*" and "*illness*" and used an adjective instead of a noun.

Encountering this mistake in the response stage, the teacher used elicitation to push S1 to correct himself, but he was not successful, which promoted F-LRE

where S3 stepped in and discussed the formal aspects of language and elaborated on the difference between "*ill*" and "*illness*", *noun is used because ill is not hum illness* (in line 9). In the subsequent line (10), the teacher endorsed the preceding contribution by explaining how an adjective follows a main verb when there is not a noun following the adjective, *yea an adjective can't be used with have when there is not a noun after it*. S1 acknowledged and continued the discussion, *yes illness (3) but I think in our culture we we prefer hum to save our our families hum life*.

4.2 Social engagement

Social engagement was operationalized as how the participants respond positively to the contributions in interaction and how much they support their peers (Svalberg 2009, Baralt et al. 2016). The responsiveness was evident in the learners' acknowledgment, repetition, suggestion, commenting, providing backchannels, and expanding on each other's ideas. Excerpt 3 taken from the IRF cycles shows an example of the learners' social engagement.

Excerpt 3

T: *you read that reading. Who is the guy? What is that reading about?*
S1: *it explains about uhh (0.4) several singers uhh (0.2) I think.*
S2: *several singers or several fans?*
S1: *fans=*
S2: *=yeah*
S1: *uhh (0.4) hum all of them hs*
T: *what kind of uhh reading it is? Is it a magazine paper, newspaper, website, social media profile what is it?*
S1: *I think it is a website*
S2: *looks like a ↑website*
SS: *yeah*
T: *so people can contact uhh it is a fan page=*
S1: *I think they are comments.=*
T: *so they ask some questions. Like what Elnaz?*
S3: *about the:: tickets of hi:s .hhh (0.3) show*
S4: *his concert*
S1: *his concert. a:::nd and (0.4) <and about > ne::w alb. [album*
S2: *album]*
S1: *album]*
S1: *a:::d for example weny was not .uhh was disappointed fo::r (.) for his download [uhh download*
S3: *downloading ↑process?]*
S: *<yes> and he wants to get his money back=*
T: *=hum ok*

In Excerpt 3, the learners had a discussion about the content of a reading passage. The IRF cycle begins with an initiation from the teacher, which elicited an incomplete response from S1 (line 2), *it explains about uhh (0.4) several singers uhh (0.2) I think*. Noticing the wrong answer, S3 initiated the feedback stage by commenting on S1's contribution and using a confirmation check. This illustrates some characteristics of social engagement in the F stage. The participants' initiation and maintenance of interaction can be an indicator of social engagement (Svalberg 2009). After receiving the comment, S1 provided the correct answer, *fans=* (line 4), then S3 used back channeling, one of the features of social engagement (Zhang 2021), to confirm the answer, *=yeah* (line 5).

S1 went on by giving further information about the topic under discussion, but his utterance was interrupted by the teacher by reinitiating the IRF cycle where he asked another question which led to a response from S1, *I think it is a website*, and a subsequent confirmation and repetition from his peers in the F stage (lines 9-10), *looks like a ↑website*, *yeah*, indicating the social facet of engagement in the response phase. The teacher elaborated on S1's answer by adding further information to enrich it and in turn, S1 provided further elaborations on the teachers' contribution which ushered in confirmation on the part of the teacher and reinitiation of the cycle by nominating another student, S3 to respond. Following a response from S3 (line 13), her peers manifested their social engagement through scaffolding, repeating, developing, and commenting on the preceding ideas (lines 15-21).

4.3 Affective engagement

Affective engagement was operationalized through the students' explicit demonstration of positive emotions and enjoyment (Dao & McDonough 2018, Dao 2019, Nakamura et al. 2021). An instance of affective engagement surfacing in the IRF cycle is given in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 4
T: *what is you plan for yalda?*
S1: *I will go to one of my friend's home and play PES all night ((laughing))*
T: *aha*
S2: *I will come (laughing)*
SS: *laughing*
T: *laughing*

The teacher initiated the IRF cycle by asking a question about S1's plan for Yalda night, an Iranian winter solstice festival celebrated on the 'longest and darkest night of the year'. His answer to the question in the R stage, *I will go to one of my friend's home and play PES all night*, was accompanied by his laugh and was followed by backchannelling from the teacher. Then S2 reacted to S1's response seeming that he found the answer interesting and manifested his enjoyment by showing his enthusiasm about playing PES. Likewise, other students alongside the teacher went about laughing, showing affective involvement.

To have a deeper understanding of the students' perceptions about engagement in the IRF stages, the students' written comments on the questionnaire were analyzed. The obtained data through the questionnaire made it possible to gain an insight into the students' affective engagement because this side of engagement is not straightforward to uncover through the interaction data. The obtained data from the questionnaire was used to corroborate the interaction data. This was done to ensure that the engagement data were coming from the learners' perceptions rather than the researchers' possible subjective judgment. In case required, the students were allowed to use their dictionaries and internet or google translator to write their comments on the questionnaire.

The obtained data from the questionnaire revealed that overall, the learners who were nominated to provide a response to the question in the F stage had a positive perception of classroom interaction based on the IRF cycle. After being involved in the IRF emerging interaction, out of 40 L2 learners, 34 of them commented on the questionnaire that the interaction was *interesting*, *good speaking chances*, and *compelling*. Moreover, the participants reported on the questionnaire that their peers, as friends, helped them to not only handle the grammatical and lexical problems but also come up with ideas to continue interaction.

These findings indicate that during the IRF cycle, the students provided and received assistance from their peers. Likewise, based on the comments on the questionnaire items, the students expressed that interaction was positive and their peers' contributions made them more *willing* to be engaged in interaction. As the following excerpt shows, the student is delighted with the help he received from his peers. As he reported, receiving assistance from his classmates, this student was more encouraged to be engaged in the interaction and got the chance to produce more English words, which are indicators of affective engagement (Svalberg 2012).

Excerpt 5

When I was picked to answer the question, I did my best to answer the question and when I noticed how my friends tried to help me, I was more encouraged to continue and the teacher did not stop me. It was interesting to have your friends help you because their assistance encouraged me to use more English words and had a chance to express my ideas.

Another student also suggested that when he was assigned to respond to a controversial question such as euthanasia, he was more encouraged by his peers which in turn led to more social engagement. In other words, the students' emotional engagement resulted in more social engagement among them. Excerpt 6 reflects this aspect of engagement.

Excerpt 6

Trying to answer the questions, I had an exciting and controversial discussion about the topic with my friends. We had opposite views but we had to keep the discussion going to reach an agreement which helped us to elaborate on our ideas.

However, while providing responses to a question in the initiation stage of the IRF cycle two of the students expressed that they did not pay much heed to their peers' contributions and just concentrated on expressing and developing their ideas. The following excerpt demonstrates their comments.

Excerpt 7

As the question was challenging, I just tried to come up with my ideas and I did not pay much attention to my peers' ideas because I thought their interruptions were distracting me from the question and when I could not generate sufficient ideas I was annoyed.

Excerpt 8 demonstrates that creating chances for students to freely participate in classroom discussions spurred them on to make contributions to ongoing interactions. This student explicitly showed that his experience was *fun* and *enjoyable*, which signifies the student's affective engagement.

Excerpt 8

It was a fantastic experience because when my friends and I were allowed to state our views and help each other, I could express my ideas without being worried about other's judgement. It was really fun, and I enjoyed speaking in English.

Overall, the CA of the spoken data revealed that the IRF cycles can create chances for L2 learners to reflect on F-LREs, L-LREs, M-LREs. The comments

on the questionnaire also confirmed that the students were inspired by their peers' contributions and had positive attitudes toward the emerging interaction from the IRF cycles.

5 Discussion

By following Svalberg's (2009) framework, this study sought to investigate at what stage of the IRF cycle the cognitive, social, and affective engagement transpired. The descriptive results indicated that the majority of cognitive, social and affective engagements happened in the response and feedback stages. The cognitive and social dimensions accounted for 80 per cent of the engagement, showing that L2 learners produced more LREs and had more responsiveness in the IRF cycles, which was confirmed by the reported comments in the questionnaire.

The learners' higher production of responsiveness suggests that the R and F stages of the IRF pattern is a valuable juncture to engage L2 learners in responding to their peers' contributions. In this stage, the students showed more tendency to pay attention to the content of their classmates' responses in the R and F stages, demonstrating that there was greater responsiveness in the second and third stages of the IRF pattern. This finding partly corroborates with previous studies reporting that L2 learners prioritize expressing and transferring the messages (Storch & Aldosari 2013, Young & Tedick 2016). Additionally, a greater number of IRF cycles commenced with questions which mainly required the learners to express their opinions about a topic related to their lessons, requiring the students to use their higher-order thinking, have a "space to think", pay heed, and make their mind up (Phung 2016: 12). This can be considered as a possible reason behind having a higher rate of social engagement on the part of the learners (Aubrey et al. 2020).

Moreover, L2 learners' experience and their close relationships can explain the existence of social engagement (Aubrey et al. 2020) because the students were classmates for several semesters. Their close relationships were evident in their reactions to their peers' contributions in which they showed that they knew their peers' interests, hobbies, and profession. Being socially engaged is suggested to be driven by the close friendships among the students and congenial atmosphere in the class (Leeming 2021). The learners also manifested happy feelings and had fun, which are likely to be driving factors in promoting social scaffolding (Baralt et al. 2016). Social engagement and scaffolding, emerging from the IRF patterns, confirms the view that classroom learning is not merely a cognitive process but rather it is co-constructed and is continuously created and recreated through ongoing classroom interactions (Waring 2009, Hall 2010,

Sert 2015). As affective, social, and cognitive factors are closely interconnected, social engagement can encourage cognitive engagement. In terms of cognitive engagement, it was found that the second dominant engagement was cognitive engagement.

Regarding cognitive engagement, the findings evinced that L2 learners had the chance to reflect on language forms either F-LREs or L-LREs in the IRF cycles. As mentioned, the IRF cycle afforded L2 learners the opportunity to be socially engaged which, as has been found by some studies, can result in cognitive engagement (Svalberg 2009, Baralt et al. 2016, Leeming 2021). However, the difference between being responsive (social) and the produced LREs (cognitive) was marginal, not corroborating the previous findings that L2 learners scarcely produce LREs in pure classroom interactions (Williams 2001, Philp et al. 2010). Responsiveness of the learners in the IRF cycle seems to emanate from their eagerness to listen to their peers (Svalberg 2009), mutual support (Philp & Duchesne 2016), and reciprocity (Dao & McDonough 2018). This was corroborated by the students' written comments on the questionnaire. The findings of the current study confirm Li's (2019) results that the F stage is a spot where the learners can be granted with space to expand their productions and be engaged in certain pedagogical goals.

Although teachers keep a grip on the initiation and feedback stages of the IRF, as can be seen in Excerpts 1 and 2, in the response and feedback stages, students voluntarily stepped in and commenced F-LRE and L-LRE, discussing the correct use of the parts of speech of "ill" and the word choice "expand". This shows the IRF patterns can be manipulated to provide students with an opportunity to be engaged in LREs and learning activities. The analyzed excerpts indicate how the basic IRF cycles are prone to be modified and expanded to not only facilitate L2 learners' cognitive engagement but also develop their online contributions (Waring 2008, Li 2019). These findings are congruent with Young's (2009: 94) argument that "participants create meanings – meanings that are intimately connected to the context in which they are created".

Moreover, scaffolding was very evident in the IRF cycles. Rather than simply closing the sequence in the F stage, the teachers used elicitation in the F stage to elicit the correct answer, but when the teacher's elicitation failed, other students stepped in and began scaffolding their peer to come up with the correct answer. At this stage, the students started a meta talk, an indicator of cognitive engagement. Cognitive engagement of the students let them scaffold their peers and reflect on the target language form (F-LRE) (Gibbons 2006, Sharpe 2006, Vacca 2008, Li 2019). The empirical data from the scaffolding sequences in the IRF cycles confirm Hammond and Gibbons' (2006) assertion that teachers' hints

in the IRF moves can create chances for the students to get engaged in LREs and knowledge construction.

The majority of IRF cycles began with questions about the students' personal views on topics related to their lessons. The topics necessitated expressing perspectives that could vary from student to student. The student who was picked by the teacher to respond to the question at the initiation stage of the IRF cycle had to produce more words and idea units to transfer a message. The questions required the students' personal views on topics, which can be considered a one-way interaction where the information-provider tried to express the message. Therefore, both the information provider and receivers worked to complete the interaction. When the questions were inferential, the students used more words to express their message which can represent the students' engagement in the IRF cycles. These findings echo Xu and Qiu's (2021) conclusion that unfamiliar topics push students to be more engaged in language productions.

6 Conclusion and implications

This study examined how engagement occurred in the IRF cycle patterns in L2 classroom interactions. The findings suggest that the triadic cycle creates chances for L2 learners to be socially, cognitively, and affectively engaged in classroom interaction. Learners manifested a high level of responsiveness and scaffolding in the IRF patterns. Likewise, learners were involved in longer turns and spent more time in their interactions. They also had reflections on language forms and word choices. The R and F stages were shown to be a rich point where L2 learners can have a meta talk, be engaged in F-LREs, L-LREs, and M-LREs. In terms of affective engagement, the emerging interaction from the IRF stages afforded learners the opportunity to feel thrilled and be willing to be engaged in interaction. Besides, when inferential questions are queried in the initial stage of the IRF cycle, L2 learners are more engaged in supporting each other, take more turns, and spend more time on the topic under discussion. It can also be concluded that if the F stage is not closed by the teacher and students have more chances to be engaged in interaction, they can have co-constructive sequences that can create chances for the students to be engaged in dialogic interaction and knowledge construction (Walsh 2011).

The findings suggest several pedagogical implications. The IRF sequences are dynamic and closely interconnected with pedagogical goals (Pekarek Doehler 2018). L2 teachers can benefit from the dynamic nature of the IRFs in classroom interactions to provide L2 learners with engagement opportunities. The obtained data from the micro-analysis of classroom interactions can be used in teacher education to equip novice and pre-service teachers with sufficient

tools to employ the triadic pattern and improve L2 learners' social, cognitive, and affective engagement. Furthermore, the learners reported that inferential and controversial questions in the initiation stage can lead to more social engagement. Accordingly, L2 teachers need to consider the topics and questions they tend to include in the initiation stage. The scrutiny of the sequences affords language researchers the opportunity to come up with novel ways of examining engagement in L2 classroom discourse.

With all its implications, this study is not devoid of limitations. As this study mainly focused on examining classroom interactions in one language institute in Iran, the results cannot be generalized to all L2 EFL classroom interactions. Moreover, this study focused on engagement in the IRF cycles. As the F stage was demonstrated to be a rich juncture for L2 learners' engagement, future studies can examine student engagement with corrective feedback in the IRF cycles. Likewise, further research is required to examine whether or not the IRF cycles can lead to elaborate and limited LREs and idea units.

Appendix: Post IRF cycle Questionnaire

Instruction: Read the questions and provide answers in the boxes next to each question

1. What was your overall perception of the interaction that you just did?
2. Do you think there was a specific goal to this interaction?
3. What features of language did you notice or need during the interaction?
4. How important and/or helpful was working with your partner in order to complete the interaction?
5. Did your partner help you? If so, how?
6. Provide three adjectives to describe the interaction.
7. Now provide three adjectives to describe how you felt during the interaction.
8. Do you think that you and your partner were both equally willing to contribute in completing the interaction?

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WHAT IS IN THE PARAGRAPHS OF VARIOUS SECTIONS OF RESEARCH ARTICLES?

Renata Pípalová

Abstract

This paper strives to uncover the leading paragraph build-up patterns in academic writing. It employs the framework pioneered by Mathesius (1942/1982) and Daneš (1994, 1995), and elaborated on by Pípalová (2005, 2008a, 2008b, 2014). The corpus assembled for the study involves three distinct sections of Research Articles, viz. Abstracts, Introductions and Conclusions. The research confirms the general prevalence of Broad P-theme paragraphs, especially the Content Frame categories. It also demonstrates that non-canonical (i.e. transitional and peripheral) forms of paragraph build-up tend to prevail and identifies a number of factors at play. The paper also shows that the distribution of paragraph patterns is not homogeneous and appears to change across the space of the Research Articles.

Keywords

research articles, subgenres, thematic build-up of paragraphs, Narrow P-theme paragraphs, Broad P-theme paragraphs, non-canonical paragraphs

1.1 Introduction

Paragraphs have been explored from diverse perspectives. The aspect central to the present paper is the thematic construction of paragraphs. The specialized corpus upon which this study is conducted was compiled as monodisciplinary, featuring linguistic discourse exclusively, and monogeneric, featuring solely the genre of Research Articles (hereinafter RAs), often considered as the prototype of academic discourse.

1.2 Previous research

Mathesius's (1942/1982) pioneering work discriminated between three categories of paragraph (viz. paragraphs where the theme is stable, paragraphs where the theme unfolds, and paragraphs where the theme develops). His framework was crucially developed by Daneš (1994, 1995) who, among others, employed in Mathesius's framework his own theory of thematic progressions (hereinafter TP, e.g. Daneš 1974, 1989). Daneš (1995: 33) holds that:

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> Thematic coherence is manifested by the fact that each paragraph has, in principle, a theme of its own, which appears as hypertheme in respect to the individual utterance themes that are subordinated to it….The different types of the thematic build-up of paragraphs can be constituted just by taking into consideration different possible relationships between the paragraph theme (P-theme, taken as hypertheme) and the themes of individual utterances (U-themes) of which the paragraph consists.

The resulting framework then features four distinct paragraph categories together with four subtypes as follows: Stable P-theme paragraphs, Unfolded P-theme paragraphs with two subtypes (a/aspects and b/split), Content Frame P-theme paragraphs with two subtypes (a/static and b/dynamic) and Developing P-theme paragraphs.

Daneš's theory was further elaborated by Pípalová (2005, 2008a, 2008b), who strove to establish the individual paragraph (sub)types on a number of firm criteria. She also deepened the insight into the subtypes of the Unfolded P-theme paragraphs. Crucially, perhaps, she proposed to distinguish between two Paragraph Supratypes (Narrow P-theme paragraphs and Broad P-theme paragraphs), relegating Daneš's original Unfolded P-theme – aspects subtype of paragraphs to the peripheral zone between the two Supratypes, labelled as Unfolded Aspects/Content Frame (Ua/CF). The outcome is represented in Figure 1. Exemplification of the individual paragraph types and subtypes together with their detailed analysis will be provided in 3.2 below.

PARAGRAPH SUPRATYPE	**PARAGRAPH TYPE**	**PARAGRAPH SUBTYPE**
NARROW P-THEME	STABLE P-THEME *(S)*	
	UNFOLDED P-THEME *(U)*	Inclusive
		Focusing
		Split
		Subsuming
-------UNFOLDED ASPECTS/CONTENT FRAME *(UaCF)*, i.e., PERIPHERAL ZONE-------		
BROAD P-THEME	CONTENT FRAME P-THEME *(CF)*	Static
		Dynamic
	DEVELOPING P-THEME *(D)*	

Figure 1: Pípalová's framework of paragraph typology (2008a)

It will be useful to recall the essential parameters of each of the Paragraph Supratypes. Narrow P-theme paragraphs (Example 1) satisfy the following criteria: Top degree of stability in thematic build-up; Foregrounding a single

discourse subject (DS, i.e. the subject matter discussed); Backgrounding the other layers of Theme; Dominant DS, being launched in the Topic Sentence (TS, usually placed initially), motivates the other thematic functions in a paragraph; cohesive links of identity, equivalence, or inclusion; Paradigmatic thematic progressions (constant theme, derived constant theme, theme derived from the Hypertheme); and a rather homogeneous Thematic layer.

(1) *Affiliative interactional resources. This term is used in the literature to refer to interactional tools used by participants to create social solidarity and interpersonal closeness. From this perspective, affiliative interactional resources are somewhat similar to relationship-building tools. However, unlike the latter, which may not produce an immediate interactional result – although they may impact relationships in the long run–affiliative interactional resources are employed to reach an immediate affective cooperation between participants by bringing them in a moment of interpersonal closeness and solidarity. In this study, the term is used to refer to pro-social interactional tools deployed by the teacher to create solidarity and togetherness with the students in potentially face-threatening moments of conference interaction.* (INT 17, 270)

By contrast, Broad P-theme paragraphs (Example 2) are marked by the following: Instability in thematic build-up; Multi-DS paragraphs; considerable DS turnover; Backgrounding the top layer of Theme; Unity/integrity is also backgrounded (the P-theme could be interpreted as "process", "situation", "episode", and more). Many links in paragraphs are motivated pragmatically (as the respective world knowledge has to be activated); Diverse cohesive links (including parallelism and contiguity); Even syntagmatic thematic progressions (thematization of rheme, derived thematization of rheme, thematic jump, thematization of utterance) may be featured; sometimes, however, there need not be any thematic progressions whatsoever. Hence, the thematic layer of Broad P-theme paragraphs is rather heterogeneous (for more, see Pípalová 2005, 2008a, 2008b).

(2) *A speaker draws upon their pragmatic knowledge to create pragmatic markers, or tools, called "inference triggers" (Fetzer, 2011:258), which indicate that the speaker intends to create a conversational implicature; these conversational implicatures are used to guide the listener toward the correct inference for an utterance (Grice, 1989). Such pragmatic tools are used by speakers not only to direct listener interpretation, but also to express speaker attitude toward one's statement. How these pragmatic tools are used is explored in the next section.* (INT 20, 297)

Apart from the constructional aspect of paragraphs overviewed above, Pípalová (2008a, 2008b) also deals with the content aspect of Themes, treated as a

layered cognitive phenomenon resembling a pyramid. The narrowest layer at the top of the pyramid features the most conspicuous, foregrounded element(s); the central layer involves a number of mutually interrelated, regularly co-occurring items composing a cognitive structure or frame. The lowest layer, which is the broadest of all and simultaneously marked by rather diffuse boundaries, features all the backgrounded elements rooted in a particular speech event/situation (such as producer, recipient, genre, or location).

Unlike Mathesius's and Daneš's pioneering studies, Pípalová (2008a) established her monograph on the corpus scrutiny of authentic data. Her specialized corpus involved a balanced share of fiction, journalism and academic writing. Considering the academic subcorpus, directly relevant to the present research, it ensured equal representation of two main academic branches, namely the soft and hard sciences. The data was drawn from monographs representing a variety of fields. The research revealed a dominant share of Broad P-theme paragraphs, testifying to a remarkable degree of constructional instability. This pattern proved to be a happy choice for expository and argumentative purposes, suitable for multiaspectual treatment of phenomena. Among the Narrow P-theme paragraphs the preferred pattern was the Unfolded scheme. The research also revealed a remarkable proportion of paragraphs from transitional and peripheral zones (over 70% of academic findings), due to the commonly integrated evaluative comments, departures, and more. These non-canonical implementations of paragraph patterns, however, were not studied in sufficient detail. Since the empirical part of Pípalová's (2008a) monograph focused chiefly on Narrow P-theme paragraphs, Broad P-theme paragraphs were relatively under-researched and hence should attract far more attention. This paper is meant to be a modest contribution to the existing research. Following Pípalová's (2005, 2008a) research, for example, Dontcheva-Navrátilová (2006) scrutinized paragraphing in resolutions and Obdržálková (2013) explored paragraphing contrastively between Czech and Spanish.

In her unpublished conference paper, Pípalová (2014) reported a cross-disciplinary research of paragraphs in two soft sciences. The corpus was also monogeneric, featuring the shorter academic genre of RAs. The data was drawn from two RA subgenres, namely Abstracts and Conclusions. The results confirmed the general preponderance of the Broad P-theme Supratype in the entire corpus and identified as the dominant paragraph pattern the Content Frame with all the subtypes. While the literary data displayed more homogeneous thematic construction of paragraphs, the build-up of linguistic paragraphs was more varied, with some proportion of the Narrow P-theme paragraphs also attested.

2 Methodology and data

2.1 Methodology

In this study the methodology devised by Pípalová (2005, 2008a, 2008b) will be largely adopted, especially the distinction between the two build-up Supratypes (i.e. Narrow and Broad P-theme ones) based on a range of criteria recalled above and the individual paragraph build-up (sub)types. However, to modify Daneš's (1995: 33) original "themes of individual utterances (U-themes)" and their role in constructing P-themes (i.e. a type of Hypertheme, see Daneš 1994, 1995, Pípalová 2005, 2008a, 2008b), in the present study the unit of research is set at the Main Clause (hereinafter MC). Hence, this paper seeks to investigate the role of MC themes (hereinafter MCTs) in encoding the Themes of Paragraphs (i.e. P-themes). To be sure, since in this approach the Subordinate Clause was considered a constituent of the MC, the subordinate clause themes were not taken account of unless they formed (part of the) MCTs. In authentic corpus examples, MCTs will be underlined. Further, a spelling distinction will be made between the capitalized Theme, as one of the textual Hyperthemes (e.g. Global Theme, P-theme) and small case theme, as a function of the FSP.

The present research aims to identify the leading tendencies in linguistic paragraph patterns and examine their canonical and non-canonical implementations. The specialized corpus was designed as monodisciplinary (featuring linguistic discourse) and monogeneric (featuring RAs exclusively). The study aims to find out whether such uniform parameters of the corpus will produce relatively homogeneous findings regarding the thematic patterns of paragraphs and whether there will be any differences in paragraph patterns across the three distinct RA subgenres, viz. Abstracts, Introductions and Conclusions.

2.2 Corpus data

This study is part of more extensive research. The data was gathered from two international, peer-reviewed Elsevier linguistic journals (viz. *Language & Communication*, and *Journal of Pragmatics*) and featured empirical Research Articles (RAs) exclusively. An attempt was made to select only authors displaying English-sounding names or those affiliated with a university established in an L1 English-speaking country (within the inner circle of the Kachruvian model, see Kachru 1985). The specialized corpus assembled for scrutiny featured three sections (subgenres) of 20 empirical RAs. More specifically, the corpus was constituted by 60 sections of RAs (i.e. 20 Abstracts, 20 Introductions and 20 Conclusions), embracing altogether 413 paragraphs and 54,965 words.

As for the individual subcorpora (RA subgenres), the subcorpus of Abstracts turned out to be the most restricted of all in size. Embracing 23 paragraphs and 3,328 words, it constituted 5.57 per cent of the entire Corpus. On average, the actual Abstracts of RAs featured between one and three paragraphs each, which corresponds to the mean 1.15 paragraphs/Abstract.

Similarly, the subcorpus of Conclusions proved to be rather short, as it composed 14.04 per cent of the entire Corpus, comprising 58 paragraphs and involving 6,785 words. The Conclusions in the individual RAs displayed between one and eight paragraphs each, the corresponding mean being 2.9 paragraphs/Conclusion.

Last of all, the most sizable subcorpus of Introductions forming over four fifths of the entire Corpus, accounted for 80.39 per cent of the data. It had 44,852 words and 332 paragraphs. The individual Introductions ranged between five and 31 paragraphs in length, the average being 16.6 paragraphs/Introduction.

Since in this study the research unit is set at the MC, it is vital to express the length of the individual subcorpora and paragraphs also in these terms. The subcorpus of Abstracts involved 145 MCs and its paragraphs proved to be the longest of all, with the average of 6.3 MCs/paragraph. The subcorpus of Conclusions embraced 274 MCs in total and its paragraphs turned out to be the shortest of all, with the mean at 4.72 MCs /paragraph. Last of all, the subcorpus of Introductions amounted to 1,943 MCs and exhibited paragraphs of average length, the mean being at 5.85 MCs/paragraph. Thus on average, there were approximately five MCTs/Paragraph in the entire Corpus. The parameters of the entire Corpus and subcorpora are summarized below:

SECTION	PAR N	PAR %	WORDS N	WORDS %	MC N	MC %
ABS	23	5.57	3,328	6.05	145	6.14
CON	58	14.04	6,785	12.34	274	11.60
INT	332	80.39	44,852	81.61	1,943	82.26
TOTAL	413	100.00	54,965	100.00	2,362	100.00

Table 1: Shares of paragraphs, word counts and number of Main Clauses (MC) in the subcorpora of Abstracts (ABS), Conclusions (CON) and Introductions (INT) and the entire Corpus.

3 Results

In this section, firstly, the quantitative analysis provides the overall orientation, offering the distribution of paragraph types across the entire Corpus as well as in the individual subcorpora. Secondly, the ensuing qualitative research displays examples of both canonical and non-canonical paragraph build-up patterns together with their transparent analysis.

3.1 Quantitative analysis

Tables 2 and 3 below are an overview of the quantitative results yielded in the entire Corpus and in the three subcorpora, together with a schematic view of the same. It should be noted that in the figures canonical and non-canonical specimens of individual paragraph constructional types are combined. From now on, the notation will be employed as follows: S – Stable; U – Unfolded; Ua/CF – Unfolded Aspects/Content Frame, i.e. peripheral zone between Paragraph Supratypes; CFS – Content Frame Static; CFMD – Content Frame Mixed and Dynamic; D – Developing P-theme Paragraphs.

P-theme	ABS N	ABS %	CON N	CON%	INT N	INT %	TOTAL N	TOTAL %
S	2	8.70	9	15.51	48	14.45	59	14.29
U	7	30.43	5	8.62	58	17.48	70	16.95
Ua/CF	1	4.35	7	12.07	45	13.55	53	12.83
CFS	6	26.09	21	36.21	79	23.79	106	25.66
CFMD	3	13.04	13	22.42	62	18.67	78	18.89
D	4	17.39	3	5.17	40	12.06	47	11.38
TOTAL	23	100.00	58	100.00	332	100.00	413	100.00

Table 2: Findings regarding the individual paragraph build-up patterns in the subcorpora and the entire Corpus

P-theme	Abstracts %	Conclusions %	Introductions %	TOTAL %
Narrow P-theme	39.13	24.13	31.93	31.24
Ua/CF	4.35	12.07	13.55	12.83
Broad P-theme	56.52	63.80	54.52	55.93
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 3: Shares of Paragraph Supratypes in the subcorpora and the entire Corpus: Schematic overview in percentages

As follows from Tables 2 and 3, in the entire Corpus the most productive paragraph build-up pattern was the CFS, accounting for 25.66 per cent of all paragraphs, followed by its twinned subtypes, CFMD, constituting 18.89 per cent of the data. Hence the CF build-up type formed almost 45 per cent of all the corpus paragraphs. In addition, CFS paragraphs were the most productive build-up pattern in two subcorpora (Introductions and Conclusions) and the second most prolific pattern in Abstracts. Its twinned subtypes, CFMD, were identified as the second most frequent in Introductions and Conclusions. Conversely, the D pattern proved to be the least prolific, corresponding to 11.38 per cent of the data, preceded in frequency only by the peripheral Ua/CF pattern (12.83%), which

marks the borderline, i.e. the transitional zone between the Narrow P-theme and Broad P-theme paragraphs. Most importantly, the Broad P-theme (55.93%) Supratype convincingly outnumbered the Narrow P-theme counterpart (31.24%).

It will be observed that the overall findings were very similar to the findings gained from the most sizable subcorpus of Introductions. However, the results yielded in the other two shorter subcorpora were found to be very different. While in both these subcorpora Broad P-theme paragraphs also prevailed, the results gained from the Abstracts were more balanced, whereas the results drawn from the Conclusions turned out to be more contrastive. Indeed, the Abstracts displayed a relatively remarkable share of build-up stability (39.13% of Narrow P-theme paragraphs, as against 56.52% of build-up instability), whereas the Conclusions exhibited a striking measure of build-up instability (63.80% of Broad P-theme paragraphs, as against 24.13% of build-up stability).

Moreover, a scale of growing constructional instability can be often traced in the individual build-up patterns of paragraphs, corresponding with linear arrangement of the sections. For example, the U or D patterns proved to be most common in Abstracts, less so in Introductions, and least productive in Conclusions. Conversely, the CF patterns were found to grow in frequency with the linear position of the section in the RA.

As also follows from Tables 2 and 3, the corpus findings suggest a remarkable degree of build-up heterogeneity. Indeed, similar to the cross-disciplinary study (Pípalová 2014), in the present research, all particular paragraph constructional types were attested, both in the entire Corpus and in the individual subcorpora, even if with varied proportions. This corresponds to the diversity of communicative needs, stylistic preferences or presentation strategies deemed suitable to the subject matter in question. Despite this, certain patternings can nevertheless be observed as more conspicuous, presumably embodying inter-individual, genre-specific characteristics.

Regarding the distribution of the individual paragraph constructional patterns across the subcorpora, their shares were relatively balanced in the most extensive subcorpus of Introductions, in harmony with the findings yielded in the entire Corpus, whereas disbalanced in one way or another in the shorter subcorpora. Indeed, in the Abstracts, the U pattern peaked and outnumbered any other paragraph category, which was unique in the entire Corpus. In addition, the D pattern, otherwise rather rare, achieved surprisingly high representation, ranking as the third most usual build-up strategy in the subgenre. In contrast, in Conclusions, both the U and D patterns proved to be rare. Even though the subgenre generally exhibited a striking measure of build-up instability, primarily since all the CF subtypes flourished there, this tendency was complemented by

the fairly remarkable proportion of S paragraphs, the preferred choice among the Narrow P-theme specimens in the subgenre. This appears to follow from the emphasis put on deictic encodings of MCTs by the end of the RAs. Thus the findings point to distinct communicative needs profiling the individual subgenres.

3.2 Qualitative analysis

Narrow P-theme paragraphs

Stable P-theme paragraphs

(3) *Research triangulation is increasingly frequently cited as a guarantor of validity and reliability (Marchi and Taylor, 2009, p.1). It regards the implementation of two or more approaches as a means of checking results (Cicourel, 1969) and it can include various datasets, methods, theories or investigators (Denzin, 1970).* (INT 10, 149)

In (3), the P-theme ("Research triangulation") is introduced explicitly in the TS where it takes the thematic function at MC level and is merely iterated, both intersententially and intrasententially. The TP corresponds to constant theme. In such paragraphs, it is only the top layer of the Theme content pyramid that is foregrounded. The reader's processing is safely guided by linguistic means (e.g. by pronominalization), which poses relatively low demands on their activation of shared world knowledge. Empirical data shows that in academic discourse such paragraphs are mostly of limited length.

Unfolded P-theme paragraphs

(4) *Positioning is the discursive process of negotiating the interlocutors' position in discursive interactions (van Langenhove and Harré, 1998:14-15). It was initially proposed in constructionist approaches as an alternative to the more rigid concept of social roles. Stancetaking implies some assessment of the interaction and _supposes the mutual connection of that assessment and the interlocutors' positions (Jaffe, 2009: 5). Specifically, positioning stancetaking means the position taken by someone with respect to the interlocutor, the utterances, or the ongoing interaction (Jaffe, 2009:3-4). Thus, positioning stancetaking acknowledges the interlocutors' agency to assess the interaction, take positions accordingly, and negotiate these positions.* (INT 12, 187)
(Note: The underscore character here and in other examples below indicates MCT ellipsis.)

Example (4) epitomizes the subsuming category of the U paragraphs. The last two MCTs ("positioning stancetaking") embrace/subsume the two earlier counterparts ("positioning" and "stancetaking"). The TPs are paradigmatic,

i.e. constant theme and theme derived from the Hypertheme. The reader's perception of coherence is significantly enhanced by the TPs and the cohesive devices employed (including lexical repetition). The P-theme is identified explicitly only in the final sentence. Compared to the S pattern, the U paragraphs proved to be longer and more elaborated.

Periphery

Unfolded aspects/Content Frame P-theme paragraphs (Ua/CF)

Example (5) illustrates the peripheral zone between the Narrow and Broad P-theme Supratypes, embodied by Ua/CF paragraphs.

(5) *Communicative function of language refers to interpersonal liaison, relational language use, and information exchange (Hua, 2014; Scollon, 1995). It is also strongly associated with forming and sustaining relationships with other members of the community, which highlights the social character of language use for communicative purposes. Communicative function of language is strongly attached to contexts of language use, as well as group membership and identity manifestation (Cashman, 2005; Edwards, 2013, 2009, 1985; Gumperz, 1982 a, b; Wei, 2007). Language choice for communicative function was found to be linked to the character and dynamics of the speaker's social networks (Wei, 1994), as well as language dominance (Dewaele, 2013b). Numerous studies revealed that multilingual speakers typically have linguistic preferences to communicate particular types of content, for example when expressing positive and negative emotions, or when communicating with certain groups of interlocutors (Dewaele, 2011, 2008, 2006a, 2004a).* (INT 8, 123)

In (5), we can observe that the build-up pattern is gradually gaining momentum, as the onset is marked by exemplary stability (constant theme), then the Theme is further unfolded (suggested by the derived constant theme) until the reader notices a shift in the topic when they arrive at "numerous studies". At this point in the paragraph, they are asked to work out that these studies do not denote academic studies in general but only those studies dealing with the "communicative function of language", although such particularization is taken for granted and is expected to follow conventionally from the mere fact that such studies are dealt with in the space of the paragraph initially centered on such a Theme. Since the concept of the "communicative function of language" is already perfectly activated, such explicit particularization would be deemed redundant. In addition, the attributes commonly take rhematic functions in noun phrases (e.g. Dušková 2015), which would not fit in with the earlier co-text. It should be noted that the element ellipted is syntactically dispensable. Hence the

DS "communicative function of language", epitomizing the top and narrowest layer of the Theme content pyramid is now set in a relevant cognitive frame (as an element of the central layer of the Theme content pyramid), for the DS is no longer discussed only internally, in terms of its inherent features/constituents (per se), but approached also externally, adherently, i.e. from the standpoint of the pertinent literature or studies dealing with the issue (rather than the issue itself). As can be observed, the first portion of the paragraph follows the Narrow P-theme pattern, while the final part clearly exceeds its bounds, pointing to the Broad P-theme pattern. Cases of this kind are deemed to occupy the space between the two Supratypes, viz. Narrow and Broad P-theme ones. To reformulate, although there is only a single foregrounded DS, other DSs associatively related to the foregrounded DS and pertinent to it are treated as well (in diverse proportions, as the case may be).

Broad P-theme paragraphs

Content Frame P-theme paragraphs: Static

(6) *Chat-based programming is a genre of broadcast talk found in television and radio as a form of talk (Ames, 2016a; Tolson, 1991). Features of chat-based programming are that it is conversation-based and orients towards personal topics; displays of wit and humour accompany a shift to personal talk; and the potential for transgression is always present (Tolson, 1991). Despite its appearance as 'normal' conversation, talk in this context is strictly institutional. Noting that all talk is inherently performative (Edwards and Potter, 2001), radio talk is particularly constructed as talk for an overhearing audience (Hutchby, 2006; Pandora, 1998; Scannell, 1996; Stiernstedt, 2014). Radio hosts manage the co-presence of the audience and themselves within a virtual and imagined 'place', and facilitate (and foster) a sense of community (see Ytreberg, 2004). Hosts therefore provide a mediated interface between radio as a public medium and the sometimes public/sometimes private world of the listener, and this has been well-considered as a general concept in study into radio talk Brand and Scannell, 1991; Harris and Scannell, 1991; Hutchby, 1991; Scannell, 1996).* (INT 5, 12)

Example (6) features several DSs and the reader is expected to be familiar with the relevant subject matter pragmatically to be able to recall the pertinent cognitive frame and to make sense of the relationships properly. The decisive proportion of MCTs are arranged paradigmatically, except for the last one, which is syntagmatic. This points to a non-canonical instantiation of the pattern, so commonplace in academic discourse. The TPs used are more varied, including the constant theme, the derived constant theme, the theme derived from the Hypertheme and a single instance of thematization of the utterance. Cases like

(6) call for the recipient's familiarity with the issue and their activation of the respective world knowledge cognitive frame, for the linguistic aids facilitating its coherent perception are much less overt.

Content Frame P-theme paragraphs: Dynamic

(7) *Here, rather than using 'saw' or a similar standard perceptual verb, the person who reports the error uses 'on examination' to frame the perceptual element of the incident. The use of 'on examination' and 'on inspection' as perceptual verbs is likely to be specific to the medical context. This highlights the need to consider clinical incident reporting as a specific genre for this type of pragmatic analysis.* (INT 4, 50)

In (7), several DSs are discussed, and the reader is asked to shift attention gradually. However, in doing so they are guided rather firmly, step-by-step from one MCT to another, using the thematization of rheme TP. Generally speaking, this pattern may satisfy the needs of inferencing, argumentation or explanation very naturally. The explicit formulation of the P-theme would be challenging, as the P-theme has to be worked out and presumably the formulation arrived at cannot but be rather vague.

Developing P-theme paragraphs

(8) *Popular music performance is often subject to stylization, where the artist uses non-native features in their performed speech. This may be clearly seen in globalized, transnational genres, as in the case of a Japanese rap group using stylized English in their lyrics (Pennycook, 2003). Such language use is what Berger (2003) considers to be 'participation-through-doing', by which language choice may embody a social identity to a greater degree than mere description. While stylized use of another language is perhaps more obvious, it is worth observing that stylization in music may also occur in the adoption of non-native dialect features. In this paper, I consider an Anglophone case of transnational dialect contact, in which the artist adopts features of a stigmatized, non-native dialect. I focus on the use of Southern American English features in country music as performed by Keith Urban, a native Australian and speaker of Australian English. Born in Whangarei, New Zealand, Urban was raised in Caboolture, Queensland, and is a prominent country artist. He released his debut album in Australia before moving to Nashville, Tennessee, in the 1990s to pursue a music career in the United States. Since then, he has released eight albums that have achieved a high degree of popular and critical success in the US, Canada, and Australia.* (INT 7, 95)

In (8), the author first follows the CFD pattern to discuss stylized music performances. Then attention is shifted to the producer's paper and still later to the subject of scrutiny in the narrow sense, viz. Keith Urban. The latter two paragraph constituents employ the S pattern in their PH-themes. It should be stressed that numerous D paragraphs (in their non-canonical D+ implementation) abruptly shift attention from an experiential topic to topics textually or situationally (deictically) available.

4 Discussion: Conspicuous tendencies in paragraph build-up

As has been mentioned above, in academic discourse the actual paragraph construction need not be always exemplary and satisfy all the parameters fully. Indeed, there are many features pointing in the opposite direction, at least in the humanities such as linguistics. For the sake of clarity, the following part is organized in sections, although there is a considerable overlap between the phenomena in the authentic data explored.

4.1 Compositionality

Firstly, lengthy academic paragraphs are prone to display several constituents within their own build-up strategy the PH-themes of which may, but need not, agree in their build-up fashion with the entire paragraph. However, mainly for manageability reasons, in the quantitative analysis of this study, only the overall paragraph build-up pattern was taken account of and represented, disregarding such potential inner constituents.

For exemplification, the reader is referred to the specimen of the D pattern (see Example (8) above) which illustrates longer academic paragraphs. It seems that its author intentionally correlated more notions within its space and decided to shift attention between them primarily at two turning points. Hence the overall pattern was identified as a D paragraph. Initially, the author looks at "Popular music performance". They elaborate on it employing the CFD scheme, presumably since the topic was deemed rather abstract and demanding. Then attention is shifted to a topic which is in fact always activated, being deictic in nature, namely "this paper", or else "the present author's intention", using the S pattern, although in an unorthodox implementation (see also below). Last of all, attention is turned to the topic of "Keith Urban", thematized from the immediately preceding rheme. To deal with this topic, the author employs a rather prototypical S strategy. In order to depict the build-up of such paragraphs using clearly distinguishable constituents, the following coding is tentatively proposed: D [CF Dyn][S][S]. As Example (6) demonstrates, the patterns pursued in the constituents need not agree with the build-up pattern of the entire paragraph.

4.2 Non-canonical realizations of patterns: Transitional and peripheral zones in paragraph build-up

Furthermore, in academic discourse, the paragraph constructional patterns are often realized in non-canonical ways, incorporating diverse argumentative or explanatory insertions, asides, bracketed passages and more. Presumably, this finding reflects the complexity of communicative needs and the numerous challenges authors have to meet. Indeed, written academic discourse being monological, authors have to engage with their readers and negotiate meaning with them carefully in order to communicate their point well. They should also anticipate potential difficulties for the reader and help them wherever necessary. The truth or knowledge has to be represented as accurately, explicitly and comprehensively as possible, which calls for a pronounced degree of formulation complexity. Simplification or schematization would be considered unacceptable sins. There is also the requirement to establish adequate intertextuality links and to avoid plagiarism. Last but not least, not only is the author expected to communicate relevant meanings, but they have to do so clearly, efficiently and persuasively. Hence, for example, reference to diverse other studies to enhance the argumentative line often further complicates the build-up of the discourse. In order to cope with numerous demands and yet to ensure adequate clarity and persuasiveness, the author has to hierarchize their content delicately, and insert a variety of secondary passages, which frequently take the shape of minor support sentences in traditional books on rhetoric or style. Commonly, such sentences do not fit in with idealized patterns and naturally modify or even disrupt them. Empirical research has found that non-canonical paragraphs (i.e. a cline ranging from the transitional to the peripheral ones) often tend to be longer, presumably to accommodate these varied layers of meanings.

(9) *Refusals can be conceptualized from a speech act perspective as commissives (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1976), committing the speaker to a course of action. In Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms, they are face-threatening acts as they highlight speakers' and hearers' different wants and needs and thereby potentially _disturb social harmony. This leads to a high likelihood of mitigation through negative and positive politeness strategies.* (INT 1, 2)

In the above short example, the P-theme ("Refusals") is explicitly stated initially in the TS (where it takes the MCT function), and later reiterated. However, the last sentence, displaying a syntagmatic link, thematizes the preceding utterance (epitomizing also discourse deixis), in order to suggest inferencing, deduction, implication, or to convey an argument in an appropriate

way. Hence in this case, various quantitative and position cues point to the S paragraph, though realized non-canonically, the suggested notation being S+. It should be remarked that alternative formulation (*They are likely mitigated…*) would keep the link implicit. Empirical research has found that non-canonical paragraphs often tend to be longer, presumably to accommodate various layers of meaning.

4.3 Coherence ellipsis

Further, RAs rank among the academic genres which are clearly constrained by space. In order to satisfy the need for formulation economy, the authors tend to employ 'coherence ellipsis' due to which some cases virtually resemble syntactic branching. However, some of these instances may even give rise to ambiguities. Moreover, at times they may be the product of deliberate strategic vagueness, as it need not be always apparent where to posit coherence ellipsis and where it no longer applies.

(10) *In a study comparing learners at three proficiency levels of L2 Modern Greek and an NS group, Bella (2014) employed three role plays varying power difference and social distance. She analyzed learner production for linguistic strategies and also collected retrospective interview data. Similarly to Taguchi (2013), Bella (2014) found that learners used far more direct strategies than native speakers, though this tendency declined with increasing proficiency. Conversely, learners used fewer indirect strategies and fewer adjuncts, though both generally increased with greater proficiency. Overall, however, patterns of strategy use were markedly different even between the highest-proficiency learner group and native speakers.* (INT 1, 6)

Example (10) might be done more justice by presupposing intentional coherence ellipsis as a device condensing the discourse, and eliminating the unnecessary iteration of elements. To be sure, such type of ellipsis is not marked by syntactic deficiency/incompleteness. Rather, by appealing to the continuity of senses, the producer invokes the implied underlying element/s ensuring a coherent perception of the discourse. Hence, despite such coherence ellipsis, the reader is expected to work out the relationships unambiguously. Not only are there useful cohesive signposts taking the shape of connectives (*conversely*, *overall*, *however*), but the author also uses parallelism to reinforce the links. Hence *Bella (2014) found that learners used far more …* appears clearly related to *Bella (2014) found that learners used fewer*…, although the second underlined part is only implicit. Even though the last sentence is likely meant in the same way, it may be considered an instance of strategic vagueness. At least theoretically, it may

suggest the deduction/inferencing of the author of the RA, and not necessarily the original author's claim (i.e. Bella). Anyway, the example demonstrates language/formulation economy which is mirrored in the heterogeneity at thematic level. The acknowledgement of two coherence ellipses makes it possible to interpret the paragraph as a product of compositionality, where the S pattern (though implied) in the second half of the paragraph incorporates a CF constituent (at a lower level), the notation corresponding to: S+[CFS].

4.4 Deixis

Occasionally, rather than the subject matter in question, the author decides to thematize various deictic elements at hand – primarily diverse aspects of discourse deixis. In (11) below, the MCT functions encode passages of the unfolding text/discourse, epitomizing discourse deixis.

(11) *The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews what we know so far regarding musical code-switching, and _establishes a baseline for the analysis of both the formal and pragmatic features of lyrical mixing. It also presents the background that situates the Texas Tornados within their socio-historical and cultural context. Section 3 presents the methodology employed, including data sources, data extraction and tabulation, and the categories of formal and functional classification of language mixing. Section 4 presents the quantitative and qualitative results, which are then discussed and interpreted in Section 5 in comparison and contrast with the types of code mixing found in other bilingual singer-songwriters of the United States. Section 6 concludes the paper and suggests avenues for future research.* (INT 15, 221)

4.5 Metadiscourse

There are other reasons for non-canonical implementations of the paragraph build-up patterns in academic discourse, including the existence of metadiscourse, both textual and interpersonal (Hyland 2017), which often enhances the persuasive impact of discourse but disrupts the thematic progressions, and shifts attention away from experiential to textual and interpersonal meanings. Example (12) illustrates a peripheral implementation of the CFD pattern. Not only does the author appeal to the reader (*Note...*) but they also invoke their own presence (*Under my approach...*). Furthermore, the author inserts an explanatory remark (*This means...*) and makes use of an abstract rhetor (i.e. typically an inanimate item as quasi-agent it is necessary, see Hyland, e.g. 2000: 85-103). Last but not least, the author also thematizes various other approaches/voices (*this view of commodification*).

(12) *Different genres are performed differently, and the value of a performance is rooted in the genre it is based in (Coupland, 2011). This means that the authenticity of a performance is likewise rooted in genre. Due to the need for authenticity, it is commodified (Johnstone, 2009). If the audience prefers an authentic performance, it is necessary for the artist to achieve authenticity in order to be commercially viable. Authenticity as commodity resembles, but crucially differs from, the position taken by Cutler (1999, 2002) that authenticity for white American hip-hoppers is constructed through commodified lifestyle choices. Under my approach, the lifestyle choices mark one as having the commodified authenticity. _Note, however, that from both perspectives, style, commodification, and authenticity are closely linked. While there may well be an economic effect, this view of commodification is taken to mean the reification of a social process, rather than the more literal approach to merchandise like T-shirts and dialect dictionaries seen in Johnstone (2009) and Beal (2009b).* (INT 7, 108)

It will be observed that many non-canonical academic paragraphs exhibit a considerable measure of MCT diversity. Indeed, paragraph MCTs were marked by pronounced heterogeneity, denoting various experiential, but also interpersonal and textual meanings (Halliday & Hasan 1985). They encoded the broader features of the communicative event (author, recipient, the RA, its sections, other particular passages of the RA, such as the examples in the co-text: in other words, much had to do with deixis). Moreover, they denoted various other relevant authors or studies taken into account. This way they ensured proper referencing, both intra-textually and intertextually. Naturally, there were also abstract rhetors, various processes, cases of inferencing and more.

Such thematic heterogeneity at MCT level frequently precludes a smooth flow of TPs, allowing for many breaks or discontinuities in the TPs and occasionally resulting even in the temporary absence of TPs. These tendencies point to a relatively less significant role of TPs in the build-up of academic paragraphs. Hence it is not always that the TPs can guide the recipient safely through the discourse and enhance a coherent perception of the passage.

4.6 Vagueness or indeterminacy

Vagueness may be employed even as a build-up strategy in its own right, being widespread chiefly in CFS paragraphs. After all, in this paragraph category the author may decide not to employ any TP at all (see Daneš 1995). In other cases, positing the TPs would be rather nonsensical.

This seems to point to a virtual cline existing within CFS paragraphs. On the one extreme, there are instances grounded on a web of conventionally associated, mostly experiential elements where in order to ensure adequate coherent perception, one has to activate the pertinent world knowledge (cognitive frames/

schemata) more or less well-established in the community of practice and recognized in the relevant cultural, institutional and/or disciplinary contexts. On the other extreme, there are instances where no TP is plausible, the coherence being very loose, vague, perhaps deliberately, with the P-theme being hard to formulate, as the MCTs themselves represent deictic entities or abstract rhetors. In between there is a whole continuum of other instances, together with mere enumeration of categories or specimens, and naturally, all the above features may be also combined in diverse proportions. Obviously, this constructional pattern exhibits a considerable measure of build-up instability at MCT level, i.e. heterogeneity of themes, which relativizes the role of TPs and the very need for them.

(13) *It would also be of interest to compare and contrast the songs and their switches against audience reactions, either in authentic or experimental settings. In that regard, it would be especially valuable to test whether different types of hearers interpret these songs differently depending on their own background, as argued before by Picone (2002) and Johnstone (2011).* (CON 14, 389)

In (13), the connectivity between the two sentences seems to be suggested by the parallelism of the sentence onsets. Presumably taking this for an implementation of the constant theme TP would be very odd. Moreover, rather than adopting such outer marking of coherence by TPs, inner coherence appears more justifiable, and due to that identifying the P-theme explicitly would be challenging.

However, strategic vagueness may also show especially in very long CF paragraphs. The sentences appear related so loosely that the technique resembles at times mere juxtaposition, and at times mere idiosyncratic associative wandering and it is up to the reader to ponder their unity, make sense of their mutual relation, and work out the overall P-theme. Example (14) should illustrate such instances:

(14) *Communicative function of language revolves around information exchange, self-expression, as well as establishing, maintaining and strengthening social relationships with other people (Scollon, 1995). In the era of international mobility-migration and cultural transition, countless bilinguals find themselves in a position where the L2 replaces the L1 in the majority of professional, social, and communicative areas of life (Dewaele, 2015a; Hoffman, 1989). Changes from L1- to L2-speaking contexts cause a significant shift in language use for interactive purposes. Levels of L2 attainment, language dominance, as well as participants and context of interaction, are typically seen as core coordinates in communicative language use (Milroy, 1987; Wei, 1994). Wei points out that*

'language is a social notion; it cannot be defined without reference to its speakers and the context of its use' (Wei, 2007, p. 12). Research on language preferences show that bilinguals tend to have their favourite language for particular purposes (Dewaele, 2011; Grosjean, 2010). The overall realm of experience can be divided into different domains of life for which bilinguals may use different languages (Schrauf, 2002). According to Grosjean (2016) language use in bilinguals is said to be domain-specific, and some domains might attract higher levels of L2 than others. The mosaic of linguistic complementarity will depend on the individual history and language preferences of the speaker (Dewaele, 2010; Grosjean, 2010). (INT 9, 127)

4.7 Combination of factors

What is more, the non-canonical implementations of the paragraph build-up pattern may follow from a combination of several features. In (15), compositionality and various types of deixis (discourse, person and temporal) delicately combine and work in concert. After the initial Topic Sentence, there is a paragraph constituent pursuing peripheral S PH-theme, invoking the author of the paper, centered on person deixis and parallelism upon which (rather than on the thematic progressions alone) the contiguity is established (*I discuss*, *I then present*, *I also analyze*). This constituent is followed by the final one established on discourse deixis (*the analysis*, *the conclusion*), pointing to a peripheral U split pattern. The entire build-up has been treated as non-canonical CFS specimen (CFS+).

(15) *The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. In the literature review I discuss various approaches to narrative, voicing and identity, followed by a discussion of my methods, some background information on the two organizations, and a description of the immediate context of their gathering. I then present analysis of four narratives from participants, demonstrating how these narratives highlight three stereotypic Christian types. I also analyze how these narratives function, with varying degrees of indirectness, at the multiple scales described above, and how they are taken up by other participants in moments of shared disalignment to collectively (re)imagine an alternative Christianity. The analysis is followed by a discussion of the implications of this alternative Christianity for LGB inclusion, and the conclusion expounds upon the theoretical contributions of this work.* (INT 3, 20)

4.8 Length

Regarding the length of the paragraphs, the research performed revealed some noticeable tendencies. Firstly, the Narrow P-theme paragraphs proved to be considerably shorter than the Broad P-theme ones. Indeed, the mean number of MCTs was found to vary, with 4.71 MCTs in Narrow P-theme paragraphs,

5.75 MCTs in the peripheral Ua/CF and 6.31 MCTs in Broad P-theme paragraphs, with the mean for the entire Corpus set at 5.86 MCTs/paragraph. In the data the generally shortest proved to be S paragraphs, while the most sizable proved to be D paragraphs.

What is more, the research also convincingly demonstrated that non-canonical (i.e. peripheral and transitional) realizations of the individual paragraph build-up patterns generally prolonged paragraph length. To illustrate, canonical S paragraphs involved on average 1.68 MCTs, while the non-canonical cases did 4 MCTs. The same holds for the comparison between the canonical Ua/CF pattern (5.47 MCTs) and the non-canonical realizations (7.57 MCTs). Similarly, the D pattern in its typical instantiations embraced 6.71 MCTs on average, while in non-central specimens this was 8.93 MCTs. Hence even the paragraph length (expressed in the number of MCTs) appears very telling.

5 Conclusion

The present research demonstrated a relatively high degree of instability in paragraph build-up in the entire Corpus, as the Broad P-theme paragraphs convincingly outnumbered their Narrow P-theme counterparts, with the transitional zone between them constituting the margin. What is more, the Broad P-theme pattern dominated in all three subcorpora.

On closer examination, the relatively lowest measure of constructional instability was attested in the Abstracts, while the highest measure of instability was traced in the Conclusions. This finding presumably points to a scale of rising constructional instability which increases with linearity (i.e. linear arrangement of sections). If this trajectory is confirmed using more extensive data, each subgenre would have a different thematic potential for the build-up of their paragraphs.

Within Broad P-theme paragraphs, the CF types clearly prevailed and outnumbered the D scheme. Indeed, the most productive proved to be all the CF categories, primarily the Static subtype, with all put together constituting a lesser half of the data (approximately 45%). Within Narrow P-theme paragraphs, the U pattern was clearly preferred to the S scheme in the entire Corpus as well as in two of the subgenres (viz. Abstracts and Introductions). This result seems to follow from the prevalence of experiential MCTs in the U paragraphs.

Although in the entire Corpus Narrow P-theme paragraphs were found to be fairly scarce, their incidence was to a larger extent associated with the deictic encodings of MCTs. These include primarily person deixis (pointing to the author or addressing the recipient) and discourse deixis (mostly identifying various portions of the unfolded discourse). Naturally, the deictic encodings make the formation of TPs rather redundant.

Conversely, it was the Broad P-theme paragraphs which could accommodate the necessary complexity of communicative needs. Moreover, this build-up pattern proved to be the chief carrier of the experiential MCTs and in the data investigated it epitomized the prototype. Although Broad P-theme paragraphs seem rather demanding to decode, particularly for novices, they are nevertheless very cooperative. Indeed, they satisfy the need for language economy, foregrounding only elements worthy of explicit encoding as themes, allowing the author to contextualize and interrelate the data thoroughly, invoking chiefly global cohesion.

Considering the proportions of the individual paragraph types in the subgenres, the subcorpus of Introductions saw the most balanced results, for none of the paragraph patterns peaked there. The two shorter subcorpora, however, proved to be very contrastive. Whereas in the Abstracts it was primarily the U and less conspicuously the D pattern that proved prolific, in the Conclusions it was the S and especially the CF types that were found productive. The former tendency appears motivated by the inherent need to shift focus in the Abstracts, whereas in the Conclusions the finding may stem from the emphasis put on integrating the content of the particular research.

The findings presumably point to distinct communicative needs profiling the individual subgenres. The Abstracts aim to anticipate the study, draw attention to it and familiarize the reader in a condensed way with its diverse aspects; the Introductions establish common ground with the reader and focus on one issue at a time, defining, classifying, explaining or overviewing in a step-by-step fashion; and the Conclusions summarize, integrate and contextualize the findings arrived at, interpreting them thoroughly and giving a properly succinct statement of what the entire study has brought to light.

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis performed revealed a number of additional tendencies, such as a considerable share of non-canonical implementations of the paragraph build-up patterns or the subtle inner hierarchy and compositionality in order to ensure a transparent internal structure of paragraphs and to maintain their thematic coherence. The study also showed a relatively lesser role played by TPs, among others due to a considerable heterogeneity of MCTs, a remarkable rate of deixis and metadiscourse employed in academic discourse, or due to the posited coherence ellipsis, disrupting many TPs and frequently resulting in strategic vagueness. It seems that only such build-up complexity and hierarchy can comfortably accommodate the wide range of communicative functions academic discourse has to satisfy, which all prolong the paragraph length.

Regarding the tendencies in metadiscourse and deictic encodings of MCTs, the research showed that whereas Abstracts and Conclusions were dominated

by intratextuality, primarily person and discourse deixis, Introductions were marked especially by intertextuality, highlighting relevant authors, sources of information, quotes, various relevant studies, the pioneers in the research, and the like.

Furthermore, although in academic discourse paragraph length is generally considerable, it was found to vary in a significant way. Indeed, the Narrow P-theme paragraphs proved to be shorter compared to the Broad P-theme ones. What is more, the canonical realizations of all the paragraph constructional types turned out to be shorter on the whole compared to the non-canonical ones, presumably because the latter tended to meet a wide range of communicative functions, suggesting dialogicality with the recipient (such as a number of asides, explanatory comments, notes and more).

The diminished role of TPs in the thematic build-up of paragraphs may be clearly manifested by the striking share of CFS paragraphs (which themselves need not display any TPs at all, see Daneš 1995), but also by a prominent proportion of various non-canonical implementations of the patterns and the subtle inner hierarchy (compositionality) in paragraphs with several PH-themes. Further, it also shows in the thematic build-up of a paragraph displaying solely/predominantly deictic MCTs. Presumably, in such instances, the role of TPs is peripheral and the connectivity or inner contiguity of paragraphs rests on other grounds and therefore may receive even other interpretations.

Since TPs are mostly employed to facilitate coherence, attenuating their function in academic discourse must have some justifications. To name but a few, in some cases it may be suggestive of the author's endeavor to meet the demands of strategic vagueness. This is particularly common in passages where there are abstract rhetors, for example, encoding several succeeding MCTs. In other cases, by attenuating the impact of the TPs, the authors create space for negotiating the meaning of a challenging topic with the reader and to persuade them, which frequently calls for employing relevant metadiscourse, whether textual or interpersonal (Hyland 2000). Whatever the particular reason for backgrounding the role of the TPs, it goes without explicitly mentioning that the lower impact of TPs must be compensated for by an appeal to activate the pool of shared knowledge. Acknowledging some overlap between the metadiscourse and deixis, this study cannot but corroborate the findings regarding the impact of metadiscourse on the formulation complexity of academic discourse (e.g. Hyland 2017, Pípalová 2019).

To sum up, the results achieved in this study are relatively consistent with earlier research in being very heterogeneous. To elaborate, the tendencies identified for linguistics data in Pípalová (2014) were all corroborated, viz. prevalence of Broad

P-theme Supratype, and the CF pattern in particular, with some Narrow P-theme Supratype also traced. Moreover, non-canonical realizations of paragraph patterns were dominant. Although these general tendencies characterize the entire Corpus as well as the individual subgenres, a striking development in paragraph patterns across the RA subgenres was observed. Hence each of the subgenres appeared to have a distinct thematic potential for paragraph build-up.

Secondly, the study conducted found a remarkable degree of heterogeneity also at the level of paragraph pattern realizations, for non-canonical paragraph types (of diverse degrees, ranging from the transitional to the peripheral zone) convincingly outnumbered the canonical implementations. The study identified some of the main factors impacting the prevalence of non-canonical realizations of paragraph patterns, including compositionality, complexity of communicative needs, diminished role of TPs, coherence ellipsis, deixis, metadiscourse, looseness/vagueness, indeterminacy, and possibly length, acknowledging their potential hierarchies, overlaps and mutual interplay. Admittedly, the corpus analyzed was limited and thus more research is needed to enhance our understanding of the subject matter scrutinized.

Notation

PAR – Paragraph
ABS – Abstract
CON – Conclusion
DS – Discourse Subject
INT – Introduction
MC – Main Clause
MCT – Main Clause theme (FSP)
P-theme – Paragraph Theme, a type of Hypertheme
PH-theme – Paragraph Hypotheme (constituent Theme)
RA – Research Article
TP – thematic progression
TS – Topic Sentence
S – Stable P-theme paragraph
U – Unfolded P-theme paragraph
Ua/CF – Unfolded Aspects/Content Frame paragraph
CFS – Content Frame Static P-theme paragraph
CFMD – Content Frame Mixed and Dynamic P-theme paragraph
D – Developing P-theme paragraph

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"WHERE GOT I THAT TRUTH?" AN ANALYSIS OF EXTERNAL SOURCES IN ENGLISH AND PERSIAN NEWS REPORTS ON SYRIA

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Abstract

While there has been a plethora of inquiries into reported speech, a cross-linguistic analysis of the source segments in political news reports is still a rarity. This study aims at a three-fold investigation: first, tracking the frequency, transparency, and types of the sources; second, identifying the strategies employed to introduce these sources in text, and third, interrogating the contextual elements. To this end, a bottom-up analysis of 120 news reports from four quality newspapers (*Kayhan* and *Jomhouri-e Eslami* from Iran and *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* from the U.S.), mainly informed by van Leeuwen's (1996) model of social actors, was carried out. The findings suggest a heavy reliance of both sets of newspapers on external sources to fulfill their vested interests, although they varied significantly with respect to frequency, transparency, and type.

Keywords

attribution, evidentiality, external source, political discourse, news report, reported speech

1 Introduction

As an interdisciplinary field, political discourse studies embraces a wide range of topics employing linguistic tools to unveil hidden agendas and ideologies in the discourse. As such, news discourse is a representative example that lends itself well to political discourse analysis (van Dijk 1988, Richardson 2007, Talbot 2007, Fairclough & Fairclough 2013). Van Dijk (2000: 44) proposes four major principles in the expression of ideology in discourse: "Emphasize positive things about Us; Emphasize negative things about Them; De-emphasize negative things about Us; and De-emphasize positive things about Them". News reports, as a significant sub-genre of news discourse, consist of two subcategories, namely 'hard news' and 'soft news', where the former is considered the primary arena for political discourses. White (2000: 101) defines hard news as "reports typically associated with eruptive violence, reversals of fortune, and socially significant breaches of the moral order" which are to be reported as objectively and factually as possible. In fact, objectivity in journalism has been regarded as an integral feature of news reports which is partly realized through the incorporation of reported speech (Waugh 1995, Calsamiglia & Ferrero 2003, Smirnova 2009)

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and quotations (Gibson & Zillmann 1993, Jullian, 2011, Choi et al. 2012, Harry 2014). Besides, the type of embedding (direct or indirect) determines the share of responsibility between the writer and the original voice (Sanders 2010).

Although texts cannot be devoid of the voice of the author in its Bakhtinian sense (Hyland 2008), Bennett (2015: 5) argues that "objectivity is a linguistic construct, achieved by the systematic use of grammatical forms". Besides, Caldas-Coulthard (2003) suggests journalists avail themselves of a range of tools to sound objective and naturalize and neutralize their positions. One of the most outstanding tools to employ is "the use of the voices of experts" which is "one of the legitimatory strategies frequently used in journalistic discourses" (Caldas-Coulthard 2003: 276). This reliance of the author on external voices has been called 'evidentiality' in some literature (Chafe 1986, Bednarek 2006b). This strategy is mainly operationalized via the use of hearsay evidentials (Chafe 1986, Bednarek 2006b) or attribution (Martin & White 2005, White 2012, Hasselgård 2021). These markers basically consist of a source segment and a reporting structure (Hyland 1999) or basis (Bednarek 2006a) which can take "a variety of grammatical forms, namely tenses, aspects, number, person and verbal voice" (Vogel 2012: 63). Hyland (2005) also subsumes evidentiality as a label for information source in his taxonomy of metadiscourse markers.

While there have been studies accommodating evidentiality in the area of political discourse (Chilton & Schäffner 2002, Chilton 2004, Jalilifar & Alavi-Nia 2012, Alavi-Nia & Jalilifar 2013), they have treated the issue as incidental and adjunct to their main focus of research. The literature on evidentiality with an emphasis on political discourse in the news is not ample either (Garretson & Ädel 2008, Hsieh 2008, Thomson et al. 2008, Reyes 2011). Nonetheless, some of the existing studies mainly focus on external sources (Thompson 1996, Denham 1997, Pak 2010, Lee 2017), their impact (Sundar 1998, Mahone 2014, Duncan et al. 2019), or specifically unnamed sources (Hale 1984, Stenvall 2008, Schubert 2015). To the best of our knowledge, the only study that employed a somewhat similar approach to our study in order to analyze source segments was Calsamiglia and Ferrero's (2003) research on the role and position of scientific voices through reported speech in media. However, it was remarkably dissimilar in terms of context (mad cow disease) and aims. They analyzed "the identity of agents of reference chosen by journalists" and "the specific linguistic choices made in the pre-citation segment" for which they drew upon van Leeuwen's (1996) framework of the representation of social actors in discourse (Calsamiglia & Ferrero 2003: 147).

Reported speech "can occur in up to 90% of the sentences of a newspaper article" (Bergler 2006: 11), to enhance the objectivity, neutrality, and credibility

of the report. Nevertheless, these citations can be, paradoxically, employed to camouflage subjectivity, bias, and imbalance. Therefore, to fill the gap in the literature and understand the way 'objectivity' is operationalized in hard news reports, a cross-linguistic study solely devoted to an in-depth analysis of source segments in hard news reporting seemed imperative. In so doing, this exploratory study, as part of a larger research study on evidentiality, aspires to investigate the external sources employed in political discourse revolving around the issue of diplomatic and proxy intervention in Syria (unpacked later) by comparing and contrasting a cross-linguistic context (American/English vs. Iranian/Persian). In addition, it also hopes to develop a taxonomy of the types of external sources and the strategies used to introduce them in the text, relative to the size and context of the corpus. To this end, this paper explores the transparency of the identity of the cited sources in the reports. Furthermore, it draws on van Leeuwen's (1996) model of social actors to examine the specific strategies employed to introduce the external sources in the new context. And finally, it tries to investigate if similar sources and strategies serve disparate functions and whether there is any systematic variation across different themes.

We preferred van Leeuwen's model of social actors over Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal framework because we wanted to solely focus on how the external sources were introduced and described in the text, whereas the Appraisal framework is more pertinent to a study on reporting structures (*say*, *believe*, *according to*, etc.) to evaluate the stance of the writer with regard to the cited propositions. Thus, this study specifically addresses the following questions:

1. Are there any statistically significant differences between the frequency, transparency, and types of external sources used in the American and Iranian newspapers reports?
2. What strategies are used to introduce the sources in the American and Iranian hard news reporting?
3. Are the distribution and functions of these sources impacted by different contextual factors?

In a sense, this study aims to 1) offer a genre-specific, functional model of external sources and 2) analyze such sources in two different languages with a unifying topic (the case of intervention in Syria) in order to discover the potential contextual factors governing each flank's strategies.

1.1 Situated context

To fully understand the study's macro- and micro-contexts, it is necessary to explore the socio-political context and related concepts. March 2011 marked the outbreak of the unrest in Syria, which developed into a civil war (Rodgers et al.

2016). Since then, there has been a range of theories regarding how it all broke out, by whom, and who was feeding this encroaching fire and fanning the flames. News outlets, therefore, shed light on the events with different slants. What could readily be inferred from the news was that it did not take long for the unrest to develop into a full-fledged international war, one hallmark of which was the intervention of foreign powers, both through proxy and diplomatic means ("Why has the Syrian war lasted for 11 years," 2022). Therefore, in what follows, we will elaborate on proxy and diplomatic intervention in Syria and further explanation of why we chose these themes will be provided in the methodology section.

1.1.1 Proxy intervention

Proxy intervention became widespread after World War II, coinciding with a decline in interstate wars (Szayna et al. 2017). In general terms, a proxy war "occurs when State A encourages the people of State C to take up arms against State B, which happens to be its own adversary" (Stern 2000: 216). Media, as well, adopt certain positions based on their political slants. On the one hand, Western media maintained that the crisis in Syria was a spillover of the violence from the regional so-called *Arab Spring* as the unrest had been spreading over the region, leaping from one country to the other. On the other hand, Iranian media (e.g. *Press TV* and *Young Journalists Club*) accused Qatar and Saudi Arabia of producing and abetting the 2011 outbreaks in Syria, and Barack Obama for his support of the unrest.

1.1.2 Diplomatic intervention

As the name suggests, diplomatic intervention is considered "attempts by outside parties to transform a conflict by means of communicating information about the conflict that can help generate movement toward potentially overlapping bargaining positions" (Regan & Aydin 2006: 745). However, these interventions by outsiders are not usually impartial and each group seeks its own vested interest and tries to win advantages for its desired side. Fierke (2005) believes that not only states, but also international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, journalists, and others can be actors in some form of cross-border communication related to war. Two influential groups diplomatically involved in Syria were the Arab League and the United Nations (UN).

Arab League's activities in Syria ranged from an offer to send civilian and military monitors to Syria to determine whether it is abiding by a league-brokered peace plan to end the crackdown on the country's uprising to the recognition of the opposition and blaming the Syrian government of taking the offensive against civilians (Stack & MacFarquhar 2012). In addition, as a result of the United

Nations Security Council Resolution 2043 (2012) in response to the Syrian Civil War, the United Nations set up its peacekeeping mission in Syria in April 2012 to observe the implementation of the Kofi Annan peace plan for Syria on the Syrian Civil War. The United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria was frozen in August 2012, following an increasingly unstable and violent situation in Syria (UNSMIS, n.d.).

2 Methodology

Bell (1991: 3) maintains that "gathering a corpus of media language" demands decisions in three areas: the genre (type of media content), the outlet (carriers of content), and the outputs (programs and the time period), according to which we made the following decisions.

2.1 The genre

The primary phase was to determine the mode (text, audio, and/or video) and medium (journal, radio, TV, or online) of the reports. After a comprehensive investigation of different sources in Persian and English languages to find comparable data, it was decided that written news reports in the most representative newspapers of the respective languages would make the optimum data sets. Comparability, popularity, readership, availability, and ease of access were among the most pertinent features of newspapers compared to other forms of media.

2.2 The outlets

Since the main project purported to be both a cross-linguistic and intra-linguistic study of evidentiality and there are two major political parties in the United States (Republican and Democratic) and two in Iran (Fundamentalist and Reformist), it was concluded that two representative newspapers from each language would suit the purpose and scope of the project. To this end, we ran an extensive pilot study on the potential candidates among American and Iranian newspapers considering their circulation, popularity, readership, availability, coverage scope, as well as the political leaning and reporting bias which played a decisive role in the qualification of these newspapers. With regard to the American newspapers, we concluded that *The New York Times* (hereafter NYT) and *The Wall Street Journal* (hereafter WSJ) qualify for the main analysis.

Consistent with the American newspaper selection process, the Iranian newspapers were selected based on their coverage, availability and ease of access, circulation, quality (of the reports), and political affiliation. To this end, a primary scanning of the coverage of Syria in quality newspapers from both

sides (*Kayhan*, *Resalat*, and *Iran* from Fundamentalists, *Shargh*, *Aftabe Yazd*, and *Etemad* from Reformists, and *Jomhouri-e Eslami* and *Ettela'at* from in between) was done and it transpired that many could not qualify for the study mainly because of the scant coverage of the issue and the linguistic quality of the reports (length of the reports, rhetoric, etc.). *Kayhan*, as "the most conservative Iranian newspaper" (Ghasemi 2006), was the optimal representative of the Fundamentalists (rightists); however, we were not able to select an absolutely Reformist (leftist) newspaper due to the above-mentioned issues. The best alternative we could nominate was *Jomhouri-e Eslami* (JE hereafter). It is also worth mentioning that these newspapers are only nationally distributed and are not comparable with their American counterparts in terms of circulation and readership.

2.3 The outputs

As far as data collection was concerned, we concluded that a unifying theme, i.e. that of Syria, as a hotly debated issue, could be the pivot. However, there were numerous reports on Syria in the selected newspapers focusing on different aspects of the issue. Thus, all the headlines on Syria within three months since the emergence of the uprising/unrest (March 2011) were extracted from the four newspapers and were labeled based on their themes. The results demonstrated that *intervention* was the most dominant theme over the intended time span. Then, the sample intervention reports were re-examined and categorized into two dominant sub-themes: proxy intervention and diplomatic intervention. The reason behind this sub-categorization was to look for any meaningful correlation between changes in slant and the use of external sources within and between different newspapers.

Overall, having considered similar previous studies and following the suggestions of the prominent scholars in the field of corpus linguistics and journalism, we determined that 30 reports from each newspaper, with a total of 120 reports, would make an adequate sample. Besides, a systematic theme-based approach was employed to meet the requirement of representativeness. Furthermore, to decide upon the time span, different newspapers, websites, and timelines were searched for the date thenceforth interventions had been reflected in the reports and it was concluded that January 1st, 2012 (corresponding Dey 11th, 1390 in the Iranian calendar) was the right date. Since the issue is still ongoing, the ending point was naturally the time of data collection, that is, June 31st, 2013 (corresponding Tir 10th, 1392 in the Iranian calendar) which made up a total of 18 months.

Therefore, all reports on these two subthemes (proxy and diplomatic intervention) were extracted and perused to probe the linguistic quality, length, and relevance of the reports, coherence of the content, and consistency between the headline and the content. Next, they were sifted by the researcher and a second rater against the aforementioned criteria, and finally, the top-most qualified 120 reports were singled out. Care was taken to have a fairly equal distribution of the final sample along the period. Thus, 30 reports from each newspaper (15 on each sub-theme), with a total of 120 reports, comprising about 100,000 words were selected. The total number of words in the reports was 30,000 in each American newspaper and 20,000 in each Iranian newspaper. However, the number of words per theme was not equally divided between the newspapers in each language. Thus, to enable comparison on a common scale, the data were normalized based on the larger number per analysis (see Table 1). That is, 30,000 for cross-linguistic analysis, 32,000 for proxy intervention analysis, and 28,000 for diplomatic intervention analysis.

	Cross-linguistic	Proxy	Diplomatic
American newspapers	30,000	32,000	28,000
Iranian newspapers	20,000	15,000	15,000
Normalization	30,000	32,000	28,000

Table 1: Normalization of the corpus (word counts) across analyses

2.4 Analytical approach

Informed by the pilot stage, first, we drew upon Martin and White's (2005) model of engagement system to analyze the reports. Thus, we scrutinized the texts for instances of evidentiality. Martin and White (2005: 112) define *Acknowledge* as "those locutions where there is no overt indication, at least via the choice of the framer, as to where the authorial voice stands with respect to the proposition". This is the main category of evidentials in the news reports (about 90% in our data) where reporting verbs such as *say*, *report*, *state*, *declare*, *announce*, *believe*, and *think* play a vital role. As far as reported speech is concerned, each pre-citation segment consists of a source introduced in the new context and an evidentiality marker attributed to him/her by the author (e.g. *experts believe*). Since most studies have only focused on the identity of the external sources, we decided to delve into the features of the accompanying descriptors as well, to see if there is any systematic approach to framing these sources. In so doing, we tabulated and analyzed the data in two phases.

First, we categorized the source segments based on their identifiability into two categories, namely *Identification* and *Unidentification*. Second, we ran a bottom-up analysis of our data against van Leeuwen's schema (1996: 66) of representation of social actors which proved the following categories relevant: *Nomination*, *Functionalization*, *Objectivation*, *Individualization*, *Collectivization*, *Aggregation*, *Genericization*, and *Association*. Besides the aforementioned categories, we noticed that, on occasions, agents are not mentioned at all through either *passivization* or *topicalization* of actions or events. Thus, we labeled such instances as *Agent avoiding* (inspired by Holmes 1984: 358). Moreover, the analysis laid bare another characteristic of the sources which we labeled *Contextualization*. This refers to the extent to which the setting of the reported statements has been elaborated, videlicet, where, when, how (via what medium or channel), and why it has taken place. Finally, drawing on the aforesaid models and relying on the bottom-up analysis of the data, the following model emerged:

Source segment: A preparatory frame for the introduction and description of the cited source
Identification: transparent introduction of the source by mentioning their name or any other references which clearly identifies that specific source (1) ***Susan E. Rice, the American ambassador to the United Nations****, said that …* (2) ***The president of the United States*** *said that …*
Unidentification: unspecific introduction of the source by withholding all or part of their identity and making an indefinite reference to the source, e.g. *an expert* (individualization), *American officials* (collectivization), *many people* (aggregation) or *critics* (genericization) (3) ***According to American officials …*** (4) ***Many of the rebels*** *confessed that …*
Nomination: introduction of the source by mentioning their name, which can be formal, semi-formal, or informal (5) ***Mr. Lavrov*** *repeated that …*
Functionalization: introduction of the source through the type of activity they are involved in or a title connoting their position or profession, e.g. *president*, *minister*, *activist*, *member* (6) *American* ***officials*** *said that …*
Objectivation: introduction of the source by means of reference to a place or thing closely associated either with them or with the activity they are engaged in, e.g. the *United States*, *committee*, *parliament* (7) ***Syria*** *announced that …*
Individualization: introduction of individual sources through citation of their names, honorifics, or affiliations, or by actions, events, or things related to them, e.g. *Obama*, *the Government*, *a report*, *he* (8) *Among other things,* ***the president*** *said that …* (9) ***Ahmadinejad*** *believed that …*

Collectivization: introduction of the source by a mass noun or a noun denoting a group of people as homogeneous and consensual, e.g. *the opposition*, *American officials* (10) ***The United Nations*** *estimates that …*
Aggregation: quantification of the source by "definite or indefinite quantifiers which either function as the numerative or as the head of the nominal group", e.g. *a number of*, *some* (11) ***Some political analysts*** *said that …*
Genericization: introduction of the source realized by plurals without articles, or by the singular with a definite or indefinite article (12) ***Critics*** *have described …*
Association: conjoining individuals and/or groups of sources via combinations of *Genericization*, *Individualization*, *Collectivization*, and *Aggregation* (13) ***Russia***, ***China***, ***and the United Nations*** *also argued that …*
Contextualization: the extent to which the setting of the reported statements has been elaborated, viz, where, when, how (via what medium or channel), why (14) *The leader of the opposition delegation, Sheik Moaz al-Khatib, said* ***in a speech at the Arab League meeting in Doha, Qatar****.*
Agent avoiding: omission of the source by passivization, nominalization, or topicalization of actions or events (e.g. *concerns are growing that …*) (15) *A European supply line could alter the dynamics of the two-year Syrian civil war,* ***which is believed*** *to have cost the lives of 70,000 people, without ending the Assad family's decades of rule.*

Table 2: Strategies of external source employment in hard news reports

It is worth noting here that some of the abovementioned categories tend to overlap and/or co-occur (see Figure 1 for further details). As for the analysis, first, we compared and contrasted the whole data cross-linguistically to see if there are any statistically significant differences between the two languages, with regard to frequency, transparency, and types of strategies employed to introduce and describe the sources. Besides, we searched for the most frequent sources these newspapers used. Second, we analyzed the reports thematically to see if newspapers incline towards certain strategies across different themes. That is, if reports treat external sources differently according to the theme of the report.

3 Results and discussion

To address the questions of the study, all the reports were analyzed with regard to the characteristics of the cited sources based on the aforementioned categories in Table 2. However, before moving on to the results, it is apt to elaborate on the possible combinations of these strategies. Although most of these strategies can be used to introduce both identified and unidentified sources, some of them are mutually exclusive and some can only be used with *Identification* or *Unidentification*. *Nomination* is a strategy used only for identification of a source,

whereas *Genericization*, *Aggregation*, and *Agent-avoiding* are specifically used for unidentified sources. In addition, *Functionalization*, *Objectivation*, *Association*, and *Contextualization* can be employed with both identified and unidentified sources. On the other hand, a source can appear either individually (*Individualization*) or in mass (*Collectivization*, *Aggregation*, or *Genericization*) (Figure 1).

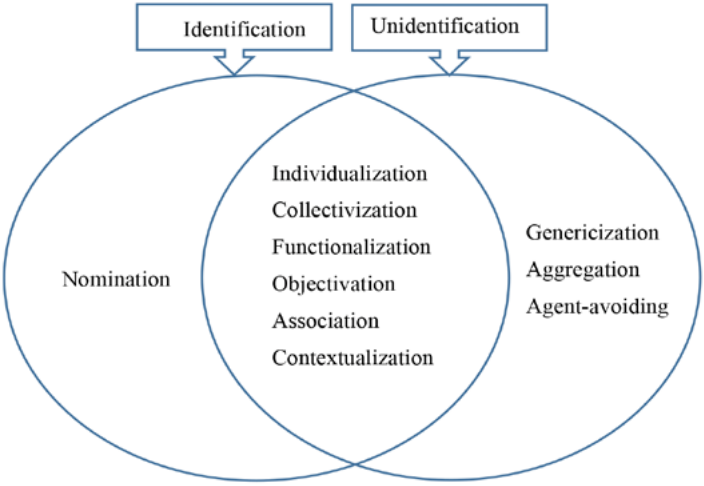

Figure 1: Possible strategies used with identified and unidentified sources

Considering the abovementioned possibilities, Table 3 illustrates a sample analysis of two source segments labeled with the relevant categories.

Source segment	Mr. Obama,	the president of the US,	said	in a speech at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum	
Analysis	***Identification Nomination Individualization***	***Functionalization***	***Reporting verb***	***Contextualization***	
Source segment	Some	opposition activists	and	residents	said
Analysis	***Unidentification Aggregation***	***Functionalization***	***Association***	***Functionalization***	***Reporting verb***

Table 3: Sample analysis of the source segments

In order to gain a better understanding of the distribution and characteristics of the data, descriptive statistics were calculated for the whole data set (Table 4). In the Persian news reports, there were 12 categories of external source employment strategies, with a range of frequency counts from 15 to 1,389. The total frequency count was 5,322, with a mean of 443.50 and a standard deviation of 426.88842. The skewness value of 1.095 indicates that the distribution of strategies is positively skewed, with more categories having lower frequency counts than higher frequency counts. Similarly, in the English news reports, there were also 12 categories, with a smaller range of frequency counts from 31 to 862. The total frequency count was 4,557, with a mean of 379.75 and a standard deviation of 296.66453. The skewness value of 0.432 indicates that the distribution of strategies is also positively skewed, but not as much as the Persian news reports. Overall, these statistics provide some basic information about the frequencies of categories of external source employment strategies in the English and Persian data. However, without more context and information about the data and the study, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions or interpretations.

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
Persian	12	1,374	15	1,389	5,322	443.50	426.88842	1.095
English	12	831	31	862	4,557	379.75	296.66453	0.432

Table 4: Descriptive statistics

3.1 Cross-linguistic analysis of the external sources

To address the first two research questions, we compared the whole data cross-linguistically to probe the outcomes for significant differences in terms of frequency and transparency of the sources, as well as different forms of representation of these sources. The results of this general analysis of the two sets of newspapers are detailed in Table 5. It should be noted that the total frequency is the total number of source segments found in the corpus. It is not the sum of the frequencies of the categories because a single segment can fit into more than one category at the same time.

Categories	Persian F (%)	English F (%)	Chi-square	p-value
Total frequency	1,737 (2.895)	1,469 (2.44)	22.403	0.00*
Identification	1,389 (2.31)	848 (1.41)	130.836	0.00*
Unidentification	348 (0.58)	621 (1.035)	76.913	0.00*
Nomination	427 (0.711)	397 (0.661)	1.092	0.296
Functionalization	549 (0.915)	581 (0.968)	0.906	0.341
Objectivation	612 (1.02)	334 (0.55)	81.696	0.00*
Individualization	1,035 (1.72)	862 (1.43)	945.606	0.00*
Collectivization	558 (0.93)	360 (0.6)	42.706	0.00*
Aggregation	15 (0.025)	54 (0.09)	22.043	0.00*
Genericization	48 (0.075)	31 (0.051)	3.658	0.056
Association	50 (0.083)	118 (0.196)	27.524	0.00*
Contextualization	260 (0.43)	308 (0.513)	4.056	0.044*
Agent avoiding	31 (0.051)	43 (0.071)	1.946	0.163

Table 5: Cross-linguistic comparison of total external sources (*p <0.05 was considered statistically significant)

Objectivity is an essential feature of news reports which is partly achieved via the citation of external sources. Mindich (1998: 1) maintains that "if American journalism were a religion, as it has been called from time to time, its supreme deity would be 'objectivity'". Similarly, Stephens (1988: 207-208) called it the "highest moral concept ever developed in America and given to the world". Nevertheless, the total frequency of the cited sources in Table 5 reveals the greater inclination of the Iranian newspapers toward employing reported sources (1,737 vs. 1,469). Hence, it can be said that the Persian reports can be perceived as more objective, at least apparently, compared to their English counterparts. Although the incorporation of external sources is a tool to enhance the objectivity of the reports, it should be noted that citations can be manipulated to serve the ideologies of the writer, "giving a slant to what is said" (Calsamiglia & Ferrero 2003: 149).

The identity of an external voice can be transparent, obscured, or completely withheld from the reader. The identification of cited sources, particularly credible ones, is contributory to the reliability of the information (Fairclough 1988, Lemke 1998, van Leeuwen 2008, White 2006, 2012). According to the Code of Ethics by the Society of Professional Journalists ("Seek Truth and Report it", 2014, para. 7), journalists should "identify sources whenever feasible" and that "the public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability". According to Table 5, although both sets of newspapers have incorporated more named sources than obscured ones, the ratio of the identified to unidentified sources in the Persian

reports is 80/20 while it is only 58/42 in the American newspapers. Moreover, the Iranian newspapers exceeded the American newspapers in *Identification* of the sources (1,389 vs. 848), whereas *Unidentification* in the American data set outnumbered the Iranian newspapers (621 vs. 348). These remarkable differences also allude to the perceived objectivity of the Iranian newspapers as their sources seem to be more transparent, and, hence, more reliable and verifiable than their American counterparts.

Montgomery (2007: 87) argues that "a way of 'doing objectivity', or impartiality, is by harvesting quotations from a range of representative viewpoints while aligning with none of them". Thus, in addition to the previous numerical analyses, it seemed imperative to investigate whether certain types of voices have been more frequently cited and if they have been cited as identified or unidentified. To this end, the following diagram (Figure 2) illustrates the most frequent sources based on the two categories of *Identification* and *Unidentification*:

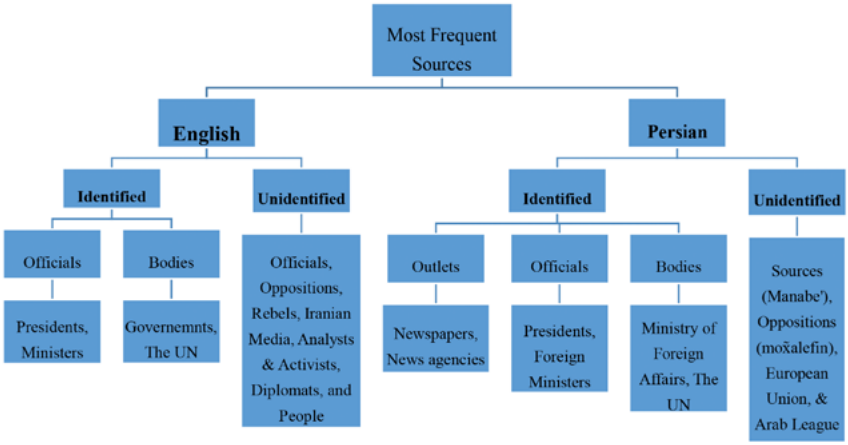

Figure 2: Most frequent external sources

Although a range of sources has been harvested, to use Montgomery's (2007) words, objectivity does not seem to have been achieved accordingly. To unpack this claim, the following conclusions have been drawn from the above diagram: 1) Both Iranian and American newspapers have generally found similar sources (mostly authorities) quote-worthy. Bergler (2006, as cited in White 2012) suggests that high certainty or reliability can be achieved through tagging sources perceived as authoritative or expert; 2) While both sets of newspapers

often cited *Identified* sources from official bodies and individuals, Iranian newspapers employed a good number of quotations from other outlets too. The number of such nested sources was strikingly eight times more compared to the American newspapers. 3) *Unidentified* sources were more diverse in both sets of newspapers, ranging from high-ranking officials to even laypersons. Stenvall (2008: 229) argues that unnamed sources "can undermine the alleged factuality/objectivity of news agency discourse". Furthermore, Denham (1997) maintains that when an official source is reluctant to be named, the reader should be cautious about the reliability of the information.

Whether identified or unidentified, sources can be introduced using different strategies. To address the second question, we categorized the sources based on their linguistic features, mainly informed by van Leeuwen's model of representation of social actors (1996). The results of the analyses showed that the main strategies used by both sets of newspapers were *Nomination*, *Functionalization*, *Objectivation*, *Individualization*, *Collectivization*, and *Contextualization*. Despite the fact that the first two were employed comparably by both sets of newspapers in terms of quantity, the Iranian newspapers outnumbered meaningfully in *Objectivation*, *Individualization*, and *Collectivization*. However, *Contextualization* was favored significantly more by the American newspapers. On the other hand, *Agent-avoiding*, *Genericization*, *Aggregation*, and *Association* were not employed frequently by the journalists, although the last two strategies outnumbered significantly in the English data. In what follows we will elaborate on the highlights of these statistics.

The use of *Nomination* and *Functionalization* was mostly intertwined in the data across the two languages. They were similarly used, by both sets of newspapers, to introduce the source "by such linguistic means as names, proper names, titles or honorifics, designation of status and public position, relational adjectives, etc." (Calsamiglia & Ferrero 2003: 156).

(16) ***Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the U.S. military's Joint Chiefs of Staff****, said the Syrian opposition appeared to be taking steps to unite as a group, …* (WSJ 2012, March 29)

Also, we found a good number of instances where only *Functionalization* was employed for the introduction of unidentified sources, especially by the American newspapers. In such cases, journalists had tried to compensate for this lack of clarity by references to positions or ranks of the sources, particularly those of officials and experts.

(17) *In a new twist,* ***according to one American official****, there have been reliable reports that Iraqi Shiite militia fighters, long backed by Iran during its efforts to shape events inside Iraq, are now making their way to Syria to help the Assad government.* (NYT 2012, September 4)

As the conflict in Syria is an example of a proxy war (Phillips & Valbjørn 2018), it seems that the principals (i.e. pro- and anti-Assad states) do their best to level accusatory remarks against each other. In this example, the newspaper makes multiple allegations against the Iraqi Shiite militia fighters and Iran all according to an unidentified source with no supporting evidence on the reliability of the propositions. The label of an *American official* is deemed to have inherent credibility and authority to obviate the need to provide some verifiable references as to the reliability of the reports.

Objectivation is the impersonalization of social actors through metonymical references. In case of individuals and groups, writers might mention their institution or affiliation to refer to them (the Government or the U.S.) while sometimes actions or discursive practices represent the source (e.g. statement, sanction, report). As such, this strategy can be a useful tool at the disposal of the writers to augment the credibility of the sources and give them a solid structure and unison. It is important to mention that *Objectivation* more often accompanied *Collectivization* in our data.

(18) ***The New York Times*** *recently revealed that Saudi Arabia, during the last few months, has been sending arms, bought from Croatia, to the Syrian rebels through Jordan.* (Kayhan 2013, March 3)

An external source can be cited as either an individual (*Individualization*) or a group (*Collectivization*, *Genericization*, and *Aggregation*). Van Leeuwen (1996: 50) maintains that individualization of actors "allows their titles, credentials and institutional affiliations to be showcased". Interestingly enough, the results of this study showed that the frequency of *Individualization* stood atop all strategies of source introduction in both English and Persian data.

(19) ***"Mohamed Hassanein Heikal" the eminent Egyptian journalist, author, and researcher****, in an interview with the Egyptian newspaper Al Ahram stated that the U.S. is the major actor against Syria and mercenaries of this country are involved in the events in Syria, disguised under Black Water security firm.* (Kayhan 2012, August 29)

From among strategies for group sources (as opposed to individual sources), *Collectivization* was the dominant one in both sets of data. Sometimes, sources are not independent individuals but are homogenously grouped (e.g. American

officials, the parliament). Van Leeuwen (1996) believes that *Collectivization* helps to signal agreement, homogeneity, and consensus. This uniformity provides the sources with amplified power, authority, and public trust that, in turn, enhance the reliability of the propositions.

(20) *In late November,* ***U.S. officials said*** *they gathered information that showed Iran was stepping in to aid Syria with its oil trade.* ***U.S. and European officials believe*** *Tehran is assisting Damascus with its crackdown by providing arms, software, training and intelligence.* (WSJ 2012, January 19)

As the last major category, *Contextualization* refers to the details or descriptions of the setting of the reported speech provided by the journalist to inform the readers and establish the authenticity of the source. This strategy surfaced as a result of the bottom-up analysis of the data and was utilized more with identified sources. Unlike most categories, English reports contextualized the citations significantly more than the Persian reports, that is, 308 (0.51%) vs. 260 (0.43%) respectively.

(21) ***At a meeting in Brussels on Friday, EU foreign ministers also agreed*** *to add 17 Iranians to its sanctions list for human rights abuses, and signed off on a legal text that details how they will implement an oil embargo on Iran.* (WSJ 2012, March 24)

So far, the analyses have shown considerable differences between the English and Persian news reports in terms of the frequency and types of strategies employed to cite external sources. Nevertheless, the types of sources were generally similar across the two languages, i.e. officials and experts. To explore whether these similar sources would serve disparate functions in the text, we conducted an in-depth content analysis drawing on van Dijk's (2000) model of ideology in discourse. We observed that both sets of reports have dominantly applied the strategies of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. However, the analysis indicated a greater inclination of the American newspapers toward positive self-presentation while the Iranian reports leaned toward negative other-presentation. More specifically, the American journals tended to embrace voices that exonerated the US from the accusations of aggravating the conflict in Syria by funding and arming the rebels; hence, resonating with image repair (Example 22). On the other hand, Iranian journals found attacking, through citing voices that substantiate the US and allies as the main culprit in the conflict in Syria, as the best strategy (see Examples 18, 19 and 23). This end was mainly achieved by the Iranian reports through resorting to secondary sources from Western media to use the words of the opponents against themselves, i.e. endorsing an opposing source to denounce a position. We termed

the strategies used by American and Iranian newspapers as *self-exoneration* and *other-accusation*, respectively. While in Example 22 the WSJ tries to acquit the U.S. of the charges regarding arming the rebels, in Example 23, *Kayhan* uses Haaretz's report as a proof of America's intervention in the conflict.

(22) *The Obama administration hasn't agreed to arm the FSA, the U.S. officials stressed Mrs. Clinton on Wednesday* ***denied charges*** *by Syria and others that the U.S. has armed the rebels.* (WSJ 2012, June 13)

(23) *Regarding the issue, then* ***Zionist newspaper Haaretz reported*** *of the shipment of several American weapons to Jordan in the last few days, and of the probable military intervention of Washington in Syria.* (Kayhan 2012, December 19)

3.2 Theme-based cross-linguistic analysis

To address the third question, we compared and contrasted the reports thematically (i.e. diplomatic intervention and proxy intervention) to examine the impact of contextual factors on the representation, distribution, and functions of external sources in the text. This examination aims to provide a full picture of how these two sets of newspapers framed intervention in Syria.

3.2.1 Proxy intervention

Reports on *Proxy Intervention* reflect stories in which there is an indication that either side provided their proxy with financial, humanitarian, intelligence, training, and military aids. It seems that the intervening parties usually try to legitimize their involvement or conceal it to eschew public or legal ramifications. In line with this policy, we found out that both Iranian and American newspapers showed a proclivity to employ more unidentified sources measured against the general comparison (Table 5) to the extent that the frequency of unidentified sources in the American newspapers outnumbered that of identified sources. Nonetheless, Persian reports still tended to rely significantly more on *Identification*. The subliminal impetus for such a strong proclivity is that principals (i.e. pro- and anti-Assad states) preferred to camouflage their implication in the insurgencies, which is reflected by a similar approach to source tagging by the newspapers of either flank.

As Table 6 depicts, the frequency of sources in Persian reports revolving around proxy intervention is not significantly higher than that of the English reports focusing on the same sub-theme (2.78 % vs. 2.64 %). Compared to the general comparison (Table 5), most of the strategies employed by both sets remained the same, however, American newspapers meaningfully outnumbered in *Functionalization* and *Agent-avoiding* as strategies for the introduction of

the unidentified sources. With the same purpose, Iranian newspapers widened the gap with American counterparts in the incorporation of *Objectivation* and *Collectivization*. In addition, their use of *Nomination* and *Individualization* decreased considerably, as these strategies were mostly used for source identification. All these fluctuations were in line with our expectations to have more unidentified sources for the aforementioned reasons. In line with Hamada (2016: 202), our findings indicate that "while journalists, especially in the West, value the notion of truthfulness through a number of 'disconnected' ethics such as objectivity and sincerity", they are like media elsewhere, including journalists of Iran, "constantly subject to manipulation of all sorts".

Categories	Persian F (%)	English F (%)	Chi-square	p-value
Total frequency	892 (2.78)	845 (2.64)	1.272	0.259
Identification	647 (2.02)	389 (1.21)	64.251	0.00*
Unidentification	244 (0.76)	455 (1.42)	63.692	0.00*
Nomination	148 (0.46)	195 (0.60)	6.440	0.011*
Functionalization	260 (0.81)	384 (1.2)	23.876	0.00*
Objectivation	366 (1.14)	171 (0.53)	79.810	0.00*
Individualization	450 (1.40)	446 (1.39)	0.018	0.894
Collectivization	369 (1.15)	238 (0.74)	28.272	0.00*
Aggregation	9 (0.028)	35 (0.109)	15.364	0.00*
Genericization	20 (0.062)	13 (0.04)	1.485	0.223
Association	25 (0.078)	81 (0.25)	29.585	0.00*
Contextualization	123 (0.38)	184 (0.57)	12.121	0.00*
Agent avoiding	17 (0.053)	31 (0.096)	4.083	0.043*

Table 6: Cross-linguistic comparison of proxy intervention (*p <0.05 was considered statistically significant)

3.2.2 Diplomatic intervention

Regan and Aydin (2006: 754) maintain that "diplomatic interventions are effective conflict management strategies that dramatically change the course of the events in a civil war". Reports on diplomatic intervention generally revolved around the U.N. negotiations, resolutions, sanctions, vetoes, and recognition of the opposition. The comparison of the diplomatic intervention reports (Table 7) showed an increase in the use of *Identification* in both sets of newspapers. An interesting finding was that, unlike proxy reports, identified sources outnumbered unidentified ones in the American newspapers in diplomatic intervention reports. The reason behind this trend shift, especially in the American newspapers, seems to be that diplomatic relations, negotiations, and

measures are carried out by government officials, and the U.N. also is purported to act as the international institution in this respect. In addition, contrary to the case of proxy interventions, each party would pride itself on its involvement in such activities and showcasing them. To substantiate this conclusion, we focused on the strategies to represent actors. The number of *Individualization* and *Nomination* in both languages had climbed, although they were employed more in the Persian reports. *Functionalization*, as a complementary strategy to *Identification*, was frequently employed as well, though meaningfully more in Persian. These facts promote the Persian reports to a higher position relative to the English ones for the incorporation of considerably more identifiable sources. Even in *Collectivization* and *Objectivation*, the Iranian newspapers outnumbered their counterpart papers. As for their typical strategies, English reports tried to declare unison through *Association* of more sources and, though not widely used, resorted to *Aggregation* considerably more than Iranian newspapers.

Masterton (2005) argues that secrecy is a news value in Middle Eastern journalism. She holds that secrecy manifests when some organization (government, companies, groups, etc.) hides some newsworthy information from the public (ibid.: 47). However, our findings suggest that Iranian journalists, unlike their American counterparts, practice more transparency in their news reporting. This finding is further substantiated by Masterton's (2005: 45) more fine-grained analyses of the Middle Eastern countries where Iranian journalism is claimed to be "closer to the world average than either of its Middle East neighbours".

Categories	Persian F (%)	English F (%)	Chi-square	p-value
Total frequency	842 (3.00)	713 (2.54)	10.702	0.001*
Identification	731 (2.61)	510 (1.82)	39.356	0.00*
Unidentification	111 (0.39)	203 (0.72)	26.955	0.00*
Nomination	269 (0.96)	228 (0.81)	3.382	0.066
Functionalization	285 (1.01)	233 (0.83)	5.220	0.022*
Objectivation	258 (0.92)	171 (0.61)	17.643	0.00*
Individualization	573 (1.91)	468 (1.67)	10.591	0.001*
Collectivization	199 (0.71)	144 (0.51)	8.819	0.003*
Aggregation	5 (0.01)	23 (0.082)	11.571	0.001*
Genericization	27 (0.096)	19 (0.067)	1.391	0.238
Association	24 (0.085)	44 (0.15)	5.882	0.015*
Contextualization	134 (0.47)	142(0.50)	0.232	0.630
Agent avoiding	14 (0.05)	14 (0.05)	-	-

Table 7: Cross-linguistic comparison of diplomatic intervention (*p <0.05 was considered statistically significant)

4 Conclusion

In the realm of journalism, particularly political discourse, newspapers resort to all possible discursive tools to substantiate their own stance and indoctrinate their own ideologies. The author employs others' words to grant credibility to those of their own. These citations can be in line with the author's message "to *reassert* what has been or will be said later, to detach him/her from the *responsibility* of the content of the quotes" (Jullian 2011: 768), to *assess* the original writer/speaker him/herself (Scollon 2014), or even by ironically representing a counter-argument, invoke intended meanings or feelings against them. Moreover, quotes can "give *flavor* to the story" or "*confront* different views of the event" (Jullian 2011: 768).

Overall, the results indicated that Iranian newspapers employed more external sources across all comparisons, which is a contributory factor to the perceived objectivity and consequently, reliability of the reports. Transparency of the sources was also conspicuously higher in Persian reports across all comparisons, which is in line with the SPJ Code of Ethics (2014) that urges journalists to clearly identify sources. Furthermore, fluctuations in the frequency and transparency of the sources across the two sub-themes showed that the process of selection and introduction of these voices is not arbitrary but systematic and purposeful on the part of the newspapers. Regardless of the quantitative dominance of the Persian reports in cross-linguistic comparisons, the number of external sources quoted in the reports on diplomatic intervention and the transparency of these sources increased in both sets of newspapers. On the contrary, none of the newspapers in the study relied as heavily on external sources in their reporting on proxy intervention, and their use of unidentified sources increased as well. Finally, whereas both sides stuck to the strategies of positive self-representation and negative other-representation, the American newspapers' main strategy was *self-exoneration* while that of the Iranian newspapers was *other-accusation*.

Elaborate discussion about values in Iranian journalism and how well Iranian journalists and media outlets abide by them is all too rare. Nevertheless, the current study has provided a different perspective on most of the assumptions about Iranian journalistic practices in comparison to their Western counterparts. The Iranian newspapers almost always tended to slam the anti-Assad flank by incorporating quotations against them, either from Assad allies, especially Russia, or even from the opponents provided that the voice was favorable. Furthermore, Iranian papers rarely included any propositions implicating Iranian officials in the event. These findings are in line with the Iranian media landscape: *Kayhan* is the most conservative Iranian newspaper which is supervised by the office of the Supreme Leader, Khamenei. *Jomhouri-e Eslami*, another conservative newspaper, is claimed to be closely linked to the Supreme Leader too (Mazrooei

et al. n.d). The media industry in Iran has, therefore, remained firmly a state monopoly in terms of ownership and regulation (Rahimi 2015). State intervention, the hallmark of Iranian media, is argued to negatively correlate with the level of media autonomy (Meng & Rantanen 2015). Newspapers' close allegiance to the state, therefore, imbued their stances with the state agenda.

On the other side, American newspapers seldom gave voice to Syrian officials, particularly to Assad, except to entangle him. These newspapers appeared, to some extent, fair by providing room for a pro-Assad voice too, particularly that of Russia. Nonetheless, they preferred to affirm their own position and legitimize their actions on the grounds of threat against humanity through victimization of the opposition and, accordingly, congregation of the West bloc and Arab League against the Syrian government for the oppression and suppression of the people. Objectivity is, hence, more than the incorporation of external sources, and is rather creating spaces wherein voices of both sides of conflicts can be equally heard.

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REVIEWS

Locher, M. A. and Jucker, A. H. (2021) *The Pragmatics of Fiction: Literature, Stage and Screen Discourse.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 275 pp.

In their book *The Pragmatics of Fiction: Literature, Stage and Screen Discourse*, Miriam A. Locher and Andreas H. Jucker draw attention to how fiction can provide an intriguing and valuable source for pragmatic analyses, and how pragmatic analytical tools can be applied in the study of fictional data. These two perspectives imply a certain synchronicity. *Fiction* and *pragmatics* have a convenient synergy, which when examined closely reveals original insights that can enrich the perspectives of students of both linguistics and fiction, as well as scholars in the respective fields. Nevertheless, as the book is a textbook, published in the *Edinburgh Textbooks on the English Language* series, the primary readership is students, which is also reflected in its structure.

The book is organised into three parts and eleven chapters: Part I. The pragmatics of fiction as communication (Chapters 1-3); Part II. The pragmatics of story worlds (Chapters 4-6); and Part III. Themes in the pragmatics of fiction (Chapters 7-11). The chapters are divided into sub-chapters, which includes a brief introduction and conclusions. The sub-chapters are to the point and offer readers detailed but concise explanations of the key concepts needed to fully understand the discussed themes. They are accompanied by examples of fiction taken from a wide range of fictional works, from classic literary works by Shakespeare and Austen to contemporary TV series such as *House MD* and *Game of Thrones*. At the end of each chapter, there is a list of the key concepts covered, which is a particularly useful feature as it allows readers to approach the chapters individually, even though the book is structured into a logical sequence of chapters. The closing part of each chapter offers a number of thought-provoking exercises. These are very practical and engaging tasks that encourage readers to explore further the language of fiction through the lens of pragmatics. Each chapter ends with references for further reading with pertinent and interesting comments about each source. Throughout the book, there are brief definitions of linguistic terms and phenomena highlighted in boxes, which are a helpful aid for students unfamiliar with these terms. In addition, the textbook contains a list of figures and tables, a transcription convention, and a glossary that provides short definitions of all the key concepts in the book.

Following the above-mentioned structure, the first part is devoted to the notion of communication and prepares the ground for the overarching theme of the textbook, which is the interplay between the discourse of fictional texts and frameworks for pragmatic analyses. The introductory chapter "Fiction and pragmatics" addresses the fundamental research interest of pragmatics, which is the communicative aspects of language in social interaction. The authors link this underlying theme to the communication of fiction by proposing that the producers of fictional texts communicate through them with their audience. Fiction is viewed as a complex form of communication and differences between the three basic types of fiction, i.e. written, performed and spontaneous, are specified, while it is also pointed out that the textbook focuses mostly on pragmatic elements within written and performed fiction. As part of establishing the foundations for the following chapters, the social and theoretical pragmatic tradition is discussed and it is made clear that the textbook adopts the social pragmatic approach, as its scope is broader and therefore more suitable.

The second chapter entitled "Fiction and non-fiction" considers the difference between fictional and non-fictional texts and refers to their communicative complexities. In fiction we encounter the narration of imaginary events and the depiction of characters, but we also often come across references to real people and places. As part of a classification of fictitiousness, it is asserted that fictitious features such as characters, places and events can co-exist with real world references in fictional texts. To shed light on this complex issue, theories that identify fictional texts are presented, for example by Klauk and Köppe (2014), which leads to the introduction of the term "fictional contract" suggesting that there is a certain agreement between the creators and recipients of the texts. Consequently, it is the interaction between the text, the reader and the reader's expectations that classifies a piece of text as fiction. Taking the intertwining notion of fiction and non-fiction even further, adaptations, spin-offs and fan fiction are presented as extensions of fictitious worlds.

The final chapter of the first part entitled "Literature and communication" distinguishes between synchronous and asynchronous interaction and takes into account the role of the audience in fictional production. The authors argue that a communicative act in fiction, as part of the interaction between the creator and the reader or viewer, resembles everyday communication, the understanding of which relies, among other factors, on the use of contextual knowledge. This interpretation process, which discusses illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect, is well illustrated with the example of a poem and a text message. Here, in particular, the role of the recipient is dealt with and an adapted model of Bell's (1991) "audience design" is proposed. The individual layers of the model are

modified to fit the needs of fictional discourse. However, not only the recipients are considered. There is also an examination of the participation structure of the creators adapted to fictional communication as put forward by Goffman (1979).

The second part of the book is mostly concerned with story worlds, and the fourth chapter, "Genre of fiction", starts with an examination of face-to-face communication, continues with written texts in general, and goes on to explore genres of fiction viewed through the lens of pragmatics. Following Goffman's (1974) notion of "frame" which derives from the fact that there exist structures of expectations for recurring situations, the authors propose that this type of acquired knowledge can also be conveyed by fiction. In the writing, such frames are represented by genres, the boundaries of which are not clear, and which are characterised by intertextuality. With this in mind, fictional texts are written within culturally dependent frames, which then help us, for instance, to tell tragedy from comedy in the given cultural setting. However, as readers and viewers we often encounter mixed genres in interaction. In that case, "evoking genres can thus work as creating common ground for meaning making process" (p. 70).

In the context of sense-making, the recipients of fictional texts seek certain familiar storylines, which is the key theme of the following chapter, entitled "The narrative core". The premise is that genres, conceived of as cognitive concepts, entail narrative core. Story-telling is an interaction, an integral part of which is the role of the audience. Hence, the combination of genres within stories then results in intertextuality, which may be linked to the concept of Bell's (1984) "audience design". The authors state that the communicative acts are transformed into narratives. In light of that, some common features, i.e. a narrative core which is cultural-dependent, can be found across genres. In addition, as addressed by Hoffman (2017), the interpretation of story worlds by readers is realised via textual cues, while it is the author's choice as to which narratorial voice will be used. It follows that the way readers approach story worlds is heavily influenced by the different perspectives used by the author. Therefore, the chapter touches upon the distinction between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrative, as well as the notion of foregrounding.

The following chapter entitled "Character creation" deals with "the linguistic cues through which the characters of story worlds are shaped" (p. 98). The focus is on regional, social and ethnic linguistic variation in character creation, with specific reference to the role of accent and visual features, and also multilingualism. Moreover, the authors discuss an important factor within pragmatic analysis, which is the construction of identity. People define themselves by the particular way they involve themselves in social interactions. However,

"how we say things can change depending on whom we address and what we wish to achieve" (p. 100). By doing so via a combination of indexical cues, we are involved in identity construction, as some of our identity specifications are shared with others. Aware of the richness of indexicality in language use, the creators of fictional characters have a powerful tool at their disposal.

With Chapter Seven, "The performance of fiction", the authors open the final part of the textbook, which informs readers about various pragmatic themes in fiction. The function of a dialogue is presented as the first of the studied themes. Following Bednarek's (2017) definition of dialogue in fiction, it can be assumed that dialogue is a manifold feature and, as such, a very effective stylistic tool. It also serves here as an instrument to illustrate some of the specifications of fiction that were discussed in the previous chapters. These include fictional contract, a comparison of written, performed, and spontaneous interaction with respect to orality, the reader's expectations, and the plot of a narrative.

The following chapter, "Relational work and (im/politeness) ideologies", examines how societal ideologies are reflected in works of fiction and concentrates on the development of relationships with respect to the frameworks of im/politeness and gender. The authors observe that "the fictional artefacts can raise issues of gender or im/politeness explicitly or implicitly" (p. 170) and thus provide unique material for studying ideologies. Another interesting commentary in this chapter is made within the context of the censuring and manufacturing of fictional production approached through the use of swearwords. It is concluded that swearing is a creative linguistic device that is used by the producers of fictional texts to shape the characters, especially from the emotional point of view. The representation of such characters may then have an emotional impact on the audience.

Emotions and emotional reactions with respect to fictitious characters and the audience is the theme of Chapter Nine, which is entitled "The language of emotion". With regard to the characters, two modes of presenting emotions are introduced. The first is the showing mode, which includes emotion cues, and the second is the telling mode, which comprises emotion vocabulary. The intersection of the two modes is a common feature, especially in performed fiction, where the viewers witness a character's physical demonstration of an emotion while it is expressed verbally. How the fictitious emotions of the characters relate to the real emotions of the audience is the second issue. Despite knowing that the emotions being presented are not real, viewers and readers develop their own emotions based on what they are seeing and reading, which is referred to as the paradox of fiction by Radford and Weston (1975). Based on Planalp (1999) and Langlotz (2017), the authors present "five levels of emotional connection with fiction"

(p. 192), including emotional recognition, accuracy, understanding, sympathy, and empathy. Moreover, in films and TV productions the emotional representation and further impact on the audience is stressed by the well-established scene, i.e. the mise en scène, use of camera, and music.

In the chapter entitled "Poetic language" the authors argue that the same pragmatic principles may be applied in the study of everyday communication and processes that arise when involved with fiction. The basic hypothesis is that all utterances, whether fictional or non-fictional, "require an interpretation process that the addressee has to go through" (p. 196). In order to support the hypothesis, the relevance theory developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986, 1995), with the two relevance principles: cognitive and communicative, is used by the authors to demonstrate the similarities of the two types of communication. In connection with relevance theory, figures of speech of irony and metaphor are discussed from the perspective of their interpretation.

The final chapter, "Fiction, pragmatics and future research", summarises the underlying themes and arguments discussed in the textbook and puts forward suggestions for future research that could focus on the pragmatics of translation in fiction.

This stimulating textbook presents novel ideas of employing pragmatic analytical tools in relation to fictional texts in order to provide insights into the creation of characters, their interplay within story worlds and the way the fictional and non-fictional worlds blend together in relation to the role of audience and their interpretation of fiction. The well-elaborated and well-structured combination of explanation, with engaging examples that illustrate the fictional worlds ranging from novels, poems and lyrics to films and TV series, constitutes an extraordinary and very engaging textbook.

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